

NEWSLETTER of the



Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



AIMS Promotion of sea canoeing · Communication · Organisation of events and conferences · Safety and coaching

EDITORIAL

Winter and the Canoe Exhibition is behind us, as are the high winds and big seas that wreaked so much havoc earlier this year. At least I am hopeful this sort of freak weather is not to be repeated. Is it, I ask myself, a feature of pollution.

Though I have a natural concern for our future, I am not a "greenie" (or a duck squeezer as they are colloquially known as in the States) by definition. None the less I really wonder at what we are doing to our planet. The facts are horrific, so many tons of poisonous gas into the atmosphere, so many tons dumped into the sea, acid rain, global warming, deforestation and ozone depletion. It has long been a pastime to predict doom and gloom. Generations ago the end of the world was forecast and here we still are, well at least some of us. Perhaps governments and science between them can rise to our salvation.

So what has this to do with sea kayaking. Not a lot apart from most of us having a love of the natural environment and the ability to explore it at rather close quarters. To see at first hand its obvious destruction brings out feelings of sorrow and despair and the selfish urge to get out and enjoy what is left before it is too late. We used to say "leave only foot prints and take only photographs". I cynically think back to this sound advice when I see a poisoned North Sea, a beach covered in oil and non-biodegradable plastics and rubbish littering everywhere. Hey ho!! If I have depressed you forgive me. I feel better for writing about it despite I suspect you now feel depressed at having read it.

Enough, enough. How about the lazy hazy days of summer looming before us. What are your plans? We would love to share the outcome with you so do remember to include the ASKC on your circulation list when you send out your expedition reports.

The ASKC trip to Ile de Re is now (at the time of writing) raring to go and I hope to have a short report for the JULY Newsletter.

I have just received a new supply of ASKC ties - still at the same old price of £6.00 - so go on, treat yourself.

A.S.K.C. SHOP

Ties @ £6.00 each
 ASKC stickers @ 35 pence each
 ASKC letter headed notepaper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets
 John Dowds' book - SEA CANOEING @ £8.95
 6th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £1.00 each
 T shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £5.50 each (in yellow or plack)
 Sweat shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £11.00 each (in yellow or black)
 ASKC Ski Hats @ £3.50 each

You may have noticed that the cost of our sweat and T shirts has risen. There are two reasons. The first is that previously I have scouted the shops for cheap shirts. Now I have a regular supplier who is providing us with quality shirts. They really are top quality. Give them a try.

You again?

During the evening of 31 May Grampian Police alerted Aberdeen MRCC with a report of an injured person over the cliff at Long Slough, south of Aberdeen.

The Aberdeen Sector Officer, the Auxiliary-in-Charge and members of the cliff team mustered in less than 15 minutes to recover a young man from the cliff. Police and ambulance crews were also on scene, as well as other climbers of the injured man's party.

Darkness had fallen by the time the cliff team arrived but the rescue was completed using Coastguard lighting equipment. The injured man, who had a fractured femur, was then carried a mile along the clifftop to a waiting ambulance for transfer to hospital.

The injured climber had six weeks earlier already been the subject of a Coastguard action. He and two friends had set out on a canoe trip that led to a search operation lasting over two hours and involved Aberdeen and Stonehaven mobile rescue units. Aberdeen Lifeboat, a fast rescue boat from Stonehaven, the police and the F.V. Margaret Rae in a search over a long stretch of the coastline to the south of Aberdeen.

The canoeists had told the Coastguard of their plans, but did not report their safe return until the search was already well under way.

The young climber was embarrassed at being once again the centre of the rescue services' attention, but was assured that the earlier incident would never prevent the Coastguard from coming to his assistance.

While the Coastguard encourages the public to inform them of their intentions when going canoeing, sailing, diving, etc., it must be pointed out that the Coastguard also encourages the public to report their safe return, thereby avoiding unnecessary use of time and resources which could best be employed elsewhere.

Ed Thompson, CGO
Aberdeen MRCC

FROM TELEGRAPH MAGAZINE

North Sea or Dead Sea?

Before May this year there were few symptoms to suggest that the North Sea, Britain's moody, often violent neighbour, was in danger of its life. Then came three unprecedented signs of ill health. The first of them was a Danish fish farmer's report that his entire stock of salmon, worth £1 million, had been suffocated by a colossal 'bloom' of microscopic algae.

In the sunny May weather, the culprit, a single cell alga *chrysochromulina polylepis*, stimulated by chemical fertilisers washed into the Skaggerak and Kattegat by North Europe's rivers, multiplied to form a concentrated slick of algae, 30-100 feet deep and six miles wide. Carried by currents along the Swedish and Norwegian coasts, it killed millions of fish.

There have been algal blooms in the Baltic and eastern North Sea before, but this, described by some as a 'Maritime Chernobyl', was the largest

ever recorded. Some resourceful fish farmers managed to tow their salmon cages out of the way. Others were not so lucky. By the end of the month, when the belt of algae began to die out, £120 million-worth of damage had been done to the Norwegian fishing industry alone.

It was about this time that seals, already affected by a mysterious virus, were found washed up dead on the shores of Denmark in their hundreds. When the virus was finally identified by Dutch scientists in August as a kind of canine distemper, it had already killed 11,000 seals on the eastern side of the North Sea and had spread to seal colonies off Britain.

It was in August, too, that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds announced that the Shetlands, one of Europe's three most important seabird breeding colonies had suffered its worst season on record. The numbers of puffins, arctic terns, arctic skuas and re-throated divers, were recorded as 'dangerously low'. Over-fishing of the sand eel, one of their main sources of food, was blamed

What do these three major ecological disasters signify? According to environmental groups such as Greenpeace, the answer is simple: years of reckless abuse of the marine environment by greedy industrialists and cynical governments have finally taken their toll. The sea has been poisoned by pollution, and we can no longer pretend that it hasn't.

Recent Greenpeace advertisements in national newspapers suggest that this is an established fact: 'The scientists confirm the very strong indications that pollution is contributing to the seals' deaths, so Greenpeace has announced it will intervene to block chemical waste pipelines which discharge into the marine environment.'

But on available evidence, the majority of the North Sea should not be all that unhealthy. The waters are some of the most intensively used in the world. No other sea is surrounded by such concentrations of industry or population. And yet, as both the CBI and the Government argue, industrial waste and human effluent have been going into it for a very long time, and it has done an impressive job of coping so far. Why should it suddenly have reached crisis point now?

Even after this year's three disasters, Department of the Environment spokesmen say there is no reason to disbelieve the picture agreed upon in London by scientists from all the Sea's nations in the massive North Sea Quality Status Report prepared for last year's international conference to discuss its problems. This describes the North Sea as generally healthy, with localised problems in its eastern waters such as the German Bight, Skaggerak and Kattegat.

But to Paul Johnson, a Greenpeace sponsored scientist at London's Queen Mary College, this description is complacent. He says this year's disasters are proof that man is taking too negligent an attitude to the North Sea's fragile ecology. 'It may not be possible to ascribe these incidents to a common cause, but they must be looked at as evidence of a major dysfunction in the North Sea eco-system. We obviously have to consider whether the existing industrial uses of the North Sea are causing damage.'

Officials still argue that the general pollution trend has been one of improvement on most chemical discharges (with the possible exception of fertilisers). Britain's rivers are much cleaner than 20 years ago and the Quality Status Report also shows a decline in the amount of chemicals being dumped in the sea.

As a senior DoE bureaucrat put it: 'Greenpeace may complain about disease in flounder in the Thames estuary, but until recently there were no flounder there at all because the Thames was too polluted for them to survive.'

The Quality Status Report goes some way to justifying the Government view that pollution of the North Sea's sensitive eastern shores is really a continental problem. Britain, with around half the North Sea's coastline, turns out around 20 per cent of the river and estuary pollution. The main source of heavy metals, toxic substances and nutrients which are washed into the North Sea is the Rhine - followed by other North European rivers.

The civil servants also appear to have a point on PCBs, the chemicals singled out for investigation by Greenpeace and continental scientists - in the absence of any obvious chemical culprits - after the seal deaths. PCB discharges are down, for throughout the EC for the past 10 years they have had to be disposed of by incineration.

On the other hand, official reassurances from the Government and from establishment scientists do not always tell the whole story. Not long ago, we were being told that the problem of the destruction of the ozone layer and the dangers of the greenhouse effect were exaggerated. Then, suddenly, they were officially recognised. Will the same thing happen with the North Sea?

Scientists in prominent positions have to be cautious about their public pronouncements. They cannot resort to hunches or common sense. Unless something is known to be true, they cannot say that it is true. When they deny that the North Sea is dangerously polluted, therefore, all they are really saying is that we don't know that it is dangerously polluted.

The real message of the Quality Status Report, if one examines it carefully, is that there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of what goes into the North Sea, and of how these discharges affect the marine environment. There are figures for only a handful of the 50,000 or so potentially dangerous chemicals which end up in the sea. And even those figures are sketchy. For instance, between 90,000 and 100,000 tonnes of toxic waste are thought to be incinerated in the North Sea every year, but the official figures, with 'not available' written in crucial places, suggest a figure of 21.9 tonnes a year.

The gaps which the authors of the Quality Status Report, by which the Government sets much store, simply did not have some of the most important figures on inputs of pollutants. There was also a measure of compromise between different views, say between British and German scientists. In other words, it was a political document.

This, of course, has not escaped the conservationists. Bob Earll, general secretary of the Marine Conservation Society, says: "You would expect the Government to hide behind the scientists. But it is quite clear from the Quality Status Report that the full data needed to make the value judgment that our present discharges are safe does not exist."

There is no doubt that the process of drafting the report convinced the DoE's then chief scientist, Dr Martin Holdgate, that pollution of the North Sea was a problem to be taken seriously. And Britain was certainly sufficiently concerned by the earlier conference in Bremen (1984) to offer to host last year's conference - and to agree to an unexpectedly extensive plan of action.

But the Government can expect difficulties even in implementing the two main 'Red List' measures agreed at that time - a 50 per cent reduction in discharges of the 26 groups of chemicals believed to be most dangerous by 1995, and a ban on dumping of all but internationally agreed 'inert' substances by the beginning of January 1989 - because British industry continues to argue that British waste is not the problem. Dr Ted Thairs, head of the CBI's Environment, Health and Safety group, says, 'The strong currents off the British

coasts mean that waste is dissolved, dispersed and degraded long before it reaches the other side of the North Sea. The North Sea is not a closed sea like the Baltic or the Mediterranean; it is flushed out by the waters of the Atlantic every two or three years. We are also reducing the volume of our discharges all the time.'

The reduction in the 26 Red List substances will happen relatively slowly, but one might have expected the Government's pledge to enforce the 1989 deadline for banning toxic industrial waste dumping to cause a flutter in the industrial dovecote. Yet the CBI seems remarkably phlegmatic. It is easy to see why.

'We would maintain that the liquid industrial wastes which are disposed of in the sea at present do no harm to the environment,' says Dr Thairs. Which means, of course, that there is no need to stop discharging them. If wastes are defined as 'inert', they are not covered by the ban.

ICI, for example, will say dumping acid waste from the manufacture of acrylics into the sea off Teeside is the best practical environmental option (BPEO in the Government inspectors' jargon). And Dr John Lawrence, of ICI's environmental laboratory at Brixham, says, 'We have been unable to identify an effect.' The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which monitors ICI's dumping licence, apparently agrees. But, of course, the fact that an effect has not been identified does not mean that there isn't one.

The same applies to the question of PCBs and seals. Scientists know that eating PCB contaminated fish seems to make seals infertile. They know that PCBs can damage the lymphatic systems of laboratory mammals, and that they can damage their immune systems by suppressing production of T-cells. Many of them suspect that something similar may have happened to the seals, making them unable to resist the current virus. But they don't know it, and so it isn't an officially approved fact. And if it isn't an officially approved fact, the Government cannot act upon it.

According to the Marine Conservation Society's Bob Earll, the alarm bells are now ringing, 'Ten years ago it would have been hard to come up with examples which might indicate a dying sea, but now the North Sea has had three in the space of one summer.'

The suspicion remains among conservationists that the Government is oversensitive to industry's complaint that cleaning up its discharges would be uneconomic. It does seem that, despite a long list of pledges, Britain is in danger of doing a small amount quite slowly to clean up its act. Is enough precautionary action being taken? Among even the most conservative marine biologists and conservationists concerned with the North Sea, the answer is no.

The society says all potentially damaging operations and discharges into the North Sea must stop now, as a precautionary measure. 'If it gets to the level where you can prove there is too much pollution,' says Mr Earll, 'it's already too late. Pollution is like a tap dripping into a bath. The pollution drip, drip, drips in. It may still be below the internationally agreed safety level, whether it's grams of mercury in fish flesh or whatever, or micrograms of heavy metals in sediment. But once you reach the danger level there is precisely nothing you can do about it. You can't drive a JCB down to the sea shore, load the stuff up and take it away.'

Eminent scientist Dr Brian Bayne, director of the Natural Environment Research Council's Plymouth Marine Laboratories, and the Government's research expert on pollution of the North Sea, also thinks we are not doing enough. In the wake of this year's disasters, he believes Britain is being too complacent

and should be contemplating much more stringent precautionary action on known dangerous chemicals.

But ICI's Dr Lawrence disagrees. 'Greenpeace and others would like us to stop putting anything at all into the environment. But to achieve that nirvana, you would have to destroy the population of the earth. Modern industry produces waste, and whether you put it in a landfill, in the river, or up a chimney, you have got to rid of it.'

Dr Bayne's arguments bring to mind Prince Charles's phrase about not testing the environment to destruction. 'Yes, we should be making a bit of a fuss about the state of the North Sea,' he says. 'We are in danger of making it sick if we haven't made it sick already.'

'There are enough symptoms around to show that we are causing changes in the system. Fish disease, seal kills, algal blooms, all suggest that the system isn't quite right.'

He points out that a reduction in the numbers of just one species can cause an ecosystem to 'flip' almost overnight, as happened in the 1970s off the coast of Nova Scotia. There, lush kelp pastures were dramatically transformed into a marine desert simply through a slump in the area's lobster population. With fewer predators, the lobsters' main food, sea urchins, multiplied rapidly and just as quickly mowed down and destroyed the kelp, the primary link in that ecosystem's food chain.

Dr Bayne says pollution could have the same effect. He is particularly concerned about the possibility of this in the Wash, where conditions are theoretically right for a deadly algal bloom.

Sewage sludge is, he says, not a great threat. But if Britain were to clean up the Tees and the Humber, we would be tackling a major part of our share of the problem. Then we would just have to cross our fingers about pollution from the atmosphere, which we can do much less about.

Before we can make accurate judgments about the cumulative effect human pollution has had on the North Sea, huge areas remain to be studied. We have very little idea what amounts of chemicals enter the sea via the atmosphere though this is probably the most common route. Similarly, the work on seals and pollution has scarcely been started. Little is known about possible links between fish disease and pollution, although many people are worried about it. And scientists also want to know much more about how sediments, which bind up heavy metals, move around the bottom of the sea. Above all, we have very little idea how a whole host of chemicals, which are not on the Government's Red List of chemicals to be banned, behave in the marine environment.

The DoE denies it has kept North Sea research strapped for cash. The Government spends a total of £7 million a year on North Sea research through the National Environment Research Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. It has just approved another £500,000 for new projects, including seal research, and says it hopes to spend more next year.

But Dr Bayne, who is sponsored by the Government, says these amounts are simply not enough in relation to the size of the gaps in our knowledge of sea pollution and the urgency with which we must fill them. 'This isn't just a bleat,' he says. 'The question of how various compounds behave in the environment isn't ivory-tower research. It's basic science. If we'd spent some money on these things four years ago we'd have some answers by now. It's all very frustrating.'

Butterfly Tours 1990

Sea-kayaking The Queen Charlotte Islands
Exclusive Guided Tours of Moresby Island

An invitation to join Gord Pincock on a wilderness journey through the land of Haida Gwaii.

*Previous kayaking experience is not necessary.

For more information and a schedule of tours, please contact:-

Kallahin Travel Services, P.O. Box 131, Queen Charlotte City,
B.C., Canada V0T 1S0, P.H. (604) 559-8455

Guide: Gord Pincock, 3218 W. 31st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6L 2A7, P.H. (604) 263-3444

Gord Pincock has kayaked and guided extensively throughout the Charlottes. He has excellent instruction and rescue skills and is trained in industrial and wilderness first-aid. He enjoys travelling quietly and safely.

Butterfly tours provides fully equipped single touring kayaks (Nimbus Puffins) while travelling with groups of up to four people. Tents, food and cooking as well as charter boat or plane transportation from Sandspit, B.C. are all included.

Prices start at \$1100⁰⁰ CDN per person for an eight day experience.

*Custom designed tour are also available.

Butterfly Tours offers the opportunity to journey as one of a small nomadic tribe and feel the moods of these mysterious, powerful islands.

We realise the simplicity of freedom and motion while paddling through the hereditary home of the Haida Nation.

From: Mark Atkinson, 101 Alfred Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5HZ
10 February 1990

FOR SALE - SEA TIGER good condition, £200 o.n.o.
MIRAGE - w.w. spec. As new £125

From: Donald Thomson, Mill of Fochel Cottage, Barthol Chapel, Inverurie,
AB5 8TH

FOR SALE - Nordkapp FM, hatches and bulkhead, no RD fittings but stainless fittings included in sale, two years old, hardly used (owner swapped for lighter boat) - £480 o.n.o.

From: Sandy Schroth, Travel Consultant, Puffin Travel, Inc., Box 3, Gustavus, AK99826. (907) 697-2260. (907) 789-9787 winter March 17 1990

Do you know about the kayaking opportunities in the Glacier Bay/Gustavus area of Alaska? Have you ever considered a trip in this direction?

Kayakers have many options for enjoyment and testing of skills on trips from one to multiple days in spectacular wilderness surroundings. The guided trips are led by local naturalists. One group provides gourmet Alaskan meals! Kayak rental outfitters require a kayak/camping orientation in the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve office the night before the group leaves. You can even bring your own kayak free on a boat from Juneau to Gustavus any Monday, Wednesday or Friday and return any Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday.

Most of the options are listed in the Puffin Travel Rates enclosed. There is one more trip that begins in Glacier Bay with kayaking, then cross country hiking with mountaineering and finally rafting toward Haines. Our local expertise will help you to plan efficient transportation, comfortable accommodation and exciting activities. You can be assured that you'll have a well co-ordinated and successful trip when you book through Puffin Travel.

When you are considering a place to stay, you want a hot shower with plenty of hot water, a place to dry wet gear, a place to store extra gear while you're out exploring, hot meals and reasonable prices, right? Kayakers enjoy the Puffin's Bed and Breakfast because you have all these plus your own very Alaskan cabin with a private bath/shower, room to roam on the five acre homestead, friendly services, great big country breakfasts, a place to meet local folks and other visitors. Over the years we've found kayakers to be a favourite group of guests.

Other accommodation available include \$40/four people rustic rental cabins, a \$60/double Bed and Breakfast with no transfers, a \$115/night rental house and \$184-200/double inns in Gustavus. There are \$126/double rooms and dormitory rooms for \$20/person/night with no meals or transfers at the Glacier Bay Lodge at Bartlett Cove. There is also a free campground at Bartlett Cove. We always do our best to match accommodation with kayakers personalities, needs and budgets.

We'll be happy to supply more information and make reservations for your activities, accommodation and transportation. Our services are free. Please contact us if you would like more brochures. We hope to hear from you soon.

From: John Kingsley, 18 Swains Lane, Flockwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP10 9BU. Tel.: 06285-26071

WANTED - Marlow Canoe Club wish to purchase good secondhand Sea Kayaks.

Offers please to John Kingsley, 06285-26071

From: Ocean Kayak, 1920 Main Street, Ferndale, WA 98248
(206) 384-5774. Fax (206) 384-5779. 24 January 1990

For Immediate Release: Ocean Kayak Scrambles Industry

Ocean Kayak's newest open top kayak, the Scrambler, is all for fun and fun for all. This 11' long, 28" wide dynamo combines the manoeuvrability of a wave ski with the storage and tracking ability of a longer kayak.

The Scrambler adopts the same self-bailing, open cockpit system as each of Ocean Kayak's models have, including the Scupper, since 1971. The Scrambler is perfect for surfing, day tripping, river running, fishing, and one-tank Scuba diving. Smaller paddlers will appreciate its light weight (approx. 36 lbs.).

Suggested retail ranges from \$449 to \$579, depending on options. Designed and tested by Tim Niemier, President of Ocean Kayak, originator of open top kayaks.

Features and options include: self-bailing "scuppers", 2-8" hatches, three tie down straps, bowline, carry handles, graphics, knee straps, scuba tank/ice chest well. Colours: Yellow, raspberry, blue, lime green.

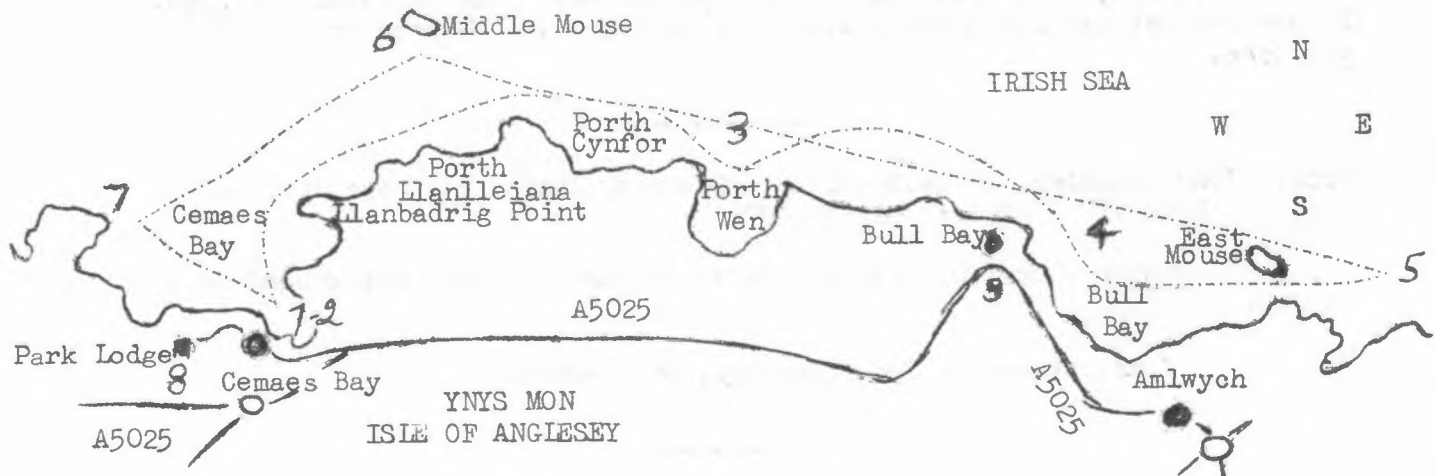
For information, call 1-800-8-KAYAKS.

SEA KAYAK CLASSIC, ANGLESEY
28th and 29th JULY 1990

A sea race for expedition kayaks only, over approximately twelve nautical miles of the north Anglesey coastline.

CASH PRIZES plus MEDALS FOR ALL FINISHERS. TROPHY FOR FIRST VETERAN (over 45 years). TROPHY FOR FIRST LADY.

OPEN REGATTA FOR SAILING DINGHIES (within Cemaes Bay).
SUPPORTING SLALOM RACE (must not exceed 14'-6"). TROPHIES WILL BE AWARDED. Also JUNIOR SLALOM RACES (within Cemaes Bay).



Race details, entry forms and information pack from:-

Race Organiser, Cao Adda, Llanbadrig, Cemaes Bay, Anglesey, LL67 0LN
Tel. (0407) 710 776

HANDA

by Dick Edie from Balerno, Midlothian

Throughout the spring of 1988 Alan Smith had been planning a three week kayak tour on the west coast of Scotland.

When you sit down and start to consider just what can be done in three weeks on the west coast there suddenly appears to be so many trips that it would take twenty years to accomplish half of them.

After a lot of careful consideration we decide to paddle from the north coast and work our way south, down the west coast.

When I say we I had better explain that three of us had agreed to join Alan for varying periods.

Stefan Janik from Dundee was to join Alan for the whole three weeks. A competent sea paddler and expert cook Stef is one of the people who really come into their own when you are away from civilisation.

Stefan worked as a cross country ski instructor in the winter and as a stalker and ponyman during the stalking season. This meant he was unemployed during the month of May. Like Alan he was training to become a senior instructor in sea canoeing and was anxious to get all the experience he could.

Stefan was to paddle his ancient Nordkapp which he loaded so heavily that throughout the trip the back deck (onto which he had loaded a golf trolley for portages) was under water.

Richard Gregory was perhaps the least experienced of the party. Although he had been canoeing for a number of years he had done no proper sea expeditioning and was fairly inexperienced at wilderness camping.

Richard was to paddle his Sea King kayak which he had built himself. It had recently been completed and this trip was to be the first real test of how the new boat acquitted itself over a proper expedition.

I had been canoeing for about five years and was perhaps the most experienced member of the group. The previous year I had become a senior instructor which was the source of endless mickey taking by the other three who had a healthy disrespect for such things.

I had decided to paddle my Baidarka, a beautiful boat taken from a design by the Aleutian Eskimos. The Baidarka has a large carrying capacity and is truly at home in very rough water.

Alan had been paddling for two years and had developed into a strong paddler. He had spent the previous winter training by paddling almost every weekend with Richard, sometimes in horrendous conditions. He was paddling a Selkies, a wide stable kayak perfectly adapted to suit him.

Stef and Alan were to paddle for three weeks and Richard and I were to join them for the first week. In retrospect this idea did not work as it produced two levels of expectation in the group. Alan and Stef who were trying to pace themselves for up to three weeks and Richard and I who were really out for a one week blast.

The first part of the week was to be spent at Richard's family holiday home at Strathan Skerray on the north coast. There we would have a couple of days exploring the local area waiting for the weather to settle before we tackled our first big headland, Cape Wrath.

The coastline of the north of Scotland is a maze of long sea lochs and dramatic cliffs and headlands pocked with some of the most beautiful caves on the British mainland.

On the first day out we explored Billean nan Ron and found this a fascinating group of islands which you could only get real access to by kayak. On the north side of the islands we were astounded by an area much akin to the Quirang of Skye with strange pinnacles and towers rising up out of the water. Unfortunately it was too rough for photographs.

Two very pleasant days were spent exploring the area and in particular the wonderful sea caves of Loch Erribol. There was even a coastal waterfall which tumbled over the mouth of a cave into the sea. Richard was going to pose by paddling straight into it whilst I took a photo but we worked out that the force of the water would rip the paddle from his hands.

It was in one of these long dark caves that Richard and I nearly came to grief when an unexpected and large wave suddenly rose up in the mouth of the cave. The danger was twofold. We could have been smashed off the roof of the cave and also be thrown against the rough boulder beach at the back of the cave.

The boats being seventeen feet long each did not help manoeuvrability but at the last moment we both managed to back paddle our way out, nervously laughing. It served as a reminder that we had to be vigilant even though we were having a fairly relaxed paddle. It did not deter us from going into the caves which are some of the best on the British mainland.

Whilst we had been exploring the sheltered sea lochs the wind had been blowing steadily from the north-west and it looked less likely that Cape Wrath would become possible. We decided to take a rest day, so Alan went for a walk to Sandwood Bay, only five miles from the Cape.

What he saw really confirmed our fears. The enormous surf was breaking three hundred yards off shore and the whole area looked desperately dangerous. The idea of doing the Cape in these conditions was ludicrous. It was a bit depressing that we were to miss out on the first main objective of our trip but the key to successful sea canoeing in Scotland is flexibility.

That evening the four of us discussed the alternative options available over one of Stefan's excellent curries. It was decided to drive to Laxford Bridge where we could launch in a piece of fairly sheltered water. This meant that we had only missed a few miles and that we still had a chance of tackling our second objective of the bird island of Handa.

The packing of the kayaks was done in glorious sunshine but a stiff cool breeze. It took Alan and Stef particularly long to stow all the gear they were to require for three weeks. When we were finally done it took three of us to lift each boat to the water's edge.

It was now that we were leaving the cars that the trip seemed to have started for real.

The wind seemed to die as we left Loch Laxford and the island of Handa slowly came into view. We were not heading there directly but planning to have lunch at Tarbet. There we would do the final tidal calculations for going round the island.

When we arrived at Tarbet the sun was scorching and as the wind had died completely the temperature had risen dramatically. I must confess that I could have spent the afternoon snoozing in the sunshine but Alan dragged me back to reality with the announcement that the tide was right for leaving. It was here that I cockily stated that as it was neap tides and the first hour of the tide we would have no problems with the overfalls at Bogha Mor on the south side of the island.

Covered in sun creme we climbed into our kayaks and shuffled into the water heading directly for the north end of the island. There we came upon the first rafts of puffins fishing on the water. The cliffs grew higher and the water got calmer with only a long ocean swell occasionally lifting the boats.

The main geological feature of the island of Handa is the Great Stack of Handa, an immense sea stack which is the home to thousands of sea birds. The stack is recessed in its own geo and is so close to the mainland that on at least two occasions climbers have crossed over to it by using a rope strung across the whole geo.

The sea cliffs of Handa are about 400ft high and are made of red Torridonian sandstone weathered into fissures, cracks and ledges which are the home to hundreds of thousands of sea birds. The island is leased by the RSPB and is run as a bird sanctuary.

It had long been an ambition of mine to paddle round the Great Stack but I never thought that the conditions would be right. The exit from behind the stack narrows to about ten feet wide and is exposed to the full swell of the North Minch.

However as we began to approach the stack it became apparent that we had struck lucky and that if we timed it right then we would be able to get round.

The water in the geo was very calm but the noise of the birds echoed round and round. There was a strong smell of a mixture of guano and a mossy damp smell which only seems to exist in such places. I was busy trying to paddle and take as many photographs as possible. The scale of the cliffs only really dawned on me when Richard came out from behind a rock and gave me something to relate size with.

I put the camera away as we turned the corner because I knew that we were going to have to get the timing absolutely right to avoid the occasional swell which was growing as it forced its way through the small gap.

Richard and I came round the stack just in time to see a large wave begin to curl in our direction. A quick spurt with the paddles and we were into the shelter of a large rock over which the wave broke with a roar. Richard looked a bit shaken at his second close call of the trip so I suggested that we go round again knowing full well that he couldn't resist the challenge. The second time round it was not nearly as bad as we both knew what to expect around the corner.

We joined Alan and Stef who had been wondering what all the fuss was about as they had timed their passage well and had gone through on the calm period between the swells.

The red sandstone cliffs still rose four hundred feet above us and it was quite startling to see just how high up the cliff the swell was breaking.

I was taking a photo when Alan came up to me and asked how I could manage to stay upright, with my paddle tucked under my arm, whilst being sucked backward thirty feet by the swell breaking up the cliff beside me. I told him it was superior skill but the truth was that I had been lucky and having the camera viewfinder up to my eye I had thought that I'd gone back about three feet. Otherwise I would not have allowed myself to get into such a stupid situation.

Alan warned us all that we would soon be turning to the south coast of the island where the overfalls of Bogha Mor may make passage interesting. None of us needed the warning, we could see the huge waves from half a mile away. So much for my tidal predictions.

When we got closer to the rough water we saw that a gap existed about two hundred yards offshore where the waves died for a bit only to build up in the shallowing water to smash onto the shore. It was with great relief that we sped through the gap and finally left Handa behind.

From: Nautical News, February 1990

All you ever wanted to know about ...
The Kalman Filter

The following is a short but precise definition and summary as to the functions and uses of the Kalman Filter. It is meant to illustrate to your readers, of which I am one, the virtues, characteristics and integrity of this system as used in navigation systems today.

The Kalman Filter simplified

'It is the policy of the company to be kept informed of all navigation systems which operate in opposition to ours. So that all users can be in the picture regarding other systems, we will endeavour to give a brief write up on various systems from time to time. This month we have, for your study, the Kalman Filter' which is often found in systems on vessels with which we operate. The following explanation in simplified terms is typical of all Kalman filters.

First, the vessel knows where it is at all times. It knows this because it knows where it isn't. By subtracting where it is from where it isn't (whichever is the greater), it obtains a difference of deviation. The Kalman filter uses deviation to generate corrective demands to drive the system from a position where it is, to a position where it isn't, arriving at the position where it isn't, it is now. Consequently, the position where it is, is now the position where it wasn't and it follows the position where it was to the position where it isn't. In the event the position where it now is, is not the position where it wasn't, the system has acquired a variation (variations are caused by external factors and the discussion of these factors is not considered to be within the scope of this explanation), the variation being the difference between **where the vessel is** and where the vessel wasn't. If the variation is considered to be a significant factor, it too may be corrected by the use of the other systems. However, the vessel must know where it was also.

The 'thought process' of the system is as follows: Because a variation has modified some of the information which the system has obtained, the vessel is not sure where it is. However, it is sure where it isn't (within reason) and it knows where it was. It now subtracts where it should be from where it wasn't (or vice versa) and by differentiating this from the algebraic difference between its deviation and its variation, which is called error, it computes the correct information to compensate for all factors supplying accurate navigation information.
(Qubit circular)

Malcolm A. B. Jones

SURVIVAL IN ADULTS AFTER CARDIAC ARREST
DUE TO DROWNING

The National Rescue Training Council is indebted to Dr A. D. Simcock for his paper "Survival in adults after cardiac arrest due to drowning".

Dr Simcock is the Consultant Anaesthetist at the Royal Cornwall Hospital (Treliske) in Truro and is a member of the Advisory Committee on Beach Life Saving for Devon and Cornwall.

ABSTRACT

Some remarkable cases of full neurological recovery after cardiac arrest following immersion incidents have been intermittently reported in the journals over the years. These have largely been in children or teenagers who have fallen into extremely cold water. We report here two older adults who recovered completely after a period of cardiac arrest in cold water. Certainly death should not be pronounced in cold water drowning without the benefit of a low reading thermometer and ECG. Controversial issues and unusual findings in these cases will be discussed.

CASE NO.1

A 56 year old man was found face down in harbour water (temperature 9.5-10°C) after drinking several glasses of beer. The period of immersion is unknown, but seven minutes after discovery, a helicopter diver found the victim to be apnoeic and pulseless with dilated pupils. He received expired air ventilation and was then lifted into the helicopter. A diagnosis of cardiac arrest was made by the helicopter crew trained in resuscitation. Cardiac massage was begun immediately and restored a weakly palpable pulse after three minutes. Cardiac massage ceased but mouth to mouth ventilation continued for a further two minutes until the patient started to make respiratory efforts. He was then given oxygen to breathe by face mask.

On arrival at hospital, 11 minutes after being taken from the sea, immediate assessment found him to be unconscious, making a poor respiratory effort, but with a palpable pulse. Endotracheal intubation was performed at once and frothy fluid and gastric contents were aspirated from the lungs. Positive pressure ventilation was commenced by an inflating bag with added oxygen, and he was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. Thirty minutes after rescue he was still hypothermic; core temperature 31.9°C.

Ventilation was continued with an inspired oxygen percentage (FiO₂) of 0.6, plus 5 cm of positive-end-expiratory pressure (PEEP). There was peripheral circulatory shutdown, an arterial blood pressure of 90 Hg systolic, pulse rate 90 per minute and poor urine output.

Further initial treatment consisted of the rapid infusion of warmed Haemaccel intravenous Methyl prednisolone 2 p; and 10% Mannitol 250 ml intravenously. A broad spectrum antibiotic regime was instituted after tracheal, blood and urine samples were taken for culture. Swan Ganz catheterisation after the infusion of 1500 ml of fluid showed unexpectedly high values of central venous pressure (CVP), 10 mm Hg; pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP), 22 mm Hg, and pulmonary artery pressure 36/26 mm Hg. Fluid therapy was restricted and these values returned to normal over the next hour. Re-warming over six hours was by a warming blanket applied next to the skin; warming the humidified inspired gases and warmed intravenous fluids.

Progress was encouraging, satisfactory oxygenation was soon obtained with an FiO₂ of 0.4, the PaCO₂ was kept slightly reduced at 4.5 KPa. Ventilation was discontinued after 24 hours as there were satisfactory blood gases, little aspirate from the lungs and the patient was awake between sedation. Extubation quickly followed and seven days after the incident he went home with no cardiopulmonary or neurological abnormality.

CASE NO.2

A 77 year old female was found floating face down in an outdoor unheated fresh-water swimming pool. After removal from the water, a doctor diagnosed cardiac arrest, commenced basic resuscitation and a heart beat was restored after approximately 15 minutes. Methyl prednisolone 1 gm and Ampicillin 0.5 gm were given intravenously and the unconscious patient transferred to hospital where she was intubated immediately on arrival and transferred to the ICU undergoing ventilation with 100% oxygen. One litre of Haemaccel was given intravenously for hypotension and poor peripheral perfusion. A Swan Ganz catheter was passed at this point and showed a CVP of 11 mm Hg and PCWP of 18 mm Hg. Fluid replacement was therefore restricted and Beta inotropic support commenced with dobutamine 10 mcg/Kg/min and dopamine 3 mcg/Kg/min. Both CVP and PCWP returned to normal over the next two hours, and urine output improved. The temperature had been normal throughout, and the ECG showed anterior ischaemia.

Initially large amounts of greyish coloured water had been removed from the lungs, and an FiO₂ of 0.65 with 5-7 cm of PEEP required to maintain a PaO₂ above 8 KPa. However, in the next 48 hours, gas exchange improved, and the cardiovascular system stabilised. Inotropic support and then mechanical ventilation were gradually discontinued and she was extubated three days after admission. Raised cardiac enzymes supported the view that she may have suffered an acute myocardial infarction. After several weeks she wrote to say she was enjoying a normal life.

DISCUSSION

Alcohol is undoubtedly a common factor in many immersion incidents and any medical condition which may impair consciousness such as myocardial infarction, is going to increase the risk of drowning. The actual period of immersion in these cases is not clear, but the documentation of the rescue is very precise. An appraisal of the clinical state of the patient was made immediately and expired air respiration commenced. A diagnosis of cardiac arrest was made in both patients on a clinical basis by trained personnel. The period of CPR was short (5 and 15 minutes) before the heart beat and respiratory effort returned. This fits in with a favourable prognostic outcome as described by Pearn.

On arrival at hospital the drowned or near-drowned victim must be met by a resuscitation team, assessed, and if necessary intubated prior to transfer into the hospital. This is part of a well established practice and has formed part of a protocol which has previously been reported. The victim is brought into hospital only after intubation and ventilation with 100% oxygen. A portable sucker is available to remove water from the lungs if ventilation is difficult due to water in the airway. The priorities on reaching an Intensive Care Unit are to establish normal oxygenation and circulating blood volume as quickly as possible.

Both patients showed a typical "hypovolaemic-like" picture; poor peripheral circulation, low blood pressure and poor urine output. Usually the CVP in such patients is low and responds to intravenous fluid therapy.

In these two patients, however, the initial CVP was high. This may have been due to colloid infusion but the PCWP was also markedly elevated. It has been our concern that the function of the left ventricle in particular may be affected by cold water immersion in adults.

The question of fluid shifts in and out of the circulation has been studied in animals in fresh and salt water drowning. This has not been reflected in clinical practice, when the temperature rather than the type of water is critical. Basically the cold water seems to cause peripheral vasoconstriction but with an inadequate circulating blood volume. It may well be that after a limited colloid infusion, Beta-inotropic support is to be preferred to further fluid loading and this will form the basis of a further study by this Unit.

Several more issues for debate are raised by these case reports. High dose corticosteroids were given, and their use has been questioned. We have already reported on 82 patients who have inhaled water and were treated with Methyl prednisolone 30 g/Kg intravenously soon after rescue. There were no problems with pulmonary infection and only one case of Respiratory Distress Syndrome. However, the late or long term use of steroids may only lead to an increased risk of infection. Likewise the use of antibiotics is open to question. The male was found in harbour water with risks of pollution and had aspirated gastric contents. The latter is a very common finding in drowned victims. Where drowning occurs in clean water, however, it would be reasonable to rely on regular cultures of tracheal aspirates. The priority remains cardio-respiratory stability with normal oxygen levels and moderate hypocarbia. If this is achieved, hypothermia will steadily correct itself. It is probable that too much emphasis has been placed on the treatment of hypothermia in the past.

The period of immersion and resuscitation compatible with full neurological recovery is at present unknown, and there are several survivors after periods of resuscitation in excess of two hours. Consequently, resuscitation once commenced must not be abandoned until the core temperature has been raised to 32°C as it is only below 32°C that hypothermia affords substantial cerebral protection through reduced oxygen consumption and metabolic rate. In practice, this can be extremely difficult to achieve if right heart bypass is not available. However, we have now treated 20 cases of cardiac arrest from drowning, four have survived and only one is neurologically damaged. The prognosis in the near-drowned victim who has not suffered cardiac arrest is excellent, and we have lost only three such patients out of 148 treated. The future lies very much at the accident site and in relief of hypoxia as soon as the victim is removed from the water.

CONCLUSION

This short report shows that full neurological recovery can occur following cardiac arrest caused by drowning in both old and young patients. Recovery, however, involves relief of hypoxia and cardiovascular stability in the shortest possible time. This must be appreciated by rescuers, those involved in transport to hospital and hospital services concerned with the reception of such victims.

SCA TOURING COMMITTEE AND CALENDAR 1990
 Caledonia House, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ
 Tel : Edinburgh (031) 317 7314

CHAIRMAN:

Richard Willis 54 Findhorn Place, Edinburgh EH9 2NS

SECRETARY:

Donald Thomson Mill of Fochel Cottage, Barthon Chapel, Inverurie,
 Aberdeenshire AB5 8TH. Tel.: Methlick (065 14) 230

TREASURER:

Alan Hunter 5 Crocus Bank, Kincaidston, Ayr KA7 3YE

COUNCIL REP.:

Ian Webster 104 Montford Avenue, Kings Park, Glasgow G44 4NZ
 Tel.: Glasgow (041) 649 6836

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Stuart Bell Tombeith, Killiecrankie, Pitlochry, Perthshire PH16 5JT
 Linda Godfrey 20 Garven Road, Stevenston, Ayrshire KA20 3NX

ACCESS COMMITTEE REP.:

Duncan R. Winning 22 Brisbane Glen Road, Largs, Ayrshire KA30 8QX
 Tel.: Largs (0475) 673787

TOURING CALENDAR (for organisers addresses and telephone numbers see over)

TOUR NO.	DATE	AREA	KAYAK/ CANADIAN	GRADE
	APRIL			
1	20/22	Surfing Social for Sea Canoeists	K	-
2	28/29	Loch Lomond	K	A
	MAY			
3	5/7	Loch Etive to Appin	K	B
4	12/13	Introduction to sea paddling for river paddlers	K	A
5	12	Introductory day (Open Canoes)	C	-
6	18/20	Safety and Rescue for Sea Canoeists	K	-
7	26/27	Introduction to Sea Touring	K	A
8	25/27	Leukaemia event, Loch and River Tay	C/K	A
	JUNE			
9	1/4	Round Jura	K	B/C
10	1/3	Theoretical and practical navigation for sea canoeists	K	-
11	2/3	River Don (family trip)	C	A
12	9/10	Round Lismore	K	B
13	9/10	River Spey (family trip)	C	A/B
14	16/17	Introduction to Sea Expeditioning	K	B
15	23/25	Loch Erich	C	B
16	23/25	South Ayrshire Coast	K	A/B
17	30/8	Small Isles	K	B/C
	JULY			
18	7/8	Firth of Lorn	K	B
19	28/5	Sound of Harris	K	C
	AUGUST			
20	24/26	Haute Cuisoeing (River Tweed)	C	B
21	24/26	Advanced Sea Assessment	K	-
	SEPTEMBER			
22	7/9	Bute trip	K	B
23	14/16	River Spey	C	B
24	14/16	Achnamara social	K	-
	OCTOBER			
25	13/14	River Dee	K/C	A/B

ORGANISERS

TOUR NO.	ORGANISER	ADDRESS	TEL. EXCH & NO.
1, 6, 10, 21, 24	J. Breen	1 Castle Grove, Kilsyth, Glasgow G65 9NB	Kilsyth (0236) 825482
2	I. Webster	104 Montford Avenue, Kings Park, Glasgow G44 4NZ	Glasgow (041) 649 6836
3, 9, 22	H. Kerr	Heathfield, Horsewood Road, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, PAll 3AU	Bridge of Weir (0505) 612687
4, 18, 25	D. Thomson	Mill of Fochel Cottage, Barthol Chapel, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB5 8TH	Methlick (065 14) 230
5	M. Rawson	Blairvadich O.C., Rhu, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire G84 8NN	Helensburgh (0436) 820701
7	J. Urquhart	30 Libo Place, Linburn, Erskine, Renfrewshire PA8 6HF	Glasgow (041) 312 4307
8, 20	B. Cook	Marlefield, Kelso, Roxburghshire TD5 8ED	Morebattle (057.34) 296
11	S. Horrocks	15 Chievres Place, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB4 9WH	Ellon (0358) 23544
12	J. Weir	6 Turnberry Drive, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire PAll 3HD	Bridge of Weir (0505) 613043
13	M. Webster	28 Campbell Crescent, Kingussie, Inverness-shire PH21 1JP	Kingussie (05402) 484
14, 16, 19	A. Hunter	5 Crocus Bank, Kincaidston, Ayr KA7 3YE	Ayr (0292) 232775
15	M. Leyland	Tigh na Sneachd, Douglas Pier Lochgoilhead, Argyll PA24 8AE	Lochgoilhead (03013) 442
17	R. Mather	11 Redwood Crescent, Bishopton, Renfrewshire PA7 5DJ	Bishopton (0505) 863694
23	A. Beaton	The Schoolhouse, Barthol Chapel, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB5 8TD	Methlick (065 14) 503
-	D. Latham		Feughside (033045) 332

From: D. R. Winning, 22 Brisbane Glen Road, Largs, Ayrshire KA30 8QX
28 February 1990

Dear John,

Frank Goodman loaned me his signed copy of "Seekers of the Horizon" and asked me to do a review of it for your Newsletter. So here goes, my first review!

Will Nordby, well known in North American sea canoeing circles has drawn canoeing tales from ten other paddlers and added one of his own to compile this anthology.

While the contributors are mainly North American the areas covered are diverse. River, sea and ocean from Baffin Island in the north, Cape Horn in the south, Hawaii in the west to the British Isles in the east.

Paul Kaufmann starts the ball rolling with a fascinating account of his "paddling the gate" at San Fransisco, his home patch. Of particular interest is his joy of paddling in the fog in the strong tides and shipping lanes of the golden gate and around Alcatraz Island.

Susan Meredith takes us back to the 1940's when she started her canoeing in Alaskan waters using a two hole Baidarka which was so shallow that her feet would not fit beneath the deck and she had to paddle from a kneeling position. She was much more at home in her second vessel a Nunivak Island kayak which eventually and relectantly she had to part with when her neighbours complained of the offensive odour of rotting seal skin.

Much later and on the other side of the continent, Larry Rice and his companion visit the Cumberland Sound region of Baffin Island in a folding double to study the white "Beluga" whales. Larry's reference to the "thin ice sounding like wind chimes" brings back fond memories of a fantastic weekend on a largely frozen Loch Lomond in the early 1960's.

In much warmer climes that redoubtable grandmother Audrey Sutherland relates her first use of an inflatable on the Hawaiian coast. This craft was all of six feet long! Since then Audrey has used larger inflatable canoes and covered prodigious distances in different areas of our planet.

Also in Hawaiian waters Greg Blanchette's trip includes an extended trip round "Forbidden Island" when he is denied permission to land. At least we don't have that kind of access problem in the United Kingdom, yet!

Returning to the eastern seaboard two extended trips are described by Chris Duff and Christopher Cunningham.

Chris relates the tale of his year and a half 1,300 kilometre voyage which took him up the Mississippe, through the Great Lakes system and down the St Lawrence to get back to his starting point on the north-east coast. While Christopher builds a paper kayak and sets off on a 4,000 kilometre paddle to retrace the 1874 journey of the "paper canoe". He has a fair lady for a fellow paddler but the relationship turns out to be less than fair, underlining the potential for personality problems on long trips in close company.

Ocean canoeing is amply covered in one of the longer chapters where Hans Lindeman describes his preparations, physical and mental, as

well as on voyage experiences and hardships encountered on his Atlantic crossing in 1956 using a folding double fitted with an outrigger and used as a single seater under sail and paddle. Without his mental preparation and dogged determination I doubt if he would have survived the trip during which he capsized twice and lost a considerable amount of his supplies. Gripping stuff!

From nearer home Frank Goodman contributed "nine tales for nine lives". However, two got lost along the way as the book has only seven of them. The themes of these tales contrast widely from his first canoeing experience, to the commitment of Cape Horn, and a romantic interlude with an open canoe on the Trent. I would have thought that Frank would have known where Ailsa Craig is, especially when he features it in one of his tales. Still, if you have been to as many places as he has, perhaps it is difficult to remember them all. To err is human!

John Bauman relates an interesting and developing dialogue with the head coastguard before and during his circumnavigation of Iceland with a companion using sectional kayaks in 1986. The official's attitude is sceptical but gradually changes and his interest grows with each report as the trip progresses.

The editor's own contribution deals with one of his early trips, with his brother and a friend, to the Glacier Bay area of Alaska and ends with a situation not experienced in the United Kingdom when one of the party discovers rather grisly evidence which leads to the park wardens finding the remains of a kayaker eaten by a bear. That they had been speaking to the unfortunate paddler at the start of their trip gave the incident even greater impact!

I found the book refreshing. For some time I have been aware of a "suggestion" in some areas that "American canoes, equipment and canoeing" especially relating to sea canoeing are somehow inferior in some aspects to the canoes, equipment and techniques originating in Britain. I have never subscribed to this attitude, tunnel vision has no place in our sport and recreation. After all the skin, bark and dug-out craft of the "new world" are the basis of the modern recreational canoes and kayaks. The book gives a glimpse of "how others do it" and is definitely for those "Seekers of Wider Horizons" who wish to read of aspects of canoeing beyond their own experience.

I must get a copy for my own library!

Regards,

Duncan

From: Marjolein Breeoyk, Utrecht, The Netherlands 27 November 1989

Dear John,

Last year I read and enjoyed the book of Bruce Chatwin, the "Songliner". It deals about the travelling and singing man and how he finds his way. In his very last book "What am I doing here" he tells about the songliner of the sea, how seamen navigated before compass and charts. I wonder if you as an expert of the Inuits know more about navigating without compass. Perhaps there are some readers who know something about those early navigators. This could become an interesting item of your Newsletter. I hope you continue your Newsletter for many years!!

Kind regards,

Marjolein Breeoyk

From: Donald S. Thomson, Mill of Fochel Cottage, Barthol Chapel, Inverurie
12 March 1990

There are a few points in your article on hypothermia in Newsletter No 78 which I feel should be clarified and/or corrected.

I have been lecturing on this subject at various courses over the years and did a lot of research on hypothermia for a paper I gave to the COCLG conference a few years ago. I have enclosed a copy which you might want to extract bits from as necessary.

Returning to your article, it is important to distinguish three types of hypothermia.

Acute (immersion) - caused by sudden immersion in cold water.

Sub Acute (exhaustion) - brought on slowly by a combination of exposure to cold conditions, exertion and lack of sustenance.

Chronic - caused by a long exposure to poor conditions - normally occurring only in old people.

The sign and symptoms are similar for all, but there is not a set list of symptoms or their order. Different people react in different ways. The best indicator is often the external factors, viz., weather, etc.

The treatments vary for the three types if full medical facilities are available. However in an outdoor environment the treatment is always the same, viz., to stop the loss of heat, supply small amounts of sustenance if the casualty can cope with them, and to put them into a neutral environment. It is important that the casualty is allowed to warm up at their own rate from the inside out. Do not apply any sort of external heat. This could kill the casualty.

I trust this clarifies some of the point in your article and helps increase peoples knowledge about a subject a lot of canoeists seem remarkably ill informed about.

From: T. Lockie, Woodhenge, Drumbeg, By-Lairg, Sutherland IV27 4NW

Dear A.S.K's,

At the risk of offending the status quo and the monopoly on the recreational kayak, I venture to whisper, nervously, the words "I run a working kayak". This, probably the smallest fishing/hunting vessel on the west coast of Scotland provides income and fresh table fare for my family around the year. (Lobster, crab, duck, various species of sich and shell-fish and eggs.)

I feel on thin ice as I announce what I think is an anomaly, for other than the occasional reference to line fishing from the kayak by a few sea paddlers, the account of all other canoeing activities are recreational/sporting.

Why? I ask. The idea of a work horse kayak is several thousand years old so there's no excuse for ignorance here, understandably paddlers who live inland would find it difficult, but of the others I wonder. Is there a sporting puritism that goes hand in glove with the twentieth century sea kayak or am I wrong to entertain my archaic activities in the present social climate?

Yours in anticipation of flack, praise or indifference.