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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

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INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 22

JULY, 1998

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EDITORIAL

I am looking forward to the Anglesey Sea Kayaking Symposium which starts this weekend coming, i.e. May 2nd. (Yes, the editorial has to be prepared early!). This symposium has become a well established event; attracting paddlers from all over the U.K. and a few from other parts of the world. I am introducing a Canadian and an American to Anglesey, both keen to use the occasion to train towards British Canoe Union (B.C.U.) coaching awards. With Nigel Dennis and Keith Maslen I shall be visiting Canada later this year to enable local paddlers to pursue their goal of obtaining BCU coaching awards.

It is clear that individuals and centres dedicated to providing instruction and kayaking experience to others need a set of standards to work to and the BCU awards have international recognition, - even if the BCU itself would rather confine these awards to within the British coastline.

As I have said before, it has to be timely for the International Canoeing Federation to adopt a coaching scheme and a set of standards that can be employed right across the globe.

With the rapidly increasing numbers taking up sea kayaking around the world and with the associated search for quality training at safe and formally recognised centres by competent teachers it is necessary to promote a world wide scheme - only the I.C.F. can spear head this. I can understand resentment from very experienced and competent paddlers in other parts of the world when those among us, including myself, try to export a British coaching scheme beyond our shores. We truly need an international coaching scheme and an international accreditation scheme. If you agree, do as I have done and write to the I.C.F.

As I see it, the re-organisation of our own much loved BCU following federalisation and a review of the coaching scheme (yet again) to ensure it's competence and relevance is causing some concern. There is a need to be less bureaucratic but grass roots members (are your out there Ron Rymer!) must have a voice that can be heard, if not always acted upon.

It is obviously necessary to ensure coaching standards are high and currently relevant and backed by fairly constant involvement, but we also have to ensure there are sufficient instructors

available or else potential paddlers learn only from their own experience and this can be hazardous. Sea kayaking, in many respects, is like mountain walking in that both involve packing up a container, be it a kayak or a ruc sac, and going off to explore and enjoy the natural environment. One difference is that sea kayaking is less forgiving and paddlers more vulnerable to the vagaries of the prevailing conditions, hence the need for a safe and effective introduction to the marine environment.

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My recent K2 partner for the DW last Easter,Peter Hatt, a keen sea kayaker, suggested we form a loosely knit group of local paddlers so that between us we could provide a calendar of activities, opportunities, events. we called this group the North West Sea Kayakers (NWSK) and it has shot into orbit like a rocket. Paddlers from around the British Isles have heard about us and now we are embracing 'members' from well beyond the North West and interest continues to grow. In return for a few stamps we send out a news sheet which lists all the paddling opportunities. Peter and I believe we should set geographical boundaries and only accept those paddlers who reside in the North West. We are not going to do this YET but is clear there is a need to establish other geographically based kayaking groups in the near future. We need a group in the N.E., the S.E. and the S.W. How about it? If you are interested in managing a similar group in one of these three areas let us know and I.S.K.A. will support and provide a co-ordinating role. If you want to know more, contact Peter Hatt whose address appears in the ISKA Members 1998 List.

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I still intend to take a bunch of paddlers to Newfoundland next year, 1999. I have set aside the first two weeks of June which gives us about ten days kayaking. Several of you have already expressed an interest. The plan is to fly to St Johns, then on to Corner Brook via Deer Lake. we shall stay one night, or two, at Marble Mountain Cabins by the River Humber during which time we will prepare provisions, kayaks and gear before heading off to the Notre Dame Bay area on the north coast. We shall see whales, icebergs, catch cod, camp among the myriad of islands and meet with people from the almost deserted old fishing communities. Then it's back to Corner Brook to 'celebrate' our exped. and sort out before having a short break in St Johns (you'll have to let me introduce you to "Stetsons" night club on the water front) as we en route London.
I am presently costing this expedition and will let you know the price if you contact me direct. It will include flights, transport and stay at Corner Brook. You will bring your own personal gear including tent, cooker, etc. and we will provision independently by shopping in Corner Brook. Register early as I am only taking ten paddlers. You don't have to be a 'macho paddler'. Notre Dame Bay provides protected kayaking and we're not going to challenge the weather.

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HUMOUR

Did the Brits descend from the Inuit?
by John Winters (Wave Length)

I was recently asked if, in my kayak researches, I have discovered any suggestion that the Brits are descended from the Inuit. While one can never be precisely sure about such things I am reasonably confident that such is the case.

All migration of European peoples has been southward towards the Mediterranean beaches. I have personally observed this on my frequent trips to Monaco and Cannes where Anyone who is Anyone in Europe eventually fetches up. Why? you ask. Simply put, the European Navigator Appendage is drawn to warmer climes and nude beaches. One need only attempt a Number One on a cold Canadian night to understand the verity in this. Today wealthy Brits encumber the warm southern beaches in great numbers sucking on each other's extremities none navigating extremities and having a jolly time in front of admiring paparazzi.

This southern migration is the product of great human Rossby waves that undulate around the planet drawing northern peoples south where they name geographic points of interest and take credit for discovering them. The benefits to Existing southern occupants who cannot speak English and have no cartographers, are considerable. Prior to English Explorers no one knew that New York even existed much less had a name. Of course, the Brits had to come from somewhere and surely they drifted south on the crest of the Rossby waves.

Further confirmation can be found in the English Public School System where intimacies between young well-to-do English students resemble in a remarkable way the shared intimacies of Inuit families. It is no surprise that the English explorers in the north felt so much at home and this may explain the sexual ambiguity of sea kayaks vs. canoes. One must sympathize with the masculine C-1 paddlers who have been unkindly branded as being effeminate but it cannot be denied that the canoe (and by definition the C-1) is a woman's boat as the Inuit have said all along. Sexual ambiguity as it stems from the careless labelling of boat types is evident than in the English use the term "canoe" to describe the kayak. One must expect some of this in a society where the women run about bashing each other at field hockey and the men play cricket and sip tea.

I digress, however.

The British claim that they invented the Sea Kayak is an example of perceived reverse cultural exchange. Their Inuit heritage forgotten (there being no Inuit Shakespeare to set the record straight and having been scandalously bastardized by invading Frenchmen, Romans, Vikings and what-not) the Brits have erroneously adopted the kayak when, in fact, it is the Umiak that British paddling poofters should be paddling.

The confusion has spilled over to the colonies. The ICF and the IOC were dominated by British poofters who labored under the delusion that kayaks were canoes hence the name International Canoe Federation. We must not be harsh in our judgments. We do owe the IOC and ICF a debt of gratitude for clearing up the Professional/Amateur controversy. We now know that an amateur is an athlete who gets paid for performing but whose money is held in escrow (or stocks and bonds) until he becomes professional.

Finally I am indebted to Professor Invernobon who has pointed out that the British rebelled against the Roman occupiers who tried to impose central heating and straight roads on the native inhabitants. Could anything speak more eloquently for the hereditary desire to bring the outdoors inside where the Inuit in every Brit could feel more at home.

Cheers
John Winters, Redwing Designs
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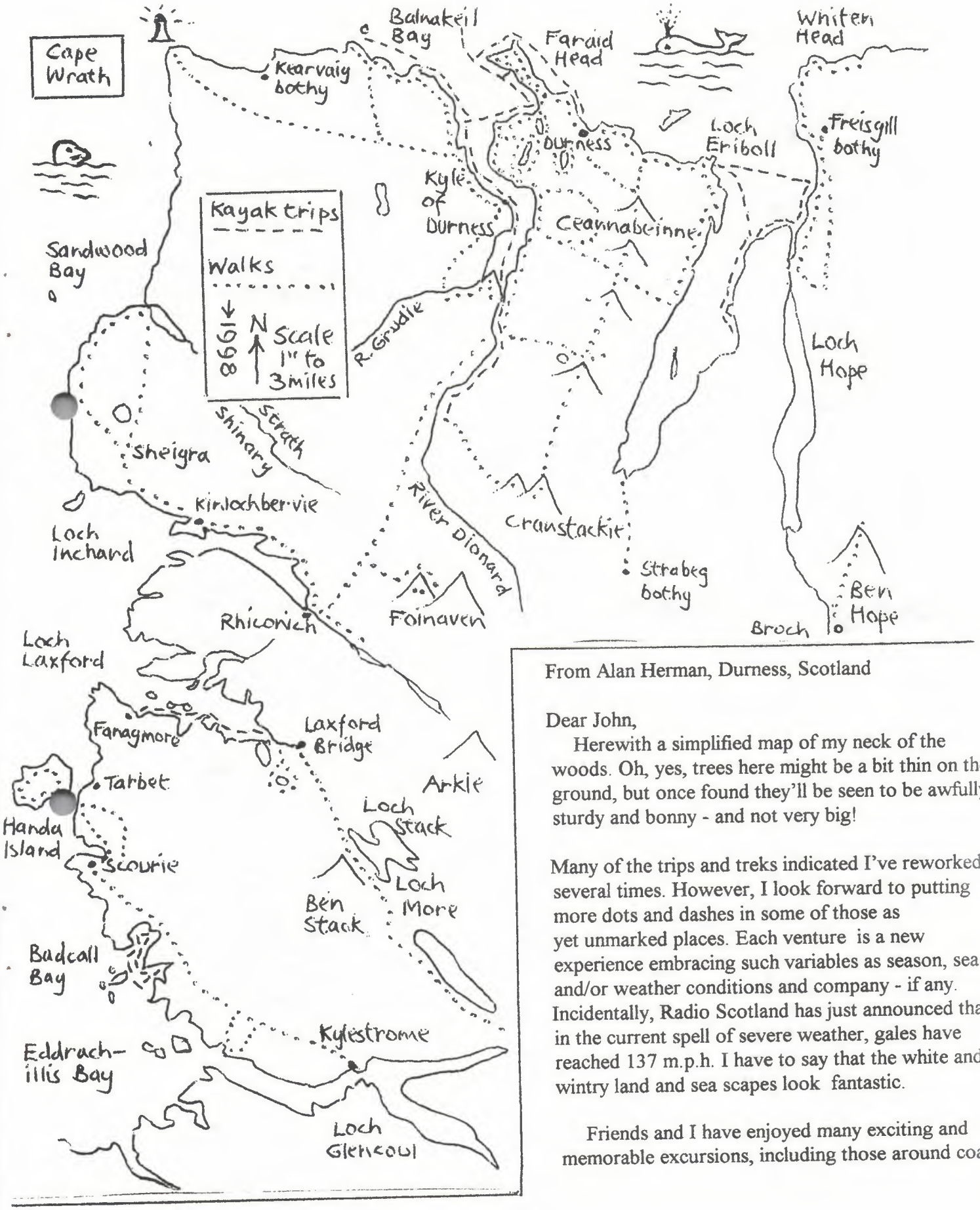


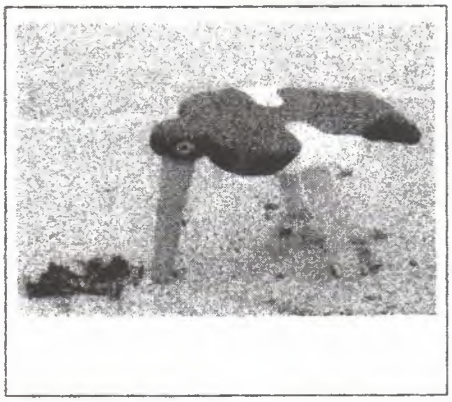
From Alan Herman, Durness, Scotland

Dear John,

Herewith a simplified map of my neck of the woods. Oh, yes, trees here might be a bit thin on the ground, but once found they'll be seen to be awfully sturdy and bonny - and not very big!

Many of the trips and treks indicated I've reworked several times. However, I look forward to putting more dots and dashes in some of those as yet unmarked places. Each venture is a new experience embracing such variables as season, sea and/or weather conditions and company - if any. Incidentally, Radio Scotland has just announced that in the current spell of severe weather, gales have reached 137 m.p.h. I have to say that the white and wintry land and sea scapes look fantastic.

Friends and I have enjoyed many exciting and memorable excursions, including those around coa



lines, in mountains and over moors, and on the water- rivers, lochs and sea. we have seen much wild life too; from puffins to porpoises, orchids to otters, buzzards to badgers, deer to dolphins and wheat ears to whales.

It's been good to meet visitors to this remote far north west fortress of Scotland. Of course some adventurous, courageous and skilled folk come to paddle around Cape Wrath, but there is plenty else to explore. For example, there are headlands, vast sandy beaches, dunes, sea stacks, caves, hills, high tops, burns, crofting communities and much more besides. (for instance Balnakeil Craft Village!)

Finally thanks for keeping such an interesting newsletter going. I thought January '98, No.19 a real gem.

With every best wish, Alan Herman.

P.s. Ocean Paddler has arrived. a quick look through gives the impression of some absorbing reading between the covers. Indeed, especially on Big Seas and in Small Boats - may we keep peace with our souls........

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Danger Warning - High Speed Catamaran

urther to the notice in the August edition of Canoe Focus, Pat Ramsey, Chairman of BCU - Suffolk has given this update...The information included in the August edition had been issued by the Harwich Haven Authority. This information was most relevant to other largish vessels using the same shipping lanes, so I would like to draw attention to further facts and serious development.

Firstly, people unfamiliar with shipping routes for the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe, which operate from opposite banks at the mouth of the Stour, could be under the impression that vessels leaving the ports head straight out across the North Sea. Due to the numerous large sandbanks the shipping lanes actually follow the coastline northwards for a number of miles and do not head towards Europe until they reach Sole Bay, near Southwold. Shipping can be clearly seen from the beaches.

Secondly, from the article it would seem that providing other vessels did not cross astern closer than 250 metres all would be well. This is most definitely not the case. The 'Stena Discovery' is producing very, very large wash waves which are causing very significant surges of water onto the beaches alongside the shipping lanes. Holiday makers, especially children playing at the water's edge have been knocked over and possessions swept into the sea. The inshore fishermen at Aldeburgh have repeatedly experienced dangerous sea conditions caused by these wash waves. The worst incident happened on the 14 August when, in flat calm conditions, a wave of some twelve feet was reported. A mother interviewed on local radio who saw this wall of water heading towards her two children, described how she grabbed them and ran up the beach at Felixstowe, only to turn and see her belongings, previously some distance from the water, afloat. The significance for canoeists on the sea is obvious, and very worrying, as this is an area where many try paddling on the sea for the first time in general purpose kayaks.

Suffolk Coastal District Council, who have the misfortunate to be the local authority for the relevant coastline have already placed notices every few yards along the beach to warn of this unexpected wave action which occurs some ten to twenty minutes after the ferry has passed. The biggest waves have occurred as it approaches Harwich where it is scheduled to arrive at 0955 hour and 1850 daily, although obviously it enters the shipping lanes up to an hour earlier. The waves have been less significant when it leaves Harwich again some fifty minutes later. However the height of the waves and strength associated with the surges varies tremendously between one sailing to the next. It is requested than any observations of unexpected wave action in the area be reported to Stena Line and/or the Harwich Haven Authority.

Stena Line have called in experts from the US to investigate the problems so I do not think that it is re-occurrences of the incident in the Menai Straits when the Captain 'put his foot down' because he was running late! I have watched the 'Stena Discovery' and it passed all other vessels, some very large and powerful, like they were standing still. There was a distinct increase in wave height and a change in wave direction, for about two to three minutes, some fifteen minutes after it passed.

The effect on the very unstable local coastline can only be guessed at, as prevailing north easterly winds over the last three winters have added several yards to the rate of erosion which was already averaging a foot a year.

Pat Ramsey - Chairman BCU Suffolk

An Alternative to the 'Norm.'

In the February newsletter A.Non in his 'My Ideal Kayak' and Richard Glover in 'Nordkapp Jubilee' complain respectively about the cost and weight of sea-kayaks. Both make the assumption that a sea kayak must be made out of glass-fibre or, failing that, Tupperware or whatever you call that softish plastic stuff.

For £250, (or much less if you so wish) you can build a boat that is both lighter than its glass-fibre equivalent, while being just as tough and easy to repair. The magic materials are plywood and epoxy resin. Epoxy resin should not be confused with the old styrene resin. The bond it makes with wood is stronger than the wood itself and is not destroyed by water getting under it (i.e. it won't fall to bits like your old mirror dinghy used to if you left it outside). It is however damaged by UV light, so it needs coating with paint or UV absorbing varnish, but the paint is much easier to replace than gel-coat AND you can have a different coloured boat every year! Epoxy resin is murderously expensive at something like £10 a kilo, but it is cheap at the price compared with paying someone make your boat for you. Unlike styrene, the reaction is a chemical bond rather than catalytic and quantities of the two components need to be fairly exact. It is, however rather more forgiving than the Goujon Bros. blurb would have you believe.

Construction of a boat by this method requires the ability to measure and then cut accurately using an electric jig-saw (plywood wears out the blades fairly rapidly). I should also point out that, as 4mm ply is the normal material, it is just as easy to cut out two boats at the same time and I have actually managed three on one occasion!!! No fancy woodworking skills are required.

The designs for our 18' 'East Greenlanders' come from the Fall (an American Autumn I believe) issue of 'Sea Kayaker' Magazine, 7001 Seaview Ave. NW, Suite 135, Seattle, WA 98117-6059, USA and make sure you ask for the revised offsets too as those in the magazine have some inaccuracies.

Dennis Davis, 9 Great Burrow Rise, Northam, Biddeford, Devon EX39 1TB sells plans for the DD17, a chined boat 15'9" long x 22" beam or the DK21 round bottomed 15'10" long x 23" beam. Phil Green, 2 Keep Cottage, Berry Pomeray, Totnes, TQ96LH. has the Seal, a chined boat of 15'8" and the Selway Fisher of 15 King Street, Melksham, WILTS. SN12 6HB have the 14' Dart single and 16' Dart Double. I think it is Dalton Young Associates of Unit 5D, Carminnow Rd Industrial Estate, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1EP who have quite a good little book on how to make stitch and glue boats. Lastly, if you have a child who fancies taking up sea-kayaking I have plans for a 14' child's sea kayak (probably up to the age of 11 or so) plans free to anybody planning to drown their kids.

Sadly I live too far to offer a do it yourself course but I would be happy to try to advise anybody thinking of building their own boat(s).

Lastly, a small plea for the Inuit. I think it was Cecil Clutton who said that all car designers should be forced to drive a Bugatti once a year to remind them what good steering was like; in the same vein all kayak designers should be forced to paddle a

traditional Inuit boat annually. I paddle now and again with friend who paddles a faithful replica of the Lowie Museum one hole Baidarka (he is somewhat Eskimo shaped which helps him getting in and out of it), and he uses a faithful replica of an Inuit paddle. He goes like a bat out of hell and the rougher it gets the better the boat seems to behave. His boat is covered in canvas rather than Sealskin, but other than some care in landing on rocky beaches it has no concessions made to its apparently fragile construction - just watch him lashing it to his roof rack! Construction is not for the amateur however, his profession is making violins!

Martin Spurling (01761 470496)

Fear and Sea Kayaking

by Barbara Kossy

(Abridged version reprinted from Bay Currents November 1997 Vol 12.11 and place-names changed to suit Victorian localities)

"The sole duty of external things is to provide access to thought and feeling. " James Hamilton-Paterson

When I first started sea kayaking I was scared a lot. I had never paddled on an open bay before. For a week before the trip I constantly worried about my skills, my strength, my health, capsizing, and weather. Would I be so slow that I'd be left behind in the middle of the bay? Would I have fun or would it be horrible? The night before I had trouble sleeping and I felt nauseous that morning. (The trip was a success and I made it through the bumpy water and made new friends.)

Eight years later I still get scared. But it's unusual now, and kayaking is a lot more fun. It's just short of amazing that I continued to kayak because I was scared a lot. Obviously, everyone is different and has their own demons. What scares you may not move me, and what scares me, you might ignore.

There are three types of fear: phobia, anxiety, and true fear.

A phobia is an irrational fear focused on something specific. Some common phobias are fears of high places, social situations, and the dark. When you have a phobia you avoid a phobic situation. It sometimes takes a lot of work to avoid a phobia. For example, someone with a phobia of bridges would drive miles out of their way to avoid West Gate Bridge. But avoidance keeps a phobia active. How can you learn a bridge is safe if you're never been on one to find out?

By dealing with a phobia directly you can overcome it and actually gain competence in other areas of your life. Insight does not help reduce phobia. To overcome a phobia you must:
* Be willing to experience your fear in the presence of others and talk about it with others.
* Use systematic relaxation when you begin to get anxious. Try creative visualisation and deep breathing.

Phobias can lead to counter phobias. People who are counter phobics do things that are more dangerous than reasonable. They deny realistic fear and can be dare devils (like Evil Kinevil). They can be sadistic and do unto others what has been done to them. Typically it's the person who encourages a novice to try a black diamond ski run or to surf a rock stack before the paddler has a good forward stroke. If you know you're not ready for big surf but your pal says you are, and tries to push you out there, be cautious. Assess your own skill level and act on your best judgement.

Anxiety or unrealistic fear is characterised by a feeling of vague, unspecified harm. Like fear, it can cause a state of physical disturbance; unlike fear, it is characterised by the absence of an apparent cause - the circumstance that precipitates anxiety is hidden and unknown. Anxiety has many symptoms, including pounding heartbeat, breathlessness, shaking, sweating, dry mouth, sweaty palms, nonstop talking, and staying with an irrational thought.
You're anxious when you know your ability, but fear incapacitates you. For example, you and your friends go out to play in the waves at Lakes Entrance, but even though you know nothing bad could happen (you have a wet suit on, you know your re-entries, you could eddy out any time) you're still scared, so scared that you just sit in the eddy and watch everyone else play. or you're in the middle of something gnarly and you get stiff and weak and scared and just can't paddle effectively.

I've seen anxious paddlers who paddle fast out in front of the group, never looking back, possibly unaware that they're scared, and afraid to turn around. For some people it's hard to admit that they're scared. If you see a scared looking paddler, (and can catch up) you may ask them how things are going. If you're relaxed , just that simple question can help an anxious paddler relax. Or maybe that paddler just needs a little tip on how to deal with a following sea, or whatever. In many cases a bit of information can help a lot (eg It's easier to turn on top of a wave than in the trough.)

You can overcome anxiety by relaxing, and examining the cause of the anxiety. To reduce anxiety build your skill level gradually. learn more about weather, waves and local conditions. Build your kayaking skills. Start with your comfort level, push it bit by bit.

Everyone does this at a different level. It took me seven years to let myself flop over in my kayak to practice bracing, and I'm still working on it. If you want to work on particular skill that scares you, bracing in choppy water for example, find a skilled teacher, either commercially or through the VSKC, and tell that person exactly what's going on. Set up your ideal learning situation. Maybe you need two teachers in gentle chop, maybe you need to set a specific goal for a session, like just poking your nose around the point to flirt with the chop for 5 minutes before heading back to the protected cove. Take time to set up what's right for you.

THERE IS NO SHAME

Fear is the appropriate response to what is truly threatening. When you are in a threatening situation, realistically appraise your skills vs. the demands of the environment. Maybe you don't need to go there. By paddling in environments that gradually challenge your skills, you give yourself the training you need to assess your ability to take care of yourself and others.

To function while afraid you can use these techniques:

- Remember when you successfully did something like this before
- Imagine doing it successfully
- Enact it before hand
- Train in advance
- Pay attention to doing it well
- Develop a ritual to remind you of doing it well (I say to my kayak, "You were built to do this stuff. Go for it.")

Are you still afraid? Is what you want to do realistic? Can you make the fear go away? It's okay to admit something is scary. Do you have the capacity to go on? Can you stop and talk about it? (Shelter behind a point, etc). Can you get out of the water? can you just go back? Remember you don't have to do everything that scares you. There is no shame.

The most important thing is to acknowledge when you get scared, and figure out what it is that's scaring you. as sea kayakers we need to examine and manage our fear because fear can incapacitate us and it keeps us from having fun. Being thrilled is fun, but being scared is not. Fear is physical and can impede skills and judgments. Learn to help others and yourself deal with fear and your paddling trips will be more fun. The awareness of fear will help you experience the pleasure of sea kayaking and of just being alive.

Fear is in fact the fear of death, and when we become aware of our eventual death we take an important step towards being a whole person. The more conscious of it we are, the fewer anxieties we have. (I ask myself, "Can I die here? Not likely, likely, etc.") Death is a very hard concept for us humans to grasp. Because of the power of our minds, we feel immortal. when we become aware of our bodies, we become aware of our mortality. Kayaking is a great way to come to terms with our mortality and engage in that great human activity, play. How lucky we are to be able to play on the bay, the estuary and ocean. To play in the heart of the mystery of life. The mystery is more than we can understand, yet it adds to the pleasure of life.

A big tide, a close shave, and a leaking hatch

It was gusting 4 to 5 easterly as we pulled up in Lynmouth. The flood boards were in place on all the promenade shop fronts and the tide had just peaked. Two days before was the eqinoxal spring, one of the highest tides for 40 years. The ebb tide promised a lightning run down the Exmoor coast of the Bristol Channel. This was also the maiden voyage of Staffa my home built plywood and epoxy East Greenland kayak on Chris Cunninghams design as published in Sea Kayaker.

The stony beach at Lynmouth west of the harbour gives a lumpy ride out through the surf at this highish state of the tide. After the inevitable fiddling about on the beach, five kayaks convoyed together for the run westward ho past the magnificent Exmoor cliffs with their eleven towers of valley of the rocks expecting troll like figures to appear and onwards to the race by Hedons Mouth. The race spat chaos in the distance, Chris said, "I am going for the inner passage". I thought OK looks a bit quieter but as I lined up quickly realised the tide was running so fast it wasn't going to work, changed direction to a rapid ferry glide out side the rock, Chris also changed his mind. The run in was extremely fast, definitely downhill, and ended in a huge standing wave, whoohoo!! I looked across, 20 yards away inshore Chris seemed to be standing still. A transit on the cliff flashed past as if one was in a rigid inflatable with 100hp under her stern. The eddy line was ahead. Full power! The Greenland rocketed across the break and I spun her a low brace. Chris's Fuego shot out, then the other three popped through the race with shouts of glee and relief. A cup of tea on the beach then inspect my kayak rear hatch a strong back system, it looked good, it loaded good, but it leaked. Later on in Coombe Martin and expensive but welcome fish and chips, I decided the skeg was leaking so bunged up possible water ingress sites with sea putty. A wonderful quick setting epoxy putty, highly recommended.

Tide changed and a cruise back up the estuary to a windy beach bivy. But handy for a pub one mile up a stoney and very dark track.

Next morning we agreed 08.30 had to be the very latest to leave so as not to catch the outgoing tide again near Lynmouth. 08.25 hours 4 kayaks sat neatly on the water whereupon the nameless one called Mark decided to have a shave. A SHAVE! Sorry I really cannot understand some peoples behaviour. Shaving has always been a rather odd custom as far as I am concerned especially on an overnight bivy/sea kayak trip in October on the Bristol Channel. I mean who are you trying to impress! 0905 and five kayaks pootle out of the bay.

Dee and Chris are at the front, I lag behind, stern hatch filling up again - I am definitely changing this for a VCP round hatch next week. Dee goes rock hopping. Brian and Mark are way behind especially the shaven one.

Brian comes alongside in his Nordcapp. In his best Dorset accent states, "I don't reckon ees Norkcapps are wot thare cracked out to bee, that bloody home made thing seems pretty bloody quick if thee arsk me. Mind you I are bin feelun a bit rough this larst week". Usually Brian is miles in front so this latter statement might be true; However a later trip Brian proves his Nordcapp isn't as fast as the East Greenland. Previously he's always left me standing.

We hit the race at slack water which is OK but the tide then turns like a tap going on. The Easterly is still blowing and the final headland is taking ages to round paddling flat out and inching forward. I move in close well within the fishing lines and the clapotis but out of the main flow of the tides vicious grip. Suddenly its gone, the current lets me go and I can calm my pounding heart and lungs to gently cruise the last 500 years and surf into the beach. The others are further out and the tide shaves more than a whisker of Marks return trip time as he arrives after everyone else clean shaven and neat onto Lynmouth beach, without even getting trashed by the surf.

Angus Geddes

7th Anglesey Sea Symposium - Observation From a Couple of Kiwis

by Roy Dumble

Just what does it take to get to sea kayak symposiums? Well, O.K. the fact that they were in Wales and Scotland meant a bit of travel, but bomb scares? Buried in the London A-Z we had just got onto the A40 and heard on the radio that it had been closed courtesy of the IRA! 10 hours of sweltering in an atypical May heat wave later we were crossing the Menai Straits and heading into Anglesey, north-west Wales. Two years of planning suddenly coming to fruition.

Typical of a bank holiday weekend, the sun soon gave way to rain, then hail, then snow. The prospect of getting wet here was not inviting - and most of the kayaks here were short, round bottomed and tippy. We had fun trying them all out but were more than pleased that we had gone to the trouble of shipping our own Southern Skua and Blue Marlin across from New Zealand.

WORKSHOPS

The symposium was held at the Angelsey Sea and Surf Centre - just out from Holyhead. It had its beginnings as a Nordkapp reunion weekend but has developed into a broad sea kayak symposium. We got the feeling of expectations of knowledge through assumed previous attendance and although communication and some on water management was not great, there were some interesting workshops and presentations. Kayak trim, glass and plastic repair demonstrations and some interesting day trip destinations were well balanced with theoretical workshops. Although there was little in the way of new concepts, they gave us the opportunity to catch up on important local considerations such as weather, sea states and Coastguard operations. In fact our Coastguard workshop was cut short because of the nature of the weather in our area. Winds approaching Force 8 were keeping the officers on their toes, with 10 call outs by midday alone. It made us feel glad we had chosen a shore based option! The most spectacular workshop / demo was a helicopter rescue using a Wessex from the navy. Simulating a lost kayak, and a medical emergency, various bods were winched up into the chopper, whilst many others took the opportunity to test their stability under the downdraft of the huge machine. The ironic part was that 100 meters away from the exercise, another lone paddler had been capsized by the chopper and was unable to get back into his kayak. Luckily the wind was onshore because it was 20 minutes before he made it to shallow water! The keynote speaker, Sam Cook, was part of the first sea kayak expedition to Greenland. He gave an interesting slide presentation on both the trip and the development of the Nordkapp which was used for the first time

SKEGS

One of the key reasons we had travelled over to the U.K. was to network with the sea kayak fraternity and discover first hand the differences in their sea kayak culture. The most obvious difference is in kayak design. Many kayaks are short with a minimal flat section in the hull. Rudders were non existent, although about half the boats had skegs, some of which were adjustable. We had interesting discussions, comparing our kayaks with theirs. I suppose you like what you are used to but, I don't know..... there was just something aesthetically pleasing about our kayaks which were missing from any other boat there. We had

ample opportunity to try their boats out and came away wondering why they persist with skegs or even worse, with nothing. To adjust the skeg, you have to take one hand off the paddle and they seemed intent on finding a design that would minimise this - but not eliminate it. Railing the kayak was a necessary skill to assist turning but also in maintaining straight line paddling. Every change in course and wind shift would require adjustment of kayak and skeg trim. Many people we spoke with had a begrudging acceptance of this whenever they went paddling, but would happily pronounce it was only a problem when the wind was not from directly astern or on the nose. I don't know about you, but I find this to be quite a large percentage of my paddling time!

"Why not use a rudder", we asked? "It would certainly make the kayaking much less wearisome." Many would look at us quizzically and shrug or say simply, "We don't use rudders here." One learned kayaker with BCU qualifications dripping from his drysuit made the most profound reply..... "If we had rudders, people would use them to steer with!" Hilary and I looked at each other then slowly nodded, confessing that, yes, that's what we did with them. I had to sneak a look at the Oxford dictionary to confirm the definition of a rudder, and breathed a sigh of relief that we had got it right during all these years of paddling!

CULTURE

But their outlook on rudders is a key concept in coming to understand their sea kayaking culture. With restricted access to rivers, let alone wild water like New Zealand can offer, kayakers take to the sea. Surf kayaking was a big sport in the 60's and 70's (and is only just recovering its numbers today). It didn't take long for some paddlers to take these surf boats along the coast in search of adventure and what they found were stretches of coast that were more like white water conditions. And what's more, it was free access! The large tidal range in some areas created overfalls and races that enabled these paddlers to strut their stuff - the only difference it being a marine environment. Gradually, kayak design changed to suit this environment. Today, sea kayaks in the U.K. fall into one of two design ranges - traditional touring and shorter play boats. Both have bulkheads and many other deck layouts that assist with sea paddling. The shorter boats enable comfortable paddling to get to the technical water they seek, while allowing a performance edge over the longer touring kayak. Rudders however, remain heresy! The purist will not even use a skeg!

BCU & NVQ's

Commercial operations are nonexistent in England and Wales. The club scene is very strong and has a long tradition. The BCU reigns supreme, although we heard numerous rumbling of discontent with the push to change their training and assessment scheme over to the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ's) system. They have about one year left to requalify into the NVQ awards and there is no recognition of prior learning. Some assessors have the system tied up and are making money but the majority are having to commit money and time, and are questioning their future involvement (does this sound familiar?).

Alongside the tradition of the BCU there is a long standing fascination with 'cold climate paddling'. Greenland and Scandinavia are on most paddler's destination lists. Added to a historical interest with traditional Greenlandic kayaking, there is the draw of isolation that these destinations offer the intrepid English paddler. Any combination of good weather, weekends and holidays draws crowds of people to the local coast, so Greenland becomes an attractive place - even if it is covered with ice and snow.

Perhaps the most interesting distinction with the U.K. sea kayaking culture is their attitude to the physical nature of it all. Club instructors/leaders have an expectation of taking new members and visitors on long paddles to find either wildlife, isolation or races and overfalls. Little consideration is made on route planning to suit the beginner, which is compensated for by an expectation of leaders to be towing paddlers home. And beginners go out with an expectation of being towed! Mind you, out of this situation they have developed great towing hardware and systems!

I think the whole English macho relationship to sea kayaking was best summed up for us by the editor of Paddlers International, Peter Clark. As he stooped looking into the mechanics of our rudder systems he said, "There's something about the English. Everything in life has got to have a goal and be a challenge. If it scares them shitless - so much the better. They're very arrogant about it."

Roy Dumble

A BRITISH/NEW ZEALAND STORY ABOUT SEA KAYAK DESIGN AND A CHAIN OF LETTERS, put together by John Ramwell, editor of Ocean Paddler magazine and I.S.K.A.

It all started with a letter by Glyn Dickson in the New Zealand Sea Canoeist Newsletter No. 69, "The Delights of Aramid Fibre" which I reproduce below.
Then came another letter, this time in Sea Canoeist Newsletter No. 70 by Grant Stone entitled "Points to Consider when Buying a Kayak". This came complete with the Editors response, the editor of the New Zealand Sea Canoeist Newsletter being Paul Caffyn. I reproduced both this letter and Paul's response in ISKA Newsletter No. 19, January, 1998. You will need to refer back to these to keep yourself going with the flow of this 'story'. It was this letter and Paul's response that Frank Goodman used to 'kick start' his "Questions and Answers" section in our new sea kayaking magazine, 'Ocean Paddler'. In case you haven't had sight of this I reproduce it below. Paul took umbrage at Frank's observations as appeared in Ocean Paddler and sent me an E-mail making his feelings quite clear. As there was some interesting comments from Paul I edited out some of the vitriol and prepared to go with it in issue No. 2 of Ocean Paddler. I let Paul have sight of the edited version of his letter and you will find his reaction below together with my agreement to pull his letter out of Ocean Paddler all together.
For the sake of completion I have also included Glyn Dickson's follow up letter as appearing in issue No. 71 of the New Zealand Sea Canoeists Newsletter which is called "What is Good Design - Part 2".
You will doubtless make up your own mind about both the subject matter of all this correspondence and their authors. Any comments on the back of a post card.

"The Delights Of Aramid Fibre..."

by Glyn Dickson

I came across an interesting thing the other day. I was talking to the good folks at Canoe and Outdoor World in Christchurch, and asking what local sea kayakers prefer and buy material wise. The answer was a resounding "Fibreglass". In fact they gave me some statistics on how many fibreglass boats they had sold, compared to how few kevlar boats, and to say the result almost totally favoured fibreglass is no exaggeration.

This strikes me as odd, and I will elaborate. When I bought my first sea kayak prior to being involved in manufacturing, I wanted the best kayak I could buy. Although budget restricted, I looked at what was available, and after studying the pro and cons, and looking at the relative values, I bought a kevlar boat. Although it was (from memory) around $300 more expensive than fibreglass, to me the performance advantages more than outweighed the extra cost.

That was in 1991, and since then the Auckland market has continued to move in that same direction. Here at Paddling Perfection, we have not built a fibreglass one-person sea kayak since May 1995, as every boat has been ordered in kevlar.

So what advantages does kevlar exhibit over fibreglass?
(1) Kevlar fibres have over twice the tensile strength of fibreglass for the same weight, and actually have five times the tensile strength of steel.

(2) Given it's improved fibre strength, your kayak can be built more lightly with the same strength.

(3) It performs exceptionally well under impact and is highly resistant to puncturing (like hitting rocks or beaches). It is also very resistant to abrasion (try sanding the stuff and see what happens).

(4) When it does fail, kevlar usually (unless under huge loads like being run over by a 20 foot powerboat!) exhibits two stages of failure. As the load increases, the laminate begins to fail, but to reach the point of total failure, even greater load must be applied. This characteristic can save your boat (and bacon). Your kayak might come into contact with something, and be partially damaged, but it's still floating, and still in one piece.

(5) Kevlar is highly resistant to the propagation of cracks, in that it can be flexed repeatedly without the fibres showing damage.

Kevlar's chief drawbacks are price, relatively lower performance under compression loadings, and difficulty in working with it (yes it's much easier to build boats out of straight fibreglass). To overcome the price issue, kevlar is virtually always used with

Laminate Spec	Strength Comp	Glass Comp	Puncture	Glass Comp	Stiffness	Glass Comp
Solid Fibreglass	45	100%	19	100%	13	100%
Glass/Kevlar	55	+22%	27.5	+53%	19	+46%
Solid Kevlar	65	+44%	45	+137%	23	+77%

fibreglass in sea kayaks, so the boat becomes reinforced with a single layer of kevlar, at a reasonable price, but with better properties than a straight fibreglass kayak. The higher the proportion of kevlar in the lay-up, the higher the performance or modulus of the laminate. Check a sea kevlar sea kayak to see how heavy the kevlar layer is, some are built with a lighter kevlar cloth (only around 170 grams of kevlar per square meter as opposed to the 300 gram kevlar we use). Recently we have gone to multilayer kevlar construction, and our epoxy modified kevlar Slingshots hulls have up to 3 layers of kevlar.

Please also note that a kevlar kayak is just as easy to repair as a fibreglass kayak if it is damaged. It can be repaired in exactly the same way, and the repair can be done with fibreglass.

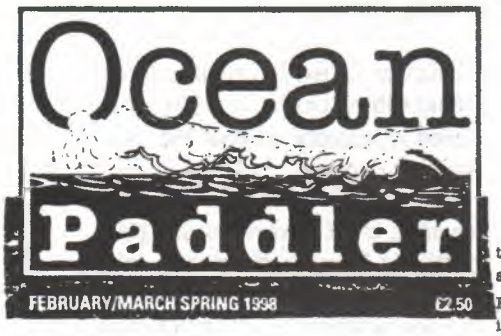
Fibreglass is also a high performing material in that it has twice the tensile strength of steel for a given weight. Glass fibres are readily available, cost effective, and relatively easy to work with (easy to cut, sand, and laminate whereas kevlar is more difficult in all three areas). The limiting factor with fibreglass is what happens under extreme loading. Its failure is characterised by sudden catastrophic failure, that is when it breaks, it does so suddenly. By nature fibreglass is a brittle fibre, so under impact loadings it's performance is substantially less than kevlar's. Cracks propagate quickly in fibreglass so repeated flexing is far more likely to lead to damage, and after damage has occurred, repeated flexing will cause the damage to spread further.

To quantify some of the differences, I have pulled out some test figures from a series of experiments with different laminates. The figures are averaged over a selection of typical laminate specifications having been separated into solid glass laminates, glass/kevlar laminates (such as used for kevlar sea kayak construction), and solid kevlar. The numbers quoted have been normalised to take into account the different laminate weights so a reasonable comparison can be made. The tests were conducted to test flexural strength, puncture resistance (simulating a very sharp point impact), and stiffness (resistance to bending). The columns headed "Glass Comp" are the relative difference between a solid glass laminate, and the figure from the previous column..
(See table at base of page 4)

Note that carbon fibres (black in colour) show very similar properties to fibreglass (stiff, good strength in tensile and compression, but brittle) and a carbon laminate will develop the same strength as glass with around 30% less weight. Kevlar still outperforms carbon in puncture resistance, while carbon fibres are horribly expensive, at around twice the price of kevlar!

I believe the results clearly show that on a weight for weight basis, kevlar laminates substantially outperform fibreglass. And what these figures do not show, is the kevlar's resistance to crack propagation, abrasion, and excellent resistance to shock loading (the test loadings were largely static). It's for these reasons that kevlar is my preferred choice for kayak construction.

Glyn Dickson
Paddling Perfection



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Questions answers

What follows is Frank Goodman's first contribution to this, the first edition of Ocean Paddler. Most of you will not need any introduction to Frank; his credentials are impeccable and I am delighted that he has agreed to be one of our regular contributors. Frank founded the well known company, Valley Canoe Products from which he has retired. Over the years Frank has made an enormous contribution to the sea kayaking scene. His attendance at sea kayaking symposia around the world guarantees to draw the crowds.

Frank Goodman is going to answer your problems and proffer advice to any matter related to sea kayaking. You are invited to write with your questions to Ocean Paddler for Franks attention.

As I sit here looking at the blank screen of my Mac, I recall vividly, only a few weeks ago listening on the phone to a stupid voice saying: "Yes John that sounds great - I'll be glad to look after a question and answer page in your new magazine". Sadly the voice was mine! What possessed me to offer my services? Not only that, but how do you get genuine questions for the first issue? My original cunning plan was to make up a few. No good. I would lose credibility at a stroke, and I'd like just a few issues to be published before the general reader realised that my column wasn't worth bothering with.

And what is worth reading? If the answer is factual, then maybe it shouldn't be on the page at all. What are libraries for? Most likely all the experienced paddlers would throw their hands up in horror, and exclaim "Doesn't he know THAT?" While beginners will be out of their depth immediately. With luck, perhaps one person only would be happy - the man who sent in the question. Will that be enough to assure the magazine's success? I doubt it.

Suppose the reply is controversial? I'll soon be castigated, and the page will degenerate into heated arguments that are probably of no consequence anyway.

I checked out this latter theory by looking at a small piece of correspondence which seemed innocuous enough: all about kayak

design. Yet by the end of the first paragraph, the editor had reached deep into his reserves of vocabulary and discovered the word "Bollocks"!

The argument went like this;

First Person.

i) There is nothing new in boat design. It's all been done before.

ii) If it feels right for you, then it's O.K.

Second Person.

i) Weight is a significant factor.

ii) Modern materials give the two major benefits of an increase in boat strength and a decrease in boat weight.

Now hold on a minute. I don't know person number one, but the second person is a very good friend of mine (till now at any rate) who is a great guy, and for whom (note the good grammar) I have a huge respect. So why is he talking nonsense? You cannot have TWO MAJOR BENEFITS in this way. For a given weight, Kevlar may be stronger than glassfibre, and for a given strength, a Kevlar boat may be less heavy than G.R.P. These two statements are both ways of saying the SAME THING. They don't describe two major benefits. Only one. We're exactly one hundred percent out already!

Well, how significant is the weight? I'm told that the increase of distance paddled per day rose from 50 to 60 miles, as a direct result of decreasing the kayak weight from 44 to 30lbs. Well let's guess a paddler's weight at 160lbs, and suppose the kayaks are empty. Two seconds without a calculator shows that the displacements of the boats are 204lbs. and 190lbs. respectively, and two minutes with a calculator suggests that a 7% reduction in weight will give a 20% increase in speed. Read that again slowly. You're right - it's wrong! Let's suppose a bit more:

Ten hours a day on the ocean at 5 m.p.h.. Distance covered 50 miles.

6 m.p.h 60 miles.

Now any boat's cruising speed is the result of a balance between the paddler driving the boat forward and the drag of water (and wind) trying to stop it. But the drag only partly depends on the wetted surface of the hull which is linked to the weight (displacement). Mostly, drag is the result of energy being gobbled up in the wake (waves). It gets complicated, because wave lengths are proportional to the square of the boat's velocity. My calculator tells me that a kayak travelling at 5 m.p.h. produces a transverse wave system about 10 ft. long. When the speed increases to 6 m.p.h. the wave length shoots up to 15 ft. - which is almost the waterline length of the hull, in this particular case (a Nordkapp) about 16 ft. The hull is now sitting in its own trough - the theoretical top speed of the craft. By adding more power, this can be exceeded, but not by much. It is a law of diminishing returns. The theoretical stop speed of an International K1. Kayak is just over 5.5 knots which is 6.35 m.p.h.. The world speed record for a K1. paddled over 10,000 metres is 8.54 m.p.h.. To go faster than this the power input required is super-human. You'd be lucky to get even a hydrogen-filled Kevlar sea-kayak up to 7 m.p.h.. No! Kayak weight makes some difference, but not that much: also, any benefit becomes proportionally less as the craft is loaded with equipment. Obviously there is a placebo effect in here somewhere - if you think you'll go faster, you probably will.

Don't think I'm letting 'First Person' off the hook either. I've never seen a traditional kayak with concave sections. It could only be achieved once stretched skins became obsolete, and indeed, both durability and strength/weight ratio are two of the big advances that have been made in recent times. Next, suppose the person testing a boat is not very skilful? Push him out in a nasty chop when he's only used to calm water, and he may not come back at all, and there you are, another sale lost. Worse, he may feel at ease in the boat because his skill level is low. Certainly, one of the most difficult things to do after you've designed a boat is to assess its performance during the sea trials that follow: is it me paddeling badly or is the boat playing up?

Neither of them is right, because if you're writing to keep your readers interest, controversy is one of the best ways to do it, and you tend to overstate your case for the sake of the argument. Of course, I won't be doing that. My voice will be that of calm reason stilling the babble of ignorance, but I doubt many readers will think that. They'll think here's another old fart massaging his ego in his declining years.

> There you are, I've done it; upset at least two people and this is only the first issue. But we know from experience that there are few absolutely true answers in kayaking, and even fewer to be found on the pages of magazines, and if the odd controversial remark or opinion makes people think things over more carefully, it can only do good. The real truth for the individual is OUT THERE. I'm not just sure what <u>that</u> means, but that's where you should be, not sitting in comfort reading this.

From: Paul Caffyn <kayakpc@xtra.co.nz>
To: John Ramwell <jramwell@provider.co.uk>
Subject: old farts
Date: 29 March 1998 01:53

Goodaye John,
Must admit to being disappointed with Franks attempt to stir up a controversy with me, and with the fact that you chose to include it in the first OP.

The readers of OP deserve better with a 'Questions and Answer'section. But I have taken the time to pen a response, not for Frank's ego or to build up a controversy, but because I feel readers of OP deserve a rational response.

Letter to the Editor
Re 'Massaging the Ego of an old Fart'
What a day to write a letter in response to Frank Goodman's musings. A deep depression has passed over southern New Zealand, and with the incoming tide, solid lumps of ocean are descending on the roof and windows of my wee house.

Frankly (pun intended) I was disappointed to read Frank's rambling diatribe in the first edition of a promising new sea kayaking magazine and disappointed in that the source of the material that Frank has drawn from is not quoted. Discerning readers will no doubt be aware who you are trying to stir up a contoversy with, and readers of John's ISKAnewsletter will by now have read the two articles that you allude to.

New Zealand paddlers have a generally good working relationship with the main sea kayak manufacturers. Advise on modifications for new boat models is sought, particularly from the commercial guiding and rental companies. Three of the main designer/manufacturers are still regular paddlers.

Now a little background to what became a spirited discourse in New Zealand over the benefits of kevlar in a kayak. Glyn Dickson, a paddler/designer/builder from Auckland, wrote an article for 'The Sea Canoeist Newsletter' on the 'Delights of Aramid Fibre'. It was a well balanced article, supported by statistical data on various laminate testing. Glyn noted:

'So what advantages does kevlar exhibit over fibreglass?
(1) Kevlar fibres have over twice the tensile strength of fibreglass for the same weight, and actually have five times the tensile strength of steel.
(2) Given it's improved fibre strength, your kayak can be built more lightly with the same strength.
(3) It performs exceptionally well under impact and is highly resistant to puncturing (like hitting rocks or beaches). It is also very resistant to abrasion (try sanding the stuff and see what happens).
(4) When it does fail, kevlar usually (unless under huge loads like being run over by a 20 foot powerboat!) exhibits two stages of failure. As the load increases, the laminate begins to fail, but to reach the point of total failure, even greater load must be applied. This characteristic can save your boat (and bacon). Your kayak might come into contact with something, and be partially damaged, but it's still floating, and still in one piece.
(5) Kevlar is highly resistant to the propagation of cracks, in that it can be flexed repeatedly without the fibres showing damage.'

In the following newsletter Grant Stone, a relative newcomer to kayak design/building, argued that; 'Although agreeing that kevlar is very, very strong, I think for Joe Average paddlers' needs, the weight and strength difference in fibreglass is neglible in a sea kayak.'

There were numerous responses, some saying weight is not a factor and some saying it is. I argued that weight is a significant factor and that the extra cost of buying a kevlar boat is warranted.

Now to Frank's diatribe. Is is significant that I ascribe two benefits to kevlar (light and strong) whereas you say it is one? This really is nitpicking and there are remedies from a pharmacy for that.

Your discussion of boat speed is unrelated to the benefits of kevlar argument. My boat speed has not changed significantly over 21 years - four miles per hour, give or take a bit. My philosophy is still minimum energy expenditure for optimum boat speed. The benefit for me with a light kevlar boat in comparison to a heavier glass boat is minimizing energy expenditure.

Total boat displacement is an important factor; a heavier boat requires more power to move at a given speed. Drag or hydrodynamic resistance also increases proportionly with increasing displacement. The relationship between wave making resistance and boat displacement is approximately squared for a given length of hull, running at a given speed. The difference between my first glass boat at 65 pounds and the Japkapp at 30 pounds is thus approximately 4.7 times greater wave making resistance with the heavier boat in comparison to the light boat.

Unfortunately I can not quote any quantitative figures to show the energy expenditure difference between paddling a light and heavy boat. My paddling statistics of daily mileages achieved have increased with progressive lightening of the boats (and equipment), but not because of an increase in speed, but simply longer time spent on the water each day. Why can I spend longer on the water? It is not due to steroid abuse, a diet of seaweed or daily sessions at a gym, but simply because I am using less energy when paddling a light boat.

There are I must admit two other factors which have also contributed to the longer paddling days; firstly the use of a deep overstern rudder and secondly changes to my paddle.

Recently I weighed the old dunger of a paddle (made in the UK) I used in the wee trip around Australia and the light paddle I used in the latest trip around New Caledonia:

old dunger - 3.470lbs (1.575kg)
light paddle - 2.055lbs (0.932gms)

The difference in weight is 1.415lbs. At 60 strokes per minute, the extra weight I lifted with the old dunger calculates as follows:

per minute - 84.9lbs
per hour - 5,094lbs
per 8hr day - 40,752lbs
The staggering difference over an eight hour day is 18.19 tons!

Even applying a 50% discount factor, for the non lifting hand supporting the other end of the paddle, the energy saving in using the lighter paddle is astounding.

So I paddle a light but strong kevlar boat, and use a light but strong carbonfibre/kevlar paddle.
And the predominant reason is minimizing of energy expenditure whilst paddling.

So frankly (pun intended) in conclusion, I would suggest that if you want to massage you ego as an old fart, please do not do so in 'Ocean Paddler'. Why don't you retire gracefully with some semblance of the respect you built up world wide left intact.

By now it is high tide and scrap of lawn in front of the wee house is awash and I need huge windscreen wipers on the front windows. An awesome sea, and I must track down a lifejacket in case the wee house drifts out to sea.

Paul Caffyn

From: Paul Caffyn <kayakpc@xtra.co.nz>
To: John Ramwell <jramwell@provider.co.uk>
Subject: the dark ages
Date: 28 April 1998 08:56

Goodaye John
Am I unhappy with what you did to my letter re Frank Goodman. Unhappy is a very mild way of trying to express my sentiments!! I assumed (hopefully) you may have deleted my last reference to loss of respect for Frank G, as in my resubmitted letter to the editor.

You have massacred my letter. Readers will have no bloody idea of what it is referring to!!
It has no relevance whatsoever unless it is reproduced in full, as it was submitted.

Frank wanted a controversy and he had the cheek to pick on me, one of his long time, erstwhile supporters. My response was to the point, and significantly toned down from what I originally wrote.

You can't edit letters like mine without losing the whole bloody point of the letter.
Editing for the sake of space is a pathetic excuse John. Roll the letter onto the next page, or save it for the next one.

So an ultimatum John - either my letter goes in unedited or not at all. Frank can take take it on the chin. He is not a blouse. I will be mailing him a copy of the letter tomorrow.

The poor old British paddlers have been indoctrinated for far too long by Nigel Foster, Frank and Derek into believing that heavy boats and no rudders are the British thing - the Scott, Shackleton tradition is alive and well still! Your UK paddlers are in desperate need of enlightentment from the antipodes. They are living in the dark ages with respect to sea kayaks. Have another look at Roy Dumble's article in the latest 'Sea Canoeist Newsletter' for another view of the Brits.

What's worse, you have not noted beneath the letter that is is abridged. Unprofessional editing John.

What pisses me off now is the time I spent responding to Frank's diatribe. My first reaction was to ignore it, but I felt I had a duty to the Brit. paddlers to respond. And I expected you would reproduce my effort in full.

So I am not only unhappy, but extremely angry with your editing of my letter in response to Frank's diatribe.

Delete me from [illegible] future contributions to OP. I not be responding to any other wankers writing diaribes such as those from Frank Goodman if you chose to edit them as you have done - it is more akin to censorship than editing.

Yours, extremely pissed off Paul Caffyn

From: J Ramwell <jramwell@provider.co.uk>
To: kayakpc@xtra.co.nz
Subject: The stone age-old age
Date: 29 April 1998 15:10

Hi Paul,
There are always two sides to a disagreement. I have tried to understand yours. From my perspective the issue is simple enough. Your letters in Sea Canoeist Newsletter made interesting reading and presented some reasonable controversy. Perhaps Frank should have referred to the sources but he was simply referring to the controversy, not the personalities, when he wrote his article which you have clearly taken great offence to. Ocean Paddler readers, certainly at the current stage of development of the magazine, are not necessarily needing to know the background. Should there be those who are particularly well informed and realise who wrote the letters and thereby started the debate, then this is their bonus. It did not require such back ground for the general reader of the magazine. There is no doubt that the whole debate from start to finish makes interesting reading. Not only are the personalities well known to the committed sea paddler (who make up the bulk of the ISKA members) but the issue re: sea kayak design is interesting. I also know how rumours fill gaps when the whole story is not told - so I intend, right or wrong, to reveal all in the ISKA newsletter. I strongly suggest you do the same in KASK n/l so that your readers and mine can come to their own conclusions about both the characters involved and the issue of sea kayak construction. You may continue to feel that your readers "derserve better than that" -I, on the other hand, feel that my readers would appreciate hearing about the debate and how it has developed thus far.
Just to say that it is the editor's perogative to edit. Once a letter has been sent to a publication the author has no control over it. At least this is how we operate in the media over here. I had to send my edited version through the post as I had not access to my PC, being in Prague for some time. I knew there would be time as the magazine remains quarterly for the time being.
So that's it. I see no future in playing any further 'ping pong' over cyber space.
Finally I would be grateful if you could give me some rough indication as to how you disposed of the magazines for our official records.
From one editor to another
John

What is Good Design - Part 2.

by Glyn Dickson

reprinted from the 'Auckland Canoe Club newsletter September 1997'.

Grant Stone's article in the August 1997 newsletter outlined his personal opinions about Kevlar. As our experience and laminate engineering work with this material doesn't bear out his claims, I feel it necessary to straighten out the facts, so that Club members know exactly what the relative benefits are of fibreglass and kevlar.

The statement "I think for the average Jo Bloggs needs, the weight and strength difference in fibreglass is negligible in a sea kayak" is one such example. We happen to own a kevlar Albatross which weighs 2 1 kg (I bought it for my wife whose startling [illegible]g weight means that the other kevlar boats on the market are too high in volume for her). The Auckland Canoe Centre currently has a fibreglass one in stock which weighs 28kg. If the difference is negligible, why does the fibreglass one weigh 33% more?

What constitutes a kevlar sea kayak, to compare a fibreglass kayak with? Current practice is that any kayak reinforced with a single layer of kevlar is called a kevlar boat. Yet different manufacturers use different amounts of kevlar in the laminate. Grant's kevlar kayaks use one layer of kevlar, with 165 grams of kevlar per square metre of cloth. The rest of the laminate is fibreglass. Our Sea Bears, and Slingshot hulls, all feature a layer of 300 gram per square metre kevlar, which amounts to 82% more kevlar in the laminate! Also the style of kevlar used in the Albatrosses is weaker than another kevlar cloth of almost exactly the same weight. The other kevlar utilises a different weave, and is more expensive (around 15%). We previously used the 165 gram, but now use this other kevlar extensively for our Excalibur racing kayaks, Slingshot decks, and for extra kevlar reinforcing in our Epoxy Modified Kevlar Slingshots, where we go to multiple kevlar layers. The same kevlar was the basis for an ultra lightweight Sea Bear 11 we recently built which weighed 26kg complete (compared to the standard 43kg fibreglass version).

Grant's argument that if kevlar was so good, powerboats/runabouts would be built from it is clearly flawed. If you stop to consider the dynamics and performance considerations of powerboats compared to kayaks, you would quickly reach the following conclusions:

(1) Most powerboat owners don't lift their boats above their heads to carry them on roofracks.

(2) Powerboats have access to cheap horsepower.

Consequently the cost/value trade-off for a powerboat owner is simple. A fibreglass boat can be built sufficiently lightly that excellent performance can be extracted using the high powered outboards available. Also the benefit of a significantly lighter hull is not appreciated because the boat has a purpose built trailer, and in fact for the average boatie, a heavier boat means more stability, softer riding, and less "flighty" handling at speed, particularly in strong winds when the boat is often airborne.

Kayaks are constantly being lifted and carried by their owners, while our paddling horsepower is severely limited. These factors give kevlar a strategic advantage.

Grant alludes to my article in KASK, written because I perceived that manufacturers selling sea kayaks in the South Island had promoted fibreglass rather than kevlar, because they preferred to build boats from it (it's easier to work with, hence requires less skilled labour). Hopefully club members can make their own minds up as to what is best for them, and that buyers in the market will become more discerning over quality of product. Of course all this brings up the technical aspects of fibreglass too. Chop mat, versus woven rovings, versus woven fabrics, versus unidirectional stitched-and knitted fabrics, I could go on .....

Glyn Dickson.

EDITOR'S RESPONSE

The article by Grant Stone was submitted for inclusion in 'The Sea Canoeist Newsletter' by Grant and not republished from another newsletter. Glyn's response which was printed in the September 1997 'Auckland Canoe Club Newsletter' is reprinted here.

I felt the two letters from Grant and Heather Stone, printed in the last newsletter, were a direct response to Glyn Dickson's earlier article on Aramid (kevlar) fibre. And I responded with my viewpoint particularly on the kevlar/weight issue. I stand by my comments regarding kayak weight, and they were painfully brought back to me while I chased Conrad around New Caledonia.

I appreciate the fact that most paddlers neither want nor need to paddle 50 miles a day, and there are strong paddlers to whom boat weight is not a significant factor in paddling long distances. I only wish I had some cold hard statistical data to show the difference in body energy requirement to push a light and heavy sea kayak through the sea.

Derek Hutchinson, in his 'Guide to Sea Kayaking', published in 1985, and reprinted in 1990 and 1995, notes the following in a section on hull strength and weight:

> To be seaworthy in high winds and the accompanying sea conditions, an unladen kayak should weigh between fifty and sixty pounds.

Such comments exasperate me; particularly when newcomers to the sport read or are told such 'misinformation' about boat weight.

Excluding the weight/energy argument I used for the long distance expedition paddling, the benefits of a lightweight boat include:

- ease of unloading & loading onto a vehicle
- ease of carrying to the sea
- ease of launching and landing off surf beaches

Training to Be an Ace

by Dick Rice

Two of the most common injuries suffered by paddlers are shoulder dislocations and wrist tendonitis. Why? Let's face it . . most of us who kayak, canoe or raft are weekend warriors. Monday through Friday we work at sedentary jobs. Much as we hate to admit it, our muscles get very little exercise.

That's why a little pre-season training can go a long way in helping you out on your favorite waterway. If you've ever become exhausted surfing a wave, paddling a canoe to camp or sea kayaking across a lengthy crossing, here are five easy-to-follow exercises that will help build strength, agility, endurance and speed. If you can do the following three times a week at your local gym for a couple of months before hitting the water, you'll have a lot better chance of staying healthy throughout the season. But remember that as with any good weight program, the key is to start light; you want to build stamina, not bulk.

Standing Squat Neck Lifts

This exercise strengthens the neck and upper shoulder muscle groups: the ones used most during braces, the Duffek and the cross-bow draw.

First you have to obtain a head harness from your local gym. These run about $8 or $9. With your empty harness on your head, assume a half-squat position with your upper body bent forward. Then attach your weight (about 5 lbs.) to the harness, grip both knees with your hands, and slowly dip your neck until your chin almost touches your chest. Slowly bring your head up until it is horizontal, eyes forward. Repeat this motion five times.

Hand Squeezes

After a few weeks of this exercise,it will take a tsunami to rip your paddle from your hands. The primary muscles involved in this exercise are the hand, finger and wrist flexors. You can do this exercise while standing, sitting or even driving shuttle. For maximum effect, the best bet is to hold your arms against your sides with your forearms horizontal from the waist. If this position proves too difficult try holding your arms parallel to your legs or vertical. With a grip in each hand, squeeze the handles until they touch inside. Release and repeat at least five times.

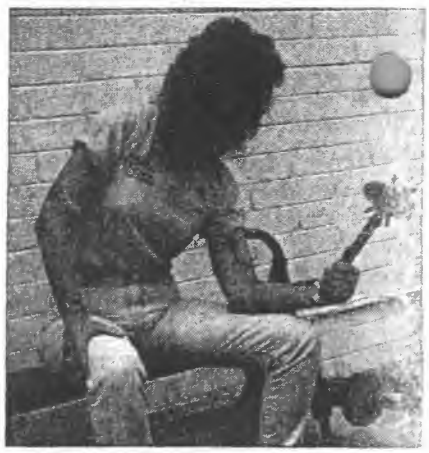
Seated Paddling Exercise

Although this exercise most closely simulates kayak paddling it is also an excellent exercise for paddlers of all persuasions. It uses the two major muscle groups of the upper and middle back, the latissimus dorsi and the trapezoids. It also strengthens the neck, side muscles, sterno mastoids, front shoulder, chest and upper arms.

This exercise requires two props: a bench that has a leg extension bar and a solid, unweighted barbell (about 14 lbs.) Sit upright, placing both feet under the leg extension bars, with your ankletops touching the underside of the bar. Make sure you have enough weight on the bar to counterbalance your body during the exercise, usually about 14 to 20 lbs. Grab the barbell with both hands at about shoulder width. Raise it to chest level. Raise your legs until tension is felt . . about horizontal to the floor. Start your paddling stroke by slowly dipping the bar, right or left, to within about a foot from the floor. As during regular kayak paddling stop your stroke even with your hips, then stroke on the other side. Continue this routine for at least five strokes (one stroke being a dip on both sides). Increase your paddling speed as you become adjusted to the weight of the barbell.

Seated Concentrated Wrist Curls

This is another hand-wrist exercise. It builds up the lower forearm extensor muscles and strengthens the smaller muscle groups that control your thumb and little finger. Sit on a bench or a chair. Place the back of your forearm on your upper leg, wrist and palm facing upward. Place a dumbbell (about one or two lbs. for beginners) across your palm so that when your fingers close they grip the shaft. Slowly lower the weight until your wrist is about 45 degrees from horizontal. Raise the weight until the end of the dumbbell nears your wrist. Repeat five times.



Again, for all of these exercises, it is important to start out slowly with light weights. As soon as your body and mind become accustomed to the routine, add weights — one-half to one pound at a time — and increase your speed. If you aren't used to a weight-training program, give yourself two weeks to a month to work out muscle soreness before adding weights. Before you know it you won't tire out as easily as you used to on paddling trips, whether you're dropping off Class V waterfalls or going for an eight-day canoe trip in the Boundary Waters.

— Dick Rice has been paddling since 1949 and served as a water safety instructor for the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army from 1967 to 1974. A freelance sports writer since 1960, he was also the first Aquatic Sports Director for the U.S. Marine Corps.