

Newsletter



of the



An international sea canoeing association open to all interested in this aspect of canoeing.

Aims:

Promotion of sea canoeing • Communication • Organisation of events and conferences • Safety and Coaching

INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER # 4

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EDITORIAL

Our new title from Advanced Sea Kayak Club to International Sea Kayaking Association seems to have been well received and interest in this Association reflects this. No longer do I have to laboriously explain why we called ourselves the A.S.K.C. and new comers feel a lot more comfortable with the International Sea Kayaking Assoc.

I attended a Maritime Safety Symposium, much of the content related to small and ocean going vessels, but I did learn that small boat hirers are responsible under Health & Safety Rules to provide hirers themselves with clear instructions about safety (particularly pertinent following recent collision between two small pleasure boats on the Norfolk Broads in which a couple drowned). This led on to some discussion about hirers of kayaks and I quoted the practice in the U.S.A. where they have quite a lot of responsibility for the safety of those hiring their equipment. Even retailers have to explain basic safety requirements to purchasers and this information is repeated on stickers attached to kayaks and canoes.

I recall the time in Alaska when Frank Goodman found an extra body had joined his group when they stopped on the beach to visit a glacier way down the Seward Peninsula. Apparently this kayaker, who was not really a kayaker, had hired a kayak at Seward and set off alone. He capsized in small surf and lost his kayak. He then spent three nights on the beach before being 'rescued' by Franks' group. He was in a bad way, dehydrated and exposed and only prompt action saved his life. How much responsibility did the hirer have? Should those hiring kayaks not concern themselves at all with the competence and/or safety of their customers.
What do you think?

For years I have sold David Zimmerleys' book, 'Qajaq', through this newsletter. Unfortunately I have just learnt that it has now gone out of print. What a pity as it is a finely produced and well illustrated account of the Inuit development of kayaks. It was brought out in the mid 1980s to complement an exhibition on early eskimo kayaks which was staged in Juneau, Alaska, which I was fortunate enough to be able to visit. So, if you have a copy, look after it, it is now collectable! Having said this, if you do want to sell yours own let me know as I have several interested purchasers.

I am writing this a week before the Anglesey Sea Kayak Symposium and am hoping this fine weather persists. I had a weekend camping and kayaking off Anglesey a week ago and was blown off the water. We are taking the ISKA exhibition to Anglesey so will see you there.

I recall once in the States quite some years ago being asked to give a key note lecture and being totally unprepared as I had given what I considered my fair contribution and was relaxing at the barbecue on the last evening of the symposium. So I needed a theme. How about safety, or expeditions, leadership and BCU Awards or navigation. The environment is always good; sea kayakers always warm to this subject. You know the sort of thing, "Take only photographs and leave only footprints!" I settled for safety and used a string of anecdotes to make the points. It went down well and was probably better for being impromptu.

So here is an 'impromptu' for this newsletter which is based on sea kayaking and safety.

Safety in outdoor pursuits has always been a real issue and raises itself to the fore following any serious incident or epic. School children falling off mountains or over cliffs into the sea and, of course the recent Lyme Bay Tragedy, all bring the subject into close focus and we often see the 'knee jerk' reaction from legislators and from governing bodies of the sports involved.

Like everything else in this world of ours, there needs to be a balance. Society needs to be in balance, the human body itself is a supreme example of the need for balance; once out of kilter and all sort of illnesses result. There needs to be a balance between a safe life and an adventurous one. This is especially the case for young people. We 'oldies' have had our adrenalin runs and have 'matured' to the extent that a gentle paddle along the coast in a sea breeze is quite sufficient. We have our memories of fast water, big waves and exciting expeditions when the outcome was far from certain. In fact, only last year, with a new kayaking partner, Guy Smith, we crossed the Solway Firth and had an epic due to changing weather on our return from Scotland to the English coast. This little adventure will keep me 'topped up' for some considerable time.

And this is the whole point. All of us need to be 'topped up' from time to time. Young people need adventure and the problem is that if we don't provide it legally, then the young people will find it illegally through crime and drugs. I know this is true because I look after such young people who crave for legitimate adventure but instead pinch cars, burglarise and mug. The misery this causes both for them and for their victims is immeasurable.

I also get involved with youth and their legitimate search for adventure. I have worked with such organisations as Raleigh International and the British Schools Exploring society. I have also worked with young people through Canoe Clubs and through schools via the B.C.U. Coaching Scheme.

Whilst the emphasis has always been on safety, without adventure the kids might as well stay at home or stick to pinching cars.

So there needs to be a balance and here lies the key. But how do we get this 'key'. It is tempting to make a list of what it takes to acquire the key and then to make a list of the sort of

things that this key will open. Safety and adventure is balanced when both the leaders and the young people are getting a kick out of doing what ever they get into, be it kayaking, climbing, skiing, camping, surfing, trekking, ridge walking, etc. The young people will be satisfied by the fact they are doing something new with an element of risk attached to it. The Leaders will be satisfied with knowing that this is the case whilst everything remains in control.

Only experience achieves this happy state of affairs. a 'sixth sense' is needed to tell the Leaders **before** things are starting to go wrong. A close understanding of the environment and of the limits is essential.

So what is all this leading to? It leads to the message that we should strive to share our experiences with young people and to do this there needs to be opportunity. Opportunity for potential leaders and instructors to develop their skills and experience so that they in their turn can share this with others coming up behind. It means that when accidents and incidents do happen, unless there is crass stupidity to blame, we do not rush to pillory and hang out leaders and instructors to dry in the self righteous condemnation that follows.

National Service used to provide an opportunity. Outdoor Pursuit courses from school used to do the same. It is now getting to the stage when only the privileged and/or wealthy can find their levels in adventure that will give them the experiences and memories that now mean so much to the older ones among us.

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Kayak Testing versus The Real World by Jon Cons, Maine, U.S.A. Kayak testing and test reports that are published from time to time and the commentary they have generated seem to be concentrated on the quest to find the mathematical models to describe virtually any characteristic of kayak performance, and the opinion of who ever is in the chair at the time to point out that everyone so far, has not gotten it right. I, for one, hope that no one ever does. I mean, what's the point of all of us kayaking philosopher sitting around all night at symposia and on camping trips arguing about whether it is possible to make the perfect kayak if some engineering type just goes and hands you its formula factoring everything down to the length of the paddlers' fingernails!! We would be reduced to arguing about the perfect buoyancy aid or something else that would'nt be half so much fun.

Kayak testing by the numbers does have one significant advantage for the tester or the designer. The numbers generated are generally accepted (at least in this society) as the facts. This takes some of the ego involvement out of it provided, of course, that the testers and designers can agree on what the formulae actually measure.

I believe that kayak design is an art as well as a science and, as such, some mystique (the bane of true science) will always be attached to it. I am sure that there must be some way to describe

mathematically the jet of water that gets forced through the bow-carrying-toggle on one of my boats when the bow buries itself while surfing and makes the boat look like a porpoise, or the angle and speed if rise required for another kayak to scoop up water on its bow hatch and fling it into my face. The question is, would a designer be able to integrate the formula for such amusements into the formula for everything else? Science can explain quarks, can it do it as well for quirks?

What you average paddler standing before the display racks in the store wants to know is: What is the damn thing going to do when I try to paddle it? How does it fit into my expectations of what I need, or at least what I think I need? Will it kill me if I become sick or injured on a trip and, if not, will it be boring if I am well? What kind of statement does this boat make about me as a paddler? Will my paddling buddies like the colour? Funnily enough, most advanced paddlers ask precisely the same questions although one would expect them to be more aware, as six foot surf is breaking over their heads, of exactly their position on their particular kayaks' performance graph.

Seriously, since kayaking is such a subjective experience, there comes a point of diminishing returns beyond which the paddler who has little aspiration to design a boat derives less and less information from graphs and formulas about what he or she needs to buy a kayak or possibly to understand its potential behaviour. Those of us who seek a more perfect way of mathematically predicting a boats' performance based on its hull design or of describing said performance post facto are to be commended. This is probably a sign that sea kayaking is entering a new stage of maturity. We should be aware, however, that the next stage will involve the use of some of these more popular terms to dazzle and confuse the public in the name of sales. Designers of other boats have had to see the truths they've spoken "twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools". Our day is coming.

Perhaps, in the end, we may have to rely on the good old subjectivity of testers relating their individual experiences with the boats and try to extrapolate what we can from that. Sea kayakers' practice of including a brief paddling description of the individual evaluators is a major step in the right direction. One can only hope that in the best scientific tradition. these evaluators are prevented from communicating with each other until they have turned in their reports. Perhaps the number of evaluators could be expanded. Perhaps they could be encouraged to write their reports describing their experiences among other things, along the lines of certain specific characteristics. Perhaps some way could be found to quantify these characteristics. Perhaps the way these characteristics would be quantified could be described in terms of mathematical formulae and graphs.....

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Most of you will be paddling off to interesting places this summer.....do remember to write about it and send off your report to me here at the I.S.K.A. H.Q. for our newsletter. You may have opinions or information of general interest. I'm waiting.

Friday 22 April 1994

My son Simon and I left Snettisham at about 9pm. I drove to near Scotch Corner, where Simon took over for the rest of the journey. I was very happy to share the driving. We finally pulled in to the camp site at Arduaine on Asknish Bay at around 7.30 in the morning. There we met up with Jon, Paul and Steve, our companions for the rest of the week.

Saturday 23 April

After a few hours sleep we set out for a day paddle, going south past the islets of Eilean Buidhe, Eilean an Duin, Fraoch Eilean and Eilean Arsa. On my O.S. it shows a clear passage between these islets, but some have had barriers built of rocks laid between them to improve the shelter for the marina beneath the Lunga Hotel. We crossed to Shuna Point and had a lunch stop near Shuna Cottage. Then north up Shuna Sound to round the point at Rubh' an Aoil, where in the next bay there is a quay marked on my map but not on Steve's more recent one - we didn't find anything you could really call a quay. We did come across an unusual derelict wooden craft, probably about 40 feet long, with a disproportionately wide beam. It had the remains of a triple rudder, was wooden with planks butted one to another, and had the unusual feature of a circular iron track of flat bar cross section laid to take up the full width of the deck. We could think of no entirely plausible history for this craft - something towed into position - possibly an early light vessel? Then back across the bay to the camp site, where the owner gave us a five day weather fax which predicted high winds from the south as the pattern to expect. Since our destination for the end of the week was Mark and Caroline Carter's island off Kerrera, I was happy at the prospect of following winds.

Sunday 24th April

We packed our boats and were on the water by nine thirty, intending to pass through the Gulf of Corryvreckan at 2.30 and enter our camping bay at Bagh Gleann nam Muc at slack water. The wind was fresh from the south east, and we hugged the coast as far as Eilean Ona. We then headed out to find shelter along the west side of Rèisa Mhic Phaidean. There was a strong stream flowing between this island and Rèisa an t-Sruith, and we found it hard work to ferry glide across, losing a lot of ground in the process and having to exert ourselves to make the lee of the island. Paul and I were in need of a pee, and we found a small inlet where the kayaks could be beached while we attended the call of nature. This was the critical point so far as timing was concerned. Bearing in mind that we were not due to enter Corryvreckan until 2.30, I am still asking myself why I did not look at my watch to see that at this point we were far too early. Every one of us was aware of the need for careful timing, and knew that the flow would change from east - west to west - east between 2.30 and 3.30. S.F.B., as my brother would say. What we should have done was to get out a bivvi shelter and wait in warmth and comfort, making it a convenient lunch stop. What we did was to set out on our crossing at about 12.30, and enter the gulf at full flow. The situation would still have been retrievable had we hugged the Jura shore as Jon and Arthur Watts had done on a previous visit, and Jon wanted to do now. As it was, we were swept rapidly through, not making strenuous efforts to get to the south east of Eilean Beag and Eilean Mor until it was too late. My own cheerful complacency had a crucial influence in delaying our major effort to break out of the main stream. The only one of our party to make the break out was Simon, who was followed by Paul. By this time we were making every effort to break out of the stream. I was paddling near to Steve, and Jon was behind us. After some time (far too long when I look back on it) I looked for Jon and couldn't see him. I asked Steve where Jon was, and he indicated a dot on the horizon.. We made our way as quickly as we could and joined Jon. He was relieved to see us, and I was glad the three of us were together. Simon and Paul were out of sight, and as far as we were concerned, had made the coast of Jura. Had we delayed our entry into the gulf until our intended time, the stream would have been slack and things would have been different. It was during this period when Jon, and Steve and I, became separated that the wind increased in speed as if a giant fan had been turned on. It blew powerfully from the south east and combined with the Corryvreckan stream, made it impossible to gain ground on Jura. Steve thought it might be possible to get into the lee of Scarba, but it soon became apparent that it was out of the question. We decided that the Garvellachs were our only refuge, lying down wind as they did, and we set a course between Eileain Dubh Mor and Lunga to break clear of the main Corryvreckan stream. The sea state was very turbulent, with large breaking overfalls in places. It required a great deal of concentration to keep on course and upright, and it had become a very wet ride. We were extremely concerned that the group had become split, but had the satisfaction of the certain belief that Simon and Paul had made Jura. I was aware that Jon was not his usual self, and was showing signs of tiredness. He had only recently recovered from a viral infection, leaving him with a chesty cold, and I should have been aware of the extent to which such a condition can affect one's strength. The rough conditions would have made rescue impracticable, and we concentrated all of our efforts on making progress and staying upright. There came a time when we agreed to run downwind for the southern extremity of Eileach an Naoimh, and in very rough seas, one of which washed my ASKC hat off, we passed through a gap between rocks off Sgeirean Dubha, and gained the quieter water in the lee of Eileach an Naoimh. The wind if anything had increased, and blew us along briskly. Jon was cold and exhausted, and was eager to land at the first opportunity, and Steve pointed out an inlet on the north western end of A'Chùli which we were very relieved to reach at about four in the afternoon.

Sun 24 April 94 contd.

We landed safely in the gully, dragged up our boats, Jon got out his bivvi shelter, and it was with great relief that we warmed up with hot soup and Jon's cereal ration which he inadvertently emptied into his front hatch. I have never seen Jon so tired. Our next concern was to contact the coastguard in order to explain our situation. With Simon and Paul on Jura, there was no way of telling them we were all right, other than the coastguard asking a local fisherman to take a message. While we sat in Jon's bivvi shelter feeling the warmth seep back into us, it seemed that above the noise of wind and wave there was a voice calling. It was with immense surprise and relief that we looked out to see Paul standing there. He explained that Simon had come back to him when he was struggling, and they had lost sight of us. When the wind began to blow so strongly that it was impossible to paddle against it, they turned downwind and made a quick and hair-raising crossing to the Garvellachs. When we arrived they had pitched their tents and changed into dry clothes, so were able to help us establish camp. I don't believe that I have ever in my life been so pleased to see someone as I was to see Paul and my son Simon. With their help we carried our boats to a place of safety, and carried our camping gear to the site on which Simon and Paul were already established. It was an excellent pitch, flat ground, dead bracken, shelter from the strong wind, just what the doctor ordered. By the middle of the evening we were snug in our sleeping bags having had a hot meal, and I knew nothing more until the following morning.

Monday 25th April

We decided to have a rest day, and explore A'Chùli, which is the smallest of the three main islands in the Garvellachs group, and upon which we were camped. There are a few sheep on the island, and colonies of black-backed and herring gulls which are preparing to nest, so we disturbed them as little as possible. I saw a wren with a beak full of nesting material, and glimpsed several small birds (unidentified). There were oyster catchers, and a pair of eider drakes by the rocks. On the previous day we had seen mating pairs of eiders near the mainland. There is marshy grass in abundance, well cropped by the sheep. Some very stunted birch, willow and briar, with a few shoots of honeysuckle. I also saw a thornbush of some sort with a few tender green leaves showing. There are primroses galore, and a little sea pink and saxifrage. Lots of small yellow flowers I will call buttercups, and some tiny white flowers (unidentified). I think a little later with warm weather these islands will be a picture, though at the moment the juniper-like shrubs huddle so close to the ground, and are so browned by salt winds where they are exposed, they give notice that this is not an environment for the unprepared. The sun shone and we were able to dry our gear. Steve and I decided to paddle to Garbh Eileach, the largest island at the north east end of the chain. There is a landing at Rubha Mór on the south coast, where we found a slipway and friendly stony beach which was our landing place. There is a cottage here which has been recently modernised, though unoccupied when we visited. Up the valley a small herd of fallow deer stared at us, and a large bird of prey circled the summit. We decided to climb to the top, and were rewarded for our exertions by wonderful views of Mull from the top of the 110 metre summit. Here on the north western side the cliffs fall sheer to the sea, and are at present populated mainly by early pairing fulmars doing lots of bobbing and beak-tapping and what sounds remarkably like gossiping to each other. What it is about the fulmar that fills me with joy is difficult to express, but has something to do with it's wonderful ability to fly without apparent effort - I've watched them leave the cliff face, swoop out low and fast over the sea in a great graceful curve, bank sharply upwards and back to where they started, and not a single wing beat to be seen. They also appear to be curious about strangers, and on many occasions I've seen solitary fulmars swoop so low in a sweeping arc round my kayak that I'm left wondering how it's wing tip doesn't get wet. If you shout "Hello fulmar", you will often get a return inspection. Definitely one of my favourite birds. To return to our clifftop walk, we were delighted to see a family of black rabbits inhabiting one warren, presumably the descendants of domestic animals bred by the crofters. Also plenty of white scuttled grey/brown plump and healthy looking rabbits inhabiting neighbouring warrens, and whose presence also probably accounts for the large raptor seen circling overhead. Early green shoots of bracken were pushing through last years brown and dead top growth, clumps of primroses showed in sheltered corners, and unidentified yellow, blue and white flowers abound. On our return to the valley bottom we looked at the ruins of a turf covered bothy which could have served as a shelter for shepherds or deer stalkers, and having sampled briefly it's claustrophobic inner charms both Steve and I came to the conclusion that there is much to be said for generous standing headroom and NHBC building standards. We re-embarked and continued our circumnavigation, taking in the outermost island of Dùn Chonnuill which has the remains of an ancient fort on it's north eastern tip. From the sea all that can be seen are the remains of dry stone walling high up inaccessible gullies. I wonder what people manned such an inhospitable watch point? (Answers to the next newsletter please?) We continued our pleasant exploration in good sunshine and on a moderate sea - only the remains of the previous days confusion coming in as swells to agitate the rocky shore and prevent us from entering the gullies. At one point we saw a blow-hole spouting steam-like vapour at regular intervals, and setting up a transient rainbow from time to time. Although I understand that there are seals in quite large numbers, we only saw a few individuals. Then back to A'Chùli where we took pains to rub in to our friends what a good days paddle they had missed. That evening we ate al fresco, and polished off our store of beers, wines and spirits by a convivial bonfire built on the rocks at the head of our landing gully. Proceedings were enlivened by the discovery of empty aerosols and their disposal in a highly irresponsible and explosive manner. And so to bed.

Tuesday 26th April

The next morning brought strong winds, and we remained storm bound until Wednesday morning. There was much rain, and the sleeping bags took some welly, and if it's possible to store up rest, we stored some. I must here sing the praises of a very simple bit of kit called the ThermoRest. Mine is the light-weight threequarter length version. Several people had recommended the product as a replacement for the old Karrimat, and Howard Jeffs at VCP had put an order together so I somewhat hesitantly parted with nearly fifty quid and got him to get me one. It has transformed my comfort level when resting on hard ground. It takes the pressure off shoulder and hip, and I think has contributed more to my camping comfort than any other piece of gear I possess. It also packs up remarkably small, which is an added bonus.

Wednesday 27th April

The day dawned grey and overcast. There had been a lot of rain in the night. But there was no wind. The forecast was wind later so we broke camp, packed our boats - an easier task with much of our food now eaten - and launched from the south eastern of our two possible gullies, and made course for Belnahua, a small island between the northern Garvellachs and Cullipool on Luing. We stopped for lunch on Belnahua, which is one large derelict slate quarry. The beach is black, the soil is black, the sand is black, the slate is black. There are many quarry workers' buildings now derelict, and large water filled pits are all that remain of the old workings. A somewhat sombre and heavy spirit seems to haunt the island, and I was not sorry to leave it. We landed at Cullipool at 2pm hoping to buy bread and milk, but the village post office cum general store opens daily only until 1pm. This seems to apply to several of the small communities hereabouts, so those of you who might be planning cruises in these regions, bear it in mind. One very hospitable lady allowed us to top up with water, and gave us some bread rolls but would accept no payment. We carried on north to Easdale on Seil, where we hoped to find a café, but had to make do with the West Highland Art Centre during a power cut, where we were given shortbread and cups of milk. They would only accept payment for whole pints, and whole packets of shortbread, which we duly bought. This is a strange emporium, the enterprise of Mr C. John Taylor, self styled Artist, Poet and Song-Writer. The poetry is something on the lines of "The Poetic Gems of William McGonagall", though rather worse, and the paintings are of similar quality. The recordings of his songs - which were heard on a later visit with power on - rival the poetry and the paintings. But regardless of the apparent charlatanism and tackiness of the place, I found it warm, welcoming and hospitable. And the shortbread and fudge are delicious. The manager advised us, as we were longing to spend an evening in a local pub, that we could paddle to the north end of Seil and camp north of Ardfach Point at a popular yacht anchorage, from where a footpath traverses the hill and leads to the Inn by the Bridge Over The Atlantic (Clachan Bridge). It took us some time to find the site. Good job Jon is a better map reader than me. Eventually we set up camp on the least boggy of some very boggy bits, and we followed the trail marking the course of what a neighbouring signpost euphemistically called a 'footpath'. As Billy Connolly colourfully puts it, "Of course it rains, it's f---ing Scotland". The combination of much trampling by cattle, together with the aforesaid rain, had turned the path into a quagmire, and if it hadn't been for the prospect of food and drink in the dry, we might have given up. Simon's Goretex boots kept his feet dry, while Steve's trainers didn't. The rest of us were in between. But it was worth it. We had a good meal, lots of Murphy's, followed by a sampling of locally distilled malts, and our wet clothing steamed by a free standing stove, the heat from which was enough to singe your eyebrows. Staggering back in the dark, with me having hysterics, was probably fun if only I could remember. Whoever it was who advised against mixing the hop and the grain was right, but it only really dawned on us next morning.

Thursday 28th April

Although we had a lot of rain during the week, we were usually lucky enough to find a lull for packing our boats and donning damp paddling gear. We set out still heading north east, with strong southerly winds forecast later, but with calm conditions at the outset. We hung a right between Barnacarry Bay and Minard Point, and headed towards the entrance to Loch Feochan, looking for a suitable spot for lunch. There was a strong flow out of the loch at Ardentalen Point, which was too strong to make easy headway, so we landed short of the point at a spot which has been used regularly for picnics by others before us, and had a pleasant lunch. The scenery here is very beautiful, and it didn't surprise me to hear that it was in this area that Gavin Maxwell lived when he wrote "Ring of Bright Water". We moved out past Minard Point, and turned north towards the Sound of Kerrera, with a freshening wind giving us assistance. It seemed like no time at all before we had Rubha Seanach, the southern tip of Kerrera, on our left, and we entered the sound. A pleasant wind assisted cruise brought us in sight of Oban, and our destination at Rudha' Chruidh, Mark and Caroline Carter's island. We pulled in late in the afternoon, to be greeted by Caroline and their beautiful and rather daunting alsation Dino. Mark and Caroline are running their company Sea Explore from the island of Rudha' Chruidh (pronounced ROOA CREWY as near as I can get, and which means 'Cow Point', from the days when Kerrera cattle were taken to market in Oban by being herded onto Rudha' Chruidh at low water, and made to swim from there to Oban). Those must have been the days when men were men, and Kerrera cattle were amphibious. However long a swim, it is the shortest distance from Kerrera to the mainland. Mark assures us that Oban is a mere two minutes away from his island by RIB (rigid inflatable) and that anyone wishing to come for a visit, either to camp,

TASMANIA

John, I'm sure you'll be interested to hear who I spent a day paddling with in February. Mike Emery and about ten other members of the Tasmania Kayak Club. I was in Tasmania for a walking holiday with my girlfriend whose brother lives about half an hour from Hobart.

I saw the slide show given by Dan and Karen Trotter at the Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium last October, and that really whetted my appetite for what the island had to offer. Dan and Karen gave me a few sea kayak contacts in Tasmania, so before going over there I sent two or three letters of introduction to see if I could line up some paddling. When I arrived, there was a club meets list waiting at the house and the trip on the Sunday in the middle of our stay was from Eaglehawk Neck to Fortescue Bay.

Mike Emery was organising this trip so I quickly made contact and arranged to meet up on the Sunday morning. This section of coastline is on the east coast of the Tasman peninsula which is in turn on the east coast of Tasmania, and a few miles east of Hobart. What an amazing stretch of coastline.

Eaglehawk Neck has a violent history, although it is a very beautiful place these days. It is the isthmus that connects the Tasman peninsula to the rest of Tasmania, and in the early 1800's when the peninsula was used as a penal colony, Eaglehawk Neck was guarded by vicious dogs on long tethers. There are still plenty of stories of prisoners savaged by dogs, and those who swam to freedom only to perish in the thick bush on the other side. Back to the present day and the eastern bay at Eaglehawk Neck saw about a dozen of us take to the water on a sunny day with a bit of a breeze and a slight swell. One of the club members told me that this is the beach where Paul Cafyn, the New Zealand paddler, hopes to set off from on his planned open crossing of the Tasman Sea to New Zealand. A distance of about 400 miles! He has made several attempts but has been prevented from setting off by the Tasmanian authorities, and on one occasion when he did set off, he and his double partner turned back after several hours because of bad weather. That's the story as it was told to me. I've no doubt that other ISKA members will know more of Paul's plans than I do.

Once out to sea properly we were immediately treated to a series of spectacular caves and a blow hole. Reminders of Shetland and the caves on Papa Stour. The high cliffs were rimmed with thick eucalypt bush, impenetrable from the land but beautiful when viewed from the sea. The scenery changed along the route from layered sedimentary sandstones at the start of the day to blocks of igneous dolomite by the time we reached Fortescue Bay.

The kayaks on the water that day were a mixture of designs, all of which were made in Tasmania or on north island (mainland Australia). Evidently there are some Nordkapps in the club, they just weren't on the water that day. And the news from Tasmania is: "rudders are definitely in." They like sticking things onto their boats over there and I think that all the boats that were out that day had a rudder.

After our lunch stop the wind got up to a good 5, gusting to 6 and the corner leading into Fortescue Bay was head down and grit like crazy stuff. A couple of rock climbers were abseiling down from a sea stack that looked absolutely superb. Across the bay to the south I recognised the Lanterns from Dan and Karen's slide show. The Lanterns are a row of distinctive sea stacks, not unlike the Drongs near Hillswick in Shetland.

Once into Fortescue Bay the wind dropped to a whisper and the final two miles across still, clear blue waters were an absolute pleasure that I wanted to savour. One of the local club members saw a penguin on this stretch, although it had swum off by the time I got there. The end to a perfect day.

I guess that is the beauty of the International Sea Kayak Association, you travel 12000 miles and meet up with a fellow club member and go for a paddle. What could be more simple? Thanks for a great day Mike. I hope you all enjoyed the whisky on the next club trip. Next time we make it to Tassie I will try to team up with you for a longer trip.

Mike Dales, Beautyfield House, Aberargie, Perth, Scotland.

Some Comments on the New Standards for Buoyancy Aids & Lifejackets

The British Standards on buoyancy aids and lifejackets have, with effect from July 1995, been brought into line with the EC standards. This means that only those lifejackets and buoyancy aids which conform to the European standards and carry the CE mark of approval will be manufactured after July. The Standards cover a range of buoyancy aids and lifejackets from the 50N buoyancy aid (50N = 11.24lb) to the 275N lifejacket for use in extreme conditions when heavy clothing is worn, or when tool belts etc are carried.

The 50N aid is intended for competent swimmers in sheltered waters or where help such as a safety boat is at hand. It will only help a conscious person to help themselves.

The 100N buoyancy aid is referred to in the Standard as a 'lifejacket' but there is some disagreement within the UK on what it should be called since it will not necessarily turn an unconscious person wearing waterproofs on to their back as should a lifejacket under the old British Standard. It is suitable for swimmers and obviously gives better protection than the 50N devices.

The 150N lifejacket is suitable for both swimmers and non-swimmers in all but the most extreme conditions. This one is the equivalent of the current UK approved lifejackets and should turn an unconscious person on to their back

providing they are not wearing excessively heavy clothing.

So what is new? Newtons? It is not clear, at least to me, why the buoyancy of these things cannot be measured in kilos or pounds but once you are aware that 50N is the minimum I guess it is not too important. The construction of floatation devices is now circumscribed in terms of the material and fittings used. For example, the material used for making the main part of the buoyancy aid or lifejacket must conform to standards with regard to its strength; rot, oil, and water resistance. It also has to pass a resistance to burning test. The old, comfortable to wear, type of jacket with air filled sacs sewn into pockets may no longer be legally made although you may continue to wear the one you already have.

The actual buoyancy of the aid or lifejacket will depend upon the weight of the person for which it is intended, thus, for a 50N aid the minimum buoyancy for a person weighing between 30 and 40kg is 35N, and for someone weighing over 70kg the minimum is 50N.

For 'Lifejackets 150' the minimum buoyancy is 45N for a wearer of up to 20kg extending to 150N for a wearer of over 70kg.

The specification for lifejackets is more detailed than that for the buoyancy aid, e.g. while the aid may be of

the range from yellow to red'.

Both types have to have a label giving the application (recommendation on use, 'sheltered water' etc), type of aid, amount and type of buoyancy (inflatable, inherent, or both), size, and manufacturer. They also carry a health warning to the effect that 'Flotation devices only reduce the risk of drowning. They do not guarantee rescue.' The maker also has to supply an explanatory leaflet to show how the device is worn, how to care for it etc.

Generally the Standards represent a tightening of the old BS along with some reduction of choice for the consumer. The 50N aid is in fact of inferior performance to the previous BMIF standard and it does appear there is likely to be some confusion about the Standards, at least initially. Finally, as already mentioned there is nothing to prevent you wearing any existing, serviceable, buoyancy aid or lifejacket which you currently own, nor is there anything to prevent the sale of the old style aids until stocks run out.

Nothing, of course, changes the desirability of adults to wear an appropriate buoyancy device when afloat and to err on the side of safety where children are concerned and have them wearing a properly fitted lifejacket when afloat or around water.

The new Standards are: 50N - BS EN 393; 100N - BS EN 395; 150N - BS EN 396

An Introduction to The MET OFFICE MARINE DIVISION by Captain John Houghton

Origins

The Meteorological Office in Bracknell is the State Meteorological Service. Its general functions include the organisation of voluntary weather observing on board merchant ships and the collection of meteorological data by other means over the oceans. The Met Office has numerous links with past and present activities of the Hydrographic Office

These links continue in many ways today, exemplifying the worthy co-operation that exists between the hydrographers who chart the oceans and the meteorologists who forecast the weather over them. They jointly serve the seafarer in numerous ways, so this article addresses the history of the Met Office mainly from the standpoint of its marine activities, since the organisation was started by a sailor.

One of the strongest connections with the Hydrographic Office is the link with the fourth Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Francis Beaufort. He not only devised the Beaufort Scale of wind force when he was Captain of the frigate *HMS Woolwich* in 1805/6 but he was also the mentor of the first Director of the Met Office, Vice Admiral Robert FitzRoy. As Captain of *HMS Beagle*, FitzRoy was sent by Beaufort on his now famous voyages of exploration and survey around the coasts of South America, including Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, accompanied by the young naturalist, Charles Darwin.

The origins of meteorology lie in the mythology, religion and philosophy of ancient times. In the tropical regions, the earliest references are found in the Hindu records of 6,000 to 2,000 years ago. The Rig-Veda, originated by the Aryan-speaking peoples, contains numerous prayers for sunlight, fair weather and warmth. References to weather and climate are found in ancient Hebrew texts and in the classical literature of China and Greece. While it may sometimes be thought

that forecasting still relies largely on invocations to the gods and folklore, it was as a result of an international conference held in Brussels in 1853, called by the distinguished American seaman Lieutenant Matthew Maury, that the British Met Office was established. It was conceived as the Meteorological Department of the Board of Trade in 1854, with Captain FitzRoy, as he then was, as its first head. Observations on ships commenced in 1855 and towards

development of the Met Office, which was then primarily intended to improve safety at sea. He is also credited with coining the word 'forecast', and with the invention of two types of barometer, many examples of which are still in use today. The first telegraphic weather reporting was carried out in 1865; by the year 1911, in addition to coastal waters, the North Atlantic was covered by broadcasts of gale warnings.



the end of that year FitzRoy had already recruited 105 merchant and 32 naval ships to this new task. FitzRoy introduced the first British storm warning service for shipping in 1861, making use of the electric telegraph; his was the main influence in the early

Weather Forecasts for Shipping

The first weather bulletins for shipping using defined areas around the coasts of Britain were broadcast from the Air Ministry in London in January 1924. Radio weather bulletins for shipping were suspended during World War 2

and soon after shipping services had returned to pre-war levels, the need arose for forecasts to cover a wide area. As a result, in 1949 sea areas were introduced which have survived with little change to the present day. Important changes to the boundaries were brought into use in August 1984 as a result of an agreement reached between countries bordering the North Sea, to use common areas in the region. The majority of the names of the North Sea areas are derived from names of shallow banks beloved of fishermen in the past.

New Distress System

In 1979 the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), with headquarters on the South Embankment in London, resolved to establish a new, co-ordinated maritime distress and safety service, making use of the latest developments in marine communications, in particular satellite communications, and at the same time reflect a greater level of international co-operation between maritime nations of the world. This led to the establishment of the INMARSAT organisation.

On the initiative of the IMO, member states of all the interested bodies, including the International Hydrographic Organisation and the World Meteorological Organisation, adopted the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System in 1988, establishing a world-wide search and rescue plan with its supporting communications network as its central theme. The new communications equipment now required on board ships depends not on their tonnage as previously, but on the sea areas in which they sail. In general terms, this means that the further from coastal waters a vessel ventures, the more comprehensive must be her communications equipment.

The GMDSS requires the automatic receipt on board ship of navigational and weather information relating to ship safety, by radiotelex, telephony and satellite communications; it is also used by shore authorities to establish rapid and cost effective communications with ships in distress. A recent dramatic example of this was the evacuation of the crippled cruise liner *Achille Lauro* in the Indian Ocean in December 1994, when the distress signal from the ship was routed auto-

matically by communications satellite to the receiving station at Eik in Norway, who passed it to the Coastguard Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Falmouth, from which distant point the rescue of passenger and crew from the ship was co-ordinated.

The new system divides the oceans into four sea areas which dictate the equipment required by GMDSS, according to the sea area in which the ship operates. Sea area A1 is within range of VHF coastal radio (about 25 nautical miles); Sea area A2 is within range of coastal MF radio (about 100nm); Sea area A3 is within range of services provided by INMARSAT which covers the globe up to about latitude 70 N and S, excluding the polar regions, and Sea area A4 which covers the remaining navigable waters within the polar areas.

The Met Office's present, purpose-built Ocean Weather Ship (OWS) is likely to be the last in a line which started after World War 2, when the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) set up a chain of ships across the North Atlantic to monitor the weather and act as communications and Search-and-Rescue units for civil aircraft crossing the ocean. OWS *Cumulus* has successfully completed her ninth year of North Atlantic operations for the Office, having previously carried out 25 years of operations for her original owners, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute.

Operating from Greenock, on the Clyde estuary, on five weekly voyages to her station, 500 nautical miles west of Scotland and between 500 and 1,000 miles south of Iceland, the weather ship carries out hourly surface and six-hourly upper air observations. The weather ship's staff also co-operate in many useful meteorological and oceanographical projects for various official bodies. Transmission of the data collected is carried out by meteorological satellite communications. Twenty berths of suitable spare accommodation are available on board on request, for employment by organisations wishing to use the ship as a classroom afloat for meteorological or oceanographical researchers or students.

With the increased sophistication of automatic weather systems and satellite data capability, the maintenance and operation of our weather ship will

become uneconomic within the next few years. Norway is the only other country to deploy a full-time weather ship, *Polar Front* being stationed off the west coast of northern Norway.

Met Office Organisation

With the metamorphosis of the Met Office into an Agency of the Ministry of Defence, the Marine Division of the Met Office remains but a small, although significant part, of the whole. Under the supervision of the Chief Executive, there are four directorates administering operations, three devoted to research and further divisions covering all the commercial and financial activities of the Office. Between them the divisions administer about 25 branches concerned with many activities, some of which are listed below:

Collection and distribution of weather observations over the oceans, the land and in the air;

Forecasting for defence, the aviation industry, shipping, commerce and the general public;

Instrument development, construction and installation;

Telecommunications and computing;

Defence services;

Research into methods of all areas of observation and forecasting, global warming and atmospheric processes (including the Met Research Flight);

Consultation, marketing, production and sales of commercial weather services for the manufacturing and service industries, and local and central government administration;

Finance, office administration and personnel management;

The Met Office's own college near Reading, Berkshire.

The Met Office produces an A4, full colour brochure entitled *Weather Services for Shipping*, available free from the Press Office, Met Office, London Road, Bracknell, Berks RG12 2SZ., telephone 01344 856655, fax 01344 854942. This includes much useful and interesting data which small boat users as well as ship owners will find helpful. ↓

John Houghton is Nautical Officer, Publications, at the Observations (Marine) Branch of the Met Office.

"What Load Capacity Should Your Sea Kayak Have?"

The reasons to buy a special model of a sea kayak are very different. Image, design, workmanship, weight and equipment can be buying-arguments. Other criteria might concern the waterline length, beam, rockered hull, cross-section, fish or Swedish form hull etc. But there are arguments, too, which make the recommendation of a more or less competent friend or dealer as a criterion to buy a kayak. And some times the most important attribute of a sea kayak will be the information, that a well known and very experienced sea kayaker owns a special sea kayak.

In the last I.S.K.A.-Newsletter I published an international "Buyer's Directory" of single sea kayaks made out of GRP/PE. All of them you can buy in Europe. The specified technical datas shall help you to make a first selection. But don't forget: The final selection you should do only after paddling with a kayak within realistic sea conditions.

Don't forget the volume!

As everybody buys a sea kayak to transport his body and gear over the sea, I think one main criteria of selection must be the "displacement" (volume) of a sea kayak. If its volume is too low, you will have a very wet ride with your kayak, because it will splash like a surfaced "submarine". And if it is too high, your kayak will have much windage and it will drift like a "sailing-boat" without keel. To get an impression about the range of different displacements I graded the kayaks from the smallest volume (233-litres) up to the highest (502-litres). Now it is your job to find out the kayak with the volume you really need.

Fortunately many European manufacturers of sea kayaks point out the volume of their kayaks. However it is a pity that there are only very few producers (e.g. "P&H", "Lettmann"), who help you to find out the minimal and maximal carrying capacity. But what will you do, when most of the manufacturers and dealers will tell you nothing about the weight capacity of the sea kayak, you want to buy? So I know a local dealer of English sea kayaks, who is convinced that all his sea kayaks (its volume runs from 275-395 litres) are suitable for everybody irrespective of their bodyweight (plus gear). He tells there is no minimal weight carrying capacity for his boats. Further on to his mind a sea kayaker will only reach the maximal weight carrying capacity of his boats when he will put stones in the compartments. Besides that, how can you recognize, if the recommended range of kayak weight capacity is correct? When I compared the recommendations of several producers I noticed that there are considerable differences. I do not know the reason why, but I think that some producers do not recognize, that the "*Minimal Weight Carrying Capacity*" (WC_{min}) of a "sea" kayak should be higher than that of a "river" kayak, and the "*Maximal Weight Carrying Capacity*" (WC_{max}) could be higher than that of a "river" kayak.

Therefore I tried to develop some formulas which give you an impression about the approximate size of the sea kayak weight capacity. But consider, this is only a first attempt to get some general hints about the weight capacity, because these formulas base on my own vague experiences and on the various more or less vague recommendations, which the producers give, when they present their kayaks in advertisements or leaflets. I hope the discussion of these formulas will show in future, if the formulas have to be changed to get more realistic results!

Where are the limits?

The idea of these formulas bases on the simple knowledge, that a kayak can swim only over the water when the amount of kilograms, the kayak has to transport (= weight), is less than the amount of litres, the body of the kayak will fill out (= volume):

$$(1) \quad \text{Kilograms (total)} < \text{Litres (total)} \quad \rightarrow \quad W_r + c < V$$

with: W_r : real weight (body plus gear) (in kg)
 c : weight of the kayak, clothes, PFD and paddle (in kg)
 V : volume (in litres).

You can determine the minimal and maximal weight carrying capacity of a sea kayak with the help of formula (2) and (3):

$$(2) \quad WC_{\min} \approx a \times V - c$$

$$(3) \quad WC_{\max} \approx b \times V - c$$

with: $WC_{\min/\max}$: minimal/maximal weight carrying capacity (in kg)

V : volume (total) (in litres)

$a \approx 0.3$: coefficient for the lower bound (producers usually work with a : 0.21–0.31)

$b \approx 0.6$: coefficient for the upper bound (producers usually work with b : 0.37–0.67)

$c \approx 35$ kg: circa-weight of the kayak plus clothes, PFD and paddle.

That means: If a sea kayak has a volume of 300 litres, the sea kayaker should carry at least round about 55kg ($=0.3 \times 300 - 35$) within in his kayak (= bodyweight and weight of the gear). And in a 300-litres-sea-kayak he should not store more than about 145kg ($=0.6 \times 300 - 35$). The datas for a 400-litres-sea-kayak are: $WC_{\min/\max} \approx 85/205$ kg.

What are the problems?

What happens, when your real bodyweight plus gear ($=W_r$) is lower than WC_{\min} ? The larger the difference the greater the problem of windage! When you will not have any wind on the sea and there are no waves, it does not matter. Your sea kayak is okay! But what happens when you will get wind force 5 or 6 respectively you want to paddle within a breaker-zone? When there are such rough conditions on the sea you must be a very proficient and strong sea kayaker, otherwise you would not be able to handle that kayak. You will get problems to paddle:

- * within waves, because your kayak will be tippier than usual (less stability).
- * windward, because it is more difficult to maintain speed (high wind resistance).
- * downwind, because your kayak does not track well.
- * alongside the wind, because you will drift aside very much and you must lean your body very strong against the wind to avoid capsizing. Furthermore it is difficult for you to turn your kayak to windward or downwind.
- * against waves, because you will splash over the waves and slam on the downside of the wave. When you want to launch through breakers it might happen much earlier, that your kayak will flipp backwards with the breakers or will get vertical and turn over.

Besides that you will have problems rolling that kayak because the kayak will drift aside so quick that your body will no longer hang upside down in a 90° position. The consequence will be that you only have a chance to roll, when you roll up on the wind side. And what happens with such a kayak when you have to practice a wet exit? If you let off your kayak it could drift away quicker than you can swim.

But there are also problems when W_r is higher than WC_{\max} ! At first it is harder to manoeuver your kayak and you might experience sluggishness. Furthermore, when you will have rough sea conditions you will have a very wet ride with your kayak. The bow of your kayak will dive through each wave and the water will splash all over your sprayshirt. When you will go through breakers your kayak will cut straightforward through the sea but your chest will feel the whole power of the breaking waves. And when you will surf, your kayak will plunge, when riding in on steepening waves, and the wave will reach till your body. If the water is cold you will fell cold too, and might suffer hypothermia within a short time. Therefore it is wise to wear a dry or wet suit, when paddling a sea kayak which WC_{\max} is to low.

That are the reasons why it is important to pay attention when you will paddle on the sea with a kayak while your real weight W_r lies outside the limits of WC_{\min} and WC_{\max} . If you are not sure the weather and sea conditions will stay harmless do not launch with such a boat. And when the sea conditions will get stormy it is wise to go to land.

Further Recommendations

If you want to rent a sea kayak, look out for one where your bodyweight plus gear lies within that limits. And when you want to buy a sea kayak? You can find the recommended volume (V_{recom}) of your sea kayak with the help of formula (4). But you must really know, how much weight you will carry usually in your kayak, because it would be wise, when the amount of this weight (plus: $c \approx 35$ kg) would lie approximate in the middle between WC_{\min} and WC_{\max} :

$$(4) \quad V_{\text{recom}} \approx (W_r + c) \div d$$

with: V_{recom} : recommended volume (in litres),

W_r : real weight (body plus gear), $c \approx 35$ kg, $d = (a + b) \div 2 \approx 0,45$.

That means: If you have a bodyweight of 55kg respectively 80kg and if you prefer to carry 30kg gear (for example during a weekend-trip) you should choose a sea kayak which has a volume of about 267 litres $(=(55+30+35)\div 0,45)$ (with: $WC_{min/max} \approx 45/125kg$) respectively 322 litres $(=(80+30+35)\div 0,45)$ (with $WC_{min/max} \approx 62/158kg$).

No rules without exceptions!

I hope the formulas (2)-(4) will enable you to find a sea kayak, which has a suitable volume for you. The nearer the real volume of your kayak lies to the recommended volume, the better it is for you, because you will get the least problems, if once you will carry fewer gear (e.g. you make a day trip) or more gear (e.g. week-long expedition).

But there are some exceptions that make it recommendable to increase the coefficient "d":

1. If you know, you will carry always the same amount of weight, because you make only weekend trips with your kayak or because you own two sea kayaks, e.g. one kayak for day tripping and another for multi-week journeys, the factor "d" can exceed 0,45 to get a boat with a lower windage.
2. Especially when you prefer to paddle within roughest water and highest winds I would advise to increase "d" till 0,5-0,55, for it is my opinion that the "ideal" value for "d" lies within this scope.
3. Further on if you want to buy a sea kayak for a week-long expedition it would be wise when "d" lies near by "b" (≈ 0.6), because during your expedition the weight, you have to carry, will decrease and consequently the volume of your kayak will remain a longer time near by the recommend volume (V_{recom}). Besides that your "expedition" sea kayak will still suit you, when you go on "smaller" expeditions.

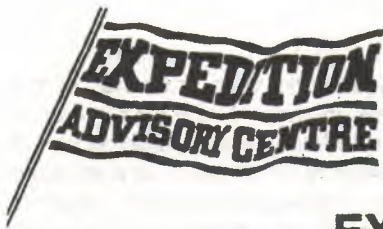
For example: Your bodyweight totals 90kg. You plan to carry 80kg expedition-gear. And your standard-gear (c) reaches about 35kg. Then your expedition-weight amounts: $W_{r+c}=(90+80+35)=205kg$ and - when $d=0.6$ - you will calculate $V_{recom}\approx 342$ litres $(=(170+35)\div 0.6)$. By the way a 342-litres sea kayak has a $WC_{max}\approx 170kg$ $(=0.6\times 342-35)=W_r$. That is okay, because you intended to reach with your real load WC_{max} at the first day of your expedition. Besides you will have the chance to end up your expedition without falling short of $WC_{min}\approx 68kg$ of your 342-litres sea kayak, because your real weight (W_r) will lie at the end of your tour about 150kg $(=85(\downarrow)+30(\downarrow)+35)$. Provided you agree with this calculation you will find a suitable sea kayak for you: at the beginning of your expedition you would have a wet ride but very little windage, and at the end of your journey - when you will get weaker - the ride and windage is still acceptable. Further more your 342-litres "expedition"-sea-kayak will be also suitable to you when you use it as a day-tripper, because your approximate real weight of 100kg $(=90+10(=day\ load))$ exceeds sufficient $WC_{min}\approx 68kg$.

No informations, no calculations!

The formulas (2)-(4) give you a first hint, which volume should a sea kayak have, if you want to rent or buy one. If you reject this way of calculating the carrying capacity respectively the recommended volume, you must have an alternative way to determine the amount of volume your sea kayak should have. I don't think it is wise to believe always what the manufacturer or your local dealer will tell to you, because a dealer is normally interested in selling one of his kayaks, but it is *y o u* who must paddle the kayak when the wind reaches force 6 or 7. Therefore it would be better for you to change the data of "a", "b" and "d" a little bit than to ignore complete these formulas.

However you can forget these calculations, when you have neither any hints about the volume of the sea kayak you want to rent or buy nor you have the possibility to determine the volume by yourself. So what? How can you find a kayak which is suitable to you? Generally but not always you have a chance to recognize if the kayak fits to you, when you sit down in the cockpit. "You must wear the boat rather than sitting in it!" If the space within the cockpit is too narrow you need no formulas, because you feel that this kayak will be the wrong one for you. But if the cockpit is too spacious and you will feel the need for much padding to hold you in place you should take warning, because a roomy cockpit could be an indicator that the sea kayak has too much volume for you!

Udo Beier, Hamburg (Germany)



USER'S GUIDE TO THE EXPEDITION ADVISORY CENTRE

Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR (tel. 0171-581 2057, fax 0171 584 4447)

The Expedition Advisory Centre is the office of the Royal Geographical Society which provides information and training to those planning an expedition overseas. It is funded by Shell International Petroleum Company under a nine-year sponsorship agreement.

The EAC is mainly concerned with those planning scientific expeditions overseas, mostly at undergraduate level, and through its association with the Young Explorers' Trust, those leading school or youth expeditions. The Centre also helps those planning adventurous activities abroad including mountaineering, caving, canoeing and underwater expeditions, those wishing to join an expedition and, to a limited extent, independent and overland travellers.

Services for Expedition Leaders

For those involved in planning their own expeditions we offer a range of services:

Expedition Planners' Handbook & Directory 1993-94

This is the primary source of information on expedition planning. Anyone considering organising their own venture should purchase a copy and read it carefully. All chapters are written by experienced expeditioners and cover all aspects of planning an expedition from its inception to final report. A major section identifies research projects in arctic, tropical forest, wetland, mountain, desert and savanna, ecosystems, followed by detailed advice on fieldwork techniques. Further chapters cover leadership and teamwork, youth expeditions, the logistics of deserts, tropical forest, arctic, mountain, caving, canoeing and river expeditions; medicine, photography, fundraising and budgeting, legal liability, post-expedition reports, lecturing and writing-up. Directories give details of grant-giving organisations, reference sources (especially scientific institutes with specialist libraries), and lists of manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, food and travel services.

Several of the chapters and directories are available for sale as individual booklets. These include *Fundraising for expeditions* which includes the directory of grant-giving organisations; *Reference sources for expeditions* which includes the chapter on pre-expedition research and a directory; *Insurance for expeditions*; and the *Guide to writing expedition reports*.

Expedition Planning Seminar

This two-day annual symposium held over a weekend each November gives expedition planners an opportunity to hear lectures from, and discuss their plans with, a large number of people involved in the expedition world. Each day usually takes the form of talks in the morning, with a long lunch break to meet speakers and look at the many exhibits. In the afternoon workshops are held on the logistics of operating in different terrains, and field research topics. The *Expedition Planners' Handbook and Directory* draws heavily on the expertise available at this event.

Country Factsheets

For those who have identified the country they wish to visit and have an outline of what they would like to do, the EAC produces *Country Factsheets*. These include general regulations pertaining to expeditions in that country, useful addresses and contacts in the UK and host country, and a reading list. Attached as appendices are notes on the availability of maps, abstracts of past expedition reports held by the RGS Map Room, and details including names and addresses of leaders who have recently planned expeditions to that country. Factsheets cost approximately £6.50 each and are limited to one (or very occasionally two) per expedition. As these are compiled and/or updated for each enquiry only those seriously intending to plan an expedition should apply. The more unusual the destination the longer they take to compile, so please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

continued overleaf...

Grants for expeditions

The Expedition Advisory Centre is an advisory body and does not give grants to expeditions or individuals. The EAC publication *Fundraising for expeditions* includes helpful tips, a directory of over 70 grant-giving organisations, and sources of further funding information, and is particularly aimed at those planning undergraduate fieldwork abroad. A short article on *Charity fundraising expeditions* is also available on request.

The Royal Geographical Society gives approval and grant-aid to those expeditions with a significant scientific content; full details and a grant application form can be obtained from the Grants Secretary, Expedition Office, Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR (please enclose an A4 stamped addressed envelope).

The Young Explorers' Trust gives approval and grant aid to expeditions whose members are predominantly under the age of 19. Those who apply to YET are *not* eligible to apply to the RGS as well. Application forms can be obtained from Ted Grey, Stretton Cottage, Wellow Road, Ollerton, Newark, Notts. NG22 9AX.

The Mount Everest Foundation, administered jointly by the Alpine Club and RGS, awards grants to expeditions proposing mountaineering exploration and research in high mountain regions. Application forms available from W.H. Ruthven, MEF, Gowrie, Cardwell Close, Warton, Preston PR4 1SH.

The Society also administers two major awards for overseas research. The *Whitley Award for Animal Conservation* is a single annual prize of £15,000 for field projects directly concerned with the protection and conservation of animals in their habitat. The biennial *Gilchrist Expedition Award* of £10,000 is for a senior (i.e. post-doctoral) overseas research project. Full details of both awards are available from the Grants Secretary at the RGS (see above).

Register of Planned Expeditions

All those planning an expedition are requested to complete a form for the **Register of Planned Expeditions** which asks for a contact name, address and phone number, number of members in the team, dates in the field, budget and overall aim and supporting objectives, and sample copies of the expedition letterhead and brochure. This is used to provide contact between expeditions going out in the same and subsequent years (usually as appendices to the *Country Factsheets*), but also for enquiries from the media and potential sponsors. Those who have registered with the EAC will automatically be sent mailings about forthcoming events organised by the EAC.

Expedition Yearbooks

At the beginning of the year the EAC writes to all registered expeditions asking them how they got on, requesting that they update the details on their original form, and inviting them to submit a two page-summary report for inclusion in the *Expedition Yearbook*. There are guidelines on how to produce yearbook entries which asks for suggestions for

possible follow-up work. The Yearbooks bridge the gap between the completion of the expedition and the production of the final report. Thus the Yearbooks not only provide a record of the expeditions which went out in any particular year but also provide examples of the type of fieldwork that can be carried out and suggest ideas for future research.

Map Room of the RGS

The Map Room at the Royal Geographical Society contains an important reference collection of maps donated from all parts of the world. No appointment is necessary. Opening hours are Monday-Friday, 10am to 5pm. The Map Room is closed at weekends and Bank Holidays, and for stock-taking from mid-June to mid-July. Large format photocopying facilities are available subject to copyright and security restrictions. A small selection of maps are available for sale.

Past expedition reports

The RGS Map Room also houses a unique collection of past expedition reports now numbering over 3,000. These reports are indexed by country,

continent and year. Abstracts of the reports on any particular country can be obtained from the EAC either as part of the *Country Factsheet* or as a separate listing. The collection includes accounts of expeditions supported by the Royal Geographical Society, Young Explorers' Trust, Mount Everest Foundation, and WEXAS among others, and more reports are always welcome. All expeditions are encouraged to write reports which can be deposited at the RGS for future use by expedition planners.

Expedition Planning tutorials

As your ideas start to take shape you may want to come and discuss your plans with someone at the Centre. It is helpful if you have consulted the *Expedition Planners' Handbook*, appropriate *Country Factsheet* and past expedition reports before this meeting. A project proposal and/or draft brochure sent in advance will help us to understand what you are trying to achieve. Please write or telephone for an appointment, at least a fortnight in advance. In cases where a university is organising a number of expeditions, it may be possible for a member of the Centre staff to visit you provided that travel expenses are paid.

Services for independent and overland travellers

The EAC holds a biennial **Independent Travellers' Seminar** in May. The programme includes talks combining practical advice with traveller's tales, with course notes on *Sources of Information for Independent and Overland Travellers*, a booklet which is revised annually (and also available for sale separately). Regrettably, we do not have the resources to answer detailed enquiries but when we can suggest a relevant publication or key advisor, we will do so.

Services to sister organisations and university exploration societies

The EAC maintains contact with many scientific and youth organisations and sends an annual mailing to over 1,000 key contacts, usually at the start of the academic year in September/October. In addition, the Centre provides a link to University Exploration Societies and can support their activities, by providing a *List of Lecturers on Expedition Topics*, notes on establishing a University Exploration Society and contact with experienced clubs.

Services for those wishing to join an expedition or recruit members for their expedition

A booklet entitled *Joining an Expedition* lists organisations which regularly arrange expeditions abroad, and gives guidelines on choosing a project and fundraising. This is updated annually. For those with specialist skills to offer (doctors, nurses, mechanics, scientists, etc.) there is a **Register of Personnel Available for Expeditions**. Those wishing to have their names and CV's added to this register should ask for the appropriate form.

In addition the EAC compiles a **Bulletin of Expedition Vacancies** which gives details of expeditions seeking members, or senior personnel with particular skills or qualifications. This is updated regularly and is available upon request.

Leaders wishing to recruit members for their own expeditions may consult the register at the EAC, by appointment only please. No typed list of candidates is kept, so if there is a particular skill or type of person you require, but you cannot visit the Centre, then please supply us with a detailed job description and we shall try and look through the register for you and photocopy any possible forms. A small charge to cover copying and postage costs may be needed. Leaders are also welcome to advertise through the **Bulletin of Expedition Vacancies** by sending in a paragraph giving the expedition name, a brief outline of objectives, skills required, time in the field, cost, contact number and any other relevant information.

Further information on publications & forthcoming events

Publications and forthcoming seminars are listed in our general brochure which is revised annually. Should you wish to receive details of future events or publications, please contact the Centre staff:

Shane Winsor (Information Officer)

Dave Edwards (University Expeditions Advisor)

Fay Hercod (Administrative Officer)

30 Day Crossing of the Atlantic by Sea Kayak

From time to time, I receive a copy of the excellent French publication 'Canoë - Kayak'. The November 1994 edition tells of an amazing feat by 22 year old French kayaker Mathieu Morverand.

On 26 May 1994, Morverand departed Cape Cod, USA in his 8 metre long kayak named 'The Capitaine Cook'. Paddling 10 hours in every 24, he took 80 days to reach Brest.

The 8m kayak was custom built from carbon kevlar for his epic journey. Weighing 450kg fully loaded, and 1.2m wide, it had sleeping quarters forward of the cockpit and storage in the rear. Equipment included a desalinator, radar, marine band radio, satellite navigation system, sextant and compass. He used four different paddles, all made of wood, with different lengths: 2.65m, 2.33m, 2.35m, and 2.37m.

During his voyage he capsized 18 times, six while in the cockpit. He declined offers from passing cargo ships to give up his voyage but gladly accepted gifts of food to compliment his diet of freeze dried food.

At times he was accompanied by many types of sea birds and on one occasion a giant blue whale swam along side him for five hours. Dolphins and orca also paid him visits.

As with many people who undertake long distance sea voyages on their own, many of Mathieu Morverand's comments on his experience are filled with references to the spiritual dimension of the voyage and the mystery and beauty of the sea.

Over 4,000 people welcomed him into Brest and he was met by a large flotilla of sea kayakers. The reunion with family was emotional and since his return, he has been working on a book of his epic journey. Let's hope it is published in an English edition.

If anyone wishes to have a photocopy of the article (it is in French) contact Vincent Maire (09) 424 2293 evenings.

Vincent Maire

SKINBOATS OF GREENLAND

by H.C. Petersen

Ships and Boats of the North
Volume 1

Published 1986 jointly by The National Museum of Denmark, The Museum of Greenland and the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde.

Hardback, 104 X 168cms, 215 pages
ISBN 87 85180 084

English and Danish language editions

This book ranks on a par with Adney and Chappelle's *The Bark Canoes and Skin Kayaks of North America* as an authoritative historical document. H.C. Petersen was born in Greenland in 1929 and grew up with a traditional Inuit family lifestyle. He became concerned with threats to the cultural identity of Greenland Inuits by the transformation from a hunter's culture to that of an industrialized society. In the author's foreword, he quotes one of the great kayak seal hunters:

It would be all too sad if the kayak, which has made it possible for our forefathers to exist in this harsh country, that vessel which developed out of their experiences and which has also formed the basis for the existence of my generation, should be lost forever when we die.

To counteract this continuing loss of knowledge and hard won experience, Petersen began collecting and presenting all available evidence on the building and use of the Greenland kayaks.

The book is in two parts, the first on kayaks and the second on umiaks. Chapter headings for the kayak section are:

Construction of the kayak

The shape of the kayak and its development

Kayak gear and fittings

The major emphasis is on constructional details of kayaks and hunting equipment, with a fair number of good photographs and diagrams to supplement the text. A glossary lists 347 kayaking terms in Greenlandic, Danish and English. I was a little disappointed by lack of historical photographs of the various styles of kayaks and a lack of detail on paddling techniques and suitability of different boats for various conditions but Petersen hopes to have the time for a second monograph on a description of Man and the Kayak, the cultural area which the kayak has created in the lives of the Inuit.

I have only skimmed through the book so far but one story appealed to me and will give you an idea of the descriptive writing style used throughout the book:

My father told me of old Nikooq whose deeds in his prime were remembered with awe. The men sat one evening and reminisced about the great kayakers while the roar of the storm could be heard from far away.

Nikooq's eyes shone. The next morning the storm raged with unabated force. Nikooq came out of his house with a kayak suit on. Because of his age he had almost stopped taking his kayak out to sea. Now he carried his kayak down to the sea, made ready his harpoon and then sailed out alone. In the afternoon he appeared again with a large saddle seal in tow. His face was burned red by sea spray. The seal was pulled in and the folk flocked around him. Remarks were made about his age. "If that seal could talk, it would have quite a tale to tell," he said and went to his wife.

OCEANOGRAPHY

IN ABOUT four years time, the coastline of northern Europe will be invaded by thousands of plastic ducks. In 1992, a ship carrying 29,000 of the yellow bath toys was wrecked, on its way from Hong Kong to the US.

American oceanographers grasped the nettle, using the ducks to study ocean currents. They tracked the ducks progress, first to the Bering Straits and then further north to their present, temporary resting place in the frozen waters of the North Pole. They predict that the ducks will start their invasion of British shores in about 1999.

Vince Smith
3 Rossall Road
Lytham St Annes, Lancashire
FY8 4ES

21/4/95

Dear John,

Below is my account of my little rescue which you wanted for I.S.K.A. You have my full permission to amend it.

I just want to relate an episode of how easy it is to have an incident, no matter how safe you think you are. I took a complete beginner out in a kayak whilst I pottered about in my husband's kayak keeping a watchful eye on him. I'd put the wrong spray deck onto my kayak and it wouldn't fit properly. But being a crew member of Lytham St Annes Lifeboat I thought I would be alright, especially since I knew the River Ribble as I'd done quite a few exercises in it.

I was opposite our Lifeboat station and our chief mechanic, Tony West, was keeping his eye on us. Martin in the Skerray capsized and as I wasn't quite used to paddling a Nordkapp it took a little while before I reached him. I thought I could handle the situation and I just got him back into the Skerray when he capsized again and drifted off holding the kayak. I had my paddle and also his to contend with. Mine being a left handed paddle and his being a right handed one. Ever tried to paddle with two paddles with the blades on one being different than the other, it's not easy. By the time I got to him again he'd drifted off down the Ribble towards the open sea. Our main big boat was moored nearby and I tried to make a grab for it, but couldn't. I'd left my VHF radio back at the boat house, but I did have some mini flares on me. I shouted to Martin that I had better set off a flare when I noticed Tony and John (another crew member) launching our mini in-shore boat down by the jetty. When they eventually got up to us my first question was "I hope this isn't going into the book". I then told them to rescue Martin and take him to shore as he'd been in the water for about 20 minutes, and then to come back and get me. When they came back to get me they found me still sitting in the Nordkapp but holding onto 2 paddles and a Skerray full of water sat in breaking surf with water coming in. They eventually towed me to shore with me desperately holding onto the Skerray. I was not going to let go as it was my boat.

Yes I should have known better.

- Taking a complete beginner out in the first place
- The spray deck on my boat not fitting
- A gusting Force 5-6, with an off shore wind and ebbing tide

So I could have had a mini Lyme Regis on my hands

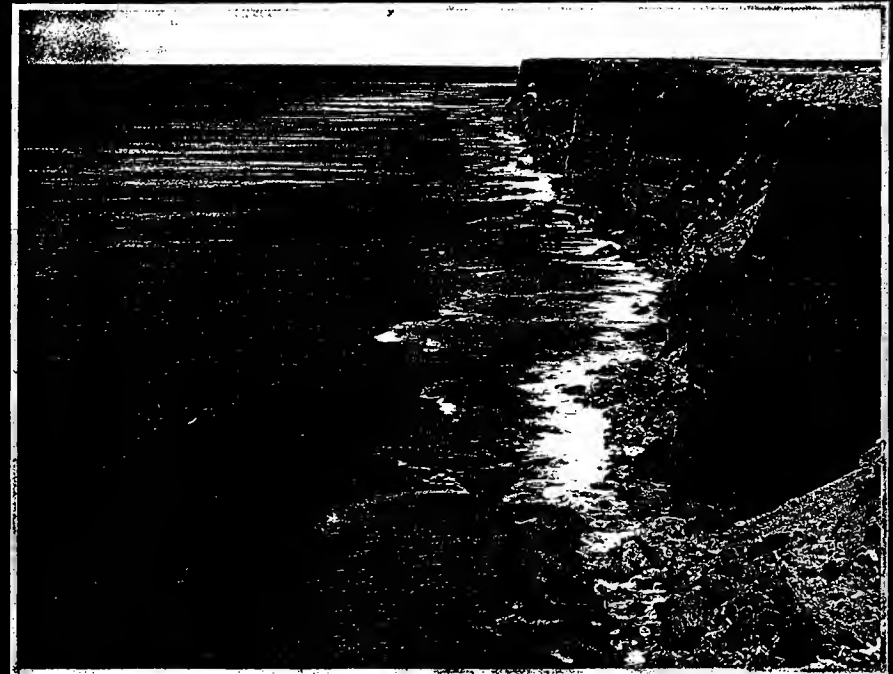
On a lighter note though. Of all the trips and crossings I've done. Of all the rough seas I've done battle with without a hitch (Ask Frank Goodman) And I have to get rescued on my own patch by my fellow crew members. Murphy's Law.

Diane Smith.

P.S. Now when I arrive at the Lifeboat station when my pager has gone off, I have crew members asking me if I've come for the "shout" or to be rescued.

P.P.S. Hello to Mike at LCG.

3 Rossall Road, Ansdell, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, FY8 4ES



AROUND AUSTRALIA KAYAK ODYSSEY

The Dreamtime Voyage is Paul Caffyn's own story of one of the most remarkable journeys ever undertaken by kayak - the first kayak circumnavigation of Australia, a 360 day, 9,420 mile epic.

It is an inspirational tale of one man's dogged determination to fulfill his impossible dream against all odds, including tropical cyclones, raging surf, sharks, crocodiles, sea snakes and long sections of sheer limestone cliffs.

John Dowd, author of *Sea Kayaking*, described the voyage as follows:

Amongst sea kayakers, Paul Caffyn is almost in a class of his own. For the longest time after he finished his awesome solo circumnavigation of Australia, the silence was deafening: few of his peers knew the significance of what he had done, and perhaps those who understood felt lost in his shadow. Not only is Paul's Australian adventure a pinnacle for sea kayaking, it should eventually be recognized as one of the great small voyages of recent history along with those of Slocum, Shackleton and Franz Romer.

The narrative is a blend of early maritime history, exciting dramatic moments, descriptions of the harshness and beauty of the vast Australian landscape, interaction with the coastal dwellers at work and play and humorous interludes with his New Zealand support crew.

Paul's Dreamtime voyage was also a journey of self discovery. For four months in Northern Australia, he paddled solo with no chance of rescue in the event of a single mistake. Particularly in the Kimberleys, Paul journeyed into the twilight zone of his own dreaming. The gruelling overnight stints along the three sets of cliffs provide compelling reading.

The Dreamtime Voyage will inspire all those people who dream about adventuring to begin setting their own dreams into reality.

THE AUTHOR

When not sea kayaking, Paul Caffyn lives on the edge of the Tasman Sea on New Zealand's South Island West Coast. He works as a coal exploration geologist, a job which takes him deep underground in the local mines. Although Paul has been canoeing since childhood he only took up serious sea kayaking in 1977. In the following decade he notched up over 25,000 miles with the first kayak circumnavigations of New Zealand, Great Britain, Australia and Japan.

Paul has made two attempts to kayak across the Tasman Sea from Tasmania to New Zealand. In 1991 Paul completed an unsupported solo, arduous 4,700 mile kayak trip around the coastline of Alaska from Prince Rupert to Inuvik.

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