

Newsletter

of the
**INTERNATIONAL
SEA KAYAKING
ASSOCIATION**



**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. 19

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John J. Ramwell
5, Osprey Ave.,
Westhoughton,
Bolton,
Lancs.
BL5 2SL

Phone/fax 01942 842204

E Mail address > jramwell@provider.co.uk

EDITORIAL

The use of mobile phones by sea kayakers has not, as far as I am aware, developed into a problem for rescue services. On the other hand I do know that they are concerned about the potential. The Coastguards believe that a mobile phone can prove an emergency life line - but in the wrong hands they could be used as a substitute for adequate preparation and experience.

It is important that kayakers going out to sea know how to use their mobile phone appropriately, not only for their own safety but also for the safety of others. The mobile phone is not a substitute for common sense or basic sea kayaking knowledge/experience. A certain amount of self reliance is essential.

The following guide lines have been prepared:-

*Do make sure you are prepared for the journey on which you are embarking.

*Do use your phone to call for help if you witness a bad incident and emergency help is required, and leave your number as a contact for them. If you use the emergency 999 number you will be asked for your number before any details are taken, so make sure you have this available. I witnessed a serious accident on the other side of the motorway some time ago and used the mobile to inform the police. So embarrassing when I did not have this available and had to page for it on the phone itself!!

*Stay with the phone and the injured party once the call to the emergency services has been made.

* be aware that making calls from sea level will restrict radio signals on which the mobile phone service relies

* take care not to run down the batteries on your mobile once you have reached the emergency services. In other words avoid unnecessary calls.

* do not use the mobile phone to access general information from the emergency services

* do not call the emergency services for anything less than an emergency, for example, to request directions. If you are out on the sea you should be prepared to take responsibility for yourself. The emergency services would be reluctant to provide

directions by phone because if the original location is mistaken by the caller, it might result in incorrect advice being given.

* do not assume that you will always be able to maintain mobile phone contact where ever you are. All networks experience partial loss of transmission to a greater or lesser extent, particularly when down at sea level.

* do not use your mobile phone as a panic button. Calling out the emergency services can put other lives at risk. Examine all the options before resorting to an emergency call.

* do not forget that the sea can be a wild place. Prepare accordingly.

OCEAN PADDLER

For a long time I have wanted to see a British based magazine on sea canoeing. It was, after all, us Brits who really developed the activity which has now been adopted world wide. So, having been approached by a publisher, I have agreed to edit such a magazine to be called *OCEAN PADDLER*. It will be quarterly, the first edition to be launched at the International Canoe Exhibition next February. I have taken the liberty of writing to one or two fellow paddlers asking for material, but should you wish to make a contribution I would love to hear from you. Frank Goodman has kindly agreed to take over a section to deal with paddlers questions and problems. If you have any such then send them to Frank via myself.

~~THE-IMPORTANT-POINT-TO-NOTE-IS-THAT-THE-INTERNATIONAL-SEA KAYAKING-ASSOCIATION-WILL-CONTINUE-AS-BEFORE.~~ I have no intention of changing the way our Association is run and I shall continue to manage it as I have done over the last thirty years. 'Ocean Paddler' will be an extra task that hopefully, being retired from work now, I can cope with. I do hope that this makes the position clear as I know how rumours can suggest that my energies will be taken up solely by this new venture. THIS IS NOT TO BE THE CASE.

I have been following with interest a series of letters in the *SEA CANOEISTS NEWSLETTER* (K.A.S.K. New Zealand) which has dwelt on choosing a sea kayak. Grant Stone is quoting a 'well renowned yacht designer'....."there is nothing new in the shape of boat hulls - be it launches, yachts or kayaks, everything has been done before. as with kayak designs, there is a tendency to work in cycles as people push the limits of acceptable hull designs to try and get that elusive ultimate machine. The 'on the edge' boats often don't stand the test of time because they are designed to perform well in only one narrow band of sea conditions. It is often the case that these boat's performance falls well short of the more conservative designs when they encounter conditions outside their design brief. The same applies to kayaks. I have included the full correspondence in this newsletter. What do you think?

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. It is made up of contributions from YOU and YOU, so send me some material. Mark it *OCEAN PADDLER* and/or *ISKA*.

Taken From:-
Sea Canoeist
Newsletter #70

Points to Consider when Buying a Kayak

by Grant Stone

As the designer and manufacturer of the Albatross sea kayak and Albatross Double Vision (to be released this spring), I am often asked how I design my boats, what do I consider good design, and what do people look for when buying a sea kayak.

A month or so ago, I went to listen to world renown yacht designer, Ron Holland, at the local yacht club. I went for two reasons; to say, "hi", as he had worked as an apprentice under my father, and of course to listen to him talk about boat design.

As a kayak designer and son/grandson and great, great, great, etc. grandson - it's a genetic failing - of boat builders and designers, I was well aware that the basic principles of designing boats for the sea was a constant. After all, the basic elements of wind and sea have not changed over the years.

It was therefore no surprise to hear him say that there is nothing new in the shape of boats hulls.. be it launches, yachts or kayaks, everything has been done before. As with kayak designs, there is a tendency to work in cycles as people push the limits of acceptable hull designs to try and get that elusive, ultimate machine. These 'on the edge' boats often don't stand the test of time because they are designed to perform well in only one narrow band of sea conditions. It is often the case that these boat's performance falls well short of the more conservative designs when they encounter conditions outside their design brief. The same applies to kayaks.

For a sea kayak to be sea worthy requires the incorporation of tried and true elements into the design. Non negotiable elements include a degree of rocker, that's the side on banana shape of the hull; too much rocker and we have the rocking horse effect....rocking backwards and forwards and getting nowhere! Conversely a rockerless hull is only suitable for a flatwater racing machine, or for use in sheltered estuaries. So why

is this? To put it basically, a rockerless hull has no life in its hull, so going into a brisk wind and steep chop translates into a much longer and uncomfortable trip than is necessary.

Hard chine or round bilge? Whether the boat is hard chine or round bilge doesn't really matter, as there are good designs available in both forms - it's a personal choice.

How stable are you? Once again, it is what you feel comfortable with. However there is much talk about secondary stability in sea kayaks; this is the ability of the boat to offer resistance to capsize when heeled. Frankly I believe that it is overrated in a boat as skinny as a sea kayak, as in rough conditions the point of capsize can be reached so swiftly that only a support stroke will save you, no matter how the boat's designed. By the way, primary, or initial stability, is how stable the boat feels when sitting upright in the water.

So what does change? Materials do. I was quite interested in Glyn Dickson's promotion of kevlar sea kayaks in the KASK newsletter (July 1997), but, unlike Glyn, I as a manufacturer who offers both fibreglass and kevlar options in my boats, am quite happy for kayakers to choose whatever suits their needs and budget. Although agreeing that kevlar is very, very strong, I think that for Joe Average paddlers needs, the weight and strength difference in fibreglass is negligible in a sea kayak. My argument is that powerboats, which would potentially hit an obstacle at a speed far greater than a sea kayak would, are most often made of fibreglass; indeed I've yet to see a kevlar runabout.

Of course, kevlar is used in bullet proof vests, but unless you intend shooting you kayak at close range, the advantage for Joe Average is open to debate.

I do, also take slight issue, with the ease of repairing kevlar, if badly damaged kevlar fibre will end up with a visible internal patch; fibreglass on the other hand can be repaired so that there will be no evidence of it ever being damaged in the first place. Aesthetically, fibreglass repairs are superior. By the way, besides South Islanders buying mainly fibreglass boats; on a recent trip to look at the

market in Oz, I found the same holds true and I felt that their market was very sophisticated.

So what about layout of deck? It's simply what suits you with any design being a case of swings and roundabouts. Cockpit and hatches: large or small? A neoprene or rubber cover? Fibreglass storm cover or plastic? Pluses and minuses all the way!

Volume; large or small? The Albatross has been referred to as 'low volume' by a very charitable soul, it's also been on an eight day paddle carrying absolutely everything, including water, within the confines of the hatches. Just think about what percentage of paddling you do as day trips of overnighters... does the boat design mean you have to carry ballast on a short trip? Large volume - do you actually need it and when fully packed can you manhandle it up the beach, even with assistance, or do you require a crane?

Check the fittings too. Stainless? Bolted, screwed or riveted? It's easy to tighten screws and bolts, but not so with rivets. Rudders - are they sound? Steering - is it pedals or t-bar? Self-adjusting? It's whatever you personally like, however make sure it's responsive and tracks straight.

Value for money: There is now a huge difference between the lower end of the market (plastic) and the highest end (kevlar). Think carefully about what you are actually intending to do and try to buy on need/suitability, not price. As with a lot of things, cheap does not necessarily equate to inferior, nor does expensive equate to superior. If the boat is a lot cheaper/expensive than other similarly constructed boats, question why.

OK, so back to Joe Average: how does s/he determine the sea worthiness of a sea kayak ... easy, try it, but insist that the trials take place in windy, choppy conditions as trying a sea kayak in flat sheltered water is akin to rolling in a pool ... not a reliable indicator or how it'll go when it really matters.

So you don't intend ever paddling on a windy, choppy day? Sorry, the fact is that the wind and sea are very fickle and have no respect at all for your wishes, and the day you get caught out

in adverse conditions is the day you require that well designed sea worthy sea kayak.

But believe me, Joe Average, you are spoilt for choice as there are a many great sea kayaks out there put out by a number of manufacturers. Buy what you feel comfortable with, so you can enjoy that paddling.

Grant Stone

Deep Creek Kayaks.

Editor's Response

I was disappointed to read this letter from Grant. How to describe it? ... dark age information. Many of the recent North American sea kayaking how to do it manuals contain similar information... 'if it feels comfortable, it is right for you'. Bollocks!

Kayak Weight: a quote from Australian Olympic gold medal winning yachting, John Cuneo:

'The only place for weight is in a steam roller.'

As the weight of a kayak increases, the wetted area increases which naturally increases drag or frictional resistance. Aside from drag, significantly more paddler's energy is required to paddle a heavy boat at four knots than a light boat. Heavy boats require a truss for a solo paddler to lift on and off roof racks. Agreed that for an occasional hour long paddle, the weight factor is not important - but for longer and more frequent trips, kayak weight is a significant factor.

We are indeed fortunate for the improving technology with manufacture and materials recent years in New Zealand that has arisen from the Whitbread and America's cup yacht races. The Australians indeed pushed the lightweight technology just a whisker to far with their last Americas Cup boat.

Many New Zealand kayak builders have utilized that improved technology to build lighter and stronger sea kayaks. My first fibreglass Nordkapp, built in 1977, weighed 65 pounds. For Max Reynolds and I in Fiordland, 30 miles in a day was exceptional. Graham Sissons and I built kevlar boats for the Aussie trip, with a weight of 44 pounds and consecutive 50 mile days were achievable. We built a 30 pound kevlar boat for the Japan trip,

with core mat and carbon fibre strengthening ribs, and 60 mile days were achievable. For the wee 1,190 paddle around Hokkaido, my daily average paddling distance was 42.5 miles per day. The dramatic increase in daily paddle distance had nought to do with steroid abuse or eating sea weed in Japan, but was simply due to the progressive decrease in boat weight.

The Whitbread and Americas cup boats are into what Graham Egarr termed the 'minimalist' style of sea kayaking. A local yachting recently related to me story of how the conditions on Grant Dalton's Whitbread racer were very basic; no hull insulation and dehydrated food only. Tinned food was strictly verboten. The cook smuggled on a few tins of tuna for the leg to Auckland for a slight improvement to the spartan diet. Why? To keep the weight of the yacht to the absolute minimum!

The kayak reviews in 'Sea Kayaker' magazine suggest many of the North American kayak manufacturers have not kept up with the recent improvements in fibreglass technology and boat building. Most of the boats reviewed weigh over 50 pounds - the latest review of a Sitka model kayak has a weight of 58.75 pounds, and that is a kevlar boat!

Carbon fibre boats are being built with weights as low as 26 pounds. Perfect for harbour and estuary racing, and dare I mention the word racing. But carbon fibre lacks the impact resistance of kevlar.

To sum up, kayak weight is a significant factor in the purchase of a sea kayak. The additional cost of a kevlar boat is warranted.

Chine: A hard chine boat has a greater surface wetted area than a round bilge hull of the same volume. Greater surface area increases frictional resistance.

A round bilge hull is best for broaching in through big surf. Great care needs to be exercised in broaching a hard chine boat through big surf in keeping the shorewards hard chine out of the fast moving water - that shorewards chine can act as an instant brake if it hits the fast moving water;

and instant washing machining.

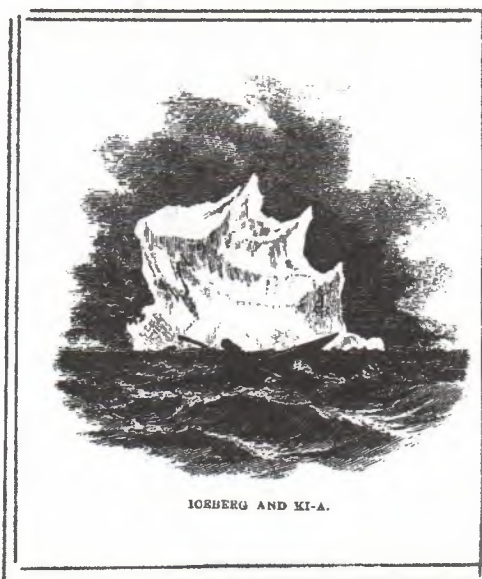
Hatches: There is a direct relationship between size of hatches and waterproofness of compartments. The small VCP type hatches are 100% watertight. Large hatches with neoprene and fibreglass lids leak.

Deck Fittings: For minimalist sea kayakers, there is no place on a kayak for any type of stainless steel fittings, bolts or rivets to attach decklines etc, apart from that required for the rudder and pedals. Stainless steel fittings etc., increase boat weight.

Kevlar Repairs: Although I carry a fibreglass repair kit, I have never needed to affect a repair to any of my kevlar kayaks. At Barrow, on the northern tip of Alaska, I added a fibreglass tape rubbing strip to the keel at the bow and stern where ice and gravel had worn through the gel coat. No trouble with that 'repair', although the major problem was generating sufficient warmth to allow the glass to go off. Had to move the boat out of falling snow into a friend's daughter's bedroom to get the warmth - she was not amused.

To sum up, Glyn Dickson's article on 'The delights of Aramid (kevlar) Fibre' accurately summed up the virtues and benefits of kevlar kayaks. For myself, the two major benefits of kevlar over fibreglass are an increase in boat strength and decrease in boat weight. The extra cost of a kevlar boat is warranted.

P. Caffyn.



The THREE WAVES of ERIN

A Journey Round the Coast of Ireland

BRIAN WILSON

SYNOPSIS

'THREE WAVES' is a *shorcography*, a *coastology* and a *paddlogue*; the chronicle of one man's journey round the Irish coast in a small boat, and a unique portrait of one of the most fascinating and dramatic coastlines in the world as seen from sea-level.

To the extent that it is a difficult journey undertaken alone in a frail man-powered craft, alternately at odds or in harmony with the winds, the tides and the swells of Europe's extreme Atlantic edge, 'THREE WAVES' is an adventure story. On its 1200 mile voyage the little kayak confronts and survives the gales and fogs of the Irish sea, the tide-races of the southern coast, the tail-lash of Hurricane Gusto and the freak whirlwinds and waterspouts of Donegal. But the journey itself is peppered with as bizarre a selection of strange meetings, unusual episodes and crazy adventures as is likely to be found in any full length seafaring yarn: a unique blend of characters and events which could perhaps only exist along the Irish tideline. The author is kidnapped and ransomed by pirates on Sherkin island, almost run down by a ghost-galleon off Mizzen Head, marooned by illness on the Blasket islands and attacked by a madman in Donegal, while the kayak itself is stolen as 'wreck' by territorial beachcombers on a forsaken section of the wild Connemara coast.

To a relatively small island nation such as Ireland, where no place is more than seventy miles from the sea, the coastline is *central* rather than *peripheral* to national identity, prosperity and character. The Irish coast has historically been the locus of trade, invasions, immigration and emigration; and has contemporary importance for fishing, recreation, tourism, export and import, and even climate. Along the coastal frontier, perhaps more than any other, the land is constantly being recreated, reformed and reinvented; not just by the sea itself, but by the people who live and work at sea-level, watching and waiting as the old myths gradually give way to the new. This extended coastal voyage therefore becomes a journey not just around, but into the 'heart' of Ireland, the country and its people, past and present, real and legendary.

The book takes its title from a set of ancient legends of the Irish coast, which despite their continuing relevance, had almost become lost; but it borrows its internal structure from a more contemporary source of sea-lore - the BBC Shipping Bulletin, familiar to both mariners and land-based sea-dreamers alike. The 'sea-counties' of *Irish Sea*, *Fastnet*, *Shannon*, *Rockall* and *Malin* serve to locate the voyage in a wider nautical context, and provide a refreshing alternative to the terrestrial county boundaries and provincial frontiers of historic and contemporary Ireland.

This is **not** the story of a record-breaking journey written for canoeists, or a novelty expedition in the 'Across the Atlantic in a Bucket' genre; nor is the author necessarily the central character. Rather it is the holistic tale of a genuine voyage, written for all lovers of coastal wandering, of small boat travel, of the sea in general, and of Atlantic Ireland in

particular. The real stars of the story are the variegated characters of the pubs, islands, villages, harbours and strands of Erin: the thinkers, drinkers and wreckers, tide-watchers beachcombers and yachtmasters, the Admirals and curraghmen who inhabit the shores of Ireland today. We meet the Nature Prophet of Dunworly Bay, Eugene the Martyr of county Cork, and the crazy pirates of Sherkin; we dance with the Lady Mayor of Wexford, cavort with Fungie the dolphin of Dingle Bay, and exchange an almost constant 'ready-salted' banter with a chain of fishermen, creelers and the traditional curragh-boatmen of the Atlantic fringe.

The narrative is brim-full of the kind of briny thoughts, humour and observations that can only be nurtured by ten weeks at sea level, and resounds with the folklore, history and flavours of the sea itself. Tales of smugglers, wreckers and pirates, blend with reports of St Brendan, Granuaile, Fionn MacCumhaill and the Spanish Armada; and even Sir Walter Raleigh, Moby Dick and the Pink Panther make brief appearances! Through the book runs a strong current of coastal folklore and maritime mythology, from the ancient tales of the 'Three Waves of Erin' themselves, to legends of St Patrick, The Island of the White Cow and the sea god Lir. We learn why seabirds shriek so cerily, how the wild waves came to be known as 'white horses', and where the Saltee islands appeared from. Zany conversations with curraghmen, pub characters and coastal archaeologists provide frequent humorous insights into life between the tides, while the more serious side of the book looks in context at the eternal battle between the ocean and the coast, the effects of famine and emigration on the coastal communities of Ireland, and the contemporary challenges of sea litter and marine pollution around our shores.

Approx Length: 100,000 words: Nineteen Chapters and an Introduction.

Preface by Tim Severin: writer, historian and adventurer (The Brendan Voyage etc.)

Illustrations: wide range of high quality transparencies and black & white photos available.

Marketability: Travel; Adventure; Irish interest (inc. USA); Folklore & social history; Sea/coastal interests; Small boat & sailing interests; Leisure, hobbies; Sport/expedition.

Sea kayaking is one of the fastest growing areas of outdoor pursuits and leisure/adventure expeditioning. There are a total of five kayaking magazines in UK alone, and a huge, separate market in USA. Previous book *BLAZING PADDLES - A Journey round Scotland by Kayak* became a minor classic in sea kayak literature, and as yet the only literary sea kayak travel book available. (see enclosed reviews) Good follow-up market potential.

Author: Brian Wilson is a writer, adventurer and environmentalist, living and working in northwest Scotland. A 35 year old Honours graduate in Philosophy from Edinburgh University, he now specialises in drystone dyking, thatching, and adventure-travel.

His previous book in this genre *BLAZING PADDLES* was published in 1988, and serialised in 1992 as five episodes for BBC Radio 4's *Book at Bedtime* programme (abridged and read by the author).

Publisher: O'Brien Press - Dublin

REVIEW

ORCA SEA KAYAK

From Peter Hall

Orca is Pyranha's plastic offering to the sea kayak world. This ain't no bendy Tupperware boat, it's a rigid innovative design based on classic lines using Royalex.

My Orca is three years old, I've had it for two, purchased as a kayak that could be used both on the sea and inland waters and cos the price was right!!! Pyranha market ORCA as a sea and touring kayak this is its niche.

Orca looks the biz, attractively finished with a choice of a red or blue deck on an ivory hull. The hull is semi-hard chine 15' 8" in length and 22' 5" wide. Deck line systems are adequate and functional all fittings are neatly recessed in the hull. Though designed as a weekend boat, storage areas will consume a weeks kit and supplies providing yer minimalist. Hatches have neoprene and rigid strap down covers, the rear hatch is large enough to take bulkier items. Bulkheads are bonded using the same systems that bond the deck and hull, there is a slight ingress of water. The cockpit is large, its a ruddy great hole, far too large for a sea kayak, (allegedly popular with the American market).

There ain't no thigh grips, there's a feeling of insecurity, however well padded, particularly when rolling. There's no purpose made spray deck, a medium deck fits drum tight, but requires Herculean efforts to secure, this could prove troublesome should you exit the kayak. The seat is comfortable and adjustable. Pyranhas I.C.S. comfort system an optional extra gives armchair comfort.

Initial and secondary stability are excellent, it tracks well and movements are predictable. It gives an exciting ride in a following sea and surfs well, though a pig in a beam wind. Perhaps not the fastest kayak around it is one that can be paddled comfortably all day.

Like all plastic kayaks there are signs of wear and tear. Orca shows up every scratch and dent, heavy wear areas being the bow, stern and keel areas that would benefit from some protection.

Some of the deeper gouges have been filled using epoxy resin.

Summarising, Orca is a hybrid sea and touring kayak, capable of taking hard knocks. Ideal as an entry level or centre boat.

Price:- 750:00

Options:- ICS comfort system 50:00

Rudder Kit:- 82:00

Pyranha comment:

The larger cockpit is popular with some paddlers and is seen as an advantage by them. The development team at Pyranha is working on a set of Orca thigh grips in response to requests for them. They will be available on new Orcas in 1998 and also as a retrofit kit for existing Orcas. This is good news for all Orca owners as we feel that by fitting the thigh grips, the criticism of the larger cockpit will evaporate.

We believe that the comments over the spray deck can be cured by selecting a different spray deck.

* I have found a deck corded on the underside has resolved this problem.

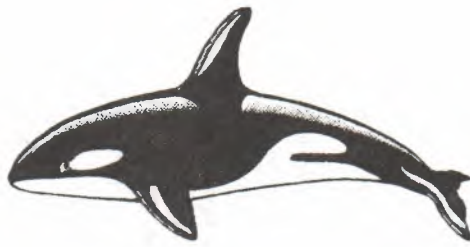
Dr. P.E.SCHUR
WIGGO COTTAGE,
135,MAIN RD.,
WYBUNBURY,
NANTWICH,
CHESHIRE,
CW5 7LR.

19.11.97.

Dear John,

Enclosed are my renewal form for membership and subscription for 1998. Keep up the good work with the magazine. I hope to get back to a bit of sea canoeing in the near future but I've forgotten the few skills I knew.

In view of this atrophy, I propose to run my R.N.L.I. challenge again this year to raise funds prior to my going once more to sea so I know they can put a boat on the water long enough to shout some constructive message to a drowning old fool. As I have neither the time nor the inclination as yet to change things, I shall be kayaking once more from Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth on Easter Monday. This was quite successful last year, raising £200 + for the R.N.L.I. despite only two of us taking part. If anyone wishes to participate I'd be glad to hear from him or her. If there are any sponsors out there, please send a cheque to me payable to myself or the R.N.L.I. - I did pay it all to them last time, honest. For the energetic, I plan to leave from just below Shrewsbury weir at about 10.00a.m. on Monday, 13.4.98 which happens to be Easter Monday. Safety will be the responsibility of the individual paddlers and their support team, though anyone seeing another in difficulties will be expected to assist. The estimated paddling time for the 31.25miles is about 5hrs depending on weather and water conditions. Time should be allowed for stops to permit adequate hydration and nutrition, both of which will be of great importance but most especially the former. If anyone has any questions on this side of things, I'd be happy to discuss them.



From Wales to see the Whales.

Our two daughters started canoeing with us at an early age. Pamela is now ten years old and Carol is eight. They both have their own kayaks and enjoy simple paddling trips in easy conditions. Living in North Wales gives plenty of opportunity for gentle paddles on rivers, lakes, canals and sometimes the sea. The summer holidays were fast approaching and we had fixed nothing definite. I was attracted to a short piece in the Jersey Canoe Club newsletter and the plans for a 'Canoe Club Summer Holiday' on Canada's west coast. After a telephone conversation with Kevin Mansell, he confirmed that the sea was always calm, there was lots of exciting wildlife to be seen and that double kayaks could easily be hired. The pace of the expedition would suit children with a maximum of five miles being paddled each day. It sounded just the holiday for us. The final point Kevin made was the fact that the Gulf Islands were in the rain shadow behind the Olympic Mountains, Kevin assured me that it never rained there. I was sold, so I booked the flights.

The team for the trip assembled in Sidney on Vancouver Island on 2nd August. Along with our family of four, there was Kevin Mansell in one double with his daughter Sarah aged 8, and Nicky Mansell with Lisa aged 10 in another. Derek Heiron with Krista aged 8 and Nicholas aged 6 all managed to cram into another double.

Packing everything for a five day trip took some time but we were ready by early afternoon. As we departed, we wondered if we were the most qualified 'expedition' of the year. Amongst the team we had three BCU Level 5 Coaches and one BCU Level 4 Coach without counting the children. We should be safe enough.

Day one was an easy paddle of about six nautical miles. From our start just south of the centre of Sidney, we paddled south east past James Island and Sidney Island. Towards the end of the day we were introduced to the concept of Mansell Minutes. "We will be at the campsite in about twenty minutes," Kevin encouraged my wife and eldest daughter. An hour and a half later and we still had not reached it. By our calculations, there are about 400 seconds in a Mansell Minute!

D'Arcy Island was our first campsite which had been used as a leper colony for oriental immigrants many years ago. We walked all the way round the island

and saw a raccoon and a deer. The children were disappointed to find no lepers.

Day two saw us paddling in perfect conditions to Rum Island, a distance of five nautical miles. The children spent most of the afternoon building dens from the enormous quantity of driftwood and discovering giant pink and purple starfish in the water. That evening we sat on the point looking over towards the American Stuart Island. We saw many sightings of Pacific White-sided Dolphins and Dalls Porpoise. Finally we saw Orcas off Turn Point. Binoculars were useful as Turn Point was over two nautical miles away. However the dorsal fins were clearly visible without using binoculars. They were big Orcas.

Day three and we understood what the rain shadow meant. Kevin had said it never rained in the Gulf Islands and, as he has a degree in geography, he should know all about it. We enjoyed a thunderstorm for most of the morning with the most amazing lightning strikes. Definitely not a day for going on the water. To our total amazement as the storm ended, a guided trip of American kayakers arrived. They had chosen to be on the water during the lightning. When politely questioned, the guide stated that his customers had paid to do the trip and he felt that his customers may have complained if they had not stuck to the schedule. The guided trip would keep to schedule whatever happened. Count me out from any future trips guided by Americans!

Day four was the most memorable day of the trip. The morning was bright and the sea calm. We took a brief stop for lunch on a small island which was occupied by an immature Bald Eagle. In the afternoon, as we prepared to cross Moresby Passage, we noticed the rather odd behaviour of a group of boats which were huddled fairly close together. Others came to join them. Why was this? We needed to investigate. As we approached, our greatest expectations were realised as we could see these boats were close to a pod of 10 or 11 Orcas. The next hour was pure magic as we shadowed this pod which was moving southwards. The Orcas would dive for two or three minutes and then surface for a few breaths. At one time two Orcas surfaced about 10 metres from my kayak. The large Orca had a dorsal fin two metres high! Orcas eat seals or dolphins for breakfast. Not the time to take photographs. Carol and I beat a hasty retreat.

Princess Margaret Island, marked as Portland Island on the chart, was our destination for the last night. Three otters played in the water and then on the bank as Carol and I arrived at the campsite. Princess Margaret Island was named in her honour following her visit to British Columbia in 1958, the Province's Centennial Year. Some of the Southern Gulf Islands are private but many, including Princess Margaret Island, are designated as Coastal Marine Parks of British Columbia. Wilderness camping is permitted on many of these islands and some have the luxury of a simple toilet. There is no fresh water on any of the islands so you will need to bring your own supply.

After the five day trip, we all parted and went our separate ways. After staying with relations in New York, we drove north to Quebec and the St Lawrence. In a small town called Les Escoumins, we hired two double kayaks and were escorted by a guide called Caribou. We paddled in the almost freezing waters to meet Beluga Whales after an hour. These intriguing whales are small in size and almost pure white in colour. For lunch we stopped on some rocks and ate as Fin Whales surfaced 100 metres in front of us. There were reports of Blue Whale and they could be seen in the distance from time to time surfacing. We were amused by the attempts of a motorised whale watching boat attempting to get close to them. A Blue Whale would surface and be spotted aboard. Engines full blast, the boat would race toward the whale, who would hear its approach and simply dive back below. Another whale would surface elsewhere and the boat would then rush towards this new target. It was comical but sad to watch as the engines repeatedly caused the whales to dive again. It appeared that the whales were tormenting the boat, enticing it to race this way and that but never allowing it to get close.

Like magic, it happened on our return. All of a sudden this enormous creature surfaced less than a hundred metres from us, with an spout of spray pushing high into the sky. Was it coming towards us? Another rush of air and spout confirmed our hopes. This Blue Whale would pass close to us. For over a minute this gentle mammal cruised gently and serenely towards us. It passed barely twenty metres in front of the kayaks, breathed once again and, with a higher arch of the back, slipped elegantly from view.

Kayaking brings many unexpected pleasures but paddling so close to the largest animal in the world will be hard to beat. I feel I have climbed the Everest of sea kayaking and shared this with my children. Will our next trip seem a little boring?

Peter Midwood, Ruthin, North Wales.

Useful contacts:

Kayak hire for the Gulf Islands, British Columbia

Contact: Sea Trek Sports, Sidney, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada
Tel: 250 656 9888

Guided paddling trips on the Saint Lawrence/Saguenay

Contact: Kayak de Mer Les Escoumins, Centre des Loisirs Marins des Escoumins, 41 Rue des Pilots, C.P. 806, Les Escoumins, Quebec, Canada.

Tel: 418 674 10441
(5th June - 15th September only)

Contact: Quebec Hors Circuits, 97 Boulevard Tadoussac, Saint Fulgence, Quebec G0V 1S0, Canada.

Tel: 418 674 1044
Fax: 418 674 1055

Contact: Fjord en Kayak, 4 Rue du Faubourg, L'Anse Saint Jean, Quebec, G0V 1J0, Canada

Tel: 418 272 3024
Fax: 418 272 3480

Contact: Guide Aventure, 1069 Nil Tremblay, Chicoutimi, Quebec G7H 1M9, Canada

Tel: 418 545 2668
Fax: 418 693 5923

Tourist Information for Saguenay / Lac Saint Jean area

(The Saguenay / Lac Saint Jean Tourist Guide booklet is excellent giving all the information you will need including all types of accommodation, points of interest, a wide range of activities to do, etc.)

Contact: Parc du Saguenay, 3415 Boulevard de la Grand Baie Sud, La Baie, Quebec, G7B 1G3, Canada

Tel: 418 544 7388
Fax: 418 697 1550

Contact: ATR Saguenay / Lac Saint Jean, 198 Rue Racine Est, Bureau 210, Chicoutimi, Quebec G7H 1R9, Canada

Tel: 418 543 9778
Fax: 418 543 1805

General Tourist Information for Quebec

Contact: Tourism Quebec, P. O. Box. 979, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 2W3, Canada

Tel: 514 873 4688
Fax: 514 864 3838
E Mail: info@tourisme.gouv.qc.ca



Orkney, 24 - 28 September, '97

From David Powell

My paddling partner Richard Bryant had just got back from Abidjan, but as Rich put it, there was no way he could take three out of his first five days back away sea canoeing! This was understandable, as he has a wife and three kids and spends most of his time working abroad, however, high pressure was anchored over N. Scotland and I couldn't delay any longer.

From Scrabster, I could see Hoy, and as I passed Dunnet Head I decided to head over. I had intended to paddle along the coast to Wick, but one of the attractions of solo paddling is that you can change your mind as you go along! Scrabster to Hoy took me about 3 1/2 hours, but my boat was leaking badly. A wet boat on a canoe/camping trip really is a calamity, as eventually everything gets wet and canoeing can become a totally unenjoyable experience. I emptied my boat and headed on up the coast past towering sandstone cliffs to Rackwick Bay.

Next day was cloudy. Headed on up past the Old Man, the top of the stack in clouds, onwards across Hoy Sound then up the w. side of Mainland to Birsey Bay, landing as it was getting dark. By this time my Nordkapp felt like I was paddling a log!

Next day paddled around Brough Head, a nice spot, then along 10 km of cliffs and pulled out at the first possible landing place, Sole Geo, to empty my boat and dry out wet camping gear. Two fisherman appeared and proceeded to catch a bucket full of fish in no time. I cooked and ate one within 5 minutes, how good they are straight out of the sea! Next morning I fixed my boat. The end of the keel had worn down, caused by dragging it up beaches. I dried it thoroughly with my MSR stove and taped it up.

Looking out from my camp, I could see the swell crashing against the cliffs of Rousay 5 km across Eynhallow Sound. Rousay and Westray would undoubtedly offer superb paddling. I intended to paddle down Eynhallow Sound, around the foot of Mainland and on across Scapa Flow to Stromness. However, I actually paddled around Shapinsay Island by mistake and ended up in Kirkwall. Believe me, these flat islands and the rather large distances between them can be extremely confusing! I put the kayak in the back of a Kirkwall taxi and headed for Stromness.

From: Winser, Nigel <N.Winser@rgs.org>
To: jramwell@provider.co.uk
Cc: S.Winser@rgs.org; T.Jones@rgs.org
Subject: ISKA newsletter
Date: 10 September 1997 21:37

John,

This is just a quick note to say how much I enjoy reading your regular newsletter and to thank you very much indeed for continuing to send it to us here at the RGS and the Expedition Advisory Centre. I applaud all you are doing to promote sea kayaking and also for wise words on expedition philosophy. Also I liked your Newfoundland piece very much and valued your further thoughts on the Lyme Bay tragedy. It has been some time since we last met so this comes with all our good wishes and hope we catch up soon. From Nigel Winser and the EAC team.

cc Shane, Tim

The wonderful activity of sea kayaking

Sea kayaking, my favorite activity! We are surfing this year! Actually started surfing in 1995 but had to rent or borrow boats till this year when we got surfing boats. Still doing trips in the sea kayaks and hoping and planning to get back to Anacapa this fall.

Fortunately I live close to the ocean and can scoot down to Long Beach or Newport Beach to put in for a few hours of paddling. The sea is ever changing and the winds and waves provide a different experience and challenge from day to day, sometimes even from hour to hour. What do I do when out paddling? Well, besides enjoying the fresh air and sea there is lots of wildlife close at hand. Frequently dolphins are sighted when I am out and there are always sea lions. Otters in Morro Bay! Recently I even saw a sea turtle near Long Beach. Sea birds are everywhere, the graceful flight of the pelicans never ceases to amaze as they skim along only inches from the surface of the ocean. Gulls, terns and other birds fly overhead. In the back bays, great blue herons and egrets are almost always seen, and sandpipers of every size are busy searching for food. At night the black-crowned night heron is about searching for his supper.

Last year, 1996, I wanted to do another trip to Anacapa Island but the right people just never came together at the right time. We did coastal day trips several times. Just short trips, Newport to Laguna Beach, Dana Point to Laguna Beach. Cabrillo Point and Palo Verde area. Even did a couple of trips across the Long Beach Harbor to get danish pastry and coffee at Shoreline Village in Long Beach. Not the most scenic trip but about 9-10 miles.

Anacapa Island Trip

The highlight of 1995 was the ocean crossing from Oxnard California to the island of Anacapa, part of the Channel Islands National Park. Across 12 miles of open ocean, not for the beginner or inexperienced I would have never attempted it but for Dave Seymour. It was Dave's 22nd crossing to Anacapa. Truly a remarkable individual Dave plans this annual expedition to give inexperienced paddlers like me the opportunity to gain greater open ocean experience. For Dave a crossing to Anacapa is like a walk in the park, but for me it was a new and exciting adventure. Even though I have now made this crossing I do not yet feel I have the experience to do it on my own. Perhaps with more crossings I shall achieve the level of knowledge and experience to make such crossings. While the kayak is an incredibly seaworthy vessel man's errors of judgement can be costly at sea.

Anacapa Island is part of the [Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary](#)

This great aerial photo from the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary web pages shows Anacapa in the foreground. There are three small islands that make up Anacapa, separated by gaps so small and shallow that passage between them is

extremely difficult and risky. In the background is the island of Santa Cruz followed by the island of Santa Rosa, and far distant, about 40 nautical miles away, lies the island of San Miguel.



[1254X534.JPG]

[Map of Anacapa from the University of Texas](#)

Tides are important to sea kayakers, NOAA can make [tidal predictions](#) for you. Knowing the [time](#) is important when reading tide tables.

If you want to learn sea kayaking and are in the Los Angeles area, [email me](#) and I will return info about classes.

Some kayaking clubs on the net.

- California Kayak Friends [CKF](#) a local club for me.
- Bergen University Kayak Club, Norway [Bergen University Norway](#)
- Manitoba Recreational Canoeing Association [MRCA](#)
- Swedish Canoe Page [Swedish Canoe Page](#)
- The [Norwegian Canoe Association](#)
- The [New South Wales Sea Kayak Club](#)
- The [Champlain Kayak Club Home Page](#)
- The [Lothian Sea Kayak Club](#) In Scotland
- The [Oregon Ocean Paddling Society](#) In Oregon, USA
- The [Maatsuyker Canoe Club, Tasmania](#) In Tasmania! Australia. Thanks to Laurie Ford for this link. Doesn't this look like a great place to kayak!
- The [YAHOO Canoeing-Kayaking-Rafting Directory](#)
- [Kristiansand](#) In Norway
- Your club here.

If your club is not listed I will add it if you [email me](#) its internet address.

For lots more info about kayaking visit Preston's Kayak Page FAQs [Kayaking FAQs](#)

For a look at the kayaking industry you could visit the Trade Association of Sea Kayaking [*TASK*](#)

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Updated: August 16, 1997 - If some of these links aren't so 'hot' email me at: dwp@deltanet.com

Sea Kayak page counter installed May 4, 1996 shows you are visitor **00410**

Back to [The DWP homepage](#)



Shetland Sea Kayak Symposium

Shetland Sea Kayak Symposium

3rd July to 6th July 1998

Muckle Roe, Shetland



The Venue

The Muckle Roe public Hall is where the symposium will be centred. A large area for camping is adjacent to the hall and a pebble beach adjacent to that. The option of catering and eating in the hall is offered. There is limited B&B nearby. A short distance by kayak is the local swimming pool. There are a few hotels and bars nearby one with its own jetty and beer garden. There are a few shops in Brae, Voe, and Aith. It is as easy to paddle to these villages as it is to drive to them.

Afterwards

Join some of the local paddlers canoeing around Shetland. Visit some of the out of the way places and unwind. There is nothing planned but to paddle, or go on your own somewhere, the camping is wilderness while civilisation is often just around the hillside or headland.



Enquires to Kevin Linklater 01950 422 325

The Area

The Isle of Muckle Roe is the backdrop to Shetland's first sea kayak symposium. Muckle Roe is 3 miles from Brae and 26 miles from Lerwick. The coastline is at least 12 miles and worthy of an 8hr day trip in the best of conditions. The many sea caves, arches and stacks are a delight to paddle into, through and around. Some of the caves connect together which can become a challenge for the unenlightened. The red sand beaches are the most peaceful of tea and lunch stops. There is wildlife to see and evidence of otters can usually be seen. The cliff and hillwalking here is also superb, with small lochs and ruined homesteads to visit. The west side is exposed to the power of the Atlantic, while around the east side the natural configuration of the voes creates an almost landlocked sea area. It's on this east side that the symposium will be held.

The Event

We are inviting a select number of contributors who will share with us their own insight to our sport. There will be slide shows, lectures and tutorials. Learning a new skill and at times relearning an old one can be very rewarding, so join in the various skills clinics that will be on offer. See and try different demonstration kayaks and various equipment, or find a sunny spot to talk the day away.



Another event in Shetland

The Shetland Canoe Club's annual event on Papa Stour, 10th-12th July '98 This will be our 7th year there. The indented coastline has hours of exploring with sea caves, tunnels, arches, stacks and even more. Some of the most exciting and rewarding paddling in Shetland is found here. In the evenings a lecture and slide show followed by a few hours of quiet socialising in the unique surroundings of Papa Stour. After the weekend some of the paddlers shall continue paddling around Shetland. On Thursday 15th July there will be a relaxing social evening at the outdoor centre at Bridge End in Burra.

For further enquires and information on these events contact, **Kevin Linklater, Waltham, Ireland, Bigton, Shetland, ZE2 9JA.**
Phone 01950 422325

logo design by Ray Linklater, Fairlie, Ayrshire.

From Harry & Chris Simpson

5, Crosswood Crescent,
Balerno,
Midlothian,
EH14 7LX
14/10/97

Hi John,

We've done it. No turning back. The decision was made and the deed is done. It's fantastic! The end of my Baidarka now hangs on the garage wall and in it's place a magic rudder. Many people decry the rudder but in spite of my unusual paddling style-adopted to overcome a back and shoulder problem- I felt a functioning rudder would relieve the strain on ageing joints. I was not wrong it's brilliant. I stress the functioning aspect. It took 5 sea trips before it was trimmed to my satisfaction. At first I had to gain confidence to use the rudder in tight spots and not to manually correct as well.

The hero in this operation was Harry who performed the surgery and aftercare with precision and patience. Because I have a cycling leg action the rudder bar had to have a side to side and not a back and forward action which seems to be more usual. The distance of the rudder bar from the footrest was also critical and took a little trial and error to get right.

The raise and lower mechanism lies in the channel used for deck lines with a skeg control knob sliding in a plastic tube. (Details available for serious readers). The cable is one continuous loop with one side going down each side of the boat under the deck and with a loop under the front deck.

One unexpected bonus was the space in the rear hatch when the skeg was removed. I had always kept the vegetables behind the skeg box and decided I could now keep even more, but how could I keep them confined. As I contemplated the problem in our crowded garage the answer came in the shape of garden mesh. It was made into a cone U shape. The ends were other pieces of mesh tie wrapped in place. A piece of tent guy line completed the "fridge" to facilitate extracting it.

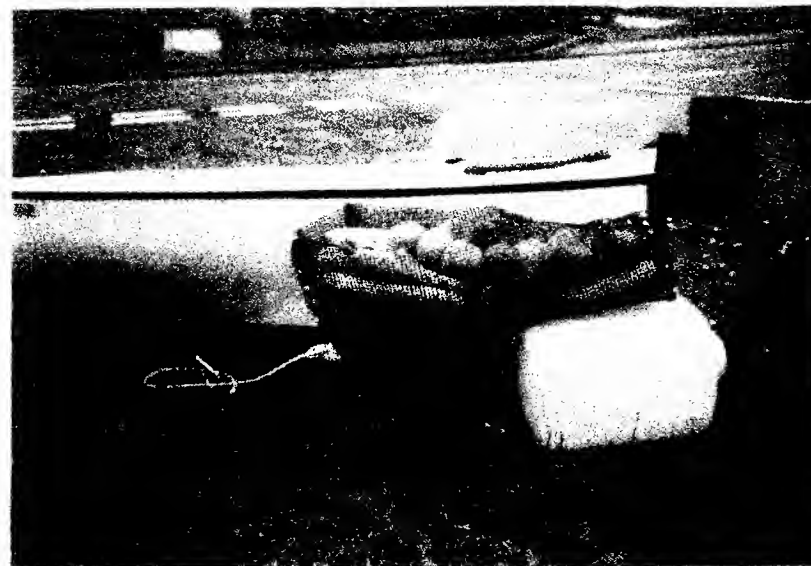
It pushes easily to the end of the boat and conforms to the boat shape so no space is wasted. It holds a weeks fruit and veg for 2 in perfect condition. Less health conscious paddlers could also use it for cream cakes (delicate items are not squashed) or classy paddlers could keep the wine glasses. The possibilities are endless.

The fridge was a bonus, the main point is that the rudder is fantastic in quartering winds, following seas and tide races. Anyone who hates paddling into a quartering wind in an empty Baidarka should seriously consider a rudder.

Chris Simpson. *Chris*

PS
After a holiday in the states and seeing an eskimo kayak in a museum, and a phone call to Duncan Winning, I am now on a winter project of building a replica from wood and canvas, unless anyone knows where I can get a few sealskins.

Harry *Harry*



FOR SALE
Foldable sea kayak

KLEPPER AERIUS II EXPEDITION DOUBLE

Length: 17ft, max beam 34 1/4, waterline beam 25",
weight 71 lbs, load capacity 770 lbs.
Colour: light green, in perfect condition,
with rudder, boat carriage and three paddles.
£1.200 shipping costs not included.

Daniel De'Angeli
Via de'Macci 7
50122 Florence, Italy
Tel+fax: 0039 55 2478439

• Canoeing is
Non-hazardous in 1996*

The perception held by some of the public as a result of the Lyme Bay accident is that canoeing is dangerous. In 1996 the death rate whilst canoeing was less than 1:1,000,000 according to BCU figures. No one died in this year and the estimates of the number of people canoeing is based on figures from BCU approved centres only. So the real proportion could be miles better.

This figure compares with a 1:16,250 chance of dying at home. In 1995, 2 people died canoeing. One death was alcohol related, neither were wearing buoyancy aids or were supervised. In general, watersports are found to cause less non-fatal accidents than any other sports.

• Access to Canoeing for Young People

In the same article Geoff Good, BCU director of coaching, reports that 80% of centres offer canoeing, 18% of schools provide canoeing within the curriculum and 27% extra curricular, whilst 91% of schools indicate that children experience watersports on activity courses.

These are great figures. The challenge now will be to turn these largely foundation experiences into participation in journeys and skill development.

* Good G; 1997; Hazardous Activities; Canoe Focus; No. 108.

• Row the Atlantic

By the time you read this the strangest challenge and competition this century will have begun. Thirty rowing boats, with two rowers in each, will have set off from Tenerife across the Atlantic, in identical 24ft boats constructed from kits, to Barbados over 30000 miles away! This one was dreamed up by Sir Chay Blyth, who himself rowed the Atlantic back in 1966 with John Ridgway, taking 92 days to do it via the northern route, west to east. The hurricane season is supposedly over and air temperatures warm, but all boats are carrying satellite tracking devices and emergency beacons and will be accompanied by two ocean racing yachts. Each boat also has a tiny 6ft 2in cabin in case they feel tired!! One interesting equipment snippet is a hand-operated reverse osmosis water pump which converts one gallon of sea water into fresh water in an hour.

Some Statistics on Health

Adults Overweight:- Men = 48% Women = 40%
Below activity levels for a fit and healthy life
16 - 24 year olds:- Men = 70% Women = 91%

And on crime:

Youth crime accounts for 45% of crimes resulting in a conviction or formal caution.

Wilderness Survival



Quantock's latest innovation is the Wilderness Survival Tent. Weighing in at 3.25lb, the Wilderness is constructed using a Milair hydrophillic nylon flysheet, a Micromesh membrane inner and a three ply Gore-tex door that features a window.

With previous Quantock models getting approval for their lightweight, innovative features and low cost, it's good to see that the Wilderness Survival Tent is carrying on in the same tradition. It comes complete with an entrance mat, a ridge stress harness that's bonded to the tent and plenty of working space for the occupant and for gear storage.

Pete Beard, the man behind Quantock reckons that this latest tent is a worthy successor to his Double Hoop Solo Survival tent, so much so that he's dropping the latter from the Quantock line-up after 15 years of production.

It's reckoned that the Wilderness Survival Tent "can be erected in seconds using either the tent pegs or stones" yet the prototype version apparently stood up to weather conditions which were expected to cause severe damage to it. After being holed up for two days in the middle of Dartmoor, both the tent (and occupant) were undamaged. The cost £138.

Contact: 01752 223008

For Sale

① YNYS SEA KAYAK - Red & yellow
Oval hatches, deck compass
back rest, deck pump £650.

② ICOM Handheld VHF
Marine Radio . IC M5
Water proof bag
Charger unit £150

Contact Graham North
12A Blackberry Lane
Halesowen. W. Midlands
B63 4NX (0121 550 6809)

Duncan Pryde

Thought this may interest you. Dave

Life and loves of an Eskimo champion

AT THE funeral of Duncan Pryde, who has died of cancer aged 60, mention was made of his earlier life, but few among those present were aware of its wider significance. Not surprisingly, for in the last decade of his life, he and his second wife, Dawn, had lived quietly, running a small newsagent's shop, Pryde of Cowes, near the town's marina. To most who dropped by for their dailies, sweets, or fishing tackle, the thin, diffident Scot at the till must have seemed quite ordinary.

One clue to the deception of this image lay in the piles of notes and computer print-outs over which he poured in quiet moments between customers: these were the raw material and drafts of what he intended to be the most comprehensive dictionary yet of the 26 dialects of the Inuit, or Eskimo, language.

Although he spoke nine of them fluently — more, it is said, than anyone else — his great project sadly proved much more than a single life's work. But by setting out Inuit's phonetical keys and dialectical codes and getting into its alphabet, he hoped his chosen successors could complete it, or use his work so far to help the Eskimos defend their identity against the cultural onslaughts of the West.

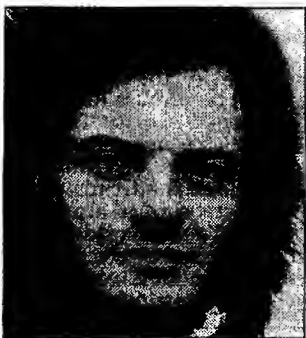
Born one of six children of a mine-worker in Dalmeir, Clydebank, Pryde was educated at an orphanage in Banffshire. At 15, he joined the merchant navy; at 18, back on land after an eye injury, he answered a newspaper advertisement by the Hudson's Bay Company and left for Canada. At 21, after three years fur-trading in northern Manitoba and Ontario with Cree and Ojibway Indians, whose dialects he picked up too, he asked the company to give him a job less "soft and civilised".

As he was to recount in his elegant, unvarnished memoir, *Nunaga; My Land, My Country*, this, along with romance and high adventure, was what he got, at trading posts further north in the tundra. Following the advice of another Scot, who was his first boss there, to "learn the Eskimo way, so you know how they feel", he became adept at hunting and fishing, setting fur-traps, training dogs, navigating sleds in win-

ters of frozen darkness, building snow-houses, and surviving off rations of raw caribou meat and seal-blood soup. His strength and resilience earned him the name Taqak, or "Wiry".

He survived attacks by grizzly and polar bears; and early on, as the employee at a remote trading post, he was at the mercy of a band of Eskimo desperadoes, one of whom tried repeatedly to kill him. After that experience, Pryde was initiated into the practice of wife-exchange, which provided him with female warmth, offspring, protection as a family member from the worst consequences of murderous blood feuds — and the beginnings of his reputation as a Don Juan on sled-runners.

This did him no harm when, in 1966, he was elected as the first member on the Northwest Territorial Council in Yellowknife for the just-enfranchised constituency of West Arctic, three times the area of France. He resigned from the Hudson's Bay Com-



Pryde . . . Arctic defender

pany, became an independent trapper, and then embarked on a series of long and perilous journeys by sled and canoe to meet his constituents.

Having experienced some of the worst of their old hardships, he was determined that, instead of being robbed of land or reduced to welfare, they should have the best possible chance to enjoy new prosperity. So that Eskimo children would no longer be sent away, he helped secure their right to state-funded schooling at home in their settlements; and to assist their parents, promoted laws guaranteeing a fair share of income from visiting hunters. His attempts to limit incur-

sions by the oil companies and tankers threatening his constituency's frail ecology were less successful.

In 1969, in a cover-story devoted to him in the Canadian edition of *Time* magazine, he was said to know the Arctic "better than any white man of his generation". In 1970, his Eskimo voters re-elected him with a huge majority over an Eskimo opponent. In 1972, he was lionised by the media, when *Nunaga* was published to critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic and became a Canadian bestseller.

After he settled in Yellowknife with his first legal wife, Georgina, a local Indian beauty queen, and formed his own development business, it looked for a while as if he might be seduced into comfy, middle-class acquiescence. But not for long. With his marriage on the rocks, he resigned his council seat in 1975 and joined the staff of the Inupiat University of the Arctic, 1,500 miles due west in Anchorage, Alaska. There, latterly as head of the Inupiat and Arctic Studies Department, he helped improve methods of teaching Inuit, devised a typewriter keyboard for the language, and was commissioned to start on his dictionary.

According to legend, the bureaucrats in Washington took some years to realise that, although he had been the named assignee of US federal grants, Pryde did not officially exist: they had no record of his social security number, residential status, or entry into Alaska. So, one evening during a card-game with some academic colleagues, a judge, and an immigration officer, he was asked as tactfully as possible how he had got there.

The question signalled how rapidly his wilderness was being tamed, and his answer demonstrated how much had already been lost. "By dog-sled, of course." Having agreed to continue his research elsewhere while his status in Alaska was sorted out, he met his second wife, Dawn, and never returned.

Duncan Pryde leaves Dawn, a daughter, Fiona, by his first wife; and a small clan of Eskimo Scots.

William Rayner

Duncan McLean Pryde, Arctic trapper and author, born June 8, 1937; died November 15, 1997

Letter.

From Anna Dore, 8, Heytesbury Rd., Bournemouth, BH6 5BN.

I wonder if you would be able to give any tips on how to find my husband, Graham, a paddling partner for summer 1998 and onwards.

I was also wondering whether you knew anyone who might be interested in doing a Channel crossing from Swanage to Cherbourg or similar.

Ed. Any one out there interested then write to Anna at address above.

The Okavango Over 50 Expedition.

Martin Davies writes:

we were out to achieve several aims - to show that those of us in the 'third age' could undertake such an expedition and to raise money for Tusk Force and Survival International.

At the end of June last year Jevan (64), Dave (59) and Martin (56) set off for Botswana by way of Johannesburg where we provisioned. We used hired Canadian canoes and drove to Mohembo in the North before setting off on the Okavango River which reaches Botswana after flowing south from the Angola Mountains.

We paddled 390 km camping on islands and deserted hunting grounds and when we reached the limits imposed by floods, walked the last 45 km back into Maun to complete a memorable journey.

The gusting winds catch us by surprise. Swells of frigid black water rise menacingly above our heads as we paddle our kayaks along the west coast of Greenland. Spray from white-caps stings our faces. Suddenly a six-foot curler breaks over Manuel,

and my friend is in the water, fighting for his life.

The sea is fearfully cold on this August morning. Manuel has to make a decision fast. His kayak is swamped and useless, but the shore is at least 500 yards away. He pushes away from his boat and starts swimming in my direction.

Mistake. The waves keep crashing over his head. We can't reach each other, though I'm only 20 yards away. Manuel is losing his fight against the surf. In desperation he turns and heads toward land.

My heart sinks as another wave thunders down on him. He disappears. Terrified that he can't survive in the icy water, I shoot a signal flare into the air in hopes that someone will see it. Then I paddle furiously toward the island town of Qeqertarsuaq, a few miles away.

"What happened?" shouts a policeman as my kayak skids onto the beach.

"My friend is in the water!" I yell, pointing toward where Manuel capsized—now 20 minutes ago. Four men jump into an outboard skiff and roar off toward the spot.

"We go in the ambulance," says the policeman, rushing me to a vehicle filled with people talking all at once in Greenlandic—an explosion of *q's*, *k's*, and *s's*. We race along the coast,

swerving across the tundra until we see Manuel stumbling in the distance. When the driver hits the brakes, I jump out and run toward him. He is alive!

Shivering violently and suffering from hypothermia, he has no strength to speak. By the time the ambulance rushes him to the small hospital, his temperature has plunged to 90°F—dangerously low.

"Bring him here," calls a nurse, who submerges Manuel in a tub of warm water to thaw him out. Then she buries him in blankets. Within an hour he begins to recover. The immediate crisis is past.

The accident shakes Manuel's confidence, however. He does not want to return to the water right away. It's a blow to my confidence as well. We have only begun our long journey. For a few tense days in Qeqertarsuaq I wonder if our dream is over. TEN WEEKS BEFORE, on June 16, 1990, after four months of training, we'd set out from the town of Narsarsuaq, 750 miles away, near the southern tip of Greenland. Along with two other teammates—Antonio Martínez and Rafael Peche—Manuel and I planned to make a three-year, 8,400-mile trip from Greenland through Alaska (map, below). We weren't trying to set any records, only to gain a better understanding of northern ways.

Our plan was for me to make the whole journey, while Manuel, or Manolo as he is

called, would accompany me for most of the first year and again briefly at the end of the third. Antonio, a mountaineer and caver who had impulsively left a promising business to be part of the group, would join me for the last two years. Rafael, a streetwise photography student, would drop in from time to time to film the trip.

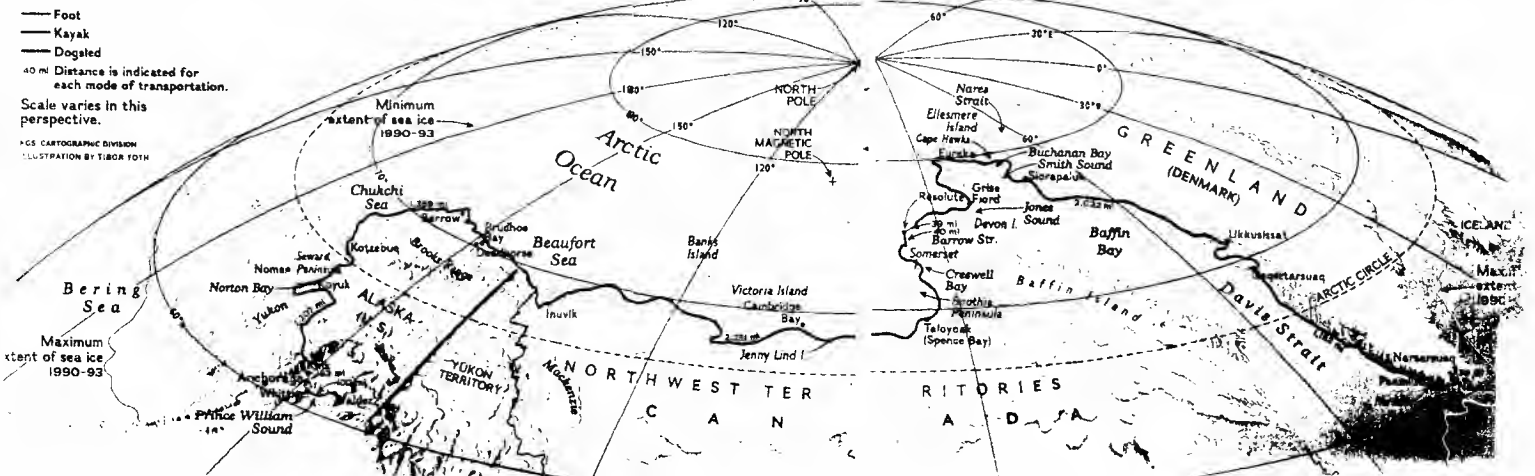
Among us city slickers—all from Madrid and all in our 20s—I had the most Arctic experience, having taken part in expeditions across Iceland and Greenland. But even I didn't know much of what we needed to survive, especially since we were determined to use only traditional forms of transportation—kayaks in summer, dogsleds in winter, and, of course, our own feet—as did Greenlandic explorer Knud Rasmussen in 1921-24 and Japanese adventurer Naomi Uemura in 1974-76 on similar treks from Greenland through Alaska.

If bad weather kept us from traveling, as we expected it might for months at a time, we would stay in villages, learning from hunters about training our dogs and making traditional gear. We had a lot to learn.

Spring 1991

Harsh Days on Nares Strait

■ It has been about eight months now since Manolo's near-fatal accident in the kayak. The bad memories have faded. The two of us are in Siorapaluk, the northernmost town in



Greenland, eager to begin our 150-mile trip by dogsled across the frozen water to Canada. During our 2,100-mile journey here from Narsarsuaq, we were delayed for more than four months by the condition of the ice. After kayaking halfway up the coast by late September, we had to wait until February for the sea to freeze over before we could continue by dogsled.

To help us make the difficult crossing to Canada, Manolo and I hire two brothers, Paulus and Adolf Simigaq from Siorapaluk. They will guide us across the ice and hunt walruses and seals for food. The polynya, an area of open water in sea ice, in Smith Sound extends far north. From Siorapaluk we must sled northwest nearly a hundred miles to find good ice.

"*Taama! Taama!*" I shout to my dogs. "Let's go!" Off we gallop up the coast.

The dogs are extremely fresh

Standing on the back bar of his sled, Paulus searches the horizon for game. He had warned us that we might have trouble finding animals because of the severe cold this spring. But even he is surprised by the lack of game. During our eight-day crossing the brothers shoot only one seal, which we share with our dogs. They devour the meat in seconds. By the time we reach Cape Hawks on Canada's Ellesmere Island, we have no food for the dogs.

Our plan is to keep going to Buchanan Bay, a place known for game, where the brothers could hunt. But on our third night in Canada, still 30 miles from the bay, Paulus gives me the bad news.

"We have to go back," he says of his brother and himself.

"We took you to Canada as we promised. But there is no food to go farther."

hamlet on the southern coast. I tell him we can't make it.

"Look, it's 300 miles to Grise Fiord," I say. "What if we don't find seals at Buchanan Bay? The brothers didn't think we would, or they wouldn't have left."

Our only option, we realize, is to try for the weather station about 180 miles northwest at Eureka. Our maps show that it is no farther away than Siorapaluk if we take the shortest route across the island. What we don't know is how dangerous this route will be.

Carrying the Dogs

■ Ten days have passed since we left Siorapaluk. Our meager supplies are dwindling. My anxiety turns to excitement, however, when Manolo spots a seal. Concealing himself behind a *taalu-tag*, a square screen of white canvas about a yard across, he cautiously advances toward the animal, the first we have tried to



MANUEL OLIVERA

today, I write in my journal on April 18. *They are running like crazy. Wind whirls the snow around like a storm, though the sky above is bright blue.*

We head north of Smith Sound, then west across the Nares Strait. Our progress slows to a crawl. Jumbled blocks of sea ice more than ten feet tall trap our four sleds in a labyrinth. The journey excites the dogs, which nip at one another as they jump over the ice. Despite the minus 13°F cold, sweat streams down my face.

To avoid the rough ice, we follow the edge of the polynya, racing over smooth, new ice as rapidly as possible. Water bubbles up here and there as our sleds, weighing 400 pounds each, skim over ice only two inches thick. Our nerves are jangling.

"But how are we supposed to go by ourselves?" I reply. "We have no experience hunting. We will be helpless."

"You will learn to hunt," he says. "If we leave now, our dogs may be strong enough to make it back. But if we wait a few days and don't find any seals, they will never make it."

I am disappointed but understand. The next morning, as Manolo and I watch the brothers pack, we try not to show how afraid we are. We have never felt so alone in our lives with so little idea of what may lie ahead.

"*Ingerlalluarisi,*" says Paulus. "Have a safe trip." He waves and rides off.

After the brothers leave, Manolo and I argue about what to do. He wants to continue to Buchanan Bay to hunt seals, then keep going to Grise Fiord, a

shoot. Watching through my binoculars, I hold my breath as he lies on the ground and pulls the trigger. A hit. But the wounded seal plunges back into its hole. My hope sinks with the seal.

We push harder now to reach Eureka. With our rations down to ten ounces of oatmeal and rice a day to sustain us for 12 hours on the sleds, I feel my strength ebbing. Immense glaciers with dangerous crevasses cover the interior of Ellesmere Island. At times, stopped by frozen waterfalls, we are forced to lower our sleds down icy cascades with ropes. At other times we race down rivers of ice through canyons of snow, never knowing whether we're being lured into a dead end.

The worst part is what is happening to our dogs. When Manolo and I started, we had 24. By

the time we reach the west coast, two have starved to death, Sondre, my lead dog, has been killed in a fight with another dog, and five more are suffering so badly we have to shoot them. Among them is Tontainas, my favorite. I cry as I feed his flesh to his ravenous sled mates.

We have abandoned one sled. The dogs are too weak to pull it. After combining our teams, we are down to 16 dogs. Then another dog is killed by an arctic wolf that slips into our camp at night. Waking to the sound of frenetic barking, we race out to find the white-coated wolf standing over the carcass. Before Manolo can fetch his rifle, the wolf sprints across the tundra.

I'm so nervous now I can't sleep at night, Manolo writes in his diary on May 6. All I want to do is finish this hellish trip.

When we finally stumble into Eureka, 13 days after parting with the Simigaq brothers, only five of our dogs have the strength to pull. Five others are walking beside us, and the remaining five are riding on the sled, with Manolo pushing from behind. We have lost the desire to carry on. The memory of our dead dogs torments us.

Summer 1991

On Thin Ice

■ We stay ten days at the weather station in Eureka, which is no more than a few barracks, warehouses, and a radio dome. The eight Canadians stationed here give us plenty to eat, and we gradually regain our confidence. Our dogs bounce back too, once their stomachs are full of seal meat flown in from a nearby supply base. We lose one more dog, however, to another wolf boldly scavenging for food on the outskirts of the station.

The journey to Grise Fiord takes 11 days. Antonio and Rafael, or Rafa as we call him, are waiting there for us. As planned, Manolo returns to Spain.

"Try to behave yourselves," he tells us.

While at Grise Fiord I hear news of the Simigaq brothers. Although not all their dogs survived, they have made it home safely.

On June 7, as the weather grows almost balmy, we three decide to test our luck by setting off across Jones Sound toward the hamlet of Resolute on Cornwallis Island, 250 miles to the

southwest. We don't know if the ice will hold our sled and 14 dogs. The ice cracks and grinds beneath us.

"Wake up!" shouts Rafa early one morning at our camp. "The sea is here!"

I jump out of the tent. The water's edge has crept within 600 yards during the night. The ice beneath us could break up at any moment. We decide to backtrack and try a safer route.

Rafa walks ahead, hunting for seals, whose fat and dark red flesh has become our only food. During the long polar days of summer we lose track of time, sometimes going for more than 20 hours before sleeping. Our compasses don't work, because we are too close to earth's north magnetic pole. We guide ourselves by observing the location of snowbanks—a technique we learned from hunters in Greenland. Since the winds in this region almost always blow from the east, snow piles up on the western side of boulders. In three weeks we arrive at Resolute.

I sense right away that this community of 170 is different. The few residents we see don't come up to say hello. In fact, they ignore us. A couple of strangers in town is nothing new here. The Canadian government operates a weather station, airport, and supply depot five miles away. For decades it has also served as a jumping-off point for tourists and explorers bound for the North Pole and other remote destinations.

The feeling of being unwelcome lasts for the three months we are pinned down here by the weather—too warm to take the sled on the sea, too cold to kayak in the ice-choked water. Rarely are we invited into homes, asked to go hunting or to help with chores, as we had been in Greenland villages. There are problems here, as elsewhere in the Arctic, with liquor and violence.

"I don't go out at night without a baseball bat," one neighbor tells me. "I don't want any unpleasant surprises."

Because of our late arrival we cannot cross Barrow Strait by dogsled. So in early August Rafa takes our dogs ahead by plane to an Inuit camp 200 miles to the southeast on neighboring Somerset Island. Antonio, meanwhile, tears a muscle in his shoulder, making it impossible for him to kayak with me. When the broken-up ice clears enough in

early September to put a boat into the water, I rashly decide to cross the strait alone.

On the third day of my trip a jagged piece of ice pierces my kayak's fiberglass skin off the coast of Somerset Island. Water leaks in. The Inuit camp is still a week away. It has taken all my strength to get this far. Although I do not want to admit defeat, nevertheless, I radio for help. An airplane bound for Cornwallis Island makes an emergency stop on Somerset, bouncing its wheels on the snow, to pick up my broken kayak and me. I return gloomily to Resolute.

Fall 1991

Slipping and Sliding in the Dark

■ Frustrated by our confinement in Resolute, Antonio and I decide to fly to Somerset Island on September 25 to join Rafa, who is living at the Creswell Bay camp of Timothy Idlout, an Inuit elder. We use our time with Timothy's family to make traditional-style equipment—harnesses for the dogs and seal-hide whips—and to sew warm leggings and parkas from caribou and polar bear skins. A few weeks later, Rafa flies ahead to prepare for the next leg of our trip at the hamlet of Taloyoak—also known as Spence Bay—250 miles to the south on Boothia Peninsula.

In the meantime, there is unfinished business. Antonio and I must return to the spot on the northwest coast where the plane rescued me earlier. We do not want to leave any part of the trip undone. Because of the short days and cloudy weather, however, we are forced to travel in murky darkness most of the time, which makes everything more difficult. With very little snow to run on, our dogs slip and fall on the ice. The wind pushes our sled around on the frozen water like a rudderless sailboat. Then we discover our radio is broken. Our nerves are shot.

By the time we get back to the Idlout camp, the family has left. The place is empty. Exhausted and discouraged, we finally decide to postpone the next leg of our journey until the sun returns in a few months.

The Gift

■ We leave Creswell Bay on February 8, sledging three weeks

to Taloyoak. There we are greeted by Rafa and Steve Aqqaq, an Inuit hunter whose weather-beaten face reflects a long and difficult life.

Following Aqqaq into his house, I find his wife, Emily, sitting on a chair, sewing *kamiks*, or boots, from sealskin. From the ceiling hangs an enormous polar bear hide stretched out to dry. On the floor is a large piece of raw caribou meat and an *ulu*, or woman's knife. The scene might have been taken from one of the igloos in which they were raised.

A few yards away two grandchildren are playing. The older child has a can of Coca-Cola in one hand and a bag of potato chips in the other. They are arguing in English about which television program to watch.

During Aqqaq's lifetime he has seen his family move from oil lamps to electricity, from nomadic camps to prefabricated houses. When I ask him if he prefers life then or now, he looks at me thoughtfully.

"Before, things were simpler," he says at last. "I had only myself to rely on. I had *control* over my life. Now everything is so complicated."

Aqqaq treats us like family, worrying about every detail of our plans. When it comes time to leave, he asks to see my hand-made caribou parka. I proudly show it to him. Grasping my coat in his strong hands, he carefully inspects the seams, hide, and shape. Then he makes a disgusted face and flings the garment on the ground.

"*Namangituq!*" he says. "Not good enough!"

Taken by surprise, I don't know how to react. I don't dare pick up the coat, which I leave lying on the snow.

Aqqaq goes into the enclosed porch of his house and comes back with a parka of much better quality than the one I have.

This he presents to me, saying, "*Namaktuq!*—Much better!"

The old hunter's generosity moves me. It is a good note on which to resume our journey.

Summer 1992

Dancing With Caribou

■ After leaving Taloyoak on March 4 we sled more than 1,400 miles west along the edge of the Northwest Passage toward Inuvik. We have been trekking, often at long intervals, almost

two years now. Unlike our earlier ordeals, the going here is easy. A bulldozer pulling a train of sleds carrying fuel tanks has forged an 80-mile path between Jenny Lind Island and the hamlet of Cambridge Bay on its way to resupply nearby radar stations. Our dogs run like the devil on the hard-packed snow.

During our stay at Inuvik, a modern community on the Mackenzie River Delta, Manolo rejoins us, bringing our kayaks with him, and Rafa returns to Spain. We had planned to continue dogsledding from here to Alaska's west coast, but since summer is coming we decide to switch to kayaks. Knowing we can no longer keep our dogs, we are forced, to our distress, to sell or give them all away.

Paddling north, then west from Inuvik, we discover how shallow the Beaufort Sea can be. Sometimes we have to climb out of our kayaks and walk them into deeper water. At night we camp on the beach, setting up a fishnet in the sea. By morning it holds arctic char, which we roast over a driftwood fire.

One July dawn, after having crossed into Alaska, we awaken to the sound of rumbling hoofs. Sticking my head out of the tent, I am amazed to see hundreds of caribou passing not 40 yards away. They are coming from the hinterland to escape the clouds of mosquitoes that torment them. We pack up our gear and follow the magnificent animals along the coast in our kayaks.

A mass of caribou are jammed together on a point of land opposite a small island, as if working up the courage to make the 50-yard crossing. Grunting and shoving, they push together until one or two animals lunge into the water and begin swimming for the island. Soon they are all around us in the water, eyes wide with fear and determination. For a moment I am caught up in their excitement, feeling in my blood what it must have been like for Inuit hunters of the past to give chase.

Once the peaks of the Brooks Range disappear, we grow bored by Alaska's monotonous coast. The tundra extends endlessly in every direction. For a change of pace we paddle onto the beach of an oil field operated by the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) at Prudhoe Bay. A secu-

rity vehicle screeches to a stop as we change into dry clothes.

"Hey, how are ya doing?" asks an ARCO guard in a blue uniform. "Where ya going?"

"We're traveling along the coast from Canada," I say. "We'd like to buy supplies."

The guard talks into a radio. Within minutes a green company bus rumbles down the road. We ask the driver to take us to a supermarket in Deadhorse, the nearest town to the oil fields. He drives us to a bright new store.

Inside we find aisle after aisle of tortilla chips, chocolate bars, sunglasses, and baseball caps, but no flour, rice, sugar, or butter, which is what we really want. Antonio asks the clerk, a man as large as a sumo wrestler, where to find such staples.

"Not in this store," he says.

"But I thought this was a supermarket."

"Nobody buys any of that stuff up here. Everybody eats at the oil company cafeterias or hotels. Talk to a cook."

We find a sympathetic one at the North Star Inn, who fills our order. Then it's back onto the bus, past mile after mile of oil wells, to our campsite on the beach. It astounds me that there can be so many roads and so much sophisticated equipment in so isolated a place.

Winter 1992-3

Time Travelers

■ The weather turns colder after a ten-day stay to the west of Prudhoe Bay in Barrow, the northernmost community in the United States. By the time we reach the town of Kotzebue, after traveling 600 miles to the southwest, on September 16, our hands are numb from the icy water and freezing winds. We have come 1,250 miles since Inuvik. We can go no farther by kayak for now.

Manolo leaves us during this leg of the trek. "Our journey across the Arctic has turned into a trip through time," says Manolo. "When a hunter in northern Greenland gets hungry, he takes his dogs out to find seals. When someone in this part of Alaska wants a bite to eat, he can pick up the phone and place an order for burgers and fries from the restaurant down the street."

In Kotzebue, Antonio and I follow the dictum, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." We replace our kamiks with molded plastic boots, our fur

parkas with single-layered, foam-insulated pants and parkas, and our homemade sleds with a sleek new one made of laminated oak and aluminum to continue our journey to Anchorage by land.

Even our dogs are high tech. Sonny Russell, a former Rookie of the Year in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, lends us a team for the winter. The Iditarod, held every March from Anchorage to Nome, has become a big media event since it began in 1973. The dogs that take part in



Perilous Journey

it, bred for speed and stamina, are raised on a scientifically formulated diet.

When Antonio and I leave Kotzebue by dogsled on January 1 to cross the Seward Peninsula, speed is the last thing on our minds. We have waited until midwinter to be sure that the many rivers and creeks we must cross are frozen solid. But now the snow has become so deep that one of us must walk ahead in snowshoes to lead the team, while the dogs struggle along behind with our single sled. The forests, moreover, make us uncomfortable. After traveling so far across open tundra and sea ice, we are not used to moving among the crowded trees, which sound like an angry mob when they shake in the wind.

On the morning of January 12, as I ride on top of our sled to rest, Jake, one of our lead dogs, is guiding us through the mist. Suddenly the dogs at the front of the team begin to disappear. One by one, they drop away, sliding over the edge of a steep slope.

"Stop! Stop!" I shout behind

me to Antonio, who tries with all his might to brake. Now the sled is vertical, and I have no time to think. I am flying through the air. I close my eyes and hold my breath. *Thud!* When I lift my head out of the powdery snow, I see a jumble of sled, dogs, and harnesses.

We have fallen about 25 feet, yet amazingly neither of us nor any of the dogs is injured. The snow has cushioned our fall. After spending the better part of an hour unraveling the traces, we are off again.

We join the Iditarod Trail at the village of Koyuk, 150 miles south of Kotzebue on Norton Bay. A recent snowmobile race has left deep ruts in the trail, which makes it feel more like an interstate highway than the unmarked tracks we took in northern Canada.

Spring 1993

End of the Road

■ Something strange happens to me during our journey from Kotzebue to Anchorage. I sink into a deep depression, becoming convinced that I am on the verge of death, even though there's nothing wrong with me. I dread the thought of getting out of my sleeping bag to face each day. The smallest chore seems too difficult. I'm overwhelmed by feelings of regret for things that have happened during our long expedition.

"What's wrong?" Antonio asks.

"I can't explain it," I say, crying.

"Let me take you to a hospital."

"No, there's nothing they can do."

"Look, when I was feeling so low back in Canada, you helped me through," Antonio says. "Now I'll do the same for you. But if you die on me, I will never forgive you."

With words of encouragement and by his own example, he keeps me going. He tells me jokes. He cuts my shaggy hair. He shouts at me when I need it. Inch by inch, he helps me back out of the darkness.

By the time we get to Knik, a village north of Anchorage, I feel strong enough to continue by myself on foot, while Antonio arranges the return of the dogs to Kotzebue. The long and grueling trek has been tougher on me than I realized.

On March 6, as I walk through downtown Anchorage with my backpack, I stop to gaze at my reflection in a shop window. Who is that man with the scruffy beard and wild eyes?

I don't feel comfortable being back in a city. The traffic is too noisy, the sidewalks crowded with people. The faces of so many strangers make me feel like a foreigner, something I never experienced in the wilderness. I realize that I can't stay here tonight. I keep on walking past the last factories and suburban houses, right out of town, and spend the night in my sleeping bag in the trees at the side of the road.

Antonio brings our kayaks to Whittier, a small town on the shores of Prince William Sound. Manolo also joins us there, and from Whittier we paddle together the final 95 miles to Valdez. We talk about all the people we have met during our journey and what we have learned about the north. Manolo says that for him the most important lesson was not to fight against nature but to respect it. For Antonio it was learning to cooperate with others under adversity. As for me, I rediscovered the power of friendship, which gave me the strength to continue day after day.

As we paddle into Valdez on March 25, a cheer goes up from my parents and 18 other members of my family who have come from Spain to meet us. After three years, I can scarcely believe that our journey is finished and that my dream has come true. I am a different person from the one who set out from Greenland.

International Sea Kayaking Association

5, Osprey Ave. Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancs. BL5 2SL Phone/Fax 01942 842204 Mobile 0374 953358

Date January, 1998

1998 SUBSCRIPTION TO I.S.K.A. FINAL REMINDER.

I DO HOPE YOU DECIDE TO CONTINUE AS A MEMBER OF OUR ASSOCIATION AND I HAVE INCLUDED A RENEWAL FORM FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.

I KNOW MANY OF YOU DO RENEW AT THE INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE 21st AND 22nd FEBRUARY. WE WILL BE THERE AS USUAL (STAND NO. 20) AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.

FINALLY TO SAY THAT IF YOU FEEL THE NEWSLETTER COULD BE MORE RELEVANT/INTERESTING THEN DO SEND ME SOME MATERIAL. I CAN ONLY PUBLISH YOUR NEWS, VIEWS AND OPINIONS IF YOU LET ME HAVE THEM.

BEST WISHES AND HAPPY PADDLING FOR 1998.



A hero of the old school

Blondie: A Life of Lieutenant-Colonel H G Hasler DSO OBE RM, Founder of the SBS and Modern Single-handed Ocean Racing
by Ewen Southby-Tailyour
Leo Cooper £25 pp412

Michael Rose

Since Homer drew the attention of the Greeks to the feats of the wily mariner Odysseus, every community has needed its own hero — and undoubtedly Lieutenant-Colonel Blondie Hasler DSO, OBE provides the source of such inspiration for the Royal Marines today. They regard him as the man whose ideas, inventiveness and practical example led to the foundation of the modern Special Boat Service (SBS) of the Royal Marines, the maritime equivalent of the army's Special Air Service regiment (SAS).

However, Hasler is better known to the general public for his involvement in Operation Frankton in 1942 when he led a team of canoeists 91 miles up the Gironde river in order to attack ships in Bordeaux — although the film called *Cockleshell Heroes* that was subsequently made of this exploit always remained a great embarrassment to him. After the war, Hasler became equally famous for his contribution to the development of small-boat sailing — partly through the brilliance of his designs, and also because he was the man who conceived the idea of the single-handed transatlantic race. It was during these races, on his 25ft yacht *Jester*, that he tested the practicability of many of his revolutionary ideas.



It is, therefore, fitting that Hasler's biography should be written by Ewen Southby-Tailyour, a Royal Marine who possesses many of Hasler's eccentric attributes, as well as his sailing ability. It was, after all, Southby-Tailyour who went to war in the Falkland Islands, living in a bath because of a shortage of accommodation, and whose detailed knowledge of the coastal waters of the islands proved to be so indispensable to the Royal Navy during the landings. However, because the author knew Hasler so well, and because he admired him so greatly, the book turns out to be something of a hagiography and is diminished by a lack of critical analysis.

By the time that Hasler had become involved in covert amphibious operations in 1941, much experimental work in this field had already been done by such men as Major Roger Courtney; operational experience had also been gained by the Special Boat sections of the British Army in the Mediterranean. It was at the tactical level, therefore, rather than at the strategic level of operations that Hasler's main contribution was to be made.

Throughout his life, Hasler was evidently more comfortable with the details of practical design and the pursuit of technical excellence than he was with wider strategic issues. It is no coincidence that in the post-war years the SBS was to inherit this attitude. It was not until nearly 50 years after the end of the second world war, when the SBS started to work more with the SAS, that their horizons widened sufficiently to include strategic level operations.

Hasler always believed that small boats could be designed to be as seaworthy as larger boats. He agreed with Sir Walter Raleigh that 'He that will happily perform a fight at sea, must be skilful in making a choice of vessels to fight in'. Hasler chose to develop vessels that were as small as possible, and it was his understanding of hull design and materials that led to the construction of the *Cockle Mark II* canoes that were used on the raid in Bordeaux. These craft could carry 480lb, including two men, and the design is still in service today.

I.S.K.A. Newsletter

LIFEBOAT KILTIES RESCUE CANOEIST. So reads the headline to an cutting from the Scottish Daily Record as sent to me at my request by Duncan Winning.

The article reads as follows:

"A stricken canoeist was amazed when he was plucked from chilly waters after seven hours by a lifeboat crew wearing KILTS and bow ties.

The Oban crew had been heading for their annual dinner when they were called out to help Peter Murray.

So the six man crew pulled on their survival suits over kilts and suits and took off to search around Balnagowa Island in Loch Linnbe, Argyll.

They found Peter, 31, but he was hallucinating after the perilously cold water brought his body temperature to a critical level.

Peter, a Gaelic lecturer, of High Street, Fort William , was found just before 9 pm on Saturday (January 10th, 1998) and flown to Lorne and Isles Hospital Oban.

The Lifeboat Team turned up to cheers at their dinner at the

Scorba House Hotel, Oban".

Duncan writes a little more in the way of background:"

.....launched Gail Bay to 'island hop' in Loch Linbe. Girlfriend reported him overdue. Oban lifeboat commenced search 1t 1856 hrs. Found Peter at the end of one of their box searches as they were about to move to next, near Blanagowan Island, not far from launch site at 21.45. No details of canoe. Peter was wearing a boiler suit and woolly hat and divers type pfd. Body temp down to 29 degrees C. Arm hooked into canoe cockpit, found semi conscious. Coast guard reckoned he was in the water for about five hours."

From Chris & Harry Simpson, - I've enclosed



some pictures of the Newfoundland kayak as far as it has got. I need to make up a steamer and bend the frames for the next phase

