

Ocean Kayaker

NEWSLETTER OF THE
**INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION,
THE NORDKAPP TRUST & PADDLERS INTERNATIONAL**
MARCH 2001 ISSUE # 39



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

**Aims: Promotion
of sea canoeing +
Communications
Promotion
of events and
conferences
Safety
and Coaching**



The Nordkapp Trust

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

For some time I have been considering the provision of membership cards to all ISKA members so that I can negotiate favourable discounts from outlets that will be of use to us as sea paddlers. Chandlers for charts, navigation equipment, etc.; outdoor gear retailers for clothing, tents, camping equipment, etc.; kayak and paddle retailers. I have already made some approaches to various large companies who are prepared to make fairly generous discounts. BUT they would require reliable prove of membership and to this end any card would require a passport photograph to appear on the card..

So I have designed a card. here it is - actually size:



From the above you can see that ISKA now includes not only the Nordkapp Trust but also **'PADDLERS INTERNATIONAL'**. A letter of explanation has gone out to members of Paddlers International explaining that Neil Chance (who took it over from Peter Clarke) has discussed the future of this association with both Peter and Peter Salisbury (who founded the association over 20 yrs ago) and agreed that I will keep the **"Paddlers World"** (the newsletter of Paddlers Int.) going within the pages of 'Ocean Kayaker'.

We now have quite a formidable readership.

It will come to you in colour and nicely laminated. Send me a passport size photograph showing head and shoulders. I also have to ask for 4 second class stamps to offset the cost of ink and lamination. Send stamps and photo to me at:
J, Osprey Ave., Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancs, BL5 2SL

From Harry Simpson]
 Hi John,

I opened the Qajaq book on boxing day and couldn't put it down till I had finished it. It is 'an excellent scientific approach to the subject, I would say not written by a kayaker but never the less very interesting Comments like the "capsizing being caused by the paddle going too deep" were a little tongue in cheek but easily understood by those of us who have got the paddle vertical against the side of the boat as the boat leans into it!

Other comments like using single paddle blades so that they could manoeuvre" and aim a harpoon at the same time made sense and only using double paddles for long distances and speed.

I wonder if you could ask for inputs of known locations of eskimo kayaks. I am sure that the magazine readership is probably well informed on the location of all museum pieces. My father in law was once offered a genuine eskimo kayak that had been brought into Leith harbour (complete with eskimo) but he couldn't get into it. He was a policeman and it was back in the 40's.

Harry

Ocean Kayaker

Issue # 39 March, 2001

editorial by John Ramwell

It is clear to me that we now live in a blame culture. "So what!" Well, let us relate this situation to sea kayaking. When we go kayaking we often do so in company. Is there a clear leader? - are members of the trip paying the leader? (this happens a lot in North America where 'guides' take paying paddlers on kayaking excursions); - is the leader being employed by an organisation such as school or outdoor centre?

If the answer is yes, then beware the lawyers who tout for business by canvassing..... "Ever been injured? Want Compensation? Why not have a go? Give *Grabbit & Run* a call. There's nothing to lose. If you don't win we don't pay".

Did you know that it is now possible to take out an insurance policy **after** you have been injured.

Let's say one of your group dislocates an arm during a rescue session, develops hypothermia because he/she can't paddle and consequently suffers a very uncomfortable experience. He/she does not have insurance. Well, here's the clever bit. You are not insuring against the risk of injury. The injury has already happened. You are insuring against the possibility that you might lose your case when you sue for damages. Neat, eh!

All this gives a great boost to the blame culture. If this new industry is to succeed, it can only do so by persuading us that many of the things we currently regard as accidents are nothing of the sort; that they are events for which other people have responsibility. and even if they are not, it might be worth finding someone to try to pin it on. The inescapable logic is that we come to see ourselves as potential victims. we cease to have responsibility for our own actions and seek out others to blame.

The people who might end up on the other side of the courtroom start taking defensive action. I am not too bothered by the micro-wave manufacturer who warns us "not to place babies in this over"! I am more concerned with the school who won't let teachers take pupils on outdoor activities because lawyers will be waiting with a writ if any one of them should return home with an injury - or even a bad experience. The equation is simple. **Private recklessness encouraged by the possibility of generous compensation equals public caution.** Think on!

address is, for copy for this magazine:

5, Osprey Ave., Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancs, BL5 2SL and I can be reached on 01942 842204.

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Whether you sea kayak regularly or hardly ever I know you can write. I also guess you have something to say. A point of view, an experience, a piece of gear that you like (or hate). SO LET ME HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER

The British Canoe Union Coaching Scheme - Is It Just For Britain? by John Ramwell. Ed. ISKA

There is no doubt, at least in my mind, that the British Canoe Union (BCU) Coaching Scheme is the most sophisticated and the most respected scheme in the world.

The evidence can be found in the canoeing press where we find outdoor centres around the world, i.e. other than here in the United Kingdom (UK), asking for recruits to coach and/or lead groups on the water to have BCU qualifications.

I know of several foreign nationals who have spent much time and hard cash on training and assessment for BCU coaching awards at outdoor centres in the U.K.

Sea Kayaking Symposiums around the world want BCU qualified personnel to contribute to their programme.

You initial reaction might well be, "So what, I agree that the BCU Coaching Scheme is a good one and why should not other nationals make use of it?"

This was my first reaction and I can claim to have coached and assessed for BCU qualifications around the world; not that I have done so for some years now.

So what is the problem? Maybe, just maybe, there is not one and we should let the current emphasis on BCU awards around the world continue. After all, it is revenue for the BCU and continues to highlight the success of their coaching scheme.

Most canoeing governing bodies around the world have established their own coaching scheme, often modelled on the BCU scheme. I have been privileged over the years to have assisted one or two other governing bodies around the world to establish their own scheme.

Even where there is a locally established scheme in other parts of the

world which has sound foundations, some local paddlers still insist on coming over here to the U.K. and by spending time and money, work hard to chase BCU awards in the sure knowledge that they will find more opportunities when they return home to work in the outdoor industry because the perception prevails that the BCU award are more prestigious.

Now I know that the BCU Coaching Committee has discussed this issue at length. There have been concerns that there were those among the British who were using their BCU status abroad in inappropriate ways. There are concerns about the BCU coaching scheme being applied incorrectly. Are the standards at the correct level, are all the pre-requisite criteria being insisted upon?

Then there are the administrative details. Issuing awards in the form of certificates is only part of the procedure. Can the BCU be sure that once the certificate is awarded, the holder is using it at the correct level. What about the processes that are readily applied to our own subjects such as re-validation. I know that these issues can be satisfactorily addressed if there is the effort, will and agreement by all those involved.

What the BCU must avoid is being involved in a serious incident abroad when the defence of those seen to be responsible is that they hold BCU qualifications. In most circumstances I suspect the BCU can support the defendant but then what if they feel less than comfortable with this prospect. One might even have concerns about BCU involvement in the first instance. All very well here in the U.K. where standards and the procedures are well enforced.

Then there is the position of the governing body abroad. What is the point in working at promoting their own scheme when their own nationals insist on chasing BCU qualifications.

There is also the interests of the individual who resides elsewhere than in

Britain. Take one who wants to make a career within the outdoor industry. There are many who own their own outdoor centre. It is their business, their livelihood. Are they to ignore what is available from their on governing body and chase BCU awards just because they are perceived as having more credibility? I know of several individuals who are doing just this as I write. In the face of a bureaucratic incompetence in terms of ever receiving the correct papers once they have undertaken the training or assessment, I have to really wonder why they bother.

Of course they bother because the BCU Coaching Scheme remains the best in the world. I am not asking you to agree with this. It may or may not be the best. What I can say is that it is certainly perceived as being the standard to aim for and the award to have most places world wide.

History has been on the side of the BCU Coaching Scheme in that the British Canoe Union was virtually founded back in the 1930's on the back of a recreational canoeing instructional process which aimed to standardise the curriculum, teaching methods and resulting awards. It had an emphasis in safety, sound leadership and group control and there is no doubt that the founding fathers of the BCU (some of whom are still very much with us) provided us with a sound backbone to the sport which accounts for the continuing high popularity of the sport with all age groups.

Then along came sea kayaking in the early 1960's. Very soon the BCU founded the Sea Touring Committee. The Committee's brief was simple enough - to look after the interests of sea kayakers. If they were to undertake this they would need a coaching programme so that they could be sure that those coming into sea kayaking had the opportunity to learn about safety as well as technique from the onset. This was not a big issue at the time as those taking up sea kayaking were mostly already committed pad-

dlers on inland waters. None the less the Committee did not have to look far, The BCU already had a coaching syllabus well mapped out. So long as there was representation from the Sea Touring Committee on the BCU Coaching Committee to ensure that the BCU awards scheme remained appropriate to the needs of sea paddlers, all was well. This arrangement persists to this day and continues to work well.

I believe that it is the universal popularity and growth of sea kayaking world wide that has helped to bring about the current perception that only BCU coaching awards are worth having.

where does all this lead us? We could agree that there is nothing much wrong with the current trend. Should this be the case should not the BCU Coaching Committee make this

clear and then go ahead to ensure the scheme was adequately administered around the rest of the world. I strongly suspect that this would be no mean undertaking. I also wonder about the reaction of other canoeing national governing bodies.

Perhaps there is a school of thought that sees the 'imposition' of BCU awards abroad as being somewhat (maybe even VERY) arrogant. Perhaps the coaching scheme is not always going to be appropriate to local needs in other countries. If there were to be any modifications, would they be overseen by the BCU Coaching Committee. So there would be difficulties. Well, here's a challenge!!

On the other hand you may believe that each national governing body should impose it's own award scheme and object to those of it's nationals to

chase BCU awards. This may be the ideal but is it realistic?

The alternative may be to put together a generic coaching scheme which would be appropriate to canoeing at all levels universally and would be universally acceptable. I think that pigs have a better chance of flying! That is, unless the International Canoe Federation takes it on.

So is the BCU Coaching Scheme just for Britain?

What do you think? I am seriously interested and hope you might be inclined to drop me you views. To help I have attached a questionnaire for your completion and return to me before end of January 2001. Do not let this 'questionnaire' inhibit you from writing down your more complete view on the matter.

----- please tear off -----

NAME.....(clearly circle your answer)

* SHOULD BCU AWARDS BE AVAILABLE TO OTHER THAN THOSE RESIDING IN THE UNITED KINGDOMYES/NO

* SHOULD EACH COUNTRY ESTABLISH IT'S OWN NATIONAL COACHING SCHEME.....YES/NO

* SHOULD THERE BE A GENERIC INTERNATIONAL COACHING SCHEME.....YES/NO

* SHOULD THE BCU COACHING SCHEME BE SIMPLIFIEDYES/NO/DON'T KNOW

* ANY OTHER COMMENT.....

Return to ISKA before July 31st 2001

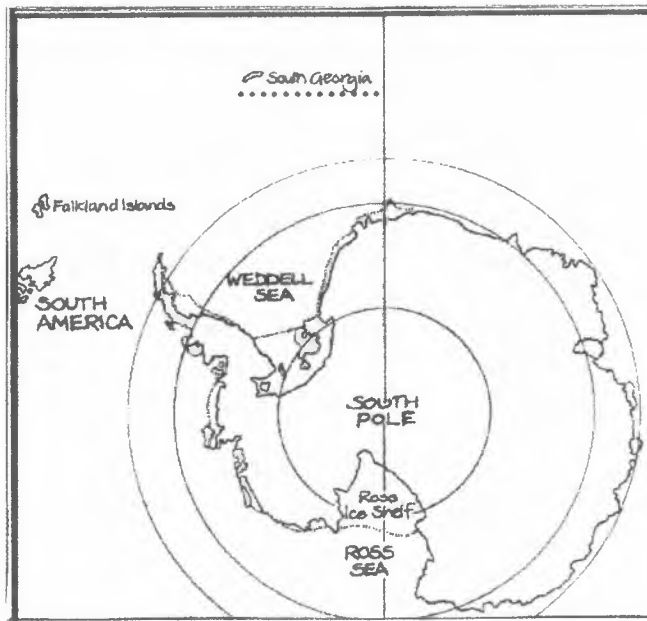
Kayaking south Georgia Island

by

Angus Finney

Angus Finney, a Sydneysider who along with Wade Fairley, has done some awesome paddles in cold parts of the Southern Hemisphere, is the author of this article which I have taken from 'Sea Canoeing' the journal of the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club.

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (a dependency of the United Kingdom), lies in the South Atlantic Ocean. The island, about 3,755 sq km (1,450 sq mi) in area and almost perpetually ice-bound, is south-east of the Falkland Islands, of which it was a dependency until 1985; it also is claimed by Argentina.

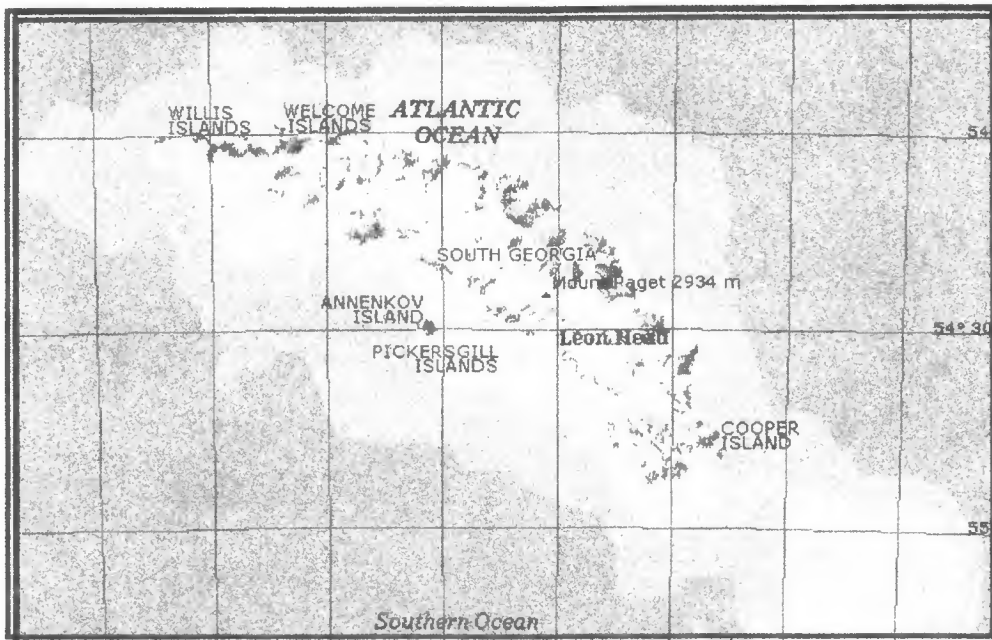


first sailing a twenty-two foot open whaling boat 800 nautical miles across

terrain were "under the constant delusion that there was one more member than could actually be counted." Wade, Bob and I had spent a day and a half hauling our kayaks and equipment up to the 400 metre high saddle of Shackleton Gap, including the last six hours of pushing into a 25 knot head-wind with both rain and white-out conditions on a snow-covered glacier, and were quite exhausted. A great feeling of humility at the strength and fortitude of these icons of the Golden Age of Antarctic exploration, and of inspiration helped power us onwards and upwards with our 120 kilogram loads. There was always "the Boss" as

Shackleton was known or some other form of human inspiration travelling with us in the wilds of South Georgia.

South Georgia lies as a lonely wind and weather-ravaged island 800 nautical miles east of Cape Horn, though, contrary to the relatively temperate climates of the Cape, inside the cold waters of



Mountainous throughout, the highest peak is Mount Paget, at 2,934 m (9,625 ft). Grytviken is the only village. The small civilian population is made up of scientists. Large numbers of seals live here, and South Georgia was formerly an important whaling base. The island was first visited by Captain James Cook, in 1775 Sir Ernest Shackleton, after his boat the Endurance was crushed by the ice in the Weddell Sea in 1915, escaped and subsequently saved his companions by

the southern oceans from the Antarctic Peninsula to South Georgia. Shackleton and two others, after seventeen days in the open boat in the Southern Oceans, then had to cross South Georgia to reach civilisation at the old whaling station of Stromness. T.S. Eliot had read about this epic and refers, in his masterpiece "The Wasteland", to an incident where the three members of the group that crossed South Georgia on foot over unmapped and previously untrodden

the Antarctic convergence. This leads to two important differences with the Cape.

First, the mean temperature is lower so that South Georgia is crowned with a mantle of ice, with majestic glaciers and icefalls cascading from the heights. And secondly, the waters around South Georgia are laden with krill, which is the foundation stone for the profusion of wildlife on the ice-free shores of the island. Five species

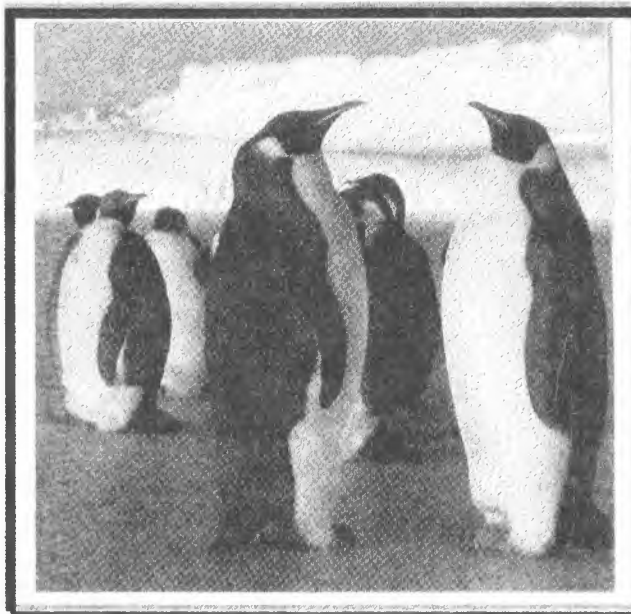
of penguin: fur, leopard, Weddell and elephant seals; four species of albatross including the magnificent wanderer; and many other birds from the stomach-turning sheathbill to the dancing delights of the Wilson's storm petrel are found breeding on the shores of South Georgia. In winter, the sea-ice comes to within 30 nautical miles, and in summer the coasts in places can be awash with ice that has calved from one of the many glaciers that cascade into the sea, or adorned by the odd rogue berg that has escaped from the confines of the Weddell Sea and silently floated northwards.

Wade Fairley, my paddling partner on several other southern sea ventures, and I had travelled two years previously via South Georgia en route to paddling for three weeks along parts of the Antarctic Peninsula. Sometime after that trip Wade had suggested that we attempt a circumnavigation of South Georgia. I initially thought that this was lunacy but after poring over the charts and the Antarctic Pilot decided that it may be feasible. Whatever happened it was going to be scary! Paddling in the southern ocean swells on the west coast didn't bear too much thinking about....

It took nearly a year to get authorisation from the British authorities in the Falkland Islands. Not surprisingly, they were reluctant to grant an imprimatur for what seemed to be a fairly outlandish idea. A range of support material including a very positive letter of support from the original surveyor of South Georgia and some fortuitous staff changes saw the permit heading our way. By this stage, the third member had dropped out and Wade had unilaterally asked along his replacement, Bob Powell, a North American whom we'd both worked with as raft guides. Wade and I re-used most of

our Antarctic gear such as Goretex drysuits and the Australian designed Pittarak sea kayaks that we had left in Punta Arenas two years before. Aerolineas Argentinas very kindly squeezed in my excess food and gear for the second trip running.

And so the three of us met in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in South America, not having been



Penguin Keeping Its Young Warm

Penguins always return to their ancestral nesting sites to lay their eggs and rear their young. The emperor penguin, the largest of the penguins, lays its single egg during the coldest time of the year, when temperatures drop as low as -66° C (-80° F). The egg is incubated on top of the parent's feet, protected by abdominal folds of skin. Young chicks remain under these abdominal folds for a short time until they are able to regulate their own body temperature.

together for over seven years. We organised the last bits and pieces utilising (in our minds) excellent Spanish and wondered naively what the blank looks were about. Two days later the Alla Tarasova, the Russian ice class cruise boat that Wade had organised a lift with, sailed for South Georgia. Four days sail with an extra three days in the Falklands, before we sat in front of the Harbour Master for South Georgia, the redoubtable and very serious looking Patrick Lurcock. Pat informed us, even though there was a small garrison of British military personnel stationed at Grytviken where the Tarasova was now moored, that they were restricted to the imme-

diately 500 metre area in their runabouts, and the nearest assistance, which in any case would not be forthcoming, was by Her Majesty's destroyer, 36 hours steaming and 100,000 pounds sterling in fuel costs away. And, by the way, you are in no circumstances to eat any of the wildlife contrary to the suggestions of Mr. Bomford the surveyor, in his letter of support. There was no intention of relying on either. We had worked out escape routes off the wild west coast, had crampons, ropes and ice-axes to facilitate this, and the knowledge that if it was anything more serious 36 hours would be too late anyway. Our state of the art Australian made Q-Mac HF radio was still included however in order to be able to contact our pickup vessel.

A day later we loaded our kayaks on the flensing platform of the old derelict whaling station, with the ghosts of some of the 120,000 whales slaughtered in these waters lingering on. Despite the fact that the whales "used to leap like trout in the bays hereabout" as the old radio operator had told us, never a solitary whale was sighted in the two months that we spent paddling there. We were pleased to be leaving that heritage behind us.

Thirty eight days food, fuel, and related paraphernalia made for heavy boats and impressive blisters as we headed north. Fourteen days food had also been depoted at the southern tip of the island. The barometer stayed high as we pushed hard northwards for a week. Even though it stayed high, in any two hour period you could get rain, hail, snow and sunshine, and all whilst travelling past steep, inhospitable cliffines that came straight out of the sea. On some days it wasn't possible to land for twelve hours at a stretch and when we did we had tussles with a problem that had remained entirely unforeseen from the safety of our couches in Australia.

It was fur seal breeding season and our route was taking us into the most populated fur seal breeding area on earth at the height of the breeding season. The males had come ashore a month earlier and started the ferocious and bloody process of staking out their territories. Fights still erupted, and there were many weary or dead males up behind the beaches with chunks out of their snouts, flippers or manes. A healthy male fur seal has one inch long incisors, an extremely infectious bite, is twice the size of a Rottweiler and can do 20 km/hr after you down the beach. The trick to dealing with them was to work out where their territories lay, and to then follow that dividing line. If they had spent the last month fighting with their neighbour in order to determine that line, then they were going to be reluctant to move too close to you and start the fighting afresh. Or that was the theory I evolved.

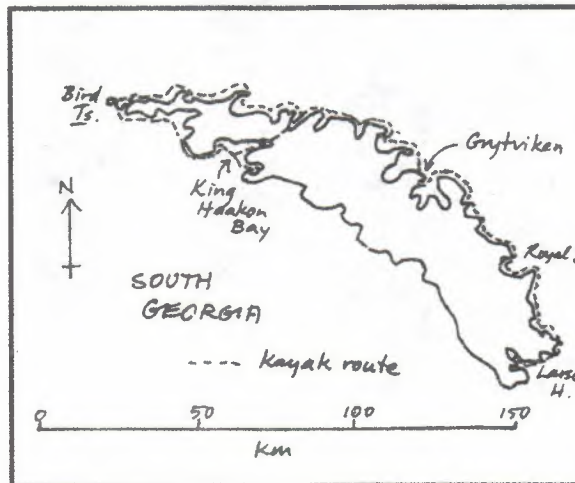
Towards the end of the first week out, after having nearly been blown out to sea on two occasions and having been harassed by seals on many occasions, we paddled into Right Whale Bay which was, in theory at least, supposedly the last relatively seal-free beach before Elsehul and Undine Harbour at the northern tip. Our information was wrong and it looked like the cricket ground the match after the Pommies had fluked a win. The unsheltered centre of the beach had the least density and after half an hour of struggling across the sand with our loaded boats whilst fending off the odd male with our paddles, we had an exposed wind-blown site for our tent.

Dotted around us were females nursing their cute young vagabondish pups that are born so feisty and playful. We saw the poignant sight of one still nursing her pup that hadn't made the distance.

Fortunately it didn't blow hard during the night, but in the early hours of the

morning we heard some rustling against the walls of the Macpac tent. Just as we realised that it was an elephant seal seeking shelter from the wind and were clambering out of sleeping bags in order to send it on its way, it yawned and stretched and broke one of the stays in the tent. Luckily it was only a three month old weaner and not a 5-6 metre behemoth.

Light sleeping was to be the order after this incursion. We did have a back-up Mont tent, but it was a much lighter weight model. After breakfasting and packing up my boat, I went to get some fresh water from a stream at



the back of the beach some 400 metres away. The "territories" theory seemed to be working fine as I returned with the same rock in my hand that I'd departed with but as I looked up to see what the other two were up to, I saw them being chased down the beach by an aggressive male. Bob was trailing and just as the fur seal was about to latch onto his backside, he tripped over his big feet and all 6'7" fell in a heap on the beach. The fur seal pulled up assuming an appropriate "thou art the vanquished" look as Bob had by chance adopted the universally recognised fur seal posture of sublimation. A close escape for both Bob and his precious dry suit!

As we headed off in our boats we knew we had a much worse fur seal scenario ahead of us if we attempted to land at Elsehul. One possible fall-

back was to paddle north of South Georgia to Bird Island and the small albatross and fur seal research station which also had a wharf. But this was to be a last resort. And so we paddled up past Nameless Point and Cape North to Som and Bernt pondering our situation. At Som and Bernt the mist closed in and reduced visibility to a couple of hundred metres adding to the overwhelming sense of foreboding as Elsehul loomed through the mist with its attendant cacophony of barking fur seals. Elsehul was thick with seals. In 1930 there were only a handful left but they have recovered well - there are now several million on South Georgia and Elsehul has a density of about 6-8 males to a bedroom-sized area. We decided that there was too much propensity for damage to both ourselves and the seals to warrant landing there and so pushed on to Cape Alexandra and Bird Island. Visibility got worse and, as we pulled in behind the lee of the Cape, we realised that the currents in Bird Sound would also be strong as we were sat in a back eddy. But which way would the current be running? The Antarctic Pilot had informed us that it could reach five knots, close to our maximum.

The currents also bring the krill to the surface and so, as we sat rafted up in our boats while trying to contact Bird Island on our radio, there was a profusion of wildlife around us. There were penguins and fur seals swimming in the water, and hundreds of birds both in the air and adorning the ominous 300 metre cliffs above us - grey-headed and black-browed albatrosses, with the occasional wanderer; giant and white chinned petrels, and even a South Georgia diving petrel, amongst others. The southern oceans are the most fertile feeding grounds on earth, and it is hard to picture the abundance of wildlife until you go there. And every food chain has its share of predators, the most feared close to South Georgia being the leopard seal.

Leopards have been known to attack

humans, and to sink inflatable boats that have been left in the water overnight. We still couldn't raise Bird Island on the radio, when out of the

the muffled roar of surf on the far rocks. Bird Island was only 150 metres away before its jagged shoreline appeared. And, as we had feared, a



Northern Elephant Seal
The male northern elephant seal, right, typically weighs more than three times the female seal, left. The male northern elephant seal has a large elephant-like proboscis, making it perhaps the most easily recognised of the 19 species of true seals.

swirling water slid the evil-looking reptilian snout of a leopard seal. Wade and I had been harassed on the Antarctic Peninsula two years before and it was quite frightening. An agile four metre long sea monster with a twenty centimetre jawline. But the present one was relatively small - only three to three and a half metres. And for some reason, I felt reasonably relaxed so I unzipped my drysuit and took my camera out just as it rose out of the water and bit the bow of my boat!

It then surfaced next to Wade for a nibble on his paddle before disappearing after easier quarry. Relief to a degree. The three of us were still stuck off the northern tip of South Georgia in minimal visibility, unable to see Bird Island, with our route of retreat being a 30 kilometre paddle to a beach that had caused us all sorts of problems anyway.

And so we struck out on a compass bearing across the sound as Bird Island was still enshrouded in mist. On pulling clear of the cape, the big swells from the west coast announced their presence by a rolling swell and

strong tide was running against us. So we had to sit in close to the rocks where the current was weakest but just out of reach of the pounding surf in order to make any headway along the shores of Bird Island. Thirty-six hours was much too far away to help us now - one wrong move

and we were on the rocks. I was in front and at the worst point of our snail-like crawl, we came to a rock outcrop that the current was pushing in closest to, and with its greatest velocity. A brief glimpse to check on the others and I was into it, wind-milling my arms as hard and fast as they would go. But I was getting nowhere, so I moved in even closer to the surf until the backwash off the rocks gave me a little kick forward. Only a metre at a time, then flail for an eternity. And another metre. And while my body was at its extremity, I remember that my mind was incredibly calm and analytical - what were the safety margins involved, fallback positions, consequences, could I get a fraction closer, another backwash, check on the others, brace etc. One more surge and I was there. Relief, but then another anxious eternity as first Wade and then Bob inched past. I wasn't out of the fire until all three of us were past. The conditions eased a little after this and an hour later we were being kindly and expertly guided through the absolute morass of fur seals at Jordan Cove by the British Antarctic Survey's leading light on fur seals. And then a hot shower and

shepherd's pie!

The next morning you could sense the apprehension amongst us. The barometer was dropping like a stone, our first section of west coast lay before us, and we were very cognisant of overstaying our welcome in the cramped confines. In the end we apprehensively paddled out from the safety of human habitation and onto the swells of Bird Sound bound for Wilson's Harbour where the fur seals supposedly start to thin out. Out towards Jorndruene and past Cape Paryadin. Some bigish swells and lots of rebound and a particularly few tense minutes in between a rock outcrop, an iceberg and the cape, with waves going every which way. Once round the cape the paddling was uncomfortable as well, bouncing round like a cork, slop landing on your deck, and only 1-2 kilometres visibility followed by an eleven kilometre crossing by compass bearing, as Wilson's Harbour was obscured by mist. Half way across, a wave landed on my back deck and over I went! Upside down in the Southern Oceans, five kilometres off the coast of South Georgia - what a nightmare. Cold, fear, sort your head out, and roll back up. Two hours later and we were pulling into Wilson's, having only made 30 kilometres after a long, hard day paddling. It would be thirty kilometres between the most optimistic landing spots once further south.

For the next six days inclement weather kept us at Wilson's. And on the seventh day we decided to go paddling. I had risen at five and it was still too rough but a couple of hours later it had settled down a bit and so we headed up the Harbour and out around Saddle Island where it began to get lumpy. A kilometre across to Cape Demidov and we hit the most disorienting waves I've ever been in. The coast is slightly convex and so waves come from all angles - the feeling of disorientation was intense, moving up, down, sideways, forwards and all on a fraction of one swell. And then there are the "ordinary" problems of these headlands - reefs,

bomboras, grounded icebergs and a shoreline that is steep, dark and craggy, with a pounding surf at its base. Every third or fourth stroke was a brace, and if you had problems, the others probably wouldn't have been able to assist. After we pulled in at Cheapman's Bay and were setting up camp with the background noise of the cracking retorts of its glacier, we realised that we had travelled less than 20 kilometres and were totally exhausted.

The next day we paddled across the mouth of King Haakon Bay to Shallop Cove, and walked up to the saddle behind it for a view down the southern part of the west coast. Immediately south were two enormous glaciers, followed by the Fanning Ridge, a 1000 metre high range that dropped straight into the sea, with surf stretching for over a kilometre out to sea from its northernmost point. We returned to our boats and found a beach to camp on. It was a fairly subdued and pensive threesome in the tent that night. We had only been making 20 - 30 kilometres a day; we had 21 days food left but had already been stuck on one beach for six days; the next pass over was the infamous Ross Pass where some British mountaineers had spent three weeks stuck in a snow cave; and the most optimistic landing sites, which would all be through surf, were 30 kilometres apart. We had a possible fallback position that was to paddle back to and down King Haakon Bay and to then carry our gear and boats over the legendary Shackleton Gap. We were unsure as to what the terrain would be like. But we had also come here to paddle round the island.

Next morning, I arose and packed my bags but the slow speed of the other two informed me that we were all of the same opinion - the west coast was out of our comfort zones and Shackleton's Gap was our new route south. The Gap would presumably have its own assortment of problems but there was a general lifting of spirits, though a residual disappointment at not being able to paddle that mag-

nificent coastline.

Shackleton's Gap didn't disappoint us. At the crest we parted company with the ghosts of Shackleton, Crean and Worsley who headed south across the icecap in their leather boots with brass screws as crampons. We had our own problems. What would the descent be like? It could be ice falls, or rock cliffs and moraine. As my boat started to overtake me on the descent, I decided to jump aboard my 5.1 metre long toboggan and slide. The icefalls moved in closer and closer from the south, and there were rock outcrops to the north, but our narrow snow slope continued down and down, with the three of us grinning with glee. And then I looked up to see Wade's kayak careening down the hill heading into crevasse and icefall territory with a large red Goretex and crampon-clad, ice-axe wielding South Georgia yeti in hot pursuit. Fortunately it hit some pressure ridges, had some air time, and slewed sideways to a stop. The Pittaraks were of a robust construction and there was no substantial damage so fits of laughter ensued. The Marx Brothers would have been proud of the comic spectacle. And the snow slope kept heading downwards and eventually stopped only fifty metres from the beach.

The next three and a half weeks were spent paddling down the relatively gentle east coast. We still had forty to fifty knot winds hammer us as we paddled across the mouths of some of the bays, found ourselves plowing through ice that had calved off the glaciers, and had our tent blown flat by 80 knot plus winds - so strong that both we ourselves and the kayaks, which we were holding, were blown along the beach. The southern tip was particularly impressive. At Larsen Harbour, Wade and I climbed up higher and found ourselves surrounded by majestic, wedding cake-clad peaks of 1000-2000 metres in altitude, with the deep blue Drygalski Fjord below us, and the awesome peace and solitude of a magnificent wilderness surrounding us.

And what had happened to the fur

seals? They had become more populous towards the southern end, but not to the same extent as up north, and the height of the breeding season was now behind us. The "territories" theory had now become practice, and we had all come to understand what diverse, fascinating and playful characters they were, though they would still rip a chunk off your backside given half a chance. But the effects of humankind are not totally absent even in this remote part of the southern oceans.

One or two bigger furs had been sighted with bits of commercial fishing detritus stuck around their necks - in particular the one centimetre width blue nylon tape that is used to pack-age bait. This rides over the seals heads and gets stuck around their necks like a collar which slowly garrots them. Wade and I decided that we had to do some thing about this, despite the infectious bites, the speed of the furs, and our exposure. Wade made up a lasso with a backup knot - to stop them being choked; we would then attempt to secure them to a rock or chunk of tussock grass; and I would move in close with my river knife. We released five out of the nine that we saw, all smaller females - the big males were both too fast and too scary. And so South Georgia never let up on the challenges. Even on a calm evening asleep in your tent there was the threat that we had parked our tent or kayaks in the middle of an elephant seal's preferred route to a mud wallow. But this was all part of the privilege of being able to experience and live this subantarctic gem to its fullest. As I lay awake on our last night there, with the sounds of king and Gento penguins trumpeting and squawking, the "slop, slop, slop" of a female elephant seal as it travelled across a stream nearby, the belching and carrying on of the elephant males down on the foreshore, and with the fantastic, haunting call of the light-mantled sooty albatross as a refrain, I was aware of how privileged I was to experience this extraordinary island. And the thought was already there - how will I return?

Malta Canoe Union The Old Marsamxett Valletta Regatta Club Marsamxett Landing Place, Marsamxett Harbour

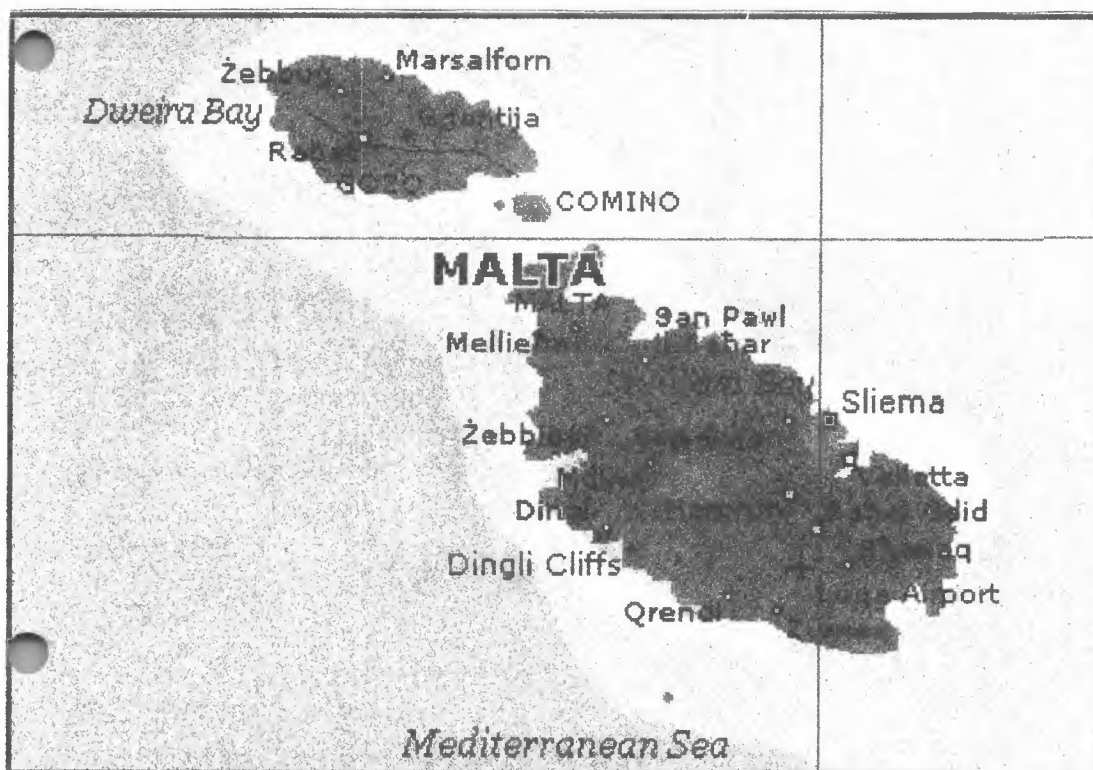
email: maltacanounion@usa.net

PRESS RELEASE: 27/11/00

HAT TRICK FOR MAMO

The Malta Canoe Union held its first marathon canoe racing national championships on Sunday the 26th of November in Birzebbugia. The blustery overcast weather helped to keep things cool for the hard core of Malta's canoe racing circuit. Although the course took the competitors occasionally into the headwind, which at times gusted to 28.8 KPH, overall times were surprisingly higher compared to the previous 16K event. Surprisingly because even the eventual winners average speed across the ground was only 11.4 KPH, and yet the indomitable Mamo still managed to gain almost 30 seconds on each hard won kilometer, and hard won it was. With a vicious chop on the way out of the first leg to the Freeport breakwater, that would have capsized a sleek racing kayak the competitors were for once glad of their stable sea kayaks. Dwarfed by containerships the small craft battled out through the chop, with one competitor Kirill Micallef-Starface taking a wide route to use the waves to ferry glide up to the turn. However Mamo was off to any early lead as is his standard tactic, with Alex Rizzo and Peter Zammit in close contact. The route took them back into the slipway to follow the division two paddlers along the shore to Pretty Bay around the point and under the EneMalta pumping jetty and into St George's Bay. A close route inshore was necessary to create the distance required. Mamo in front was followed by Zammit, and Rizzo third, along to San Lucian and around into Marsaxlokk bay. Deep into the bay the distances between the leading pack and the closest competitor Wightman were now getting far enough to loose paddlers against the back-ground. Here they met the division 2 paddlers coming back from the shorter 13Km route, before paddling out past the

power station and up to the predetermined turn point.



Wightman's short cut through a gap in the rocks in the outer power station breakwater, took some glassfibre off Micallef-Starface's hull, which was one of the lighter moments. After the turn the wind seemed to pick up on the return leg, and the run into Marsaxlokk was a bumpy one. The return leg was the same route as the outward leg reversed. Overall this was a surreal experience, as paddlers seemed to get closer

on opposing sides of each bay. A last challenging sprint for home saw Mamo secure the national marathon championship, to add to his 6Km ICF sprint and Olympic distance sprint championships. Peter Zammit was close on his heels, and has improved nicely this year, with Alex Rizzo a well deserved third place. Ian Busuttill worked hard for first place in division 2, although it has to be said that Charles Mizzi never left him with a chance to get very far away, and seemed to have an enjoyable day's racing. Wightman plodded in, in a borrowed boat, and admitted that he wouldn't have survived the chop in the first leg in the usual racing boat. Micallef-Starface was not far behind with a more than creditable performance for only his second outing.

Hopefully next seasons racing will be just as eventful, with double the events planned. Although there are a few smaller "clubman" races and time trials between February and now the next much awaited event is the Manoel Island Classic. With both 10Km and 3Km events there are races and challenges for everyone. The Manoel Island Classic will be on Sunday the 4th of February, those interested in this event or racing generally should contact the Malta Canoe Union care of 41 Victory Alley, Birkirkara with a stamped self addressed envelope for details.

Results: *Seniors K1 Mens 24 Km Julian Mamo: 2Hr : 07 Min : 00 Sec Peter Zammit: 2Hr : 10 Min : 26 Sec Alex Rizzo: 2 Hr : 14 Min : 37 Sec Div 2 13Km Ian Busuttill: 1 Hr 17 Min Charles Mizzi: 1 Hr 19 Min*

Release ends:...

Alan Byde

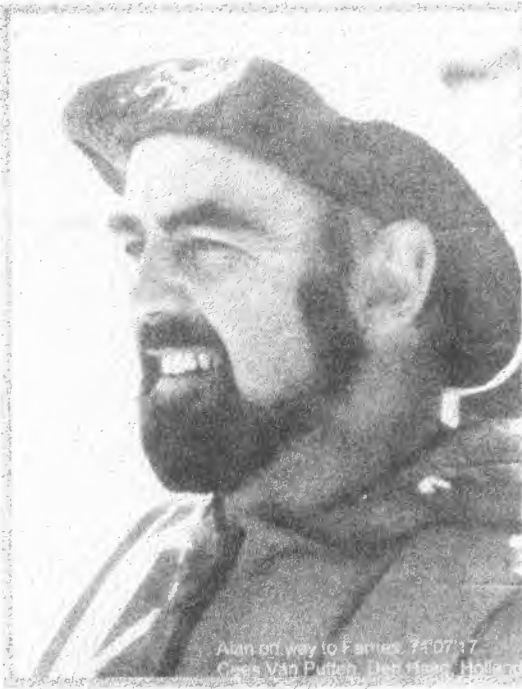
Alan wrote to me recently with a fantastic CD full of interesting stuff 'a la' sea kayaking and it's history. At the risk of embarrassing Alan I wrote back to say how much of an inspiration he had been when I first came into canoeing many years ago. Then Alan was coaching canoeing on the Thames at the Riverside Centre and he had just published "LIVING CANOEING". Even today, all these years on, it is still relevant and very readable. Anyway I asked Alan to give me a short account of himself for 'Ocean Kayaker'.....

Now that's the sort of letter I enjoy. Made me feel useful! I am not old. I am 72 going on 22. (Inside) I advise you to take the same view. Futures can be planned, not endured. I really do believe Joan and I are destined to emigrate to NZ sometime in 2001. Should get Stanley Kubrick to make a film about that. Downsizing is the name of this game but none said where.

So you want a profile of Byde eh? Born Darlington, star sign Cancer, hard shell, soft innards. Water sign, Moon dominant, imaginative, and waddya know? there is a Byde family crest and it is an upraised arm grasping an anchor. Very few nautical crests in the big book. Incidentally the name 'By-de' is hyphenated so how about that? Double barrelled, us. If the spread shot don't get you, the choke barrel may.

Darlington Grammar School to age 19, two weeks Edinburgh regional finance dept of Ministry of Labour then 105 weeks, 5 days and 23 hours in the army mostly at Catterick as a radio mechanic and drill instructor, including six weeks leader training

course at Aldershot with third Battallion Coldstream Guards. Maybe I should have remained in the Army. Looking back it was a good life. At least the rules were clear. Three times jankers, for a dusty rifle but what the duty officer didn't know was I was off home Fridays for the weekend



AWOL. My mates dusted the barrack-room but forgot to wipe m'rifle. Good shot too. Five out of five .303 rounds from a SM Lee Enfield in a target 3 inches by 5 inches at 100 yards first time at the butts.

Back to reality. Returned to civvy street in May 1949, to enter the Min of Lab in the finance dept at Newcastle. Distinguished myself by being an utter prat and realising that me and the CS didn't think the same. I left in 1964. By then I'd admired the Cockleshell Heroes. I used to read Wizard and Rover and Adventure and Modern World. When I was eleven in 1939 my Dad saw I'd bought three such papers in one morning and read the lot and suggested, not too kindly, that I get my teeth into something worth while like Nicholas Nickleby.

That did it. I shifted the whole collection of Dickens that Dad had, and I still have, by my teens.

I digress. Many endure that. In 1957 my neighbour and I built a PBK 20 each at the evening classes at Durham Johnstone School. Paddling that barge was a labour too far, so I made the sails using a Bowker and Budd book and it went very well, pointing into wind sharper than a National Twelve. Sailed it on Ullswater and Loch Tay and my daughter then six yelled "Faster Daddy, faster!" and I was laid out over the weather gunwale watching the dagger board appear, inch by inch from the racing surface thinking, "When that lets go were in it for sure" But whatever fate directs my ends, rough hew them as I may, we survived that.

Then the Central Council for Physical recreation chap in Durham, Bill Saunders, took me under his wing and I got to instruct a group in rolling kayaks in Durham Baths. Half the people rolled, but half including me, didn't. Later I was able to use the Durham School Baths where we had to wait some evenings while David Bellamy finished instructing his diving class. Derek Hutchinson started to roll there. He turned up with a Wessex "Sea Rapier" with a bathtub cockpit 5ft long by 2 ft wide. We tried wedging him in with a broomshank but he sank. Next week he'd rigged an alloy deck with sensible cockpit and knee braces. The beam was 32 inches I believe which defeated even his heroic efforts to roll, so the third week he had taken a tuck out of the sides and achieved a 24 inch beam and the put-across roll. That's how the Hutchinson career started.

The North East paddlers, John Robson, South Shields, Chris Hare, Hartlepool, Jack Levison, Peterlee, and others complained to the BCU

that no-one took any interest in us and if that was our reward for joining the BCU they could bid us goodbye for we formed the North East Canoeing Association. That did it! We had John Dudderidge and Oliver Cock up to see us quick time, at their own expense. That was circa 1959-60. One thing led to a nation of others and I became the second Senior Coach after John D. It was a political appointment. I hadn't any of the basic qualifications so I acquired the RLSA Award of Merit in 1962, and all the paddling skills certificates, kayak, canoe, river and sea by 1965. One thing I learned about myself while doing the RLSA courses with the police in Durham City Baths was that my legs won't float. Do a star layback and down go my legs, slowly, gracefully, followed by my torso and eyeballs last.

By 1964 I knew that my future in the CS was bleak. I had endured it until then because I had a family, a girl and a boy, and they were old enough for my wife to return to nursing in a Durham Hospital where she met Brian Skilling's sister who was a sister here. Brian edited that great mag "Canoeing" for many years. I have them all. Mike Clarke took over when he packed it in. I entered teacher training, in a primary school course although outdoor activities was my aim. The reason was that the college nearest was aimed at that kind of teacher. I did a two year course, did well in maths, and left.

Durham Education Authority which had been enjoying my abilities more or less for free for several years as a provider of kayaks and instruction, refused to allow me any incremental points in recognition of my achievements. Two would have done. In 1966 I was offered a job at Wolsingham

Grammar School, taking 4 G for social studies. That included lots of sailing and canoeing on the local reservoir so I said blow it, much as Mole did in Wind in the Willows, and without accepting that position, advertised in "Canoeing" I had a bite in three days from Wolverhampton, Ken Rudram swung it, offering me 5 extra

wasn't in the trade. The meeting grew grim and asked me pointedly, what did I think I was about, helping youngsters to make their own canoes for material cost and blowing the trade out of the water? I surveyed them with relish. "Hands up all those who would have been here two years ago?" Eight raised a hand. "And now there are twenty eh? Where do your customers come from? I'll tell you where! From youth clubs and schools who have the moulds to make them because I went there with one mould for petrol cost and did it in a weekend. Now they want something better because they know what to ask for. And you benefit from that! Don't you forget it!" They didn't. Nobody enjoys having his nose rubbed in it.



incremental points on the basic scale. We moved house to Shropshire for two years then I spent a year in a cabin 8 feet square and 4ft 6 inches high at the Riverside Centre at Donnington Bridge Oxford. It was up in the roof with a great view and opening windows. I couldn't sell the house near Wolverhampton and for 21 months I paid mortgage. I couldn't afford rent as well. Oxford City bailed me out and we rented a council house for two years. At last the money from the house sale was in the bank and being cash customers we bought a very pleasant detached house in 1971 for £8,050 when the asking price was £8,500. He was under pressure, we had cash so we got it. Fate has a curious way of making me wait for the goodies.

From Riverside we went to the sea and the rivers. We suffered in damp campsites and we roistered in pubs down long lonely lanes by surging rapids, entered sea caves which took some getting out of as the tide rose and the waves rumbled through. Several times we went to the Swirl Stones, Roddam and Green, Fang, the Wannies, Bluestones, Brownsman, Pinnacles, gottit yet? Farne Islands. I love their names and the associations. On 11/01/1958 I launched my PBK20 by the weir on the Wear just west of Durham Cathedral where Cuthbert is buried, and there we were, paddling in blue waters and storm, tide race and flat calm, mist and rain by the place where Cuthbert was a recluse.

Riverside was a cracker. One year, I think it was 1972, we built or repaired 164 kayaks and canoes, which is rather more than many commercial outfits. I think it was 1969 I chaired a meeting of manufacturers in London before the BCMA was formed on 19/10/1971. There were about 20 present. They asked me because I

The story behind the pic. It was taken by Dutchman Cees van Putten, a photographic journalist in Holland. His wife, I met her, was a kayaking 'widow'. The rather large group from Oxford had travelled up the A1 since morning and by mid afternoon we were meeting again, two landrovers with large trailers laden with kayaks, a dozen cars and our tents in a sort of corral. As I stood there having just arrived myself, a smartly dressed city

gent strolled over and I could tell by the look in his eyes that he was heading right for lil ole me. His expression was neutral, much like a cruising shark. "Will you come and meet my wife, please" he asked, politely. One remains rather boggled by such an invitation. I looked helplessly at my companions who were watching me with that carefree expression that says, "You're it, buster."

I went across to a lady who in normal times would have been rather attractive, but the expression boded danger. In acidulated tones she remarked "It's

a fix, isn't it?" "Eh?" was my instant if witless answer. Cees was grinning. Some other poor sod was at the sharp end. It turned out that after some years of waiting every weekend by 500 or 1,000 metre sprint K1 courses all over Europe, she had insisted that she and Cees would enjoy a kayak-free holiday in Scotland. All night they had travelled from Hook of Holland to Harwich, then all the hot day to Beadnell, where our welcoming committee offered kayaks by the dozen.

I explained who we were, what we intended to do then naughtily offered

Cees a spare kayak for we had several. The atmosphere turned chilly again but I'm used to that and rather enjoy it. Next day just before we set off I was reciting those names, Fang I love, and aged 40 I was in prime condition. I think it shows. There's been a hellu-valot since then, mostly political, but that's the way it is. I could go on and on, but elderly gents are known to do that so I'll play the old soldier.....

*John,
In case you're interested for the mag., below is a 'review' of P&H's new 'Quest' kayak, recently received by P&H.*

*In deep water, ...
John Chamberlin

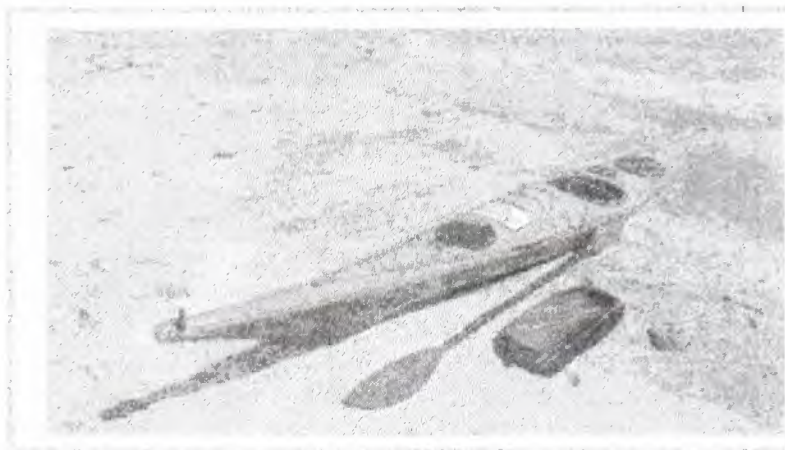
The P & H QUEST - An impossible boat.

I have been a sea kayaker and sea kayak seller for many years now. A large percentage of my customers paddle the West Coast of Scotland where both sea and tidal conditions can be severe and the choice of sea kayak has to be taken very seriously. Throughout this time I have often been asked for a boat that is "fast but stable". I've previously had to reply that this was the impossible dream - the two were completely incompatible. If you wanted stability you went for a boat with a wide beam (in the U K this was judged to be a boat of 24" beam or over) at the expense of speed and if you wanted speed you went for one of the lean, mean sea kayaking machines at the expense of stability.

However, following the arrival on the scene of P & Hs QUEST, I will have to change my tune. This is a boat that

changes all the rules. The impossible dream is here, NOW.

The Quest is long at 17 foot 7" and fast but the overwhelming impression is its quite INCREDIBLY STABILITY for a boat of only 22" beam. My first impression was that P & H had somehow managed to fit an invisible giro stabiliser and / or an equally invisible yacht type keel. The stability was unbelievable. Nothing seemed to



worry the boat and I felt very comfortable in conditions that might have worried me a bit in other boats of similar or greater beam.

I have paddled a prototype and one of the first production Quests on several trips in various parts of the West Coast of Scotland in a wide variety of conditions including a trip through the Corryvreckan whirlpool where things got a bit interesting. The more I paddled it, the more impressed I was. This is a boat that a beginner

would feel at home in and could keep all their paddling days.

The Quest hull has a soft chine running from the cockpit area almost all the way to the stern,

P & H have carried the width of the boat further forward than on the Orion giving the Quest broad buoyant shoulders and the bows are slightly flared out at deck level. This combination greatly reduces the amount that the boat pitches and it planes through rough seas like an aircraft carrier, keeping the foredeck much dryer. It has as much storage space as the Orion despite being 2" narrower and is more stable.

The Quest comes fitted as standard

with a deck mounted Silva P70 compass. P & Hs excellent retractable skeg system, comfortable adjustable seat, a tow line or security fixing point and a cross deck recess for paddle float self rescues.

An astonishing design, in a class of its own, and the answer to that impossible dream of a fast but stable expedition sea kayak.

Kayaking to the Islands off the Dampier Archipelago, Western Australia. by Les Allen

*From: lallen@nm.com.au
To: jramwell@provider.co.uk
Subject: Trip Report
Dear John*

*I have included a trip report I wrote for our club Journal on my trip to the islands off the Dampier Archipelago in Western Australia. This was not a particularly long trip but it was one of those trips that had everything in it. If you want a regular contributor from Australia I would be happy to send more articles that may be of interest to your readers. I do at least two trips a year in Western Australia ranging from a few days to my next big one, a 1200 kilometer Southern Ocean paddle.
Les Allen*

heat yet. We were about level with the gas terminal and decided to tow Nigel to a beach about 3 km from our position. I was beginning to wonder if it was going to be a night mare trip and was not feeling happy. John and I towed Nigel to the beach where we

beautiful little island and we enjoyed paddling around it. On the northern end we picked our way though a little rock garden (John in a fibreglass boat was not overly happy with this) and stopped at a sand bar. I went for a little snorkel and was amazed at the

and were treated to an amazing display when a large shark (probably a Tiger shark) came from the deep water to the surface on its back taking a fish. The power and ferocity in the attack was awe inspiring and very sobering as we earlier had been snorkelling near by.

stopped for lunch. The Dampier Archipelago comprises 42 islands and rocks lying within a 45km radius from the town of Dampier in Western Australia.

number of fish I saw. Out on the sand spit were 5 or 6 Stingrays and a little 1 to 1.5m Shovel nosed shark in very shallow water. After a rest we headed for a beach at the start of Flying Foam Pass. This turned out to be an excellent camping spot with level sand and rock shelves for gear and cooking. The weather was warm and the ocean like bath water. We only had a short carry as we arrived mid tide. I was feeling very happy and starting to relax into the trip.

Tell and Steven went fishing off the point and were treated to an amazing display when a large shark (probably a Tiger shark) came from the deep water to the surface on its back taking a fish. The power and ferocity in the attack was awe inspiring and very



We headed out at 10.30 with the high tide into a smooth sea, very high humidity, 38 degrees heat and a very light breeze behind us. We were heading for the start of Flying Foam Pass 15 km away with the aim of having a holiday trip with no route or destination confirmed.

The humidity made paddling very hot and uncomfortable. The heat in fact was almost unbearable and after one and a half hours Nigel was showing signs of heat stress. Unfortunately none of us had acclimatized to the

Twenty five of these islands are incorporated into reserves for conservation. The islands were formed 6000-8000 years ago when rising sea levels flooded coastal valleys, leaving hills and ridges exposed as islands. They range in size from Enderby, covering an area of 3290ha, to

unnamed rocky islets of less than 1 ha. Many of the islands resemble the rugged Burrup Peninsular, with coastal cliffs and steep sided rock piles separated by valleys, sand plains and pristine beaches.

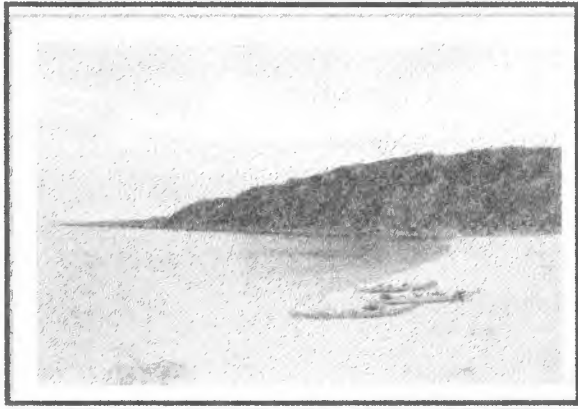
The precautionary tow payed off because Nigel was ok after lunch and we set off for Conzink Island about 3 km away and close to our original course. The humidity had lifted considerably and with the breeze at our side the paddling was a lot more comfortable. Conzink is a



sobering as we earlier had been

snorkelling near by.

The next morning we had a leisurely pack and headed up the pass. Once again the humidity and temperature



were high and the wind at our back. The pass was flat and oppressive and the paddling unpleasant. The country side was typically Pilbara with red square blocks of rock of all sizes tumbling down the hills intertwined with green and yellow spinifex. The millions of square and rectangular rocks would make any Egyptian Pharaoh green with envy. The pass goes between Angel and Dolphin Island and opens up at the northern end to a large bay with Legendre Island forming the triangle. In the middle of the triangle are pearl farms.

As we neared the end of the pass there is a house boat anchored there. A young couple were in residence and we were offered cold beers by a lovely bikini clad young woman. At the time it was the best beer I have ever had. We moved to a beach near the boat to save our booty and have morning tea. There was a mangrove next to the beach and we snorkelled with the large variety of fish and baby sharks that were resident. Tel caught a little Trevally and we headed off to the northern end of Dolphin Island. We landed on a beach near the point for lunch with lovely hot weather and no humidity. During lunch we saw two White Bellied Sea Eagles on the hills overlooking the beach. They preceded to give us an amazing aerial display when they were attacked by what appeared to be Sooty Terns. As the Terns attacked the eagles would stall

and flip upside down with their talons bared then swoop out of the stall.

After the Terns moved on the Eagles showed interest in the remains of our fish. Then with a perfectly timed dive he took the remains that were only 5 metres away. The eagle came in at amazing speed and took fish off rock so cleanly I don't think his talons touched the rock. After our air show we headed off 5km across the bay to the end of Collier Rocks. The compass and map said there was a passage through the Islands but we could not see it till we were 100m

away which was quite amazing. Instead of going through we found an excellent camp site at the western most island of Collier Rocks. Tel wanted fish for tea and decided to trawl through the shoals of fish jumping in the passage.

It didn't take long to get a big hit and he had to fight it for 15 minutes because he was using light gear. Eventually he got it about 10m off the beach and the fish went to ground in the rocks. Tell couldn't pull the fish up without breaking the line so he started shouting for us to spear the fish before the sharks arrive. Of course this comment had the spear passed from person to person before Nigel went out and speared the large Giant Trevally.

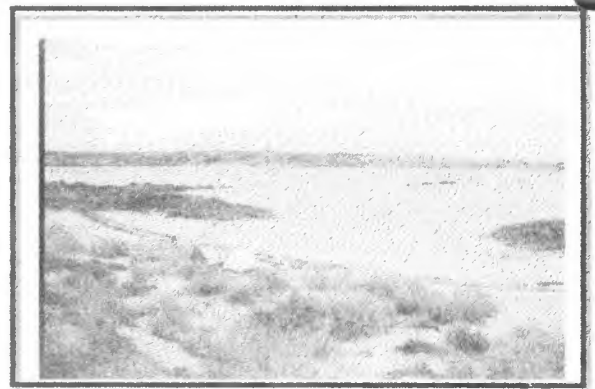
Later Tell decided to fish of the beach and was standing in about 30cm of water when a shark surfaced and headed straight for him. To use one of Tells phrases he hit the beach looking like a swastika. The shark was only cruising and probably curious. It was incredible when you look around because every thing in sight, from lizards to birds to fish to insects were either eating something else or being eaten. Even us humans who are at the top of the predatory tree were being eaten by

sand flies as we munched on Trevally.

This country is not kind to the weak, stupid or unfortunate. Nature up here is not the warm and fuzzy experience some people would have us believe but a vicious fight for survival with no mercy given.

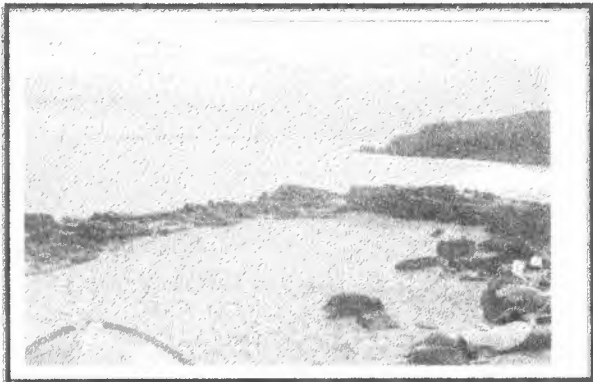
Day 2 ended for me with a hot and balmy evening contemplating life, as here it is very easy to put things into the correct perspective. Day 3 we headed down the aptly named Shark Passage. When Nigel entered the passage and we saw at least 6 sharks in the shallow water of the pass. This was the first of many shallow water areas where we saw large numbers of sharks, turtles and a myriad of other fish. We were paddling against the tide as it rushed through the passage but as we turned out of the passage the tide was with us.

We headed down the west coast of Gidley Island then turned straight west for a 12.5 km crossing to the Mailus Islands. The crossing was easy, but hot, and halfway across Steve showed signs of heat stress. We immediately stopped to hydrate and rest Steve. This necessitated me getting out of my boat on a raft up to get more water out. All these manoeuvres we practice regularly so in these situations we can take on almost any problem with confidence. Steve



recovered quite well and preceded under his own steam. At the end of the crossing I was feeling quite strong when some of the guys were taking strain. This was evident throughout the trip with different people having

strong days at different times. Every long trip I have done this has been the same, meaning any person in the group on a bad day can be affected by



things like heat stress, and it's up to all members of the group to keep a close eye on each other so action can be taken quickly before a serious situation can occur.

Its in situations like this that the experience of the group shows. After the crossing we headed for a shack on the Malus Islands where we had a water drop. We had adequate water with us for the whole trip but decided to take the drop as a precautionary measure as none of the Islands have water on them. That night we camped under the awning of the shack. Unfortunately the noise from a generator at a near by shack interrupted our wilderness experience.

Once again Tell trawled in the shoals of jumping fish at the point and landed a large Tailor. The amazing thing that night was at 4am suddenly a strong easterly wind came from know where, without any warning. One minute it was dead calm, then a 20 to 25 knot easterly. Dawn showed storms west of us and the wind consistently gusting 20 to 25 knots from the east. We headed out to North Malus Island in a choppy sea with the wind at our back. Surfing the waves was the order of the day.

The storms were building and we stopped on North Malus for a while just to see what was going to happen with the weather. It appeared we missed the main storm so we headed

out for a 5 km crossing to Rosemary Island. A storm appeared behind us and there was a strong cross current dragging us out to sea. Nigel was a little slow as this was the roughest water he had paddled in. Tell stayed with him and they drifted about 500m west of us. I was a tad worried if Nigel went in, as the current was quite strong and we would have been sucked out past Rosemary Island.

My fears weren't founded and we all met in a sheltered bay on Rosemary

Island and had morning tea in the wind and rain. This was the coldest weather on the trip as cags were the order of the day. After our blustery morning tea we went around to the lee of the island for lunch and to explore. We walked inland to the old well and what appeared to be a grave (there are 6 graves on the islands thought to be pearlshells or walers). This is probably the remains of early pastoral settlements thought to be abandoned prior to 1900. Although, it could also have been made by whalers who operated on the Malus Island from 1870-1872 taking and processing Humpback Whales in long boats. After lunch we dawdled along the western side of Rosemary where there were lots of turtle slides on the sandy beaches. We didn't land in the turtle rookeries incase we disturbed there nesting sites. We stopped at the western end of the island before crossing to the Goodwyn Islands. The weather had fined up as we headed out on a 5km crossing. We were averaging 7km an hour paddling speed but because of the strong current taking us out to sea it took over an hour of hard paddling to reach the Goodwyn Islands.

We made camp on the sandy spit between the islands just as the tide was rapidly receding so we didn't have too long a carry to the high water

mark. That evening we went looking for crays in the rock pools. One pool about 60m by 40m stunned us with the amount and diversity of marine life out at night. We saw Moray Eels, Sea Snakes, Sharks, Sea Slugs, a myriad of fish and crays everywhere. We wandered back to the beach still amazed at the variety of sea life in one pool. Another seafood dinner.

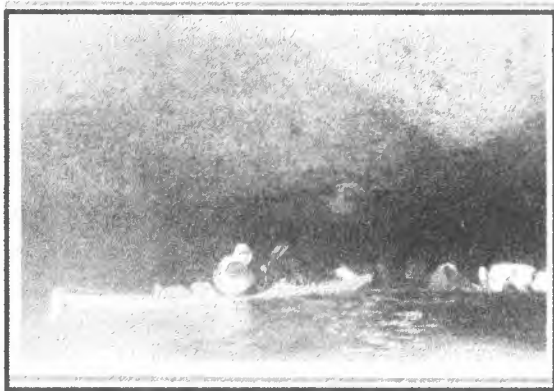
The next morning we went to look at the caves on the western end of the island and did some caving in our kayaks. One cave opened up onto a little beach which was quite intriguing and we spent about an hour playing in the caves and taking pictures. As we rounded the island to cross to Enderby we had some interesting rough water with the wind and the tide opposing each other. This gave us steep slow moving waves and is the first time I have paddled easily into the wind. Living with the tides left me fascinated with this phenomenon and the incredible amount of land that is exposed and covered twice daily. Considerable local knowledge is needed to understand the intricate tidal currents that twist and wind in and around the islands. Cruising down Enderby we saw more Sea Eagles, Osprey, Waders and Turns. Some of the waders migrate from Australia to Northern Russia. The Sooty Oystercatcher fascinated me the most with the intricate relationship they have with their mate. Snorkelling at morning tea and lunch we saw giant Sting Rays large Cod and hundreds of



other fish.

We were heading east to the end of the island for a short crossing to West

Lewis Island. The crossing was easy and we were looking for a camp site



between West and East Lewis Islands. In the shallows Steve saw a 1.5 to 2m shark and promptly started to stalk the shark. Just as he got near the shark panicked and took off heading straight for John's boat. As he got near John's boat he suddenly saw the boat and turned in total panic and charged straight into the side of Tell's boat. He is probably telling all his mates how he took on 3 five metre monster sharks and beat them all. Our camp was on a sand spit and as the tide went out a land bridge 1km wide formed between the islands. That evening Tell and Steve went shark fishing and had a lot of sport landing large sharks for the gear that they were using. I did notice that they didn't kiss the sharks before letting them go. I wonder if Rex Hunt does! (He does a fishing show in Australia and always kisses the fish before he lets them go)

Next morning we had a long carry to the water and there was some mud just before the water line. Tell didn't have his booties on this morning and of course luck would have it this is the morning he stands on a small Sting Ray. Having a doctor helped because he was able to find Sting Ray in the wilderness first aid book very quickly (Wilderness Medicine 4th edition) instead of the desired behavior of just staying put.

Quiet John of course knew exactly what to do of the top of his head and within minutes of the sting we had the foot in almost boiling water. Tell thought the water was more painful

than the sting, but we all knew that would change. The very hot water sets the protein in the venom neutralizing it. We had to head back to Dampier that day any way and as we didn't know if Tell had any reactions to Sting Ray venom so we thought it better to play safe and head in straight away. We had just started when Tell was hit by waves of nausea and rapid heart rate. On the beach we administered orally 5mg of

Maxolon to stop the nausea. Between Nigel, John and myself we had enough equipment and drugs to do minor surgery or treat most ailments.

On these types of trip a comprehensive first aid kit including a variety of drugs and the knowledge to use them is most important as without it what should be a small non life threatening problem can become very serious very quickly. Having a doctor along who can bring anaesthesia, morphine and intravenous drugs is a bonus (on ya Nigel). John and I towed with Nigel and Steve either side of Tell so he couldn't fall in.

We were about an hour into the tow when Tell came good and never looked back. We arrived back in Dampier on the high tide and enjoyed a beautiful steak that night in the pub. Nigel and Steve had to fly back to Perth, so then there were three. We paddled with the tide for Sea Ripple Pass, the wind was at our back and we were flying along at about 9-10km per hour water speed but barely making 5 km per hour ground speed. The tide was against us. We stop at the ever popular Conzink and then over to the mouth of Sea Ripple Pass to a nice little beach for the night. I was amazed when I looked around at the number of lizards and other reptiles on the islands. In fact there are 37 species of terrestrial reptiles on the

islands which is quite amazing considering the barren country and no water. The next morning we had to drift down Sea Ripple Passage with the incoming tide as the water was too low. This turned out to be a great experience as we were drifting over some of the most beautiful coral I have ever seen. Combine that with the sharks, fish and turtles and it was one amazing 2 hrs of drifting.

After Sea Ripple we headed west along the Dolphin Island cliffs which were fun to paddle close to and look up at the towering rocks which gave us a feeling of being very small in a big world. Deep water and the knowledge some very big sharks have been caught in these waters only added to the feeling. We stopped for lunch at the most beautiful bay I have ever seen.

There were high cliffs of tumbling rock either side with a 100m of beautiful beach at the base. A creek and gorge followed back from the beach with different coloured rocks intermingled with spinifex with a few small mangrove and native figs trying to grow in among the rocks at the base of the cliffs. All this combined to make an interesting and beautiful feature of Dolphin Island. We then paddled to the western end of Dolphin and across to the eastern end of



Collier Rocks.

A short stop and then for something different John and I sailed our kayaks on the crossing to Legendre Island. I had a quite manageable sail that propelled me at around 4km per hour,

John on the other hand had a massive sail meant for at least two kayaks rafted together, and so was flying all over



the place at 10 to 12km per hour almost out of control and coming very close going over on several occasions.

When we reached Legendre Island there were mangroves all along the coast, it was getting late and we had to find a place to camp. We decided to paddle to the western end of the island as the map showed beaches there. We were tired as we paddled of with me about 75m in front of Tel, an overcast sky, mangroves to my right and murky deep water below us. All of a sudden my left knee hit the top of the kayak, there was a splash and tug at the back which stopped me dead and my rudder made a grinding noise.

happened so fast that it took a second or two to realise my rudder had been hit by a very large fish or shark. After seeing the teeth marks on the rudder and as they were a centimetre between each tooth I am quite sure it was a shark.

My heart rate immediately jumped from around 62 to 162 and as I paddled on I tried to convince my subconscious that there was no danger, but it was not taking any notice, as all the time we were near the mangroves I felt uneasy. At the end of the Island we found a lovely beach with a large turtle on the sand. She lifted her head to look at us but made no effort to move. We assumed she was going up

the beach to lay eggs but when we came back that night to see, she was in the same spot dead. There was a cut in her shell, probably from a propeller, and it had become infected so we assumed it was that that killed her. The next morning we went to the western side of Legendre Island which was about 30 km from Dampier and the furthest out to sea we were going

In the deep water crossing from Legendre to Cohen Island a shark that was larger than Tel's boat made two passes under his boat. Strangely his hart rate went



up a little. After Cohen we headed down the eastern side of Gidley Island where for about 1 hr during the incoming tide are the best surfing waves you could imagine coming through in sets of about 5 waves. Tell and John were in their element.

Both are excellent kayak surfers and were getting incredibly fast 100m rides. At one stage John, who is normally quite serious, passed me on the top of a wave with a stern rudder planted and travelling at about 20km per hour with a grin from ear to ear. I have never seen such an excited expression on his face.

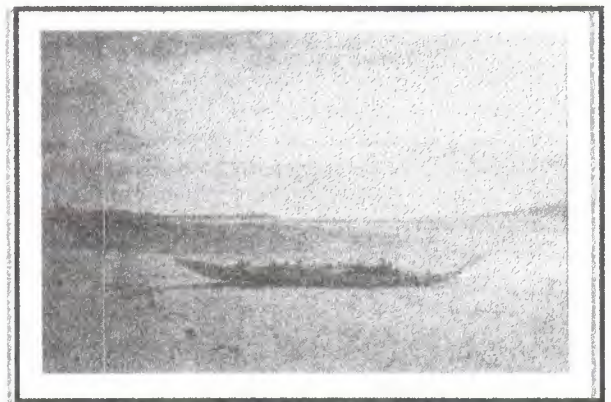
That night we camped back at our original camp site at the mouth of Flying Foam Pass. We were a bit flat that night as the trip so far was one of

the best I had been on and nobody wanted it to end. The next morning we paddled back to Dampier with John playing with large Manta Rays the only real high light of the trip back.

During the 10 days on the water we visited 20 different Islands, saw incredible diversity and numbers of marine life, had shoals of fish in their thousands leaping in arks at the bow of our kayaks, saw sharks create killing fields by herding shoals of fish into shallow water, had hot and humid days, 3 days with rain, thunder storms around us most days, and every day some high light that made it memorable. It all wasn't perfect though as we had 3 minor health problems, some incredibly hot and uncomfortable weather and the normal problems with sand flies and bush flies, but this is part of a wilderness experience.

I think one of the things that made the trip for me was not having a schedule to keep or to have to worry about time. We got up when we felt

like it and went wherever we felt like at the time, which is a total contrast to my highly organised and committed life style at the moment. I would like to thank Tel, John, Steve and Nigel as it was their company, humour, enthusiasm and easy going nature that also made it such a memorable trip.





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To John Ramwell Ocean Kayaker
Fom.....Tony Ford Am Kurpark 4
37444 St Andreasberg Germany
Email: tford@web.de

I have just read the extract from the Marine Safety Co-ordination Committee on the use of mobile telephones in the marine environment and would like to recount an incident that happened last year off the German coast. We, the Salzwasser Union, were taking part in our annual sea kayaking week (Roter Sand 99). One of the planned activities was to carry out emergency training with the DGzRS, the German sea rescue service (photographs can be seen on pages 26 and 27 of Seekajak 70, and a full report on pages 19-21 of the same issue.) The idea was to carry out planned multiple capsizes off the coast, and call up the emergency services by marine vhf radio, and then simulate a number of additional incidents. Once sufficient paddlers had capsized, an attempt was made to contact the emergency services by vhf marine radio and for the rescue cutter "Hannes Glogner" to come to our aid from it's base on

Langeoog, less than 2nm from our position.

All went well until it was realized that possibly because of an intervening sand dune between the cutter and ourselves, our signal was not being received. The alternative was to use a mobile telephone, which we did, and we were able to communicate without further hindrance. It is usually necessary that there is line of sight, or near line of sight between those wishing to be rescued, and the rescue organisation when using marine vhf radios, and of course at any time when wishing to communicate. It would be wrong to believe that just because one is near a marine vhf radio station, one will be heard. Perhaps in this day and age, and to be on the safe side, one should carry both a marine vhf radio and a mobile telephone. I would not advocate that this should become standard practice, as, as you point out in your article, there is no substitute for the correct piece of communication equipment.

A similar incident but with a different outcome occurred whilst paddling South East Alaska a few years ago. We wished

to pass an urgent message to the US Coastguard, at their helicopter base at Sitka, about 20nm away, as the crow flies. There were hills between us, so there was no line of sight possibility - nevertheless, we were able to communicate quite well using channel 16 once we had climbed a hundred feet or so, so on some occasions, one can communicate without line of sight.

On another point emerging from our training exercise with the Hannes Glogner, when the rescue cutter came in sight, flares were fired to pinpoint our positions. Despite the crew knowing where we were located, and no doubt could actually see us when flares were fired, the crew did not see the flares. The moral to this story is don't use flares in daylight - they are unlikely to be seen - even from a few hundred yards. Smoke or drawing attention by waving a paddle, or suspending a radar reflector from a raised paddle seems to be a more sensible idea. Keep up the good work, *Tony Ford*

Repairs to a Valley C Trim Rudder

By Tony Ford

(Tony is editor of "Paddles Past", the journal of the Historic Canoe & Kayak Association - I am very grateful for this article from him - Ed)

We had been paddling along the coast

Moresby Island in June, when, after failing to ensure the rudder blade was not in the raised position, we moved our Aleut II half a meter to one side, on the shore. This was done to ensure that it sat on an even keel, and away from any obstructions. The inevitable of course happened. The swing plate snapped where the pintle bolt passes through it. I am

that the rudder assembly had been weakened after it had been left outside for a year, and affected by the strong UV rays in Alaska. It seemed unthinkable, beforehand, to carry a spare rudder assembly, and so running repairs were needed.

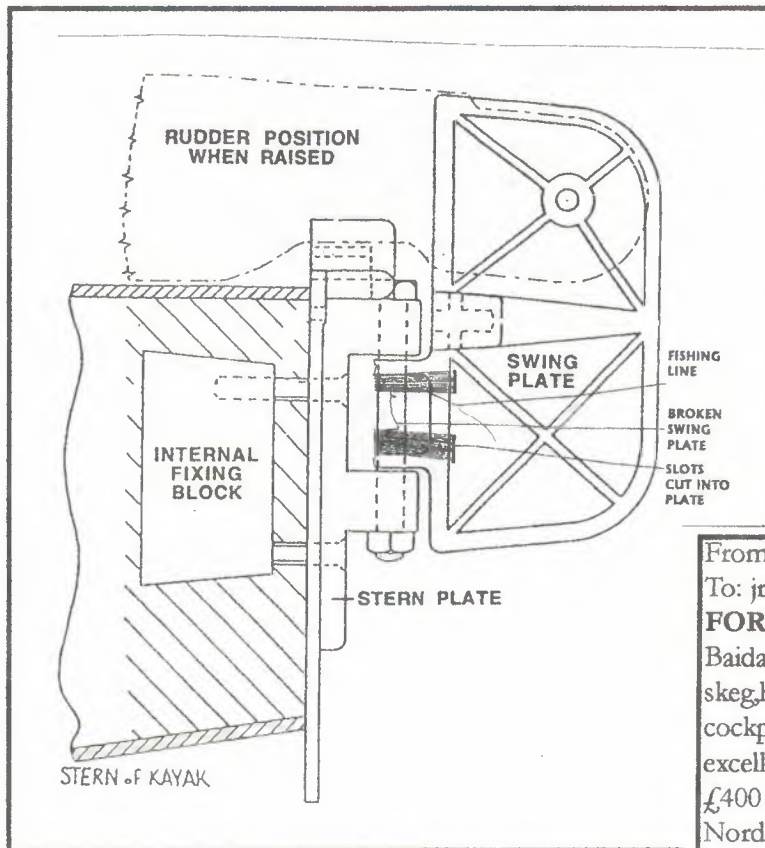
The first experiment was to attempt to melt plastic from yoghurt beakers, and the like, and then attempt to paste back together the broken off piece of swing plate. We had some moderate success with this, but after a day or so, the plate broke again, and as always seems to happen in such a situation, one piece of the plate was lost.

Nevertheless, the rudder did continue to function even though it moved from side to side when waves hit it or when pressure was applied on one foot pedal or the other. A more substantial repair was needed.

With a red-hot hacksaw blade, a vertical slot was burned through both flanges of the swing plate, adjacent to where the pintle passes through. Once this had been done, the swing plate was secured to the pintle using 60-lb mono-filament fishing line. This repair worked fine for a number of days, but as time passed, the line worked loose and the result was that the swing plate was held in position with little more than the steering

Given a similar situation, I think I would cut two short slots in the swing plate, to ensure that the line has less tendency to slip vertically; then to tie two lines, one at the top of the pintle housing and one at the bottom, as shown in the accompanying drawing. It is difficult making secure knots in fishing line at the best of times, and it was found best to tie on and tie off around the steering cables, where they pass through the yoke of the swing plate. It would be interesting to learn whether others have been in a similar situation, and how they carried out repairs. Robin at Valley suggested electric cable ties could be used instead of fishing line- they must be easier to fit, and may also be easier to

tighten up against the rudder pintle. Fitted one above the other, cable ties could well prove better than fishing line. On reflection, however, I think that it might be an idea to carry a spare swing plate on long trips "just in case" despite the ease in which the repair was carried out to the Aleut.



cables. It was noticed that because pressure applied on the steering cables or on the rope and shock-cord lifting lines was applied on the upper part of the swing plate, there was little to hold it in a secure position against the pintle. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the fishing line is tightly wound around the swing plate and pintle.

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 To: jramwell@provider.co.uk
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 brian

A BIRTHDAY SURPRISE or WHY STARVE

By John Ramwell

Some years ago I was kayaking in Glacier Bay, Alaska with a group of friends. Unbeknown to me they were



aware it was my birthday. We pitched the big tent we used in wet weather and started the portable wood stove designed to use in it. First appeared a carefully husbanded (and intact) pack of cream crackers with a tub of wine cheese spread. Then, to my amazement, came a little bottle of Black Russian cocktails that had been chilling all day in the bottom of someone's boat. We set to and sliced the fresh vegetables to stir fry. A pot of rice steamed on the wood stove as shiitake mushrooms soaked nearby. We lingered over dinner. I had just blown out the candles on a cheese cake when we heard a tour boat approaching on its' evening run up the bay. We had met the crew earlier and I called them on the VHF radio. "There's wild life ahead of you on your port bow!" The tourists dining aboard while watching miles of absolute wilderness roll by peered into the twilight drizzle to spy well fed kayakers in party hats waving at them in front of a tent festooned with balloons

Kayak dining is very much part of the adventure. You might be surprised at what edibles are practical to carry; breakfast sausages identical to those back home (in fact they are the same, just dried and then rehydrated), fresh vegetables that last and combinations of plain supermarket things together with imagination, some fried vegies, and unusual spices and garnishes to produce a memorable dish rather than

a pot of stew. Though kayaking provides the means and occasion for feasts of bought and foraged foods, there are also times when eating is just something to be done with and FAST is the primary ingredient of the meal.

Breakfasts may have to be speedy to allow us to catch the tide or beat the weather home. Then there are the times when the conditions can be trying, and camp is little more than a beach bivouac in rain and dinner is one of the chores before turning in. At these times I have really appreciated the premade dinners, complete with directions to encourage me through the few sim-



ple steps to consumption. On trips where miles per day are important and the wild country is less hospitable, an array of pre-prepared meals is an important part of my provisions. I have been making these meals up for myself and rarely travel without a complement of them. So eating and enjoying food is part of sea kayaking.

Perhaps you would be surprised just how much is edible from the beach and coasts in the way of molluscs, sea weeds, plants as well as fish. In Canada this year we caught huge cod and cooked a vegetable stew using pig fat as a base. The cod is added a few minutes before completion of the cooking - what a feast.

To John Ramwell, FRGS

15/11/00

Dear John,

Please note that at last after 10 years the Malta Canoe Union (who were recently the Malta Canoe Club) have been given premises, by the kindness of the Marsamxett Valletta Regatta Club. This is a large and well appointed facility, if somewhat in need of repair and refurbishment.

Can I ask any ISKA members who happen to be visiting Malta to contact me or Peter Zammit via our home addresses (the return address above is mine) as noted in ISKA the yearbook. It's much quicker.

I remain as always yours in canoe sport,

James Craig Wightman
President M.C.U
Dip Youth Studies

----- Original Message -----

From: ic24

To: jramwell@provider.co.uk

Subject: transporting kayaks

Could you put this question in the next newsletter please.

I am looking to purchase a motorhome but cannot find a way of loading and carrying a kayak onto one. Has anyone found a solution? email address is keithmorey@ic24.net

STAY WITH YOUR KAYAK

by Greg Stamer

During a rolling session with Maligiaq Padilla, the 1998 Greenland Champion I watched him capsize, reach up with both arms on one side of his kayak and lift his face out of the water so that he could breathe. Try it, it works.

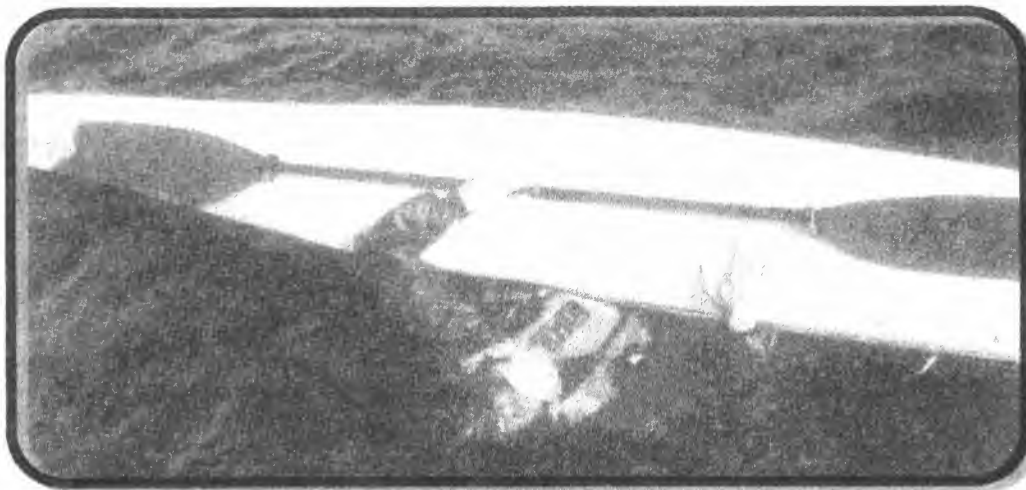
I have long been fascinated by Greenland kayaking techniques that utilize that often unexplored gray zone between a fully upright and a fully capsized position.

John Heath has done much to promote and popularize several Greenland paddling techniques that hold the paddler in a stable position with his torso immersed and his face just above the surface of the water, including the balance brace and chest-, side- and back-sculling maneuvers.

Today, these skills are widely known and practiced among many North American Greenland-style paddlers.

Peter Petrusen from Kangaamiut in Greenland had not yet learnt to roll when he capsized while on a solo outing, but lived to tell the tale. Petrusen credited the saving of his life to the sealskin kayak jacket, or tuiqiq, sewn by his mother. While shorter length garments were fashionable at the time, Petrusen's mother had wisely made his tuiqiq long enough so that it hung to his knees, in the traditional style. Since the sealskin of a tuiqiq does not stretch, the garment's loose, generous fit allowed Petrusen the mobility needed to do this maneuver.

After young Petrusen capsized, the length of his tuiqiq allowed him to push himself slightly away from the seat, twist his body around the cap-



sized kayak, and then raise his head above the water to cry out for help. Some other kayak hunters in the area heard his cries, and Petrusen was saved.

I had envisioned Petrusen dog-paddling to the surface for a breath of air and a quick shout, then sinking back into the frigid water beneath his kayak to wait for another attempt. It was not until I had the chance to practice rolling with Maligiaq Padilla, the 1998 Greenland kayak champion, that I learned about the technique that Petrusen must have used. During one practice session, I watched as Maligiaq capsized and reached up with both hands on one side of his kayak. He grasped the chine and, then, using a motion similar to a pull-up, he lifted his head up to the chine to breathe. He could hold this position with his head above water indefinitely. An observer might well assume that Maligiaq had bailed out of his kayak when, in fact, he was still in the cockpit and only extended an inch or two away from his seat! This must have been the maneuver that had saved Petrusen's life. Initially, I assumed that this technique could be done only

by someone as flexible as Maligiaq, and in an extremely low volume Greenland-style kayak. After trying it myself, I was delighted to learn that this skill should be within the reach of many recreational paddlers using touring kayaks. In fact, I found it easier to perform this skill in a 24"-wide Chinook than in my 20.5"-wide, hard-chined Greenland-style

Anas Acuta. In the case of the Chinook, the wider beam and large cockpit allows you to shift about more in the seat, requiring less torso rotation. However, you need the support of good thigh braces, or you will simply fall out of your kayak when you capsize. It helps to be somewhat limber to perform this technique, but no more so than that required to perform a balance brace or many other Greenland rolling maneuvers.

Fortunately, to do this maneuver, you don't need a tuiqiq. While the nylon skirts that I used while trying this maneuver often had the frustrating tendency to pop off the cockpit coaming during the maneuver, my short neoprene spray skirt stretched more than enough to allow me to twist into position.

Performing the Petrusen Maneuver

For your first attempts, practice in shallow water and have a partner standing close by. Stow your paddle securely. The following directions are for performing the Petrusen maneuver on your right side. I recom-

mend practicing the following set-up position on the surface prior to capsizing.

Rotate your body strongly counterclockwise, as if to look behind you over your left shoulder. Place your hands on the gunwale about a shoulder's width apart. Your right hand will be near your left hip, and your left hand will be well behind you. Rotate your butt counterclockwise in your seat. You will need to brace with your legs, but the exact technique you use will depend upon the fit of your kayak. In a narrow kayak, I find it easiest to remove my right foot from the foot peg and bend my right knee so that my right foot reaches back toward the front of the seat. I feel strong pressure on my left thigh brace and with my right hip against the right side of the seat. In a wider kayak, I prefer to press both legs against the sides of the hull. Whichever method you choose, ensure that your legs press against the thigh braces and not directly against the spray skirt, or you may dislodge the skirt or even fall out of the kayak.

Once you achieve the set-up position, slowly capsize to starboard (fall backward). Upon capsizing, reach upward, toward the surface, and move your hands from the gunwale to the chine. If your kayak does not have hard chines, find a point near the turn of the bilge that you can cup your hands over without slipping. As you first enter the water, you will briefly sink downward before rebounding quickly toward the surface. The buoyancy of your body and PFD will bring your face very close to or above the surface. Once you and your kayak reach equilibrium, if your face is still slightly submerged, pull down on the chine (or bilge) with your hands while using your legs to keep the kayak level. If you have enough flexibility and a kayak with a complementary hull shape, your face should easily clear the surface. You are now free to relax, take a deep breath and, if need be, shout for your chiropractor! With a little practice, and as you become more limber, you may find the final

position to be surprisingly comfortable.

You can perform the maneuver with the paddle held on top of the upturned hull. If the conditions are not too severe, you can also hold the paddle vertically above water, in the crook of an arm, to attract attention. After you have succeeded once or twice, you can skip the preparatory step and do the set-up while underwater.

Although we will probably never know if the technique demonstrated by Maligiaq is exactly the same technique Peter Petrusen used to save his life, it is, nevertheless, a very useful skill that has great potential for rescue situations. John Heath presents a strong argument for staying put following a capsize. John states: "With few exceptions, it is better to stay in the kayak after a capsize for the best chance of survival. The lung-full of air that you have when you capsize is not necessarily the only one you have to work with to recover. By staying seated with your spray skirt secured, you are less exposed to cold water, you limit the amount of water entering the cockpit, and you avoid the risks and difficulties of bail-out and reentry rescues." John also notes that the capsized kayaker must avoid panic. The overwhelming fear of entrapment that many people feel when capsized often fuels the rush to bail out immediately and reach the surface.

The beauty of the Petrusen maneuver is that it is a quick and effective way to satisfy the natural urge to quickly get your head above water. I use it to rest during hand-rolling practice if I get tired after several roll attempts fail. For paddlers who feel a sense of panic and entrapment, it offers a way to get above water without breaking the cockpit seal. In an unexpected capsize, the method might help you keep panic under control and get plenty of air in your lungs, to call out for assistance or perform a self-rescue that does not require leaving the kayak. Self-rescues at this point could include rolling, rolling

with a float on the paddle blade, or rolling with a float. Whether or not you can use this in an emergency, as Petrusen probably did, depends on how quickly you can execute the maneuver, and how well you can remain in this position with your face comfortably above the water.

The real strength of the Petrusen maneuver is in its use for capsized victims who have partners close at hand who can provide assistance for a rescue. When practicing assisted Eskimo rescues, it's a common and frustrating occurrence to have your partner bail out just as the bow of your kayak reaches him. The victim is frequently unsure of where the rescuer is, if he is on the way, and how long it will take for the rescuer to arrive. With all of these doubts, many victims simply do not have the confidence to hang out and wait for a period of time.

When an assisted rescue is combined with the Petrusen maneuver, the victim can verbally contact you, blow a whistle or drum loudly on his upturned hull, and then keep tabs on your progress as you approach. You should exercise great caution when approaching a capsized victim during any assisted rescue, but especially with this technique, since the victim's head and hands are exposed; a collision could easily lead to an injury.

The Petrusen maneuver is an interesting historical technique, but its use is not limited to Greenland-style aficionados; it offers benefits to a large number of kayakers. With a little practice, you can add this old Greenland skill to your set of rescue skills, and enhance both your assisted and self-rescue techniques.

Greg Stumer, of Orlando, FL, is a long-time advocate of Greenland-style kayaking techniques. He is one of several Americans planning to compete in this year's Greenland National Kayaking Championships in Nuuk. He can be reached at: <gstamer@magicnet.net.>

Pumps and Things.

by Frank Goodman

I was interested to see the article in the July issue of Ocean Kayaker written by *David Youren*.

I thought it was a good article and the further research he proposes to do on pumps and especially his questionnaire, must be a good thing.

Mind you, I don't think pumps are quite as useless as he says in the conclusion of his article. It isn't reasonable to dismiss the foot-pump because it gave one individual, (David) cramp in the leg! I'd have thought that was a problem with his leg, not the pump.

Self bailers have been used for racing kayaks over many years, and we too have fitted the odd bailers on some touring (not sea-going) kayaks, by request, from time to time.

As a retired gentleman of leisure, well I don't know about the gentleman bit, I took myself down to have a word with Robin Goodliffe, who is my partner and managing director at Valley Canoe Products. This means he's still working hard, while I do the leisure bit. Well he's young!

By a strange coincidence, when I mentioned the article by David extolling the virtues of self-bailers, Robin reached across his desk and put a self-bailer into my hand. "One of our customers was asking about them, and I got this one from the chandlers to have a look." He said.

Well we had a look and the answer was that, while the bailer itself was fairly robust, bonding it to the hull seemed to be the weak link. After a lot of discussion, we felt that it was just not on to punch a hole in the hull of a sea boat. A misjudged landing or launch may pound the hull on a few lurking rocks, perhaps not to breaking

point, but certainly enough to make a paddler wince. If you were unfortunate enough to get the rock and the self-bailer in contact, you may well have a major repair on your hands. In fact, you don't even have to have impact for holes below the waterline to give trouble. Check out Peter Bray's epic attempt to cross the northern Atlantic in this issue.

Another problem left unresolved was; how do you open and close the bailer? We couldn't envisage a simple mechanism of working it from the fore-deck, so it seemed to us that the spraydeck had to be removed in order to reach it. Not a good idea.

All in all, while the self bailer is an alternative rescue tool that may work extremely well in many circumstances, the possibility of catastrophic failure is too high for my liking as a manufacturer. At VCP we would not fit a bailer unless we'd spoken to the customer in person and made sure that s/he was well aware of the potential problems involved. Certainly, unless much more research is forthcoming, we'd suggest they fit their own, if they are sure that's what they want.

This may sound a bit wimpy, but my memory goes back the early eighties when we were developing our watertight hatches. Several years of R & D including six months sea-trials were completed before we launched them in 1981 - a year of deepening recession. We had sold one hundred and fourteen kayaks when the phone started ringing. The rims of the hatches were distorting and hatch covers were falling off. We had chosen (and tested) a material that could (and did) distort after prolonged exposure to the elements. Disaster!

Times were hard, and our kayak-

builders were on short time. I had no money in the company coffers. The only way was to come clean, and I advertised that the hatches were faulty and would be replaced F.O.C. plus refunds on carriage costs. Every last penny went on re-designing the hatch rim and re-making it in ABS which is still the material we use today. But I couldn't afford to pay the chaps to repair the hatches. I had to do them myself. It took two hours to cut out the defective rim and replace it with the sound one. Four hours per boat, one hundred and fourteen boats. I worked one hundred hour weeks until they were all done. V.C.P. survived, just, but the memory prevents me from jauntily launching a self-bailer that may not be reliable.

This letter has gone off on a tangent. It wasn't meant to become a lament about the fraught world of kayak building, but it should highlight the difference between customising your own boat and taking on someone else's design.

I think it is great to evaluate new developments, which I think I have done over the years, but I still think the pump is a vital piece of equipment, whether it be deck, foot or hand-held. They are first and foremost reliable, and do not weaken the impact integrity of the hull. Of course they have minor problems. Certainly, the rear-mounted deck pumps that date from the original Nordkapp Expedition of 1975 were never intended to be worked by the occupant, but by a colleague. Now with more solo paddlers and more sophisticated pumps available, we seldom fit them on the rear deck at all. Every sea boat should have some sort of bailer, whether it be a large sponge or a small pail! Of the choices, a reliable fitted pump has worked best for

me over many years. I seldom used it at all, luckily, but when I did need it, it worked. Which reminds me, I haven't filled in David's questionnaire yet.

There are also covert uses for the extended pump that is used to dry out

another waterlogged kayak in trouble. When you've successfully pumped him out and eventually replaced his spraydeck, you beat him soundly over the head with the pump tube to remind him to get his own pump fitted A.S.A.P.

Best in paddling,

Frank Goodman.

P.S. No questions to answer this time. but it hasn't stopped me rabbiting on. Sorry!

I found the following article in the Sunday Times last November (2000) and thought you might be interested.

Stay off my wave or Surf Star fights curse of sea rage

Paul Ham
Sydney

AN Australian surf legend, who was beaten up after stealing a rival's wave, has started a national campaign to save his sport from the menace of "surf rage".

Young Australians have become increasingly violent in the crowded waters off popular beaches. Nat Young, 53, a five-times world champion, hopes his suggested code of conduct — a "tribal law of surfing"

— can help to stop repeats of the ugly brawl that put him in hospital with facial fractures.

Young was attacked by his rival's father after the incident in which he was accused of "dropping in", the cardinal sin of falling into somebody else's surf line.

Young's tribal laws are part of a book, Surf Rage, which he wrote while he was recovering from fractured cheekbones and eye sockets. In it he reassesses his surf-obsessed life with his wife and two children near Angourie beach in New South Wales.

He draws on his own painful experience, in which he had titanium plates inserted in his cheekbones, to encourage other surfers to reform their ways. Young admits he was guilty of surf rage himself and that he prompted the brawl by ignoring a complaint from the son of Michael Hutchison, his attacker.

He hopes the tenets of the tribal law will be displayed on beaches all over Australia. "Give respect to gain respect," it advises, and crucially: "Do not drop in, do not snake."

Akin to a Highway Code of the breakers, the law explains who takes precedence on a wave and how to paddle out to avoid a collision.

"I don't fight. I never fight. I'm a .lover," said Young, whose surfing parables led to the first "national surf rage summit".

"I can't think of anything more ridiculous than a 53-year-old getting into a fight over a wave," he said. "I've had to come to terms with my attitude. And I have had to recognise Michael's existence. When I see him in the water now, I say, "Hello Michael!."

From: <Dhenrypowell@aol.com>

To: <jramwell@provider.co.uk>

Subject: **Peter Bray's NAKC 2000**

Re: Peter Bray's NAKC 2000

I greatly admire his boldness and commitment, what a shame his attempt ended so soon in a total fiasco. On his web site Bray says it was the failure of a non-return drain valve. What's the point of having a drain valve? Isn't this basically a plug hole in the hull! That is just asking for trouble. I was surprised Peter decided to paddle at night so that he could avoid ships and sleep by day when he thinks ships will see him. Really? Night paddling is fine if it's flat calm, but is impossible if it's rough. It's also very unlikely large ships would ever spot his boat, day or night, even if they were looking for it. I think a collision with a ship crossing the Atlantic is extremely unlikely. Even in the middle of the Dover Strait, although one will probably have several close encounters requiring a cool head, an actual collision course requiring avoiding action by the paddler, i.e. either stopping paddling to let a ship pass on it's way or paddling like hell to get out of it's way, is rare. Out in the Atlantic more likely to have a collision with a whale, but this is just a low risk objective danger that is intrinsic to the challenge and must be accepted.. Bray says his boat underwent sea trials, etc., but this is not the same as proven sea worthiness. Did he or anyone else actually test the boat on some major open crossings (like paddling from Scotland to Norway, for example, which I think would also be a first crossing) in order to prove it's seaworthiness? There is simply no way that Bray can know whether his experimental kayak/capsule/keel design is seaworthy until it's been used for some major crossings.

Regards

Dave Powell