



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 No. 15

MAY 1997

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#### EDITORIAL

We've moved with the times....at last! I now have Internet with E Mail and electronic fax. We've even got a page on the web site. ISKA is in cyber space.

I was particularly taken with Stuart Fishers' editorial in the recent copy of his magazine, CANOEIST. He was on my soap box in that he was saying how opportunities for young people in outdoor activities has diminished for a variety of reasons. The two main reasons have to be lack of resources and lack of opportunity. Why these two reasons predominate are obvious to most of us and Stuart touched on many of them. The public attitude towards to the car is changing as pollution increases and it is highly likely that such mode of transport will become restricted over the years ahead. Without our own vehicles we are stuck with carrying gear and kayaks to our chosen launch spots.

On top of this is the accreditation of outdoor centres in line with the Jamieson Bill. Though we need safety in outdoor education, and this must be enforced and paid for; we still need adventure opportunities. Are you prepared to be responsible for young people on the water in the present climate of blame and accountability? I have just joined a local canoe club which specialises in K boat racing and, eager as it is to encourage youngsters, at a recent 'start of season' meeting there was much reluctance - understandably- to become host to young people whose parents saw the club as an opportunity to off load the kids whilst they went off to do other things. The answer has to be much more parental involvement. I tend to be a bit despondent as I have spent a nearly life time looking after the results of parents who have children but then fail to provide time for them.

Anyway, ISKA is not here to solve the problems of the universe but I thought it worth mentioning that we could and should all do more to encourage young people into outdoor activities. Sea kayaking has traditionally attracted older people but I've seen youngsters get a real kick out of living from a kayak as they kayak and camp their way along the coast.

In my last Editorial (March 1997) I mentioned the spread of the need for international coaching awards and official recognition of safety standards for outdoor education centres. Things have moved on apace recently in that the NORDKAPP TRUST has been founded. Several centres feature in the Trust brochure and these do so on the grounds they meet basic standards. The introductory statement of the Trust reads as follows: "The Nordkapp Trust was set up in 1990 in Great Britain by Frank Goodman, Nigel Dennis and John Ramwell as an organisation to promote safe sea kayaking world wide. In accord with its aim of promoting kayaking skills as the best way to promote safe sea kayaking safety, the Nordkapp Trust appointed several sea kayaking centres in North america to be instrumental in conducting the British Canoe Union (BCU) sanctioned sea kayak courses. These centres are staffed with instructors, holding BCU Instructional Certificates and are using the services of visiting BCU coaches from Great Britain to provide high calibre instruction".

Returning to the coaching scheme back here in the U.K. It is the case, as I understand it, that Regional Coaching Officers have to approve coaching courses. These need to be approved well ahead of their schedule to allow the coaching calendar to be published in good time. This allows for interested parties to plan ahead and ensures that there is not a 'glut' of courses which may end in poor attendance. This official approval also ensures that the right standards regarding skills and safety are maintained on these coaching courses. All very applaudable. The problem is that, like many other forms of bureaucracy, it can be abused. I know of one particular centre which is being forced out of business by the coaching panel in its' area refusing it the right to run coaching courses. They are able to find some slight pretext for so doing, but the real reason, I suspect, is to prevent the centre, which is one of world wide renown, hogging all the courses which they would like to see run by local coaches and instructors. What about free market forces and the right of people to make choices !! I may have more to say on this situation as it continues to unfold.

One of my favourite charities is the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It is not always appreciated that this charity receives no support from the tax payer. The crews are all volunteers, and while only the mechanic on the off shore boats is fully paid (to ensure that the boats are always ready for launching), the remainder of the crew only receive very small expenses when they are called out to a 'shout'. The RNLI launched some 5,000 times in 1996 and up to the end of November '96, had saved 1,025 lives. The cost of running the Lifeboat service in 1996 was 63 million pounds, money which is raised totally by voluntary contributions. Doubtless many of you are members of Shoreline. If not, and you are interested, then you by contacting: The Royal National Lifeboat join could Institution, West Ouay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ, sending 15 pounds as a years subscription A letter from Vertebrate Graphics, 20, Woodstock Road, Sheffield, S7 1HB, tel: 0114 258 1081

#### Dear Sir,

Please can you assist me in putting together a diary of competitive outdoor events for the U.K. calendar May to October, 1977. This calendar will feature in a magazine to be distributed as an insert throughout the established outdoor press (initial run is anticipated to be @ 120,000 copies). You will be credited in return for any information you can supply me with. O. Henry said: "The true adventurer goes forth aimless and uncalculating to meet and greet unknown fate." But he added that a good example was the Prodigal Son - when he started back home! Just as all the best jokes usually have some element of truth within them, I'm sure that canoeing as an adventure sport must have its element of the unknown if it is to remain worthwhile.

Because of my own strong belief in 'adventure' I was particularly interested in two adjacent articles in the March copy of ISKA magazine: first Geoff Good's piece about Chris Bonnington's keynote speech at a recent outdoor education conference, and then John's editorial discussing the place of the BCU coaching scheme abroad.

Of course, I realised at once that the subject of John's editorial was not chosen at random but was the result of someone bending his ear, and probably twisting his arm as well, in line with recent changes in the Coaching Scheme and its impact on foreign instruction.

The two articles together raise fundamental issues that have always been at the heart of adventure education in general and sea-canoeing in particular.

Geoff has empathy with Chris Bonnington, as I'm sure most of us have, when he says that the best learning situations come out of self-discovery. However, Geoff is quite right when he says we must not disregard safety. The problem is that if the canoeists who really <u>do</u> know what paddling is about don't define 'safety' very carefully, people who know nothing of the sport will come in from outside and make a few arbitrary rules - as the sea-canoeists in France know to their cost!

So it is important that we continually ask ourselves questions about safety; what level of safety is required; what do we recognise as safe; does everyone agree? But more importantly, we must continually explain to individuals, and groups outside canoeing what is actually safe and what is actually dangerous even though it looks safe. And of course vice versa. When I was designing the Slalom Course at H.P. 'safety experts' wanted to put a big net at the down-stream end "to stop paddlers drifting out into the River Trent where there were 'dangerous undercurrents'". I had the devil's own job to convince them that 'dangerous undercurrents' in the Trent were a myth and that a net across the course would certainly drown canoeists on a very regular basis!

However, I do think Chris Bonnington is a just a little off track if he imagines that 'safety' in itself stifles adventure. Rather it is <u>ill-conceived ideas of what safety is</u> that can do damage. I've known Geoff for twenty years, and his article only confirms what I already knew... that he sees canoeing as an adventure, and that the Coaching Scheme should enhance rather than detract from this. But we must concede that a coaching scheme might well stifle initiative and adventure if it was not planned properly. I've always been aware of how hard Geoff has worked to make sure the BCU coaching scheme is flexible enough to allow individuals within it to teach in an appropriately flexible way and he's done a great job. (Gratuitous praise, sorry!)

I've been steadily withdrawing from 'official' canoeing chores since my retirement seven years ago, and the very last job I gave up recently was the chairmanship of the BSI Committee for the safety of Canoes and Kayaks - because at last, the Standard, which has taken well over a decade to prepare, has been published. On February 15 this year BSI Standard BS 7852: 1997 Code of Practice for Design of Canoes and Kayaks came into effect. There's a big section on sea kayaks in it, so it is worth sea paddlers taking a look. Devising a sensible standard for BSI runs parallel with the task Geoff has had in devising a sound standard for the BCU Coaching Scheme... and it is not easy! Ideally both schemes must not stifle adventure - either in kayak design or paddler performance, they must provide for basic safety requirements, must be easily understood at all levels, and provide a comprehensive reference document when things go badly wrong and people are looking for the 'book' to throw at somebody else. Beyond this it is important to try and make sure that the general tenor of the standard acts as a guide in the future so that uninformed legislation which could possibly become mandatory doesn't cramp the sport to the point where it is pointless to participate.

Unfortunately, however well devised a coaching scheme or a standard for safety may be, it can be undermined very easily by the interpretation that people bring to it. A few years ago I was helping with a sea-symposium in the States and we were running some BCU coaching courses over a number of days. We came under very heavy criticism because we had not instructed the candidates on how to enter a kayak from knee-deep water. Suddenly we found to our dismay that this small element of technique was actually the corner-stone of the sea-kayaking world, and to have failed to teach it was a heinous crime. Oh dear! oh dear! Happily we discovered that this snippet of technique had been officially removed from the BCU syllabus some years previously! Of course the whole incident was just silly, but it is this type of rigidity that can play havoc with any scheme. Poor instruction will crucify adventure whereas sound teaching will always broaden horizons.

So strong was my own aversion to the danger of over-instruction that I outlawed it from the Nordkapp Owners Meets in Anglesey which I inaugurated in the early eighties. Sea-kayakers met annually on the Mayday weekend and within the first halfhour joined groups to make various journeys around and about the island. It was quite informal. Someone would say; "I'd like to go to the Skerries. I've been before... who'd like to come? Within a few minutes a group of paddlers would be discussing the logistics of the trip and apart from a few discreet questions on a particular paddler's experience, the trip was on. Within an hour Nigel Dennis's Centre was empty - I usually collected the few people who hadn't decided where to go, or felt nervous of their abilities on the sea and took them off somewhere safe but challenging enough for them, to give them their share of adventure. Certainly there was no formal instruction and apart from a couple of 'travelogue' slide-shows with beer and wine in the evenings we spent all weekend and the Monday bank holiday as well paddling. Great! This worked perfectly for many years until John (Ramwell) persuaded me, much against my better judgement to hold a full-blown sea symposium. The Nordkapp Owners Meets had worked so well and filled such an obvious need that I was reluctant to change them, but I was persuaded, dammit.

I had helped organise the first modern sea-symposium in Maine, in 1982 and this style of meeting had been copied all over the U.S.A., so I decided to use the American model in Anglesey. In fact Stan Chladek, who was the Nordkapp agent in the Great Lakes came over to help with what was unashamedly a copy of his very successful symposia. Of course this was a wholly different kettle of fish to the Nordkapp Owners Meets, and to get it going it was obvious that Valley Canoe Products was going to have to underwrite the costs to the tune of several thousand pounds. Rather than call it the V.C.P. Symposium, it seemed appropriate to continue with the Nordkapp tradition of meets, and because the whole idea was not commercial, but about the promotion of safety on the sea, I got my own back on John (for suggesting it in the first place) by forming the Nordkapp Trust and forcing him to become a founder trustee. It is the seventh Nordkapp Trust Meet this coming May.

I do believe we have a real international rapport with sea-paddlers in the States. They often come over to Anglesey to our symposium either to lecture or just take part, and

British coaches go over there to give help and advice and to explore rugged coastlines as an after-symposium bonus.

It has worked well. Until now, at any rate.

In my retirement, like John, I had hoped to see a truly international system of coaching for sea-paddlers continue to build up... with the added satisfaction of having helped a little in its development. But under the latest set of rules the BCU Coaching Scheme is no longer a viable option for instruction and awards in the States - or anywhere abroad it seems. This is because now, a coach who receives a BCU qualification in the States will only be able to pass on an <u>inland</u> qualification to his protégé, so the whole thing becomes a non-starter. Again, if a candidate aims for a top-level award he must be conversant with other aspects of canoeing such as Rodeo and Sprint Racing. For an overseas candidate this effectively bars him from Coach Level 5., as the scheme forces him to come to the U.K. in order to cover all the syllabus. Obviously, a trip across the Atlantic simply to collect irrelevant information is not realistic. Many sea-paddlers in the States grow up where the sea is their only paddling option, simply because the distances to areas where White Water, for example exists, are huge.

This change in the rules has taken place since I indicated that the Nordkapp Trust wanted to extend the role of the BCU Coaching Scheme in the States. By expanding our existing coaching activity and monitoring it closely by appointed members of the Nordkapp Trust (USA) we felt we could help visiting BCU coaches with the courses and also help to check that the centre facilities and equipment were up to scratch etc. etc..

When I talked to Geoff last year he mentioned difficulties of control and insurance, just as John's editorial did the other day, but the Americans have always been insured up to the eyebrows anyway, and the speed of travel, its low cost and the ease of communications generally means that the policing of a BCU scheme in the U.S. in the nineties should be slightly easier than checking a similar scheme in the English borders in the nineteen sixties.

Of course, if the BCU really doesn't want the responsibility of BCU schemes running abroad, that is fine, and I respect that decision. However, in spite of the reservations Geoff expressed I don't really think this is the case. It seems that the new rules have been set up because there is paranoia in the BCU coaching ranks with regard to the name Nordkapp Trust. I thought that the strengthening of international ties between well-established organisations could only be welcomed, but I have been told that the spectre of the Nordkapp Trust as some sort of malevolent monster appeared so real to some BCU instructors that they have fiddled with the rules deliberately to make sure that overseas qualifications are chopped away. If this is true it is a great pity, and a sad reflection on their integrity too; but I wonder just what the purpose of all this is? If the idea is to prevent BCU involvement in Nordkapp Trust activities in the States, haven't they cut off their noses to spite their face? Our goal was simply to regularise our own teaching in the States and forge closer links with the BCU by continuing to ask visiting coaches to help out at the U.S. symposia. We shall hopefully continue to do this, but without using the BCU awards. A great shame, as we'll have to jump to it and present Nordkapp Trust Awards instead. No doubt, if we do a good job nobody will notice much difference in a few years time.

We really didn't want to do this... but it is March already. Our coaching courses for the year ahead are already planned and they will go ahead under the Nordkapp Trust. If the BCU can come up with a reasonable scheme for foreign participation the Trust will be glad to co-operate, but if it is true that persons unknown within the coaching scheme wish to stop collaboration between the Nordkapp Trust and the BCU then they have succeeded - for the moment anyhow. I'm sure this is not what Geoff, for one, intended, or wanted, for that matter, and I'm sure in the end he will sort it out.\* But I don't envy him the task - it will be worse than being chairman of the BSI drafting committee for the Design of Canoes and Kayaks! Isn't retirement bliss? All that leisure time and no hassle!

Frank Goodman. March 20 1997

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\* Since this article was written, the BCU Coaching Scheme format has been changed, and it seems that overseas awards will, in future, be exactly in line with the home-based product... so all's well that ends well!

Frank Goodman's experience of paddling began in 1963 and after building boats as an amateur he began designing kayaks commercially in 1970. In 1974 he designed the 'Nordkapp' sea kayak, one of which is now on permanent display in the Greenwich National Maritime Museum as a pivotal modern sea kayak design. In the same year he made a record four mile surfing run on the Severn Bore and also a sixty mile crossing of the Irish Sea from Wicklow in Eire to Aberdaron in North Wales. He was a member of a fourman British Expedition that first rounded Cape Horn in 1977 and in 1980 he organised an expedition to Baffin Island and journeyed with Inuit paddlers. He was a first division slalomist back in 1969. Over the years he's paddled on most continents. After serving on the BSI Canoe Safety Committee for twenty years, he managed another five as its chairman. He designed the artificial canoe slalom course at Holme Pierrepont which was opened in 1986 - and also the tidal course at Teesside which opened last year. As well as lecturing extensively in the U.S. Australia, etc., he has spent his latter years exploring the Atlantic coast of Ireland and the north shore of Lake Superior.

Dear Fellow Paddlers,

Attached is a letter describing my experiences building a baidarka with Mark Rogers. As you can tell from the dates on this letter and the attached letter, I have spent a long time thinking about this. But since Spring is around the corner and all paddlers' thoughts turn to a better boat, I thought that I should send this information to you. The attached letter describles our experiences in Mark Rogers' Greenland kayak and baidarka building class.

It is my sincere hope that this information will assist other paddlers in their decision to take Mark Rogers' class. If more information is required, I can be reached at the phone number and address included with the attached letter.

Sincerely,

H.L. Des Lauriers

#### 7 October 1996

Dear Fellow Paddlers,

I joyfully signed up to build a baidarka with Mark Rogers at Superior Kayaks. I was thoroughly looking forward to this workshop to learn not only how a baidarka is put together but also what made this fine kayak float and perform. I flew from California to Wisconsin, reserved 10 days at a local motel, paid the \$1100 workshop fee, and arranged for shipping the kayak to California. I told my family and friends how much I was looking forward to this wonderful vacation and positive learning experience. What occurred was the "Workshop From Hell."

We started on Sunday, 22 September 1996. A couple from South Carolina would join us on the next day to build greenland kayaks. The first day started immediately with constructing the baidarka with a lot of my questions concerning the baidarka's construction and paddling characteristics postponed by Mark Rogers to be answered at a later time. The second day became more hectic with the arrival of the second couple. Mark Rogers' stress level also increased. By the third day, my questions and class participation was under negative scrutiny by Mark Rogers. It appeared that nothing I would say or do was up to his expectations. I was told that my work was "F....d up" or to quit "F....g up" or what I had done was "s..t, s..t, s..t". A part I had spent considerable time on did not fit the boat quite well enough, Mark broke the part and threw it at my feet and said to do it over. My partner tried to explain to him that we had deliberately decided to make the part slightly bigger so we could pare it down as required. But, this explanation only made Mark angrier. It was apparent that Mark did not want to discuss his decisions or actions. At this point I stopped asking questions. I thought that this would improve the workshop's atmosphere. This did not work. The negative feedback. profanity, harassment, and lack of professionalism escalated to the point that by the end of the fifth day I decided to leave the workshop.

The evening of the fifth day, I called and told Celeste Rogers that I wished to speak with Mark. However, he was in the bathtub amd she asked what was the problem. I told her that I was leaving the workshop to return to California. Celeste said that she thought the problem was a "personality conflict", that Mark was under a lot of stress due to the workshop, and that the sixth day would be a lot better. With a great deal of reluctance, I stayed in the workshop. Mark's attitude towards me the next day did improve somewhat. However, the seventh day became far worse in the level of anger and verbal abuse than any of the previous days. That evening, we, as a class, met to discuss Mark Rogers' negative behavior and how to proceed with the workshop. I wanted to leave. One of my workshop mates did not want me to leave because he was concerned that Mark's anger would then be focused fully on him. He had been asking questions in class also. We discussed confronting Mark both one on one and then as a class. However, after discussing this at length we came to the same decision that I had made on day three. If we did confront Mark, it would have made the workshop even

#### The role of sea paddlers in marine mammal research

Sighting seals, dolphins and whales whilst sea paddling can be the highlight of a trip. Even the longest of stretches can be thrilling when accompanied by a following grey bull seal or a

parallel swimming porpoise so who do you tell about these encounters ? For most of us, perhaps, only family and paddling friends, ie the people we think may be interested. However, in addition to several locally based organizations both the Sea Watch Foundation and the Sea Mammal Research Unit are keen to receive information on sightings and non-sightings of both seals and cetaceans(porpoises, dolphins and whales).

To this end my own work is based on the development of a system of recording and reporting information which is specifically designed for use by sea kayakers. The project is being undertaken with the help of both the SMRU and the Sea Watch Foundation.

At this time I need to establish contact with sea paddlers for two reasons:

1) to form a shortlist of individuals who would be prepared to assist in a pilot scheme during the Easter period of '97. (This would involve using a recording system whilst out sea paddling anywhere in the UK).

2) to establish a register of paddlers who would like to receive further details and an information pack as the project develops. If you would like to be involved at either level I can be contacted at 21A Hayburn Crescent, Partickhill, Glasgow G11 5AY, tel 0141 337 6441.

As the 'captains' of silent pollution-free craft, sea paddlers can experience encounters with marine mammals, particularly with seals at very close quarters. If, in addition to the awe and wonderment such experiences can provide, we can assist in the study and conservation of these species then perhaps we have gone some way to deserving such encounters. Tim Morton

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protanity, and lack of professionalism

bottom of this letter.

workshop in further detail,

I have enclosed my name, address, and phone number at the

Should you wish to talk to me concerning the probably a good kayak designer and builder, but

he has serious flaws as an instructor.

paddling community.

Mark Rogers is

I have written this letter to you to ensure that this information is passed on to the

"DON'T DO IT!"

So,

we endured the workshop.

come into the shop and ask Mark about the classes we would mouth to each other

It got to be a joke with us

As people would

Mark never let up and the verbal abuse, negative

continued to the very last day of the workshop

feedback,

deal of money, time, and effort at this point

more unbearable and possibly affect the outcome of our kayaks.

We had put in a great

#### 'CHANCE FAVOURS THE PREPARED MIND' (Louis Pasteur 1822-95)

' YOU MAKE YOUR LUCK' (John Chamberlin, b.1946)

At 2230 on Friday, 14th June, 1966, Tim Oldrini and myself left Soldiers Point, Holyhead, Anglesey and headed out past North Stack to assume a compass bearing of 280 mag. Sixteen and a quarter hours later, at 1443 hrs on the Saturday, we nosed our two single seat sea kayaks into the beach adjacent to the walled harbour at Dun Laoghaire, Ireland. We had completed 60 miles to cross the central Irish Sea in conditions which can only be described as ideal.

The trip was sponsored by 'P & H Sea Kayaks' of West Hallam, Derby, who had supplied the two boats used in the crossing. I had chosen a relative newcomer, the glass fibre 'Outlander', whilst Tim was in the 'Capella', a polythene kayak brand new to their range for 1996. Both kayaks were designed by P & H's Peter Orton.

Why do it?

A good question. I remember an A.S.K.C. (as was) article many years ago in which Duncan Winning asked what people saw in open crossings, but I guess until you've been out there (which I'm sure he has too), in darkness or daylight, and sensed the thrill of isolation, tinged with the buzz of individual commitment, then that will remain a question. I know I have sensed it before, and in fact said 'never again!!'

I am conscious of first voicing it to Tim as a potential partner, one summer evening in 1995, in the 'Holly Bush' at Makeney. (Don't all good trips start in a pub!)He says I've been on about it longer than that. Either way, I had a desire to complete a trip across the central section of the Irish Sea during the year when I was 50, which I reached in January '96, partly because my father died at 50 and I wanted to mark the year for me.

However, when I examine the desire, it is difficult to pin it down to any one source, as another is my pathological fear of water. confronting that is clearly part of the challenge. These days half the stands at the NEC/ICE show have a video of some canoeist going over a waterfall towards what appears to me to be certain death. I stand amazed at the apparat lack of fear with which they shoot ever steeper falls, larger rapids and deeper gorges. I know I never could. few fellow canoeists understand, but fortunately for me, Tim does.

Next was the carrot of completing all three Irish sea crossings unescorted and in single seat kayaks. I had done the St George's Channel in 1972 and the North Channel in '86, so for me, this latest crossing would achieve a personal objective, with the possible bonus of the 'hat-trick' being a first in itself. I am not sure about that as yet and it is of lesser importance.

To Tim I think it is safe to say it was just another trip. Not one he would have personally chosen to do, but one he was happy to because I had. He knew how much this one meant to me, and I pay tribute here to the companionship, understanding and solid friendship has shown from conception through to success. Thanks Tim.

Another question is, 'why write it up'? Who else is interested anyway? My view is that this is primarily our record because when compared with other trips reported in the ISKA newsletter, it certain,y lacks 'thrills'. However, rough water is not essential to worthwhile sea excursions, and definitely not on crossings such as this. whilst the Irish sea may be 'old hat' now, perhaps there will still be many for whom it (and hopefully this account) may hold an attraction; not just the facts, but the feelings too.

#### THE TRIP

When pondering the chart it was clear that the Aberdaron to Wicklow crossing was reckonably shorter but the snag was the route being all hassle at each end, getting the boats to and from ferry terminals, especially Holyhead. so Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire was chosen despite the extra distance.

Above all else we wanted to 'enjoy it'. This had been agreed early on and had in fact influenced the 'weather envelope' decision. Being out in the open sea in the daylight, completely out of sight of land in good visibility carries a buzz only the experience can replicate. Being out there at night carries another.

We left on a forecast of 'variable 2 to 3', whilst which not bad on the face of it, we did not wish to do 60 miles against even a Force 3. There is no way we could have anticipated the ideal conditions that obtained.

Arrival at Soldiers Point just before 2200 hrs on the Friday night however, confirmed the suitability of the conditions; no wind, the sea flat calm, magic! Eight miles directly north of the beach, the Skerries light blinked lazily in the gathering summer darkness. Only two weeks from the longest day, we had dropped lucky with almost the minimum period of night ahead of us - my guess being five hours at the most.

2230 hrs on the dot, but 20 minutes later than schedule, we slid the two craft off the shingly beach and checked the skegs were free. Out of the cove we turned and set a bearing of 280 mag.; ten minutes later approaching North Stack.

The first minor but amusing panic was Tim thinking he'd not locked the car and me that I'd forgotten my dextrose tablets found safely lurking in the bottom of the Co-op carrier bag between my legs!! -symptomatic of my need for totally positive mind-set like a tennis pro's preserve ritual.

A mile or two beyond North stack and by now west of South Stack the usual overfalls were alseep to our passing - exactly as planned. This was in effect the final hour of the north goibng flood and the next hour would begin to see it turn south; remaining so for the following six hours. This was good because, again by design, it meant this first and largest dip in our sinusoidal curve of tidal drift took us well south of the beeline ferry routes, until at least about half past eight the following morning.

Less than an hour into the trip the reason for wanting that 'dip' south through the night became audible before it was visible to our searching eyes - one of the huge 40 know Stenaline HSS catamarans. The problem was, it was to port and therefore to the south of us, meaning consequently it had to come north and towards us to miss the Stacks and enter Holyhead Bay. For the next ten minutes or so our eyes flitted between torch illuminated deck compasses and the ever more rapidly growing lights of the approaching ferry.

Gradually it became apparant that the galloping beast would continue pass to the south of us, making me at least grateful for the first hour of northerly drift. There was no chance they would see us, neither on radar (we would merely be 'flotsam'), nor through visually spotting our five lights. We had to avoid it, and on this occasion we did. Phew!!

Breaking briefly for liquid and glucose intake at 2330 we agreed that after the 0030 shipping forecast we'd lengthen the period between breaks to one and half hours so that as little time as possible was wasted. The next stop was important because, again by prior agreement, that would be our true point of no return. If the 0030 forecast was outside our criteria, we.d turn back, even then.

Variable 3 to 4@. we seriously considered turning back. Not because Force 4 itself is a problem, but because 'variable' meant it could just as easily be westerly and in our faces, and we did'nt want to get that once we were in the middle. The coin came down heads. we carried on. And are'nt we glad we did!

The best way I can describe the sea conditions is through demonstration. Pour a glass of water and stand it to settle on a firm surface - that smooth. The photographs show unbelievable mirror like reflections of the kayak on the sea, hour after hour. Looking at them a couple of weeks later one guy in our canoe club said, "This looks like serious flat water, John" It was exceptional in the extreme.

Tim had very wisely written down the ferry times so we had some idea when to increase our vigilance, especially astern. glancing behind us also enabled the confirmation of the onset of the southerly drift, the Skerries Light very gradually slipping to starboard as South Stack came astern, before also passing to the north as the night wore on.

One such north easterly glance revealed another set of lights worthy of closer monitoring, and sure enough about twenty minutes later, at 0200 hrs. a large grey naval vessel bore silently down on us. so silently in fact that is we had not spotted it, we may well have been run down by it as the convergence of our paths was such that if Tim had not stopped paddling we would have collided.

.....to be continued in the next ISKA newsletter..

### From: Da.e Powell

#### PADDLING ON THE EAST COAST OF SCOTLAND

There is some good paddling on the east coast of Scotland between the Moray Firth to the Firth of Forth. It's a good place to paddle in winter - the weather is often sunny and excellent, and the coast is ideal for short day trips.

#### STONEHAVEN TO GOURDON \*\*\*

This is a nice coast, like N. Yorks. The forecast was bad but conditions were ideal; cold, calm and sunny with wind and tide with us. Finished at Gourdon in a blizzard (Jan 94).

#### **ROSEHARTY TO GARDENSTOWN \*\*\***

Quite a varied coast. Grey and squally, a blustery southeasterly generally with us. There is one tremendous huge rock arch marking the start of a short excellent section of broken cliffs. Lunch at Pennan (deserted), then around Troup Head. Some bold cliff scenery. A good little trip (Feb 94).

#### **BELL ROCK \***

This lighthouse is 12 miles off Arbroath. With a smooth swell breaking over the rock and panaromic views all around, this is an atmospheric place (March 94).

#### PETERHEAD TO NEWBURGH \*\*

Started from Boddam, south of Peterhead. First stretch is red granite climbing cliffs all the way to Cruden Bay. Somehow we missed the Bullers Pot, a local feature. At the mouth of the Ythan estuary, I carried over the dunes, Rich paddled around (Apr 94).

#### ISLE OF MAY \*

A sunny and breezy bird island 5 miles south of Crail. Excellent for puffins, they live in burrows on the cliff tops. There's also a colony of arctic terns. (July/Aug 94).

#### **CULLEN TO WHITEHILLS**

A beautiful cold breezy day. Paddled eastwards along the coast just east of Banff (Jan 95).

#### **MONTROSE TO ARBROATH \*\***

We had an epic on this trip, when Richard was lucky to survive immersion for about 45 minutes in a very cold January sea. We started from the lagoon at Montrose. There was a big sea running down the coast and we stayed well out, across Lunan Bay to the Red Head, and onwards to the Deils Heid, a distinctive stack a couple of miles north of Arbroath. Rich was too close in and was tipped over by a wave and swam. We were only about 100m offshore but trapped in big rolling waves which had a powerful backtow. Unfortunately, I couldn't rescue my friend and I didn't have a tow rope or flares. We were eventually rescued by the Arbroath lifeboat (Jan 95).

#### THE DEILS HEID

There is a pleasant VS climb up the seaward face, the only side which is not seriously overhanging. There is reasonable gear and insitu pegs. There was not much to abseil off on the top, and my climbing partner suggested we could simultaneously abseil off opposite sides of the stack! Superb tabletion (Seb 97).

#### STONEHAVEN TO ABERDEEN \*\*

Sunny day, good conditions. This stretch is low broken cliffs, with many hidden coves and much rock hopping interest. Lunch at Muchalls Cove? Just before Cove Bay, Rich toppled over and swam, but we managed a fast side rescue and he was back in his boat in no time. He looked a bit unstable, however, so he stopped at Cove Bay and I paddled around to Aberdeen to get the car. Saw 3 large dolphins between Cove Bay and Aberdeen Harbour (March 97).

2

#### COVE BAY TO ABERDEEN \*

Good conditions and an exciting sea, especially paddling with Rich (Nov 96).

#### **CRUDEN BAY TO PETERHEAD \*\*\***

A brilliant cold sunny day with Rich still finding his Nordkapp a bit too tippy to handle, but fortunately managing to roll! Had lunch in the Bullers Pot, a local feature aptly described as 'sheer and repulsive' in my climbing guidebook (Feb 97).

#### PETERHEAD TO FRASERBURGH

We intended to paddle from Peterhead to Fraserburgh, but the weather was just too dire. We drove down to Rattray Head, a windswept and remote stretch of coast. On the way back to civilisation we paddled from Cruden Bay to the Bullers Pot and back (March 97).

#### BASS ROCK \*\*\*

Started from North Berwick. The rock was white with thousands of gannets. Circumnavigated it clockwise. With a small swell landing was tricky. We rafted up, and I was able to grab a rock and clamber ashore. Rich capsized, did a perfect roll, then made it. We walked up a concrete path to the top of the Rock passing thousands of gannets on one side of the path which seems to deliniate their territory. Seal launched off the rocks, and visited Tantallon Castle on the way back. The place was closed, but an exposed traverse above the cliff at its castern end can be made. Both the Rock and the castle are well worth a visit (March 97).



## Ganoe death firm sues Coastguard

The Government is being sued by the firm that organised the 1993 Lyme Bay canoeing expedition in which four teenagers drowned.

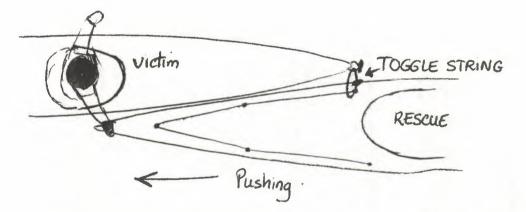
OLL Ltd, of Cheltenham, Glos, claims that negligence by coastguards contributed to the tragedy, and that it is entitled to an indemnity or contribution from HM Coastguards for the compensation it has paid to victims' familles and the survivors. recently - From Didier Plouhinec

When the french bataillon de fusitiers marins, trained in England, landed at Riva Bella Ouistreham on the 6th fune 1944, all those green berets soldier had, hanging around their body, a "Toggle rope" with many toggle ropes they could have a very long rope, build "monkey bridge"...

this year, 6th June 1996, like every year I had a special tought for all the soldiers who gave us freedom and suddenly I got the flash: the toggle string was born.

When operating a contact tow in sea hayak, the victim graps the front of your hayak whilst you paddle forward and push the hayak poward. To prevent the stern or sow of the victim's hayah swinging out I found the toggle string more convenient than using the paddle park or leash

He boggle string is passed into the loop of the toggle (stern or sour depending if you reverse the victim's kayah). Then passed under your deck lines as shown on my drawing. the toggle string is easy and very cheap to make, and can be very useful for every instructors or leaders.



For a quick contact tow the unstructor will keep the toggle string already passed under hild decklines or at hand in the pocket of his buoyancy and

THE TOGGLE STRING.

Here included the drawing of the toggle string (drawn by Christian Gabard)

#### <u>Safety Signals for Sea Kayakers -</u> <u>An attempt to find a standard range of hand signals for sea kayakers</u>

When you go on a sea kayaking tour all members of a group should stay within voice communication of each other. But is this possible? We can not always talk at conversation volume due to wind and wave noise, compounded by distance. Therefore it is important before you start a tour along the shoreline or off shore, to agree within your group what kind of signals you want to use. However which signals come into question? We think it should be only such signals, which are very important for communication between members of a group. In 1996 and 1997, several sea kayakers of different sea kayaking clubs - spread all over Europe and the world - contacted one another and discussed this problem. We all agreed that sea kayaking is becoming more popular around the world. Added to this, more and more groups of sea kayakers consist of persons from different countries. Therefore it is thought it is time to select a few uniform signals, which one can handle and remember easily, and what is more, be able to be used even in difficult conditions. The result of this work can be found on the following page. As a matter of point, there are 11 basic sea kayaking/canoeing books, written in English, but only one, Randel Washburne's "The Coastal Kayaker" mentions three hand signals, which, more is the pity, these having been recommended by American white-water kayakers!

The signals in the survey say something about "Attention!" "Come to Me!" "Wait for Me" "Help Me" "Distress -Mayday" and "Caution" or "Danger." Indeed one could find other signals for these. It is however important to have signals which can be used by any kayaker, advanced or beginner, and in any situation; ie force 1 to 7 winds, in a tidal race, or among breakers. The common consensus is that any proposed signal should be able to be performed with both hands on the paddle (expect perhaps in the case of a capsize when the paddler is out of his boat). There is but one exception, the Signal No 2: "Come to Me" which should only be used by the group leader, or "scout" who would both be expected to be "advanced" paddlers.

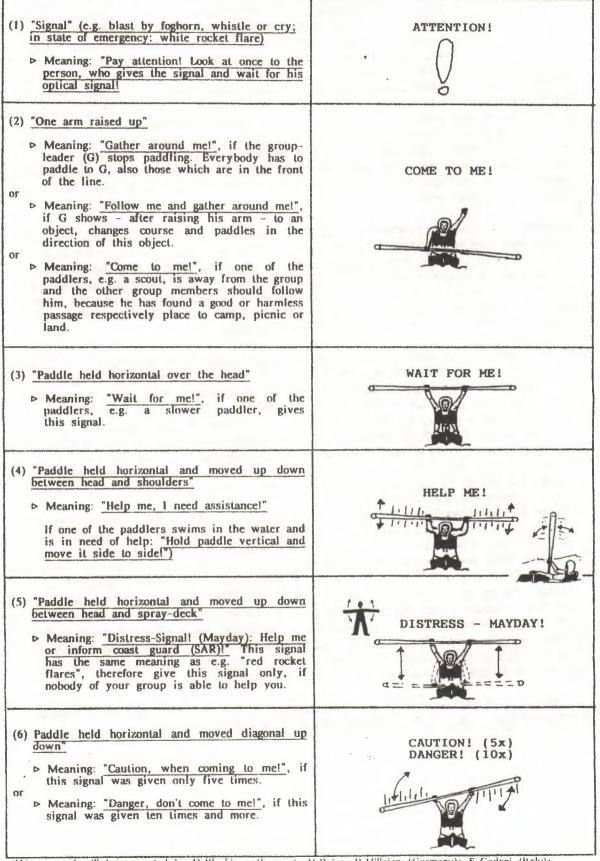
Of course, there might be other information which one may wish to signal, eg, "Raft Up" "Are you OK?" Is it necessary, however, for these to be included? It is not believed so. It is important that it be clear that what is recommended is a set of simple to understand signals which are important for group communication, and not a special "sign language" of sea kayakers for every eventuality. The "Tsunami Rangers," a US American sea kayaking association of very advanced sea kayakers, has developed 42 hand signals (see "Bay Currents" (Dec 1991), a newsletter of "The San Francisco Bay Area Sea Kayakers" (BASK)). All of these signals are interesting, but who is likely to be able to learn and memorise, let alone use all of them, during a lifetime of sea kayaking! Furthermore, it is unlikely that a large number could be used on a windy day with a good sea running. A further problem, and perhaps the major problem, is that all group members would need to know the meaning of these signals if misunderstandings are to be avoided.

It should be stressed that Signal No 5 should only be used when a sea kayaker is in a life threatening situation, which can not be dealt with by other members of his group. This signal signifies "Distress at Sea:" "Mayday." Using this signal denotes that you require immediate assistance from anyone who can give it, and that the Coastguard (SAR) should be notified that assistance is sought. Up to the present time, there exists, with the exception of the use of red flares and the use of "MAYDAY," etc, no specified "Distress" hand signal for sea kayakers. Having said this, however, Collision Regulations (IRPCS< ColRegs, KVR) recommend the following "Lift and let down slowly and repeatedly your arms, which are stretched out!" (See small drawing alongside Signal No 5). This is a recognised signal, which each sea kayaker should keep in mind, in the event he finds himself in a life threatening situation. The question is, what should he do when sea conditions are such that he dare not lay down his paddle in order to wave with outstretched arms. It is suggested Signal No 5 is an equivalent signal, but this would need official acceptance by the Coastguard and other bodies.

The signals on the following page have been discussed among the following...Didier Plouhinec, Udo Beier, Bernhard Hillejan, Sergio Cadoni, Christian Gabard, John Ramwell, Tony Ford....

# Safety: The Sea Kayaker's Paddle Signals

Before you start a tour agree with the members of your group what kind of signals should be used. Remark that theses signals must not be used, if other persons could misunderstand them as distress-signals (exception: signal, no. 5)! (G = groupleader)



This proposal will be supported by D.Plouhinec (France); If.Beier, B.Hillejan (Germany); S.Cadoni (Italy); .....

Mar del Plata 28/01/97-

#### Mr. John J. Ramwell:

It has been already some time since we have received your explanatory and very interesting letter. We coincide with the basic concepts of LS.K.A.; that is the reason why we have decided to subscribe!

At 44 years old, I am one of the "newest" members of our association. Two years have passed since I first proposed our Association Committee to contact with kayak groups all over the world. By means of the American magazine PADDLER, as well as of diverse Embassies in the City of Buenos Aires, we obtained many addresses of kayak associations!!!! And, certainly, they have answered us!! From the remote South - Australia to small associations in Patagonia!!!

As you might suppose, I am "in charge" of the international correspondence.

We have not got our own headquarters, and our sending address is the private address of our present Secretary and defender of the sea kayak, Mr. Adrián Pol!! He defends not only the interests of our city kayakers, but also, those of other cities, and very energetically!! He is, I would say, the paladin of kayak. Ordinarily, there is a tendency to forget people who row in the provinces, away from the big cities. Pol does not forget them and he is an example to us!! (although his modesty does not permit him to recognise it, he is our leader!).

Our Association was born twelve years ago, and since then, it has dismembered at various opportunities! Now, with the leadership of some "patriarchs" and the effort of "new" outstanding figures...it sails before the wind!

Children are our objective! For they are the future! Just a sweat - shirt with the logotype of the Association is very important to them! And we feel happy to see that the seed of kayak ... GERMINATES!!!!

Adrián has also been one of the participants of a crossing from the City of Buenos Aires to our City!! 400 kilometres!!! (approximately 230 miles of yours!).

One of our aims is the edition of a News Bulletin; another, to get in contact with kayakers of the (polemical) Falkland or Malvinas Islands!!

We also want to collaborate so that members of other kayak associations from other countries can visit us and share with us the emotions that our KAYAK activity offers!!!

"We have the determination and we push forward with the emblem of fraternity"!

As a maritime city, we have the ocean!! And we go deeply into it!

We play with the waves and compete once a year with associations of other coastal cities! We invite and challenge sea kayakers from other countries! We participate in competitions in our Province, lagoons, plain rivers. Crossings. We construct kayaks, fibreglass roars, helmets.

And we propose you to know each other, to invite each of us to share the waters of friendship!!

Our English knowledge is elementary, but a trip to England will certainly communicate us better. (Actually, this letter has been translated.)

Adrián Pol (secretary). Miguel A. Minaudo (mail international).

#### SERGIO CADONI VIALE COLOMBO 118 - 09045 QUARTU S.ELENA - CAGLIARI - ITALIA

Quartu S. Elena, 24th October 1996

Dear John,

as you would have read in the previous Bollettini, our Association as such, due to lack of resources (more related to the scarce interest shown by the members of the association in active participation than to the scarcity of the economical resources) will cease to exist the next December.

With a few enthusiast I have decided to go on publishing a newsletter very much the same as the ISKA one, namely a non profit project, open to all those interested in this sport, devoted to security and promoting meetings between its subscribers.

The new newsletter will be called *"Il Kayak da Mare"* (translation: Sea Kayak), the contents and the editorial project will be very much the same as the AIKM Bollettino.

The vast majority of the AIKM subscribers have already given their support to this new chapter of the Italian kayaking scene. Many new friends are calling to subscribe. The starting seems to be encouraging.

I will propose to you to go on exchanging our publications as in the past. Send the ISKA newsletter to my address. In exchange I will sent the IKdM newsletter to you.

**Best** wishes

Sergio

HI JOHN! I WROTE DOWN SOME IDEAS I HAVE ABOUT EQUIPMENT. PERHAPS IT GAN SUITE THE NEWSLETTER? OR MAYBE IT'S NOT SERIOUS ENDUGH..... HOY FROM KARIN

# ABOUT EQUIPMENT

TWO PERSONS WHO KNOWS EACHOTHER, USUALLY HAS GOT A LOT OF THINGS TO TALK ABOUT. TWO STRANGERS WHO MEET -FOR EXAMPLE ON A BUS - USE TO TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER. TWO KAYAKERS WHO MEET - EATHER IT'S ON THE SEA OR ON AN OFFICE, EATHER THEY KNOWS EACHOTHER OR NOT - USE TO TALK ABOUT EQUIPMENT.

. THERE'S A LOT TO SAY ABOUT EQUIPMENT AND EVERY SEAKAYAKER WHO HAS BEEN IN THE GAME FOR A WHILE, HAS DEVELOPED THEIR OWN SPECIALLITYS.

JIM, WHO MOSTLY IS GOING FOR LONG SOLD EXPEDITIONS IN REMOTE AREAS, US TO SAY THAT "EVERY LITTLE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT YOU CARRY, SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO USE FOR AT LEAST TWO THINGS".

I THINK THAT SEEMS TO BE A GOOD OPPINION AND I'M SURE HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT!

I'M STILL DEVELLOPING MY SELECTION OF EQUIPMENT, BUT THERE'S A FEW THINGS I HAVE FOUND SO USEFUL, THAT I WILL PROBABLY NEVER LEAVE THEM BEHIND.

ONE EXAMPLE IS MY SELF MADE CHERAMIC BOUL. I USE IT FOR: 1 PORRIDGE. 2 YOUGHURT : MÖSLL. 3 SOUP. 4 PASTA WITH SAULE. 5 GHOP SOYS'. 6 SALAD. SIX THINGS ! NOT BAD!

My SMBRELLA IS ANOTHER OF THOSE THINGS I WOULDN'T DREAM OF LEAVING BEHIND.

MAGINE THE RAIN IS POURING DOWN AND YOU ARE STOPING FOR PLAYLUNCH.

WHAT WOULD THAT BE LIKE, WITHOUT AN UMBRELLA? SWAMPED SANDWICHES AND COLD TEA!

OR YOU WAKE UP AT 3 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, DYING FOR A PEE. WITHOUT AN UMBRELLA YOU HAVE THREE OPTIONS: 1 TAKE OFF THE PYJAMAS, GO OUT FOR THE PEE, GO BACK IN AGAIN AND DRY YOUR BODY WITH THE TOWEL BEFORE TAKING ON THE PYJAMAS AGAIN. 2 GO OUT WITH THE PYJAMAS ON AND GET IT WEAT WHICH FURTHER ON ALSO MEANS A WEAT SLEEPINGBAG. 3 STAY IN THE WARM, COOSIE SLEEPINGBAG AND WEAT IT ALL ANYWAY.

THE UMBRELLA CAN ALSO BE USED AS A LITTLE ROOF, WHEN YOU HAVE

THE HATCHES OPEN TO DIG OUT THAT CAN OF BEER FAR BACK AND IN THE BOTTOM OF THE COMPARTMENT.

IN FOLLOWING WINDS YOU CAN USE IT FOR SAILING AND YOU CAN PUT IT BETWEEN THE SUN AND YOUR LUNCH-SANDWICH, TO PREVENT THE CHEESE FROM MELTING.

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT SOME EQUIPMENT THAT MANY SEAVAYAKERS DO CARRY.

THE PADDLE-FLORT IS SOMETHING THAT BECOMES MORE AND MORE COMMON. AND THE INFLATEBLE ONCE ARE PROBABLY WHAT IS MOST OFFEN CARRIED.

Some PEOPLE USE IT AS A PILLOW OR A SEAT. | FIND IT UNCOMFY AS A PILLOW AND TOO WOBBLY AS A SEAT: TWO GLASSES OF WINE AND I WOULD BE CAPÉIZED!

ANYWAY, IT'S VERY USEFUL FOR LEARNING THE ESKIMO-ROLL!

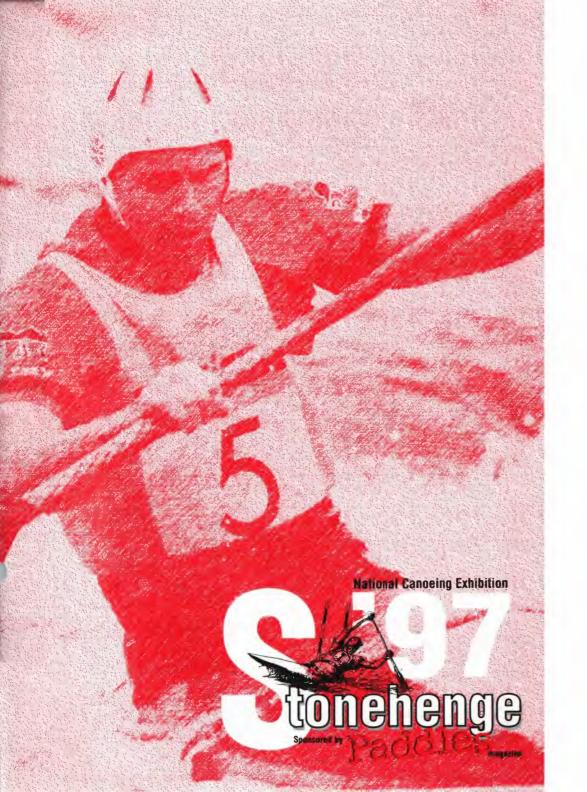
FLARES. HOW MANY THINGS CAN YOU USE A FLARE FOR? AS FAR AS I KNOW, ONLY ONE. AND ONLY ONCE! AND HOW OFFEN DO YOU USE A FLARE? PERHAPS I SHOULD LEAVE MEN BEHIND NEXT TIME I GO OUT.....

THESE GREY/RED PLASTIC HAND. PUMPS THAT MANY SEAKAYAKERS CARRY ON THE DEC. ARE NOT JUST GOOD FOR EMPTYING A WAYAK. IF YOU'RE FED UP WITH SOME OF YOUR PADDLING. COMPANIONS, JUST STICK THE THING INTO THE WATER, AIM THE OUTLET FORM THE ONE YOU'RE FED UP WITH AND START PUMPING!

JUST MAKE SURE THAT YOU FIRST HAVE MOVED THAT PERSONS FUMP TO A PLACE. WHERE HE SHE CAN'T REACH IT!

AS I'M QUITE FANCY DISCUSSING EQUIPMENT MYSELF, I'D LOVE TO READ ABOUT ANY OPPINIONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM YOU GUYS, SO JUST GRAB YOUR PEN NOW AND LET ME KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!

KARIN



## STONEHENGE CANOE CLUB

# Saturday & Sunday 21st & 22nd June 10.00am-5.00pm



VATIONAL

CANOEING

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Pewsey Sports Centre, Wilcot Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire Tel: (01980) 654043

### Admission

Individuals Adults: £2 Childrens & OAP's: £1 Under 10s with Parents: FREE Cars Car parking on site: 50p per car FREE parking in the town centre

### **Polo Tournament**

An open tournament for mixed sex teams of any level, 4 players (2+2) per team, plus a maximum of 2 reserves

Swimming Pool Various activities in the pool

including:

Come and try canoeing

(for beginners)

Test paddle traders boats

ALL FREE

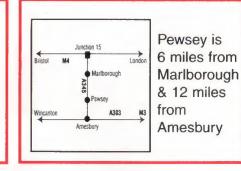
Bring your swimwear and a towel

#### Advanced Bookings Groups of 10 or more can get a

Groups of 10 or more can get a 10% DISCOUNT by booking in advance. Please contact us at address below

# Over 60 Trade & Information Stands

Many of BCU discipline committees & canoeing organisations will be represented, as will many top trade stands



Please send me more information on the following:

Trade Stands	Advanced Ticket Boo	king
Polo Tournament	Information Stands	General Information
Name:		-

Address:

Please cut out and return to: Stonehenge '97 11 Foster Walk, Larkhill, Wiltshire SP4 8RE Tel: (01980) 654043