

NEWSLETTER of the ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB



Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



JULY 1992

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

EDITORIAL

Unfortunately I could only spend a couple of days at the NORDKAPP TRUST ANGLESEY SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM at the beginning of May but those few days were real fun. Again this event was very well supported but what was particularly encouraging was the attendance of a large number of newcomers to sea kayaking which is exactly what the NORDKAPP TRUST sets out to achieve. I've asked Frank Goodman to let me have his comments on the event and I will publish them in this newsletter. One of the 'high spots' over the weekend was Mike Watts, who gave a really inspirational 'travelogue' on his kayak 'holidays' which in my view were really expeditions.

Now I am looking forward to the Jersey Symposium at the end of this month and in July I'm off to the Shetlands for theirs. Symposiums are becoming synonymous with sea kayaking. It was the ASKC who started the whole thing when it staged the first ever at Birmingham University in the early 70s. Now the Americans, Australians and Europeans are using symposiums to bring kayakers together to share knowledge and experience.

Which leads me on to remind you to note in your diary the Sea Touring Committee Academic Symposium over the weekend of *26 - 28 June* at Calshot Activities Centre. See you there.

I believe that symposiums could well be organised on a regional, even club, basis and that these social/learning events will be a frequent occurrence throughout the year. I certainly hope so.

On a personal note I want to let you know that I and Jenny are moving back to the mainland - to Wigan in the north-west of England. In fact it is only a matter of weeks before we go. Already we are surrounded by packing cases. We shall miss our friends on the Isle of Wight but are delighted with the prospect of getting back into the main stream. I shall publish our new address in the next newsletter. It would tempt providence if I did so now as we haven't quite exchanged contracts.

Enjoy our newsletter; keep those letters and contributions coming.

ASKC SHOP

Ties @ £6.50 each
ASKC stickers @ 35 pence each
ASKC letter headed notepaper A4 size @ 50 pence for 10 sheets
T-shirts - Small/medium/large/X-large @ £6 each (yellow or black)
Sweat-shirts - Small/medium/large/X-large @ £12 each (yellow or black)
ASKC ski hats @ £3.50p each
QAJAQ - The book by David Zimmerley @ £12.50p

All prices inclusive of postage and package.

From: Peter Midwood, Tal Y Waen, Craig Y Pandy, Tregarth, Bangor,
Gwynedd LL57 4RA. Tel 0248 (Bethesda) 601366. 9 May 1992

Please could you put the following ads in the next newsletter:

FOR SALE

An original Sestrel Compass. Likely to fit many older V.C.P. Sea Kayaks and others. V.G.C. £15.

Netsilik Sea Kayak. Larger volume than most others. For the larger person or for a big trip. Try it in North Wales.

Good to see you on Anglesey last weekend. It was a good do - better than the previous year in my humble opinion. Sorry we didn't have much time to chat but there you go. It is always the same at these events.

From: Angus Geddes, 11 North Street, Swindon. Tel. 0793 614 376
7 May 1992

Please can you place the following ad in ASKC magazine. And perhaps this letter.

WANTED

Anas-Acuta or similar vessel for a small lady paddler.

I've just returned from a very enjoyable weekend in Anglesey at the Symposium, my first. I met a lot of interesting and friendly people; pinched lots of ideas both from talking to folk and observing their boats and kit. My regret was not being able to attend the lectures and paddling clinics at the same time. It would have been nice to have had available a list of participants as well.

As a new sea paddler only recently gaining my sea proff, I initially felt rather overawed and expected to meet everyone else being a brilliant paddler who had all at least circumnavigated Britain if not Cape Horn. This was not the case and many people were modest ordinary paddlers; best of all there was no pretentiousness from the experts (unlike some other sports).

Living in Swindon a long way from the sea is a disadvantage as you can't pop out for a paddle after work on the sea. The River Thames being the next best thing a poor second. There is relatively little interest here in sea kayaking, at least I've not discovered other locals who are. A problem in my opinion with the plethora of sea clubs is the national nature if one wishes to meet fellow like-minded paddlers. I guess most of use have limited time available to go on trips. National meets are great but only if one is able to (a) spare the appropriate weekend, and (b) drive the often long distance to the meet.

We need a regional structure of trips if novice paddlers are to be able to learn from the more experienced members at a more local level. I am not convinced that starting more clubs for sea kayaking is currently the best way forward, it may spread too thin on the ground (or sea). Possibly there are reasons I am not aware of why there are a number of separate National Clubs, however would not a form of affiliation be sensible to reduce costs and to maximise efforts to get paddling. Presumably most of us have pretty similar aims, objectives and needs.

From: Karen McKinnon, Marketing Support Service, Telephone Information Services plc, 24 West Smithfield, London EC1A 9DL
Telephone 071 975 9000, Telex 920129, Facsimile 071 236 3501

SURFCALL

Please find enclosed our new 'Surfcall' cards.

Surfcall is a new telephone information service offering regularly updated information on tides, wind speeds and general surf information for the U.K.

If you would like further cards, free of charge, or would like a card dispenser, please do not hesitate to contact me on 071-975-9000 or fax on 071-236-3501.

1992 HEINZ GOOD BEACH GUIDE

In early March the 1992 Heinz Good Beach Guide was launched in London.

This year's Guide has been thoroughly updated and revised. It now includes a detailed section on how readers can get involved in the campaign to increase the degree of treatment of sewage and end the dumping of litter at sea and on beaches.

This year's Guide shows the lack of impact that the 1995 Compliance Programme is having so far.

We must all keep up the pressure on the water companies and your help is needed.

Available from Marine Conservation Society Sales,
9 Gloucester Road, Ross on Wye, Hertfordshire HR9 5BU @ £6.99p.

SEA KAYAKS by SIMON TINMAN

We lift to the sky, on great green swells,
That roll to the Isle Gabo!
Where the gannets go in wheeling flight,
To dive deep to the fish below!

Our craft are sleek and long . . . so serenely strong!
Like those the Eskimos made
They rise and drive right on like a song,
Attuned to the wave and blade

Kismet, it is! We are living again!
But our thanks we so firmly bestow
On those small brown men in their slim skin boats,
From the seas where the Narwhales blow

Our spirits fly as we run the breaks,
On those rolling mountains of sea!
Which are just ripples, Old Earth Mother makes,
As she spins to Eternity.

From: Tomas Andersson, K.H.U., Solhagsvägen 23, 53135 Lidköping,
Tel. 01046 510 21708

I send you some information about the lake and about renting sea kayaks.

Enjoy sea kayaking in Sweden. Try the big lake Vänern the third biggest lake in Europe. The unice Swedish law gives you the opportunity to go ashore and camp almost everywhere. Vänern is a clean lake and if you want to drink the water it is O.K.

I want to give you the opportunity to rent sea kayaks in Sweden. Transport to and from the place you want to paddle in is available. I can be hard to reach, the best is to write to me and tell me which week you want to rent and give me your address and 'phone number and I will contact you. Price per week 800 sek = £80. I can give you information about good places to paddle at.

From: Nigel Denis, Anglesey Sea and Surf, Porthdafarch, Trearddur Bay,
Anglesey, Gwynedd LL65 2PL. Tel. 0407 762525

GREENLAND KAYAK AND BAIDARKA BUILDING COURSE
TO BE HELD AT ANGLESEY SCHOOL OF SEAKAYAKING
WORKSHOP ON 9TH OCTOBER-18TH OCTOBER 1992

THE COURSE - A group of no more than eight people will work together in pairs to build either two sea kayaks or a baidarka in the eight day period.

The kayaks frames will be made of timber and covered with a canvas skin. West and East Greenland types of boat as well as one, two or three hole Baidarkas are possible construction aims at slightly differing prices. Simple hand tools will be used by all participants. The exact specifications of the boats will depend upon the dimensions, experience and requirements of the intended user.

The teacher - Svend Ulstrup will come to Britain from Denmark. During the last ten years he has been responsible for the building of well over a thousand kayaks. He has taught in all the Scandanavian countries, Greenland and the U.S.A. He is the President of the Danish Seakayak Union.

Participants will take away their own kayak. Aspects of using such craft safely will be both discussed and demonstrated on the course, with opportunity to practise being available for all participants.

THE COST of instruction and materials for the kayaks will be provisionally set at £530 for a Greenland type, £620-£700 for larger Baidarkas. Enquiries and booking details are available on receipt of a s.a.e. from Rich Lennox. Other courses for schools and groups can be arranged for the Autumn of 1992 or other periods.

Rich Lennox, The Flat, Buckland Farmhouse, Bwlch,
Brecon LD3 7JJ

ACCOMMODATION AND CAMPING will be available at various prices. Booking and enquiries should be made direct to Nigel Denis.

From: Nick Padwick, Quarry House, Colwinston, Cowbridge, South
Glamorgan CF7 7NL

SEA TOURING WEEKEND - 26TH-28TH JUNE 1992

The BCU Sea Touring Committee attempts to hold its meetings at different venues around the country and to make them something far more than just a meeting. In fact the Committee has often been accused of making an excuse of holding the meeting for what could otherwise be classified as a cracking good weekend. We like to invite as many people as possible to join us both from the local area of a particular meet and from further away. It is a good opportunity to meet those who include in their number some of the most experienced sea paddlers to be found. This summer's meeting will be held at Atlantic College, St Donats Castle, Nr Llantwit Major, South Glamorgan.

Atlantic College is an International College run on a Trust Basis for 16 to 18 year olds. It is situated in the Vale of Glamorgan, considered by many as one of the most beautiful areas of South Wales. The grounds of the Castle are very large, supporting its own farm and bordering the north coast of the Bristol Channel. It has a slipway straight out to sea, an inside and outside swimming pool. It has facilities for sailing, climbing, canoeing and encourages a full range of outdoor pursuit activity in a big way for the students. The staff and students also provide safety cover for beach patrol and run the local RNLB Inshore Service. The students will have departed by the time of this weekend.

Accommodation for the weekend could be of three types:-

(a) Full board with rooms and meals in the Castle. Bathrooms/showers in the rooms. Meals to include some sandwiches on the Friday evening, Saturday breakfast and dinner (probably a self service buffet) and Sunday breakfast. Depending upon what is decided regarding trips this arrangement may have to be changed (see below). Cost - Approximately £28-£31 each.

(b) Camping with meals as above. Cost - Approximately £13-£15 each.

(c) Camping only - Cost £3.

Any bookings where meals are involved must be made 10 days before the event. Payment with the booking where board and meals are required please.

The prime target for trips in the area is undoubtedly the Islands of Steephalm and Flathalm. However, the tides are not the best we could have hoped for. High Tide is at 16.45 on Saturday and 17.40 on Sunday. Allowing for the considerable tides departure from the College by transport to the launch point would have to be about four hours before high tide in order that Steephalm could be reached and the crossing made to Flathalm around the top tide time. These departures and crossing times are critical. One possibility could be come together on Friday evening, have a relaxed Saturday morning, pool, short trip from slipway, etc, an afternoon paddle out, a late afternoon paddle back with a buffet supper on the return. Sunday could then be used for a local coastal paddle with a bit of buoy hopping. The meeting could be slotted in wherever. Meals have to be arranged accordingly - unfortunately well beforehand to enable staff to be organised.

For those interested, please contact Nick Padwick at the above address.

From: Eric Totty, KENDAL, Cumbria LA9 4PS 20th March 1992

Sea Rapier (J. L. Gmach)

I was very interested to read Duncan Winning's remarks in Newsletter No.90 about the Sea Rapier.

John Gmach travelled with me as a passenger in my car to Yugo Slavia in 1955. We were bound for the World Canoe Slalom Championships at Tacen and then to the Drina (a Grade III - IV with V in places river. This was before the river suffered the indignity of having its main canyon dammed. It was a very exciting river in wild country in the heart of Bosnia. The journey to it was no less an adventure. It was when Yugo Slavia was first opened up to tourists some time after the end of the First World War, and the roads and bridges were in a parlous state as the German army had pursued a scorched earth policy during their retreat.

I remember that John was over six feet tall and he was short of headroom in my Sunbeam Rapier but he never complained. I lent him my Klepper T6 for the trip as I had treated myself to a new kayak.

It was after his return to UK that he designed the Sea Rapier although he discussed it with me at the time, and we were in correspondence about it until, eventually, I bought one of the first off the mould for myself, but it was not to my liking being too roomy for rough seas and having no bulkheads, and so I sold it soon afterwards. But this was his first edition, and no doubt later models were fitted with bulkheads, hatches and rudder as Duncan reports.

His letter brought back memories of our unforgettable "Journey to the Drina" which was the title of my account of the trip which was published in the "Canoe Camper" It was in No 67, the Autumn number of 1955, should anyone be interested in reading it in more detail.

From: Irene Williams, Promotion Secretary, Park Lodge Cemaes Bay,
Anglesey LL67 0HF. Tel. (0407) 710 103

SEA KAYAK CLASSIC, ANGLESEY
FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL CANOEISTS BOTH
CLUB AND INDIVIDUAL

Following the success of the Sea Kayak Classic, Anglesey every year since its inception in 1989 with an entry averaging well over 70 paddlers, the Race Committee are pleased to announce the staging of the fourth race this summer.

The 1992 Race will be as follows:-

SUNDAY, 2nd AUGUST

Expedition Sea Kayaks 12 nautical miles within this race are Veterans, Ladies and Design categories for which there are cash prizes and trophies

WITHIN THE MAIN EVENT WILL BE:-

Sea Kayaks - Cruising Not a competition but for all paddlers wishing to cover the Classic course.

Sea Kayaks Doubles Over the Classic course but for a Doubles prize only.

Slalom-type Canoes 4 nautical miles from Bull Bay to the finish at Cemaes Bay.

From: Vince Smith, Lytham St Annes, Lancs. FY8 4ES. 17 March 1992

I have recently taken delivery of a new book which has been mentioned in Canoeist (November 1991 issue) and I thought that I would pass on my impressions. The book is called "The Hidden Coast" and is by Joel Roberts. It is produced in the States by Alaska Northwest Books. It is 168 pages long and can be ordered through Canoeist though my copy has taken three months to arrive. I do not think that this is the fault of Canoeist magazine but the time taken for it to be imported from the States.

The book itself is full of gorgeous colour photographs of a very high quality. The photographs accompany the text which covers "kayak explorations from Alaska to Mexico". The trips are varied and Joel's writing are full of interest and incisive observation. He describes quite vividly the scene in Prince William Sound after the Exxon Valdez disaster. The point being that even though the surface oil has gone it has seeped into the soil, sand and therefore the flora and fauna are still failing to recover. As he paddles to an area unspoiled by the oil, the contrast is quite striking.

The trips include the Oregon and California coastlines as well as Baja and Mangroves in Mexico. Each chapter in the book is about a particular area and a simple outline map is given. The book is a very high quality production and is not a guide book in the normal sense. It does, however, stimulate the urge to get on out there! (Anyone got any spare air tickets to West Coast?) This book, in conclusion, is an excellent documentary record in words and pictures of some relatively unknown areas on the Western coastline of North America. Even friends who are not canoeists have picked it up and discovered why we go kayaking.

In regard to the increasing number of Symposia, does this mean that there is an increase in the number of sea kayakers? I wonder if there are any statistics to confirm this. Perhaps the manufacturers would like to comment on the sales of new kayaks. I realise that this would not be an altogether accurate method of determining increasing numbers of sea kayakers, but it would be some indication. Certainly the number of kayaks available have increased in the last few years, as well as some North American kayaks appearing. But I have the impression that there are more people going out than previously. I am, in comparison, to many people in ASKC a relative youngster at about five years, but it is an interesting thought. Then to examine some of the drivers for such moves. Is it due to pressure on rivers, access problems, lack of water in rivers? Or are people coming to sea kayaking for the first time rather than from other canoe disciplines?

From: Charles Evans, Carregwen, Llanbadarn Road, Aberystwyth,
Dyfed SY23 1EY 18 March 1992

FOR SALE

McNulty Kodiak Sea Kayak. Fast and stable. Front and rear hatches and bulkheads. Orange with black trim. One year old. Excellent condition. £450. Telephone 0970 615386.

From: British Canoe Union, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham
NG2 5AS

NATIONAL CANOEING DAY -
SATURDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1992

The Olympic Games will give us a unique opportunity to raise the profile of canoeing. This is important if we are to win public support for increased access and also if we are to attract new money to help develop our sport.

On 5th September we would like all canoeists to take part in an event even if only as a spectator.

Get your club involved and DO something.

We all need to be involved in canoeing on this special day and need to advertise the pleasures of canoeing. Give as much information as you can to your Regional Committee to pass on to the Press and T.V.

Get as many important personalities as possible involved. Invite your local MP, Local Councillors, Sports Liaison Officers and local business people. We need as much publicity as possible. Let your celebrities know that their names will appear on the BCU National Register of Event Supporters which will be released to the Press on 4th September.

We need to let the media and the general public know about canoeing, the benefit and the pleasure.

TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT THE PLEASURES OF CANOEING AND ABOUT THE "NATIONAL CANOE DAY".

Wild animals and wind harps
Mountain dulcimers and doors
Winter walking, writing, windmills
Munching raw food with my jaws
Cast my kayak on the ocean
Thaw frost patterns of perception
Taking each wave as it comes
Ever paddling in perfection

Paddling amongst the pintails
Now the equinox spring gales
Have had their say I canoe
All day in the bay Hooray!

Alan Herman

From: Vadim Gouida, Michurina 5/7, Nemchinovka 1, Moscow Region 143013,
Russia

Adventure travel in the Soviet Union

We are an adventure travel team with three years of experience for running white water and trekking trips in the Soviet Union for American and European clients. We are a team of professional prize-winning paddlers and guides. We operate independently from any State institution.

We are committed to provide safe and enjoyable experiences which will help you to discover the natural beauty of our land, show the diversity of our culture and promote human contacts.

Here we offer six trips to different regions of our immense country. All the itineraries can be modified according to your wishes; besides we also do customized travel. Any suggestion on other areas of travel are most welcome.

We charge \$45 p/p p/day for groups of 5-15 people (every 11th goes free) plus the air fare within the Soviet Union. For larger groups and for students we give discounts. This cost includes in Moscow: accommodation in families or hostel-type hotels, meals, transportation, a cultural programme and a guide-interpreter; en-route - meals, transportation, camping, sight-seeing in cities, guides and a cook.

We require a 10% non-refundable deposit 60 days prior to departure date plus the air fare.

We believe that this is a unique opportunity for adventure lovers to do something different and lots of fun. To come to the Soviet Union is already an adventure, here we are offering you a double adventure which is a real challenge. And we want to share this challenge with you.

We are looking forward to working with you. It can be great fun!

Please, contact us: Fax: 4095 - 2926511 Box 8631
Tex: 411700, Box 8631

P.S. John,

We are all former Moscow slalom team. Now we are working in different companies but we took decision to be together again and in nearest future I give the name of our company. So if you know somebody interested, please let me know.

"IN SEARCH OF THE VELVET SCOTER" OR
AROUND THE ORKNEYS BY SEA KAYAK
by JERRY ROGERS

The Admiralty Chart for the Pentland Firth has, I believe, been updated. It used to state that the stream can reach up to 12 knots but a survey ship recently registered 16 knots at the Pentland Skerries. The Clyde Cruising Club advises all yachts should have engines powerful enough to contend with a tide of 8 knots in the region of the Orkneys. Further advice suggested keeping well clear of the Merry Men of Mey, an area between Hoy and Dunnet Head, which even on a calm day can consist of vicious overfalls and turbulence.

A year ago, at the first planning stage, to paddle across the Pentland Firth to the Orkney Islands seemed a minor challenge but now as we studied the charts and tidal stream atlas and the time to go was fast approaching it seemed rather more of a mistake.

For various work and travel reasons the six of us - Trevor Wadsworth, Trevor Riches (West Norfolk CC), John Steven (Instructor at Skern Lodge), Paul Searle (Alton CC), Jon Butt and myself, Jerry Rogers (Blackwater Valley CC) did not meet as a group until 6 o'clock on Sunday, 21st July, at the camp site at Huna. It was a beautiful sunny evening and the Firth was benignly peaceful with barely a swell distorting its surface and the islands of Stroma, Hoy and South Ronaldsay clearly in view.

I had only been to Scotland once before and that was to watch England win at Murrayfield. Having been born near the Lizard in Cornwall it seemed only natural to walk the $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to John O'Groats and appreciate this most northerly end of mainland Britain. Incongruously, the first person I spoke to was a fellow Cornishman. He was the official photographer of the signpost under which you stand with it reading the name and distance to your home town. His first words were "Funny place, Scotland - you can't get a pasty to eat anywhere but I recommend you try a haggis washed down with a whisky."

The forecast for Monday was fine with a SE wind freshening to 4/5 by late afternoon. The outlook was for the good weather to break on Tuesday.

An early departure at 7.30 saw the group paddle across the inner sound to Stroma and up the east shore in the shelter from the last of the easterly current. Escorted by dozens of seals, Atlantic Greys and Common, we arrived at the northern tip of Stroma at slack tide ready to make the eight mile crossing to South Walls.

Almost immediately the water developed a two to three foot swell. Whilst this presented very little excitement it would have required only a slightly fresher wind to have been a different story. It was after all a flat calm day with barely a breeze.

Keeping a watchful eye on a couple of container ships passing through the Firth we paddled on for a further two hours as we crossed this notorious stretch of sea which, in February 1969, caused the Longhope lifeboat to back-loop with the loss of all eight on board.

After lunch at Sands Geo on the south coast of Hoy we paddled round Tor Ness and headed north up the west coast. Whilst the wind was freshening, we were generally sheltered by the cliffs, which became higher the further north we travelled, save for the occasional bay or cove when the cliffs opposite created squally down drafts and head winds.

There were hundreds of seals lying on the kelp covered rocks until we approached when they would all dive into the water and surround us. I had never seen so many in one place before and at times I knew what John Wayne felt like in the middle of the Apache camp.

On to Rackwick, the only possible landing place on the west coast of Hoy. Whilst the group had now covered about 20 miles and there were a few aches and pains we decided to press on a further 10 miles round the northwest corner of Hoy because all the forecasts suggested a southwest gale blowing in on the Tuesday. A situation that would have kept us storm bound at Rackwick.

Past Rora Head and the Old Man of Hoy came into view. Its peak at 450 feet was below the cloud base but the 1100 foot cliffs just beyond at St John's Head were hidden from view. Maybe it was the low cloud base or maybe it was the perspective one has at sea level looking up, but personally I wasn't too impressed with the Old Man.

These cliffs are sandstone and the horizontal strata is comparatively easily eroded by wind and sea leaving thousands of ledges for Kittiwakes, Fulmars and other sea birds to nest upon.

It was along this stretch of coast that Jon (the group's ornithologist) saw his first Skua and Black Guillemot. I used to know nothing about birds; but four years of sea canoeing with Jon and I can now distinguish a Black Backed Gull from a Herring Gull solely by its flight pattern, can recognise the incessant chatter of the Oystercatcher and my nose can tell me whether it was a Kittiwake or a Fulmar which just defended its territory against me.

Around the northern end of Hoy there are some spectacular arches which make the canoeing interesting. We eventually established camp near Moaness pier and just 10 minutes from the pub. After 33 miles of paddling we felt we owed it to ourselves to pay a visit to this hostelry.

Tuesday 24th, Trevor Riches birthday, dawned in a thick, cold and clammy fog and with one of the group showing signs of tinotendonsinuivitis we decide to stay put on Hoy and explore the island. We walked across the island to view the Old Man of Hoy from the cliff top - a perspective which was far more impressive. At 8 o'clock we arrived back at the camp after taking seven hours to walk the 13 miles across the island and back. Personally I was shattered and feeling the effects of a dramatic drop in blood sugar level. As I reflected on the days activity to view a piece of crumbling sandstone it occurred to me that I could have stayed in the tent and stared at Trevor all day without exhausting myself.

However, after a meal of steak and chips and the odd pint in the pub which we felt we owed to Trevor in celebration of his birthday, all such irrational thoughts disappeared.

Wednesday 25th and the fog was so thick Graemsay, only 800 yards away was out of sight. Following a bearing of 020, in theory we should have passed close to a blockship in the channel, but we missed it as the current carried us out to the northwest end of Graemsay. Rounding the island we set course for Stromness which we made right on target an hour later. A four star campsite on the point persuaded us to stay here and wash and dry our kit in the launderette. We spent the afternoon shopping and visiting the museum.

The influence of Stromness grew during the late sixteenth century when large merchantmen sought sactuary from Atlantic storms. In only a few decades the town expanded dramatically due to its importance as a watering and revictualling stop for the ships of the Hudsons Bay Company grew. Many a young Orkneyman was recruited as crew and labour in the fur stations of Canada. Whaling ships called on their way to and from Greenland and twice a year whaling men held wild revelry in the town.

Thursday 26th we woke to a beautiful summer's day. A dazzlingly bright sun shone across Scapa Flow, a light breeze gently whispered from the northeast and the sea was like glass. The water was cold, so cold that the air inside the hatches was chilled and the covers were permanently concave, but it was crystal clear to the extent that we could see crabs scuttle from one kelp bed to another some 15 or 20 feet below us. It is certainly the clearest water I have ever paddled on.

The days journey started with a gentle paddle around to the west coast of Mainland. It was a hot day as we paddled, without cagoules, past cliffs which plunged so sheer into the sea it was possible to drift by within inches and touch the limpets and anemones clinging to the rock face. Thousands of Kittiwakes and Guillemots nesting on the ledges screeched and bombed us as we made our silent way along the coast. We witnessed Skuas attacking Gulls and were accompanied by dozens of seals. There were hundreds of jellyfish consisting of at least six different species some of which were very brightly coloured and whose bell was about the size of a large dinner plate. Having a fairly low pain threshold I decided against rolling the canoe.

After four hours paddling we stopped at the Bay of Skail for lunch, alongside the 5000 year old neolithic settlement Skara Brae. This is the scene of a Mary Celeste style mystery in that for some unknown reason the inhabitants suddenly left their homes in a hurry leaving no sign of battle or unnatural death. The settlement was hidden from mankind for several millenia by shifting sands only to re-appear in the middle of the last century since when it has become one of 'the' archeological sites of the Orkneys. During the two hours we spent there a dozen coaches of holidaymakers passed through.

At 4.30 p.m. we set off again northwards towards Marwick Head with its tower built as a memorial to Lord Kitchener, who was drowned just off the coast at this point on 5th June 1916 when the cruiser Hampshire struck a mine and sank. Only 12 men survived the tragedy. On to Brough Head to establish camp while Jon and Trevor R. fished in the bay. About an hour later I paddled out to Jon and Trevor leaving the others to pitch the tents.

After a quick photo call of the two fishermen cleaning and gutting the 14 fish they had caught and hand feeding the scraps to a slightly timid Fulmar, we paddled the mile back to shore. It was now the excitement happened.

The three of us were quietly rock hopping round the point past some jagged reefs which ran 300 yards out from the shore. Suddenly a set of larger waves came in. The first one broke just outside me, caught me sideways on and I started to bongo ride towards the rocks. Sheer panic gave me enough strength to turn the bow round and lean back on the wave so that it carried me up and over the rocks rather than drive me straight into them. Soon the wave receded and gently dropped me down onto the kelp covered reef for the softed landing I have ever had. Fortune smiled on me for it was a flat and level surface I was now

sitting on and there was no danger of rolling off to one side. There was no time to admire the view as I could hear the rushing sound of the next wave coming in. As soon as I felt the boat lift I back paddled as fast and hard as I could and managed to get off the reef before the canoe sustained any damage.

It had been a perfect seal landing as described and illustrated by Derek Hutchinson in his book on sea canoeing. Nonchalantly I shrugged my shoulders and pretended that it was a deliberate manoeuvre but I don't think the boys were fooled judging by Jon's comment of "That was a pretty extreme look of terror on your face Jerry when you realised you were inside the breakline of that set."

Friday 26th another day of no paddling as Trevor Wadsworth hitched into Kirkwall to find a dentist to treat a tooth abscess. Paul's wrist was still giving him some pain and with the dull overcast day giving way to occasional periods of clamping mist we decided to retire to a nearby tea shop for refreshment which we felt we owed ourselves. After an hour of drinking coffee, eating sweet cakes and writing postcards we emerged from the shop to a warm sunny afternoon and Trevor rejoining us with his pocket full of antibiotics.

We spent the afternoon walking around Brough Ness watching the birdlife. Whilst watching some Puffins feeding their young with sand-eels we noticed a flock of unfamiliar birds sitting on the surface of the water 200 feet below. One group allowed itself to be swept onto the flat sloping rock at the waters edge and then spent a few moments walking around before all jumped back into the water again.

"I don't recognise those birds but I think they are some form of duck" said Jon.

Reference to his Book of British Birds later confirmed that Jon had just seen his first Velvet Scoter. His day was complete.

Saturday 27th we broke camp and were on the water by 8 30 a.m. and paddled eastwards with a slight offshore wind, bright sun and a calm sea. At first the coastline consisted of dramatic cliffs and headlands with many caves for exploring and one fantastic arch of about 50 yards and a couple of dog legs. Gradually, however, the topography changed as we moved further east to a more low lying shoreline backed by rolling downland.

Into Eynhallow Sound and the wind freshened to a 3 or 4 bringing with it a squally rain. My rudderless Nordkapp was continually yawing into the wind and I was resigned to making forward progress by canting the boat over to the right and sweep stroking constantly.

The uncomfortable conditions encouraged the group to stop for an early lunch and sheltering under an overhanging grassy bank the trangias were soon brewing up. Before long the rain cleared away, we had eaten and relaunched. No matter how unpleasant the weather I always feel better when back on the sea and the canoe is gently riding the swells as it cleaves its way through the water.

We crossed Eynhallow Sound to Rousay in a moderating wind and paddled along the southern coast to the evocatively named Tang of Trumland where we set up camp just 10 minutes from the only pub on the island. Because it was comparatively early Trevor R. and I circumnavigated the nearby island of Egilsay while Jon tried his hand at fishing again. Later that evening we retired to the pub to celebrate Paul's birthday.

Walking back to the campsite along the narrow strip of foreshore we suddenly disturbed a Fulmar chick sitting in its nest which was built into the grassy bank at head height. The aggressive bird promptly spat at Jon who felt so honoured that for the second time his day was complete.

Sunday 28th we left Tang of Trumland at 8.45 a.m. in warm sunny weather with a fresh southwest wind. Gently easing our early morning stiffness we paddled around the southwest point of Wyre. We crossed the Sound to the southern shore of Gairway where the concave shape of the bay set up a strong reverse current which in turn created a violent eddy line as it met the main flow again.

We ferry glided the two miles across to Shapinsay without incident and landed for lunch on the sandy beach at Ling Holm on the north coast. During the three hour lunch break all the kit was hung out to dry and we fell asleep in the sun. This was the first sandy beach we had landed on all week and we had it to ourselves - this is what sea canoeing is all about

As we moved towards the east the topography was changing. The islands that lie on this side of the archipelago are low lying and have a much more sandy foreshore than those in the west.

At 2.30 we set out for our intended destination - the romantically named Bay of Doomy, on the island of Eday 10 miles to the north and four miles further east of our position.

We had to cross the eastern end of the Westray Firth, perhaps the next major channel after the Pentland Firth for the Atlantic and North Sea to ebb and flow past the Orkneys. In retrospect we probably jumped off Shapinsay too early because once out in the current we were swept very rapidly to the west. With at least two transit points at right angles to each other our sideways drift was impressive to witness. About a mile from shore we ran through some large boils about 20 or 30 feet in diameter.

The intention had been to pass to the east of Little Green Holm and Muckle Green Holm and paddle through the Fall of Warness and then up the west coast of Eday to our camping spot. However, the group got split up and while everyone else was swept round to the west of the Holms I was fortunate to creep along the intended route and do battle in the overfalls of Warness.

I landed on Eday at Sealskerry Bay and waited for the others who soon joined us. Before long we landed at the Bay of Doomy and pitched camp at the end of the runway at 'London Airport'. After supper we walked the three miles to the pub at the northern end of Eday which is a long thin island with just one road running north and south along its spine. The airport consisted of a field with a 500 yard strip of mown grass and a windsock. There were no buildings and the only perimeter fence bordered the road.

The pub was on the shore where the Gulf of Eday formed a narrow channel with the main island. The northern entrance to the channel is quite wide but it funnels down to little more than 300 yards and there is a right angled dog leg half way through. The current fairly spits through here and a man walking briskly is unable to keep up with anything drifting on the flow.

On the return to the campsite we posted the day's cards in a letterbox that had the time of collection as "half an hour before the plane leaves".

Monday 29th another early start to catch the tide. Today's plan was to paddle around the northern end of Eday, through the channel to land on the eastern side and visit the only shop on the island and replenish stores. Then we would cross Eday Sound to Sanday, paddle around Spur Ness to land on any one of the promising looking beaches on the eastern side. That was the plan.

The day was again beautifully sunny and warm with a slight southeastern breeze and a flat calm sea. We had a photo call at the suitably named Red Head with its bright red cliff in the background. This was the furthest north we planned to be on this trip. Next we drifted past the Calf of Eday at around four knots and landed to visit the shop.

Half an hour later we emerged with arms full of food and drink to be met with a thick clamping fog. Local advice suggested it was either a sea fog coming in with the tide in which case it would clear in a couple of hours, or else it was likely to be with us for the next three or four days.

We set out on a bearing of 030 and visibility of 100 yards to make the mile crossing to Sanday. However, the current's strength took us by surprise again and we ended up on the Calf of Eday.

Resetting course for 160 we now had to cross the Sound further north where it was wider with a current stronger by two hours, with very limited vision. Before long a small reef came into view with dozens of seals lying on the rocks. Their plaintive calls and barks added to the eeriness of our situation.

It was a serious sprinting effort to inch our way past the rocks against the stream and then we hit the boils. These were bigger and much more violent than the day before and many a canoe was suddenly thrown at right angles to its course as the bow dug into a turbulence running counter to that of the stern.

Suddenly we paddled into a patch of swells as the open Atlantic from behind met the current flowing towards us. Fortunately they were rounded swells of five or six feet which were not breaking as overfalls. In the thick fog without any sight of land as a reference, I for one was grateful.

After about 40 minutes we made landfall and paddled southwards down to Spur Ness and back up towards the north on the east coast of Sanday. The island is aptly named for the bays are large, sandy and shallow. As a consequence they dry out for anything up to 1200 yards.

We landed on just such a beach at Backaskaill Bay. It is character building to carry fully laden sea kayaks for the best part of $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in good weather after seven hours paddling. In thick fog when one is tired, wet, cold and hungry, I for one felt every nook and cranny of my personality had been well and truly morticed up.

After supper we felt we owed it to ourselves to visit the pub. At midnight as we left, the sky was clear and a full moon lit our path back to the tents. It augured well for the next day.

Tuesday 30th thick fog greeted us in the morning. We launched at 10 30, in a southeast Force 3 and 100 yards visibility. We hugged the coast, which meant being inside the breakline, down to Hacks Ness our jumping off point for Stronsay. We set a course of 150 for Holm of Huip

and staying in a tight group, each taking 10 minute stints on the compass we crossed Spurness Sound. We made landfall bang on target 40 minutes later. My confidence in our navigation was restored.

We paddled on to Stronsay and landed at St Catherine's Bay at 4.00 p.m. on top of the tide. A narrow grassy bank behind the beach was to be our campsite for the night.

No sooner had we set the tents up than the fog momentarily lifted to give us a 400 yard visibility and we realised half a dozen houses overlooked our rather untidy site. For the Orkneys this constituted a major housing estate. Immediately six canoeists called the fog down again. It obliged.

The forecast from the coastguard was for the fog to persist throughout Wednesday with an ESE Force 4 blowing. This was depressing news and no nearby pub to call upon.

Wednesday 31st left St Catherine's Bay at 9.30 after another long carry to the waters edge. However, as soon as we were afloat the sun appeared for the first time in two days. It soon disappeared again but the weather looked as though it was going to clear.

We jumped off Stronsay at Rothiesholm Head on a bearing of 240 with some ten miles or so to landfall on Mainland. At first it was a case of ten minute spells on the compass and as soon as we were in the middle of Stronsay Sound the beam on swells grew to some ten feet. This was enjoyable, but oh how much more fun it would have been without the need to concentrate on a compass bearing.

After an hour the visibility improved to the extent that we could now see Shapinsay off to the east of us. Two hours later we were passing Rerwick Head and then heading for Deer Sound and landfall at St Peter's Pool. We portaged the narrow isthmus across the A960 road and then lunched before relaunching on the south coast of Mainland Orkney.

The wind had freshened and there were some interesting swells with some mind focussing clapotis off the cliffs to make the journey rather more exciting.

Soon we were crossing Holm Sound and on rounding Burray Ness a following sea and wind gave us a good surfing opportunity. We landed at Churchill Barrier No.4 at 4.30 p.m. after another 26 miles paddling. The Churchill barriers are dams built, to link the islands of South Ronaldsay, Burray, Glimps Holm and Lamb Holm with Mainland, by Italian prisoners of war in response to Gunther Prean's audacious and successful attack, by unterseaboot, on the Royal Oak at anchor in Scapa Flow early in the last war. Each barrier consists of thousands of concrete blocks each weighing over a ton.

Thursday 1st August B****Y FOG AGAIN. After a D/W style portage over the A961 and the barrier we launched at 9 30 a.m. I had a thumping headache and was feeling about as bright as the weather.

The group had a following breeze as we paddled along the northern shore of South Ronaldsay towards Hoxa Head. On rounding the points, without a sight of the oil terminals just a mile and a half to our right at Flotta, we crossed the entrance to Widewall Bay, against an adverse current and a freshening cross wind creating a heavy chop on the surface of the water, to the accompaniment of the foghorn on Stroma.

Arriving at Sandwick Bay, the rest of the group lunched while I slept in a survival bag for three hours. Trevor and Jon phoned the coastguard for a weather report and the ferry company for a tentative booking.

Having missed that afternoon's tide for crossing the Pentland Firth our options were to go at 3 00 a m or 4 30 p m on Friday or paddle down the coast to catch the 7.00 p m ferry that evening. I majority verdict for the ferry saw us back on the water and paddling down to Bur Wick and the terminal.

Jon had just commented that "since conditions are not conducive to photography" he would pack his camera away. Ten minutes later a large fish jumped clear of the water about 100 yards in front of the party. Almost immediately it repeated the performance. We scanned the water for another sighting but it was to no avail. It was about the size of a dolphin or porpoise but its leap was practically vertical like a salmon leaping up a weir.

With person spirits at a low ebb, partly because of the sickening headache, partly due to the imminent ending of the trip and partly because we were taking the ferry back to mainland Scotland rather than canoeing, we paddled into the ferry terminal.

As evening drew on the sun came out and the Sail Training Ship Winston Churchill came into view making her way down to Aberdeen and the next leg of the tall ships race. She was in view for the next three hours beating against the full force of the current in the Firth. At one point for about 20 minutes she actually travelled backwards, in relation to the land, towards Dunnet Head.

Friday 2nd August. Back at Huna and we woke to another thick fog with the foghorns of Stroma and the Pentland Skerries playing a mournful lament. We had made the right decision and at least we had paddled across the Firth on the outward journey.

Before long the group broke camp and headed south. Ten miles down the road and we were in glorious sun without a cloud in sight.

We had paddled a little over 200 miles in the ten days afloat and although the second week was almost entirely in a blanket of total fog it had been another great sea canoeing trip. I cannot tell you much about the islands we visited at Eday because although we paddled round or past them, we landed on them and we walked to the pubs and shops we did not see them. I would, however, strongly recommend paddling in the Orkneys. There are some fairly committed crossings with some very interesting currents, the scenery is spectacular in the west and totally contrasting in the east and the people are very friendly.

The Orcadian is generally a shy individual, but if you open up the conversation he will immediately start to talk in English and include you in his chatter. Being islanders, their lives are ruled either directly or indirectly by the sea and maybe it was a common affinity with it that caused them to be interested in us and where we had come from and were going to.

We did not get to the most northerly islands of Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay, both of which we had hoped to visit. The latter is the home of a unique breed of sheep which is kept on the seaward side of a dyke built right round the island. Consequently their diet consists entirely of seaweed which apparently gives their fleece a very warm and soft property.

Another year maybe when the wind is blowing predominately from the west and the likelihood of fog is greatly reduced.

From: Dave Gardner, Lerwick, Shetland. Tel. 0595 5096 5 March 1992

I recently fitted an electric pump in my Skerray R.M. kayak and I thought you may be interested in the details.

The pump is called a "water buster" and it is sold by V.C.P., priced at £42. It is submersible and has no suction pipe, the suction being an integral part of the plastic pump casing, complete with filter. The pump is about the size of a small B.D.H. and weighs approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. It is rated at 200 gallons per hour or about 3 gallons per minute and is powered by 3 1 1/2 volt torch batteries. The makers recommend using Duracells and reckon they will give five hours pumping time. V.C.P. supply a foam block into which the pump is inserted and the whole unit is then wedged between the back of the seat and the bulkhead. To operate the pump you have to remove the spraydeck to gain access to the switch located on the side of the pump. There is a $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter discharge tube which would require to be poked out of the side of the spraydeck. I was impressed with the performance of the pump but did not like the idea of having to remove the spraydeck to operate it. I have made some modifications so that the pump can be "plumbed in".

I removed the switch from the pump casing and connected extension wires to the switch cables. The connections are made inside the battery compartment so there is no danger of them getting wet; the wires are led out of the hole where the switch was and the hole sealed with silicon sealant. Next job is to drill a hole through the deck near the cockpit rim and fit a waterproof switch. I initially tried using the original pump switch but found that it was a bit fragile when it was removed from the pump. I have now fitted a Durite splashproof switch, obtained from an auto-supply shop and I have modified it to make it waterproof. The switch block has been coated with rapid setting Araldite. If you then heat it with a hair dryer it will set quickly. While the switch is hot melt some vaseline into the block, this should keep out any water. After installing the switch and screwing on the metal ring, put on the rubber shroud and seal it to the deck with silicon sealant.

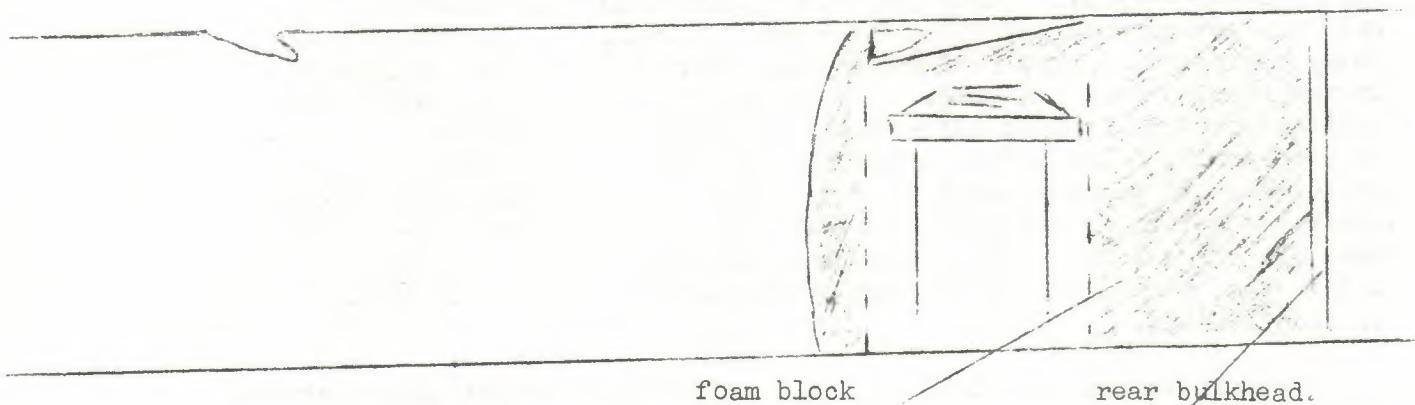
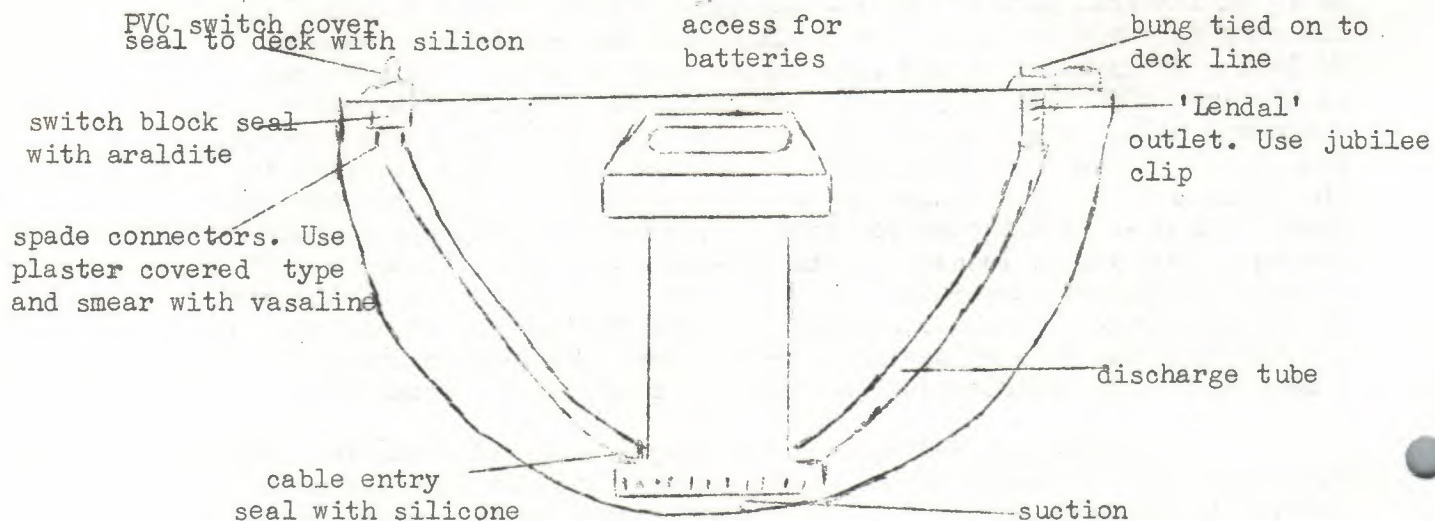
It is not practical to use a non return valve on the discharge tube as it reduces the flow. To overcome this problem I fitted an outlet, obtainable from Lendals, to the top deck on the opposite side to the switch. To prevent water ingress I made a bung from a toilet seat hinge pin. The pin is made of plastic and if you wrap one layer of canoe repair tape around it you end up with a good fitting bung. To complete the job drill a small hole through the shank of the pin and tie it onto the deck line. This facilitates easy removal of the bung and prevents it getting lost. The discharge tube is secured to the outlet fitting with a jubilee clip.

I have tested the system in the pool. After a re-entry and roll followed by a roll without the spraydeck I reckoned that I had as much water in the cockpit as I hope there will ever be. The pump emptied the cockpit in seven minutes and the kayak was reasonably stable after three minutes. I think that this is a reasonable performance and an acceptable time considering that you have the advantage of having both hands free while pumping.

The pump has a metal plate secured to the base by two screws. This can be removed to lighten the pump as it is not needed when the pump is "plumbed in". The foam block which is about 4" wide makes a nice backrest. The foam can be easily trimmed using a hacksaw blade.

For group use the pump could be used as supplied, without modification. It could be carried by the trip leader and once the capsized person was assisted into their flooded kayak it would be fairly easy, while rafted up, to pump out the cockpit.

As you may have gathered, I think that this is an excellent little pump with a reasonable price tag. See diagram for details.



WATER BUSTER ELECTRIC PUMP

A CALL FOR PICTURES

Do you have slides which exemplify moods or feelings from wilderness paddling experiences - be it canoeing, rafting, kayaking or rowing? If so, I'm interested in reviewing them for possible publication in a book entitled MOMENTS.

Please submit duplicate slides for consideration. Briefly note why the slides have special significance for you. Should I choose one or more of your pictures, I'll ask you to develop a paragraph or two to fully convey your feelings engendered by the picture(s). This may be done in prose, free verse or poetry. Also include data such as camera, lens, exposure and location.

If I do choose one or more of your pictures, I'll then sign a contract with you stating the terms of usage and payment for your material. Once this is done, originals of the slides will be required for publication. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely, Will Nordby,
5, Carmel Drive,
Novato, CA
94945 U.S.A.