

Ocean Kayaker

NEWSLETTER OF THE
**INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION,
THE NORDKAPP TRUST & PADDLERS INTERNATIONAL**
MAY 2001 ISSUE # 40



**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

Ocean Kayaker

Issue # 40, May 2001

editorial by John Ramwell

"Crikey, we've only just received the March issue and here he is sending us the May issue already!!" I know, I know, but I had this issue ready on my desk and thought it better in your hands now rather than later. I can only offer you six letters a year, so don't be holding your breathe for the next one (due July). Once the International Canoe Exhibition has come and gone (we are at Stand J6/62- *see you there*) I will be sending out the ISKA Members Directory. It will be more of a resource document this year thanks to lots of useful data from the likes of Udo Beier.. Then we will be into better weather and longer days and kayaking is more fun than publishing your newsletter, even if I do get a kick out of doing it I have a lot of feed back from you about my efforts to get a global canoe/kayak coaching scheme up and running under the auspices of the Int. Canoe Federation. Essentially most of you are in favour of the BCU scheme being made available world wide - but I am asking you to understand the hurdles to be overcome by non UK residents as they work to gain BCU awards. This is what I am trying to address. Some really good stuff this newsletter, then I'm biased as I put it together!! Hope you enjoy..#

Neil Chance has agreed to edit the section that will appear within the pages of this newsletter devoted to **Paddlers International**. In future this section will be clearly labelled and all of you, in particular members of Paddlers Int. are asked to send your material/contribution to Neil at "Rocks Cottage, Kemerton, Tewkesbury, Glos. GL20 7JP, UK." His email address is <neilchance@compuserve.com>.

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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design
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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

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The following is an account of the Phase One Sea Kayaking with Raleigh International in Chile. 8-29 October 2000 which included Prince William

It was an excited group of 15 Raleigh International volunteers and staff that arrived at the tiny Chilean sea port of Chacabuco on a cold and wet October morning. We were setting out on a three week sea kayaking expedition into the remote and challenging Chonos Archipelago. This virtually uninhabited group of islands lay about 90

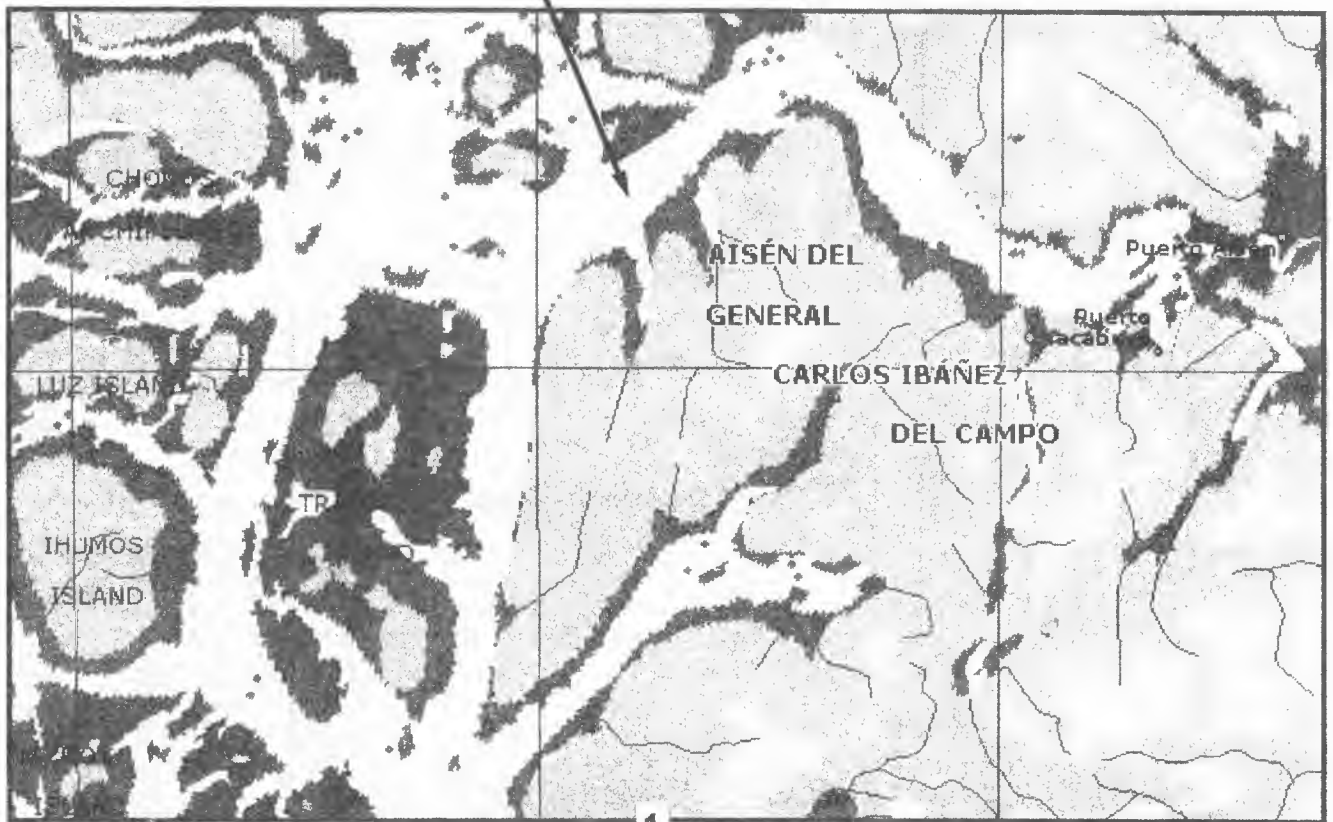
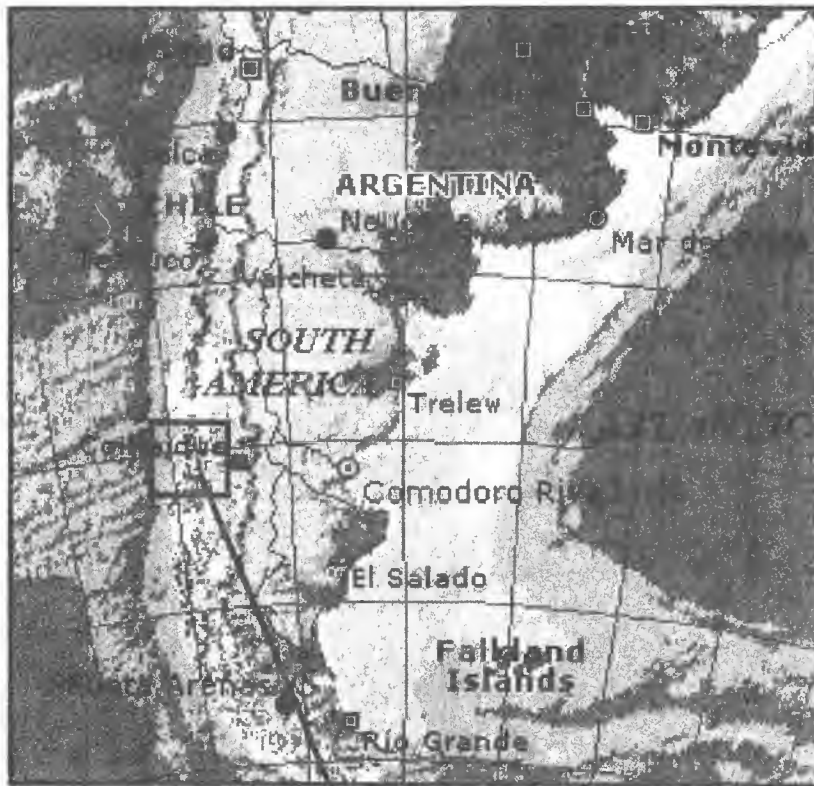
miles out to our west and to get there we would need a great deal of commitment from the whole group and a lot of luck. For the 15 volunteers this was known as the adventure phase of their expedition - 1 knew that this trip would live up to that name!

The Patagonian weather systems are

notoriously unpredictable. Our main concern that morning was to sort out our "beach hut" lent to us by the amazingly generous Chilean navy (Armada De Chile). The three kayak coaches in the staff group then began a two day intensive training program as the group were mainly novices. We were soon on the water and having a laugh until those dreaded words

"Capsize and Rescue drills" were heard... This session actually proved a great success because we taught the group to self rescue in the Aleut doubles, they are ideal for beginners and advanced alike and fun to play with although the glacier-melt water does speed up the whole process.

Eventually, the staff were happy and we set out on the exped proper. The sea was about a force two and there were blue bits in the sky. We had a great paddle out to our first bivvy site, Punto Manos. This large beach with



ocean kayaker, may 2001

golden sands was about 8 miles up the huge westerly sea channel, we passed some enormous sea lions and some of the group felt decidedly twitchy as the males bellowed at our passing. We set up camp on the beach, the Coastal Mountain Range flanks these sea



channels and our backdrop was superb snowcapped mountains.

We awoke the next day to see a violent storm at sea - we were not moving that day, or the next. ...in fact we were stuck on the beach for five days waiting for the sea to calm down . When at last a south westerly brought us clear skies , we were ready in a flash and made it to a fantastic bivvy site at Tortuga, a journey of ten nautical miles, not bad as there was a strong headwind all day. At Tortuga, we discovered a tiny path leading away into the jungle. We naturally followed this being nosy and , after a twenty minute walk up a deep valley, found a series of volcanic hot pools. These five pools were Jacuzzi sized and hot—perfect, we just needed a pina colada....

The volunteers were now getting quite skillful in their fast and stable doubles. The Aluet is capable of carrying huge loads and still cruise along at five mph. It was only in biggish following seas that they became nervous as the boat tends to broach suddenly but we soon taught the group to make use of these seas and eventually they were able to relax and surf on some very impressive waves indeed.

The crux of our expedition was to get across the huge open crossing into the

actual Chonos itself. This involves a crossing of 9 miles with a huge fetch (open water) to our north of thirty miles so the potential for big swells and sudden squalls was significant. Sadly for our group, the sea conditions were just too rough on both

days that we tried to get across and as time was short, we had to abandon that objective. The group did not give up though, they simply chose a different objective - a small island twenty mile: to our north called Aguirre (we

we were stuck on the beach for five days waiting for the sea to calm down

planned to island hop for shelter).

We fought a strong headwind and spring tide but eventually the group made it to a perfect weather protected bay a journey of 15 nautical miles. The only landing site however was just a bit of wet jungle sticking out from the rocks but we were not choosy that night. Despite the green slime over everything and little wood, site proved a great success from a Raleigh International point of view. The group were truly resourceful, worked as a team and soon had the dinner cooking, the radio aerial up and had cleared enough jungle for the tents - it was leech city so no one was up for bivvy-ing that night.

The morning mists cleared slowly to reveal ten dolphins playing in our bay about twenty feet away, a great start to another great day. The sky was blue for the first time, the sea was flat and



we had the tide today as well. We reached Aguirre easily by early afternoon and as we approached the tiny slipway, it seemed as if the whole community had assembled to greet us. There was indeed a carnival atmosphere as we landed, this small fishing community seemed genuinely impressed that we had paddled to their island in the "little boats". We spent the afternoon on Aguirre and camped on a nearby island but it was now time to head back home.

Our luck with the sea was to continue for the rest of the expedition, we now had a gentle following sea for the return and were able to cover 25 nautical miles with relative ease.

The group of Raleigh volunteers that landed at Chacabuco late on that Friday night were very different from that of three weeks earlier. They had learnt to operate as a team and com-

bine their strengths to overcome some severe tests and challenges. Perhaps my greatest pride was that this group of mainly novice kayakers had overcome their fears and learned an impressive array of skills to cope with being in a big sea in a small boat, some marvellous trunk rotation, great support strokes and perfectly timed surf landings. Three weeks earlier I had introduced myself to a group of strangers and now as we drove back to field base, I looked at the group and thought of them as a special group of people and more importantly, as friends.

Tony Davies

GRASSHOLM ISLAND

by Jeff Jaye.

As we drove down the road to Whitesands Bay the expanse of white water round South Bishop rock light-house showed that the incoming high pressure had not completely calmed the swell from the previous week. It was august bank holiday sunday and the campsites in the St. Davids area were full at the promise of a spell of good weather. Dave Husband from Maemarfon, Mark Nangreave from Stratford on Avon canoe club and myself had taken a few extra days off work to paddle in one of our favourite areas, the Pembrokeshire coast. Another incentive was that the tide times made it possible to make a trip to Grassholm Island, a trip that I had wanted to make for quite a few years. A look at the small craft chart 1478, St. Govans Head to St. Davids Head, shows how exposed this island is. Ten nautical miles S.S.W. of Ramsey Island and seven miles west of Skomer although that is academic because of the strength and direction of the tidal streams. This is not the place to be if the weather is not reliable.

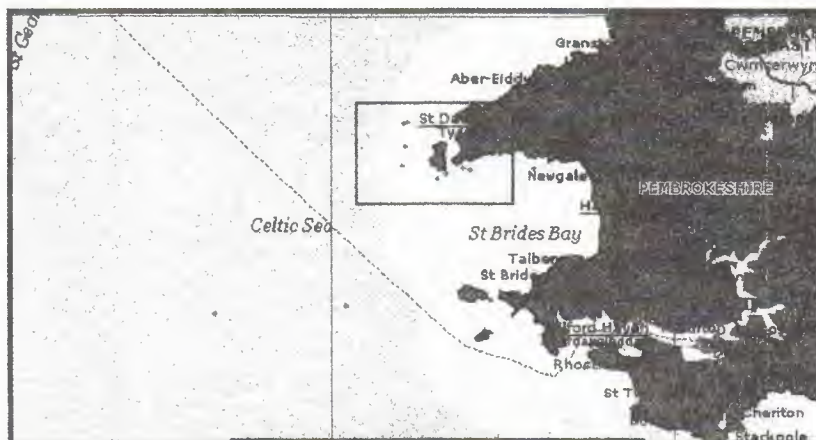
The name Grassholm is derived from the old norse *Graesholmr*, green or grassy island. It is too small for human habitation being some 400 yards by 250 yards or 22 acres and has no water, but has been exploited in past times for its resources. In medieval times a small flock of

wether sheep was kept for its wool until the crews of the pilot cutters

started to visit under the cover of the frequent mists to stock their larders. In later years the local crofters and fishermen would sail over to collect birds eggs and to net puffins to use as lobster pot bait. In 1890 it was estimated that there were 500,000 puffins in residence. This over population could not be sustained, the shallow turf was so full of burrows that it



dried out and collapsed and the puffins moved on to make way for the occupant that makes Grassholm famous today. Viewed from high ground near St. Davids on a bright summers morning it looks like a snow covered peak because of the gannets that live on it. There have probably always been a few gannets on Grassholm but since 1890 when there were 200 pairs the numbers have escalated, 3000 pairs in 1928, 5000 in 1933, 12,000 in 1946, 15,000 in 1974, and 30,000 in 1988. This may have been helped by gannets leaving Lundy Island and it is now the second largest



gannetry in Britain after St. Kilda. In the second world war it was used by

the R.A.F. as a bombing target until this was stopped by protests. Grassholm features in the book *"I Know an Island"* by R.M.Lockley who leased Skokholm in 1927 and became a co-founder of the West Wales naturalist Trust. The book details island life and history in Britain and as far afield as the Westmann Islands off iceland. It has long been

out of print but is worth scanning the second hand bookshops for: a good excuse for an expedition to Hay on Wye in the winter when the weather is too bad for sea kayaking.

We parked in the Whitesands Bay car park and went through the usual process of changing, sorting gear and carrying the boats and were

on the water by 1130. As the tide changes later the further south you go we would have plenty of time to paddle out but we would not have to delay coming back. The cunning plan was to paddle west towards the Bishops and Clerks rocks, pass close to South Bishop and then paddle south west until we could turn south and be carried down to Grassholm on the tidal stream.

The water round South Bishop was as rough as it had looked from the land. To the west of the rock a long line of confused breaking waves made that passage risky and to the east it was almost as bad but there was a gap close to the rock where the tops were not breaking. We went through this without any problems and headed off into the open sea. Away from the shelter of the islands the swells became stronger aided by a southwest breeze against a south flowing

tide stream. We set a course of 230 degrees and settled down for a long paddle. After a while a day charter fishing boat spotted us as it powered past, the skipper was quite concerned for our safety (or sanity) being out in these conditions but we seemed to convince him that we knew what we were doing. It was at about this time that I started to wonder if we had got it right. The only two fixed points that I could navigate on were Grassholm and the South Bishop rock lighthouse. By paddling southwest the lighthouse should have been dropping behind us but whenever I turned to look it was on the same line of direction; the current was pushing us southeast. If we missed Grassholm we would have to turn north and keep paddling until the tide turned at 1600hrs. hoping not to lose too much ground. Because of the sea state I was starting to feel a bit queasy so this prospect was not very inviting. We turned west, kept paddling and tried to convince ourselves that the island was getting nearer. Islands on long crossings are like watched kettles, if you look at them they never seem to get any closer but eventually I could pick out distinct features and colours and then the gannets could be seen, at that distance looking like a swarm of wasps round a nest. On the west of the island a rock appeared beyond a gap, this was Seal Rock and if we could keep that gap open we were on course and would not get swept past. Soon I arrived at the north end of Grassholm, I was a bit ahead of Mark and Dave as my old Nordkapp feels safer in a rough sea if it is paddled fast, so I started to look for a landing place. There are three landing places on the map in R.M.Lockleys book, the north landing didn't seem to exist so I carried on down to the east landing which is an eroded basalt dyke sheltered by a large rock called East Tump. We didn't investigate the south landing because of the state of the sea that we would have to paddle through to get to it. The tiny natural harbour was relatively sheltered although enough swell got through to make getting out of the boats onto the slippery rocks a very tricky exer-

cise. It was now 1600 hrs., the trip had taken us four and a half hours, a lot longer than I had calculated because of the easterly drift of the tidal stream and the current was about to run north. We hauled the boats as far up the steep rocks as we could and secured them with throwlines to make them safe. After a rest and some lunch Dave and I left Mark watching the boats while we climbed up some rocks on the east side of the island so that we could view part of the gannetry without causing any disturbance to the birds. After taking some photos we made our way back to the landing where the tide was rising rapidly and reaching the boats. Getting back onto the water was as difficult as getting out but after several near duckings and the removal of some gelcoat we were ready to set off. A few seals who did not seem in the least timid watched our struggles with amusement.

It was now 1700 hrs. and a north flowing stream was running strongly past the island. Off the north east corner was a long line of breaking waves where the eddy met the current so we paddled hard east to avoid this hazard. As we left the island curiosity got the better of the gannets and a



large number of them took off to inspect us. They whirled round us in a huge dizzying cloud, it was like being in an out of control planetarium. Although the wind was blowing the same way as the tide it did not reduce the size of the waves and we made fast progress back surfing down huge following swells. With the sun on our backs and low on the horizon the larger ones were preceded by a sudden and slightly worrying reduction in daylight. I had planned to return up Ramsey sound through the Bitches but the westward drift pushed us to the other side of Ramsey island. This caused us no problems and we landed back at Whitesands Bay at 2000 hrs. just as it was starting to get dark. We loaded our boats onto the cars and drove back to the tents to cook a meal having just missed the St. Davids chip shop which tends to keep rather short hours. We were tired but well satisfied with our achievement, this was a trip that we would remember for a long time to come.

Footnote

Landing is banned on Grassholm because of the gannetry and although we did land we acted responsibly. We went in august, a time of year when there was no danger to chicks or eggs and we kept to the cliffs and did not go near the birds to cause any disturbance. There must be more risk to the future of the occupants of Grassholm from commercial over fishing and pollution than from the small numbers of responsible sea kayakers who would risk the trip out there.

Ed's note Pembrokeshire is a unitary authority in southwest Wales. The Pembrokeshire coast is much indented and is more than 225 kilometres (140 miles) in length. Offshore there are numerous small islands, of which the most important are Ramsey, Grassholm, Skomer, and Caldey; others include the picturesquely named Bishops and Clerks, Hat, Barrels, and The Smalls islands.

Sail When You Can. Paddle When You Must!

by Howard Jeffs, Nottingham

The frustrated cries from my wife "I thought you said it would only take you a weekend to get this boat ready!" faded into the distance, as we munched on our chips and headed North up the A I.

I am not usually a fan of plans, they have a habit of coming unstuck especially with the weather we have been having over recent years. Mid May to Mid June is usually a good weather window for the West coast of Scotland, but as we pulled into a lay-by to get the late forecast (why did they have to change the times!) it looked like the Gods where sadly not going to shine upon us. We had 8 days to sail or paddle if we had to! down Loch Shiel, onto the sea, up to Arisaig, along to Morar, portage onto the Loch and down to Tarbet, portage over into Loch Nevis and finish up in Mallaig where one of Britain's last classic train journey's would take us back to fetch the car.

A night in a Fort William bunkhouse at least kept us dry, but rain lashed down on the windscreen as we headed out to the Glenfinnan monument for the start of our journey. The rain eased as we started to pack the boat, but out came the voracious Scottish midges "in force"! How to



Loch Shiel

get everything in and what to leave behind was hardly given a thought as

The "boat" is a standard Dagger Interlude Royalex plastic open canoe.

we frantically launched to escape their ravenous appetite.



Just over 16ft in length 34in wide. I had added a mast thwart and foot as well as a bracket for a small mizzen sail at the back. The mast is a stiffened version of a collapsible pole made by Lendal paddles, which open canoeists can use to push themselves

up shallow rivers.

We had a leeboard which could be moved fore and aft to trim the boat, but no rudder, only a paddle to steer. Due to this and other problems when sailing open canoes, I had spent some time on this occasion to design a rig that would be easy to handle.

The Open Canoe Sailing Group are a group of eccentrics that relish sailing

these small but very

capable craft. 44 square feet of sail is the maximum that is allowed to be used in racing, and

from my previous sailing canoe I knew this was manageable in a wind

up to force 4. To keep the centre of effort low I split the area between 9 square feet in the mizzen and 35 square feet in the main. Both could be reefed by wrapping around their respective masts Topper dinghy style, a technique we would develop to perfection!

In an effort to avoid the dreaded down wind death roll I had gone for a "Ljungstrom rig". This is basically two sails of the same

shape sewn on top of one other around a luff/mast tube. When running down wind, the sails are unclipped at the outhaul and goosewinged out each side, steering can be effected by pulling in on one side and easing the sheet on the other.

At any other point of sail, the two halves are re-clipped together and sheeted as normal. The other advantage of this rig is that when removed from the boat but still mounted to the spars, it can very quickly be made into a bivi tent?

All credit must go to Tim Rush of Rush Sails who did an excellent job of my wacky idea. This was quite a relief as I had not had chance to try the thing out before we left!

We left Glenfinnan pier at 11.30. With a smug grin on our faces we drank tea and made good progress down the Loch under sail. To try to increase our speed, we hoisted the smaller of the two large, light weight jibs I had taken from my old boat, but as the valley's on the North shore funnelled the wind, an exhilarating ride of about a mile in a very short space of time proved the point that it was time for lunch and to practice our reefing. We pulled up on a

small beach, 9 miles in less than 3 hrs was not to bad we thought. The clouds had started to break up and the sun came out, but the wind was increasing all the time.

3 turns around the mast on the main sail, and I on the mizzen still had us down to Eilean Fhianain in no time at all. Steeped in history, old grave stones and a tail of the old bell of St Finnans Chapel make this place well worth a visit. With the wind still freshening and dead on the nose, progress was slow, so we finally pulled up to camp at a small headland on the South shore of Moidart. 14 miles in half a day, we could not complain.

Even after an early start, by the time we got away the wind had piped up considerably. Tacking through the shallows to the start of the river Shiel damaged the clips that held the lee

board. We stopped for a short tea break to make running repairs and to stow the rig before the entertainment of the river.

The river Shiel is a very picturesque stretch of water, which finally falls into the sea in quite a spectacular drop. I had seen this fall in high water during the winter, and as it was low tide I was a little concerned as how we would get on. We pulled into the bank just above the drop. A silent nod was all that was needed before we



where back in the boat and heading down stream. We managed to stay upright, but did fill up to the gunwales in water! with fits of laughter and some delicate paddling we managed to get back to shore before we capsized. As strong squalls where passing through we decided to take the North channel of Eilean Shona. We covered out of the rain in the old castle and brewed up, waiting for the tide to let us through. A hard flog against the wind finally brought us to our camp-site. The compulsory evening walk to inspect the next day's open crossing brought spectacular views of the Small Isles.

Morning brought a perfect day, and after stopping on the beautiful beach of Eilean Coille to set up the large jib, we made the crossing of over 4 miles in under 50 minutes. For those of us

who remember the film "Local Hero" the islands of Arisaig with their white sands, the back drop of the island of Rum to the West and the Cullin mountains to the North, will only bring back memories. A leisurely afternoon cruise and an entertaining landing through the surf brought us into the entrance of the river Morar. While Dave unpacked the boat and sorted the gear I caught the train back to Glenfinnan. God bless Scott rail for not closing this one! By 8pm we were back on the water, full sails set

and not a breath of wind! out came the human outboard. A good hours paddle through the still black waters of the deepest inland Loch in Scotland brought us to the perfect camp-site, or so we thought? the midges where waiting! As Dave hid under the security of his bug net I frantically made a smoky fire, until the temperature dropped and we were given a reprieve until the morning.

The last rays of the sun bathed the tops of the surrounding mountains, and as the wine bag gave up it's final drop, only a glass of the finest malt could end such a perfect day.

The day dawned fine yet again, and although the midges where not as bad as the evening before, they did not encourage us to hang around!

We tacked up the Loch to Tarbet with the wind slowly increasing, down came the jib. This was the day we had been dreading. The portage to Loch Nevis is renowned in canoeing circles, some folk taking a day to get everything across. We pulled the boat up next to the pier which had been damaged in the recent bad weather, the track looked ok, what's the problem we thought!

We decided to do the trip in two runs. Firstly carry over the gear in ruck-sacks, bags and the barrel between us. Then come back for the boat and hopefully use the trolley. After a short walk up the track the surface became rutted and full of pot holes, the boat would be fun! Twenty minutes later had us to the old church. At £1.50 a night, it has now been turned into an excellent bunkhouse (what a place to spend hogmanay). The warden encouraged us to stay, though very tempted, we wanted to get to Sourlies Bothy that night, so back for the boat! The drag up the hill was not too bad, as long as you only ever had to do it once! and we rewarded ourselves with lunch on the col. With the boat repacked we headed down to the Nevis narrows. The wind had picked up from the East and although we had the tide with us, under paddle power we were making slow progress. As the Loch started to open out, we took on a lot of water in the rough wind against tide conditions, a shout from the bow confirmed my own feelings "we had better get to the shore before we sink, capsize or both!"

After a quick brew to warm us up we tried to sail the rest of the way. The wind died, back to the human out-board!

Though remote and surrounded by some spectacular hills, Sourlies Bothy is very popular with walkers, we resorted to the tent again.

As mountaineers we could not leave the place without "bagging" a couple of classic "Munrows" (peaks over 3,000ft) But when the day yet again dawned perfect and the wind was in our favour we just had to go.

Full sail had us back at the bunkhouse in just over the hour. I snoozed while Dave went to search the previous day's lunch spot for a roll of film (it was in his bag all the time!). According to the Guinness book of records, the pub at Hiveree is the remotest on the British mainland, its reputation is legendary, we could not just sail past it, could we? With an

early camp and a back drop of the Cullin mountains of Skye, we basked in the sunshine, but covered from the cold, fresh Northerly wind.

The pub did live up to its reputation! and with thick heads and light winds we headed out to Mallaig.

Listening to the startled comments by the local fishermen "you have come from where?, in that!" we pondered on what to do? We had in theory finished the trip, but with 3 days left! It did not take us long to decide that we may as well head back South the way we came. The islands off Arisaig where still as magic as ever, we just had to spend the night. Heavy cloud built up to the East, was this the change in the weather? no. We were rewarded with a fine sunset, a brief glimpse of an otter, as well as being surrounded by inquisitive, wailing seals. The trip would have to finish soon, we were running low on whisky!

With another boring fine day it was time to let Dave take the helm and for me to become the motley, nagged crew.

It did not take him long to get a feel for steering with a paddle. Leaving the entrance of Arisaig we sailed through the off lying rocks and headed East along the coast. A short tea break allowed us to reduce sail before we cut across the bay to Ardnish peninsular. As conditions picked up Dave found it a little more entertaining than he first thought, and I did not relish the concept of a swim! Wet and bedraggled we finally entered Loch Ailort and pulled up on to another beautiful beach for lunch.

In the gusty conditions we sailed cunningly up the eddy's against the tide to the head of the lock. Safely within its confines Dave was reluctant to drop the large jib, I cringed as the mast bent like a fishing rod and waited for the sound of a crack!

As the boat slid upon the shore the only comment was "Mallaig North

next year?, sounds good to me!, better get the leave booked".

Was this a sea trip? an open boat trip? who knows and who cares, but what it was, was a good trip! and that's what it is all about.

The potential of the open canoe, on the sea, with the use of sail has yet to be realised. Though as with any small craft, as long as they are handled safely, sensibly and in favourable conditions.

For more information on the equipment used contact :-

OPEN CANOES & EQUIPMENT

Mobile Adventure Ltd
Bridge Works
Knighton Fields Road West
Leicester
LE2 6LG
Tel 0116-2830659

COMPOSITE TUBES

Lendal Products Ltd
40 Hunter Street
Prestwick
Ayrshire
Scotland
KA9 1LG
Tel 01292-478558

SAILS

Tim Rush
Unit 4
Wycliff Mills
High Church Street
Nottingham
0115-9790684

OPEN CANOE SAILING GROUP

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Solway Dory
Kirkbride
Carlisle
CA55HX
016973-51688

Findings of the Pumps survey

BY DAVE YOUREN

In the Spring 2000 issue of the ISKA Newsletter, I wrote an article regarding pumps, which was accompanied by a questionnaire. I said then that I would report back on the findings regarding your experiences of pumps.

There were thirteen respondents from a broad range of parties encompassing a wealth of experience and some notable names. Thank you all for your time, comments, diagrams and photographs. (the latter should by now be back to you-thanks)
 Respondents represented sea paddling and paddlers' from Norway, Australia, Ireland, Scotland and England. All were most welcome whether they came from those who had used a pump in dire need or not.

What prompted me to investigate our use of pumps in the first place was an unexpected need to use a pump in a genuine situation out at sea. A situation that proved easier said than done and led to a thorough re-evaluation of my capabilities and the suitability of the equipment to the job. I set about finding from friends and colleagues, how they viewed using their pumps and was surprised how little confidence they had in them, or in their ability to use them effectively, if push came to shove. Shocked by the continued acceptance of an important yet apparently unworkable or unloved piece of kit, I decided to enlist the readership of ISKA to shed further light upon the subject. Here are the findings of the questionnaires and the additional comments which you added in accompanying letters.

There were 13 respondents. In some cases the response representing more than one person or a club. Some had more than one boat, or recounted past occurrences with previous boats.

The boats you paddle are:-
 Iceflow (1) Romany (3) Islander (1) Sirius (1) Nordcapp (2) Skerray

(3) Voyager (1) Un-stated (4). 9 boats had **fitted pumps**, 6 boats had **no fitted pump** but of these 5 carried a hand held Stirrup type pump. 1 person chose not to carry any pump at all.

Of the 9 boats fitted with a pump
 4 had hand lever operated Henderson /Chimp pumps, 2 mounted on the fore deck and 2 on the rear deck. 2 had single, foot operated Henderson/Chimp pumps. 1 had double foot operated Henderson /Chimp pumps 2 had electric Aqua-Buster or Water-Buster pumps.

11 of the 13 respondents had needed to use their pump in earnest at sea.

2 had never used their pump. 5 stated that they had practiced with their pumps in a variety of conditions.

Of the 11 who had used their pumps in earnest:-

6 had needed to pump out their own boat. (3 in solo situations) 5 had used their pump to pump out a companions boat. 1 had also been pumped out by another boat's pump.

The need to pump out the boat was caused by :-

capsize and roll	- 4 occurrences)
capsize, re-entry and roll	- 3 occurrences)
end loop re-entry	- 1 occurrence)
burst in or leaking spray deck	3 occurrences	
leaking hatch cover	1 occurrence	
failed deck fitting	1 occurrence	

The sea state / weather on these occasions varied from .5m to 2m and force 2 - 7 wind speed. One respondent recorded being end looped in

2m+ breaking waves and force 7 wind whilst paddling solo. He effected a self rescue with a paddle/life jacket outrigger and twin foot pumps.

The hand pumped boats were additionally stabilised in solo conditions by the paddle float outrigger, in 2 other cases.

The time taken to pump out the boats varied from :-

1 minute to over 15 minutes.

Type of pump.	est. time to be able to carry on.	boat.
Hand lever operated (rear deck)	15+ minutes.	Islander.
(rear deck)	10 minutes	Nordcapp.
(fore deck)	1-2 minutes	Sirrius.
Twin foot pumps	3 minutes	Un-known.
Electric water buster	5 minutes	Skerray.
Hand held stirrup	5 minutes	Sirrius.
	2-3 minutes.	Nordcapp.

Other occurrences did not state a time taken.

Degree of difficulty expressed in pumping out. Each phrase is a direct quote from the questionnaire about the particular pump concerned.

Hand lever operated:- too slow... difficult to maintain stability...at best hard work...one handed paddle support needed...difficult to pump behind me, too unbalanced ...even a colleague found the rear deck handle hard rafted up...fitted behind you, one needs to have great flexibility and an insane sense of balance...useless when needed most...(fore deck mount) almost impossible-assistance needed from second boat...virtually impossible in all but calm conditions front deck mounted Compact 50, who wants to faff around fixing the fiddly handle, try doing it knackered, cold and in heavy swell?...fitted deck pumps are no good in solo situations!

Hand held stirrup type:- not too bad, but two handed operation means there's no support when you need it, I'd rather have an electric one! ...force2 and .5m swell I needed extra help for balance in order to pump.

Foot operated (single) :-stretching to the limit to maintain balance and pump, all with incipient cramp...I'd rather flick a switch and paddle away...

(double):- dual action gives ease of balance and smooth fast passing of water...air must be able to enter between body and spray deck or you suck as much water as you pump, from round the cockpit rim ...

Electric Aqua buster:- works on it's own, whilst I maintain balance and control and paddle away to a safer area...The biggest joke sold by reputable dealers, The Aqua-Buster. A bit of kit designed to empty garden ponds, that's where it belongs...

In addition to the questionnaire responses many were accompanied by letters which amplified the raw information. It is the distillation of experience and hindsight expressed in these letters which lends substance to a numerically thin response. One letter

expressed it this way: 'like you, we realised years ago that the manual pumps mounted behind the cockpit were useless when needed most and wrote into the Australian Canoeing Award Scheme the requirement for "a pump or self bailer capable of hands free operation", that means if you turn up to a Sea Proficiency assessment in Australia with a hand operated pump you will be failed.' The letter further states that low cockpit volume has long been regarded as a safety feature and that the boat must not be "still fairly unstable when swamped, indeed if you cannot control the boat with a swamped cockpit you'll fail your sea prof. Whatever the pump used electric or foot pump it must match the cockpit so that it can be emptied in a couple of minutes at most and must be installed in such a way as not to cause cramp or other problems".

The word from Australia seems to be a resounding exclamation of ...'why are the Americans and Europeans still addicted to messing about with manual pumps and paddle floats, devices which they consider 'deck ornament' and which detract from, rather than enhance, safety'. Instead they have gone for the electric pump in a big way. Two types appear to be popular. The Single Unit Attwood and the Rule 500, which is powered by rechargeable NiCad video Camera batteries. Perhaps someone from over there would like to introduce us to them, with more details please.

In my previous article I described the dinghy self bailer which I have used on my boats. Some of you have asked what make it is. It is a Holt Allan product, a firm which makes all kinds of parts for yachts and is readily obtainable from most chandlers. There is a stainless steel version and a plastic one. Mine is the plastic one as I believed the plastic would bond better when glassing it in, than the steel version.

The self bailer received a mixed reaction. The Australians, with their requirement for a hands free method

of losing water, have already given it a good go, improving it as I have, by adding a larger vortex generator. All this means, is that the flap which protrudes down into the water; to generate the low pressure area, into which the water in your boat is drawn, can be increased in size to increase the suction. This results in effective emptying at lower boat to water speeds. ie. when paddling against the wind or down tide.

The two common concerns expressed about the self bailer are:-

- 1). The not unreasonable reluctance to cut a hole in the bottom of a perfectly sound hull accompanied by the risk of damage to the device and attendant leaks.
- 2). The inability of people to paddle fast enough to make the device effective.

From my experience of having a self bailer fitted first to an Angmagssalik plywood boat, then a fibreglass Sea King, with a chined hull and latterly my Iceflow with it's rather flatter hull, I have had no difficulty with the device on the water at all. A helpful friend, unaware of it's presence, once ripped the flap out backwards putting my boat onto a trailer, fortunately at the end of the day and not the beginning. Sand in the device has at times made it's operation less than smooth but not prevented it's proper function. Recently the 'O' ring suddenly showed signs of failure and the device leaked embarrassingly on a trip. A temporary taping up sufficed until I could replace the part.

To sum up, most respondents feel that the hand pumped means of losing water is the least practical, but are happy to carry along a stirrup pump for group situations where rafted support is available. Foot pumps are given mixed reactions. Being hands free is a distinct advantage, whilst cramp and the need to concentrate on two distinctly different activities at once- ie. Pumping and maintaining paddling stability, are definitely disadvantages. (I could not retrospectively install a foot pump without moving

the bulkhead further away to make the necessary room, in my current boat, even if I wanted to.) Electric pumps seem on face value to offer a more possible solution to the problem, that is if they are robust enough, insulated from short circuit and the rigors of salt and if the rechargeable batteries prove reliable. I'm still unsure, for how long rechargeable batteries will keep their charge and how many 'emptyings' can be achieved on one battery? Just thinking of an extended trip requirement.

Moving slightly aside from pumps, minimum volume cockpits, pods and sea socks all featured in your letters. We know the problem areas: loose hatch covers, ill-fitting or old leaky spray decks, poor thigh fit in the boat. We can and should do something about these before they become the cause of an epic. But many boats have very large cockpit holes, with large vulnerable spray decks, and all my

boats have had a bulkhead far enough behind the seat to lose two BDH bottles, until I added a third bulkhead and another hatch. Yes modern boats have the option of key hole cockpits and sloping bulkheads behind or integrated with the seat, but there are loads of boats on the second hand market which still don't and some still in production. Incidentally I have never been able to afford a new sea boat, all my boats have been adapted to fit my requirements, or are a compromise. I suspect that probably goes for a great number of you too. I believe there is room here for development, not only where pumps are concerned, but also in cockpit design. We have to let the manufacturers know what we want. We have to know, better still, what we do want in terms of the safety features on our boats, including cockpit fit, shape and comfort. Yes, the deck mounted pump does look the part, it looks like we mean business, but the practical

application is not merely the need for more practice, it is the realisation that it does not do the job for which it was intended and should be replaced with something that will.

Having said all that, however well designed a boat is, it is up to the user to be able to handle it properly, not to overestimate one's capability and to paddle in conditions one is happy with. A bomb proof roll goes a long way too!

Finally, this is not the last word on the matter. I'm sure I will have made comments someone will disagree with, if you do, say so, or if you agree add your experiences to the debate. If you have anything to add or information you could share, which will help improve the situation then let's hear it.

Good paddling, Dave Youren.



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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

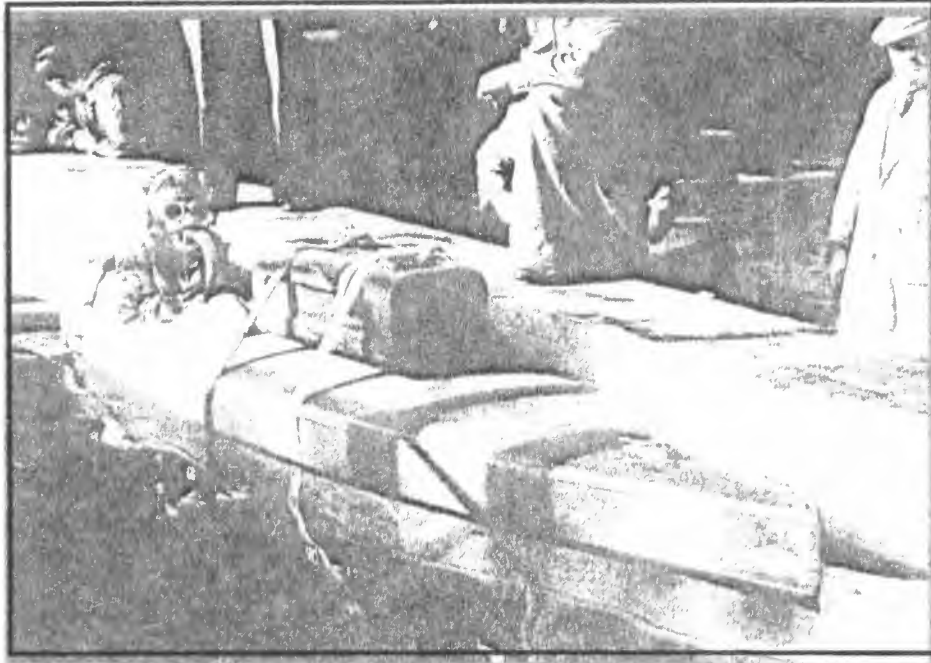
The story of the submersible canoe by John Lambert

On my frequent periods of research at various establishments, it gives pleasure to find obscure subjects. One such is the Military Submersible Canoe., previously known as the *Sleeping Beauty*, a light steel built single seat canoe, powered by batteries and electric motor. The craft could proceed on the surface of the water, trimmed-down, so that only the divers head

shows above the water, or submerged. down to a depth of 50 ft. The length of the craft was approximately 13 ft and the beam 2 ft 3". On the surface it could be propelled by the electric motor, paddles, or by a sail. In the trimmed-down or submerged position the craft was driven by electric power, but could be manoeuvred as well by use of the driver's hands where it is necessary to move the craft a short distance or to turn the craft around.

The craft was capable of carrying neutrally buoyant charges up to a total weight in the air of 60 lb. The primary function of the design was for attacking enemy ships below the water line: reconnaissance of the sea bottom down to 50 ft; or for obtaining views of the coast for reconnaissance purposes.

The driver could also act as postman taking letters to enemy occupied shores that were unapproachable by other craft. The driver of the canoe wore a light rubber suit and carried oxygen breathing gear which he dons prior to submerging the craft. The



normal oxygen set gave the driver 1 hours breathing below water and an auxiliary set in the craft would provide a further hour. The operator could also wear Fins and was able to enter or leave the craft whilst underwater with ease.

Modus Operandi

The vessel weighed between 500 lb and 600 lb and could be carried on a modified motor cutter, motor torpedo boat or well deck freighter. There was also consideration for dropping by parachute. The craft was launched from the parent craft, either by rollers from the motor cutter, or lowered by slings from the MTB, at a distance of 5 to 10 miles from the target. In the case of the well freighter the craft could be launched underwater, either close to the target, or as near to the outer defences as possible. Normally the craft proceeded on the surface until within 2 miles of its objective where the operator flooded up, and continued with only his head above water. In this position, the craft could be put into a power dive and evade

detection. It was estimated that the operator would proceed to the target in a trimmed down position, with the possible exception of (a) moving through a narrow channel well guarded with sentries, searchlights etc. or (b) the last 60 yards run into his target. In both cases the

operator would travel approximately 10 to 15 ft below the surface. The Final approach to the target of 60 to 100 yards would be made underwater at slow speed. The target having being located by bumping, and after a short reconnaissance, the charges would be Fixed to the hull of the ship.

The return journey would start by an underwater run by for a distance of at least 100 yards before surfacing to eye level buoyancy. Having passed through the various defences in channels out to the sea the operator will surface fully on his tanks pumping out the water from his craft by means of the ejector gear passing under the keel of the craft, utilising the suction of the propeller, and by means of the hand pump installed below the dashboard.

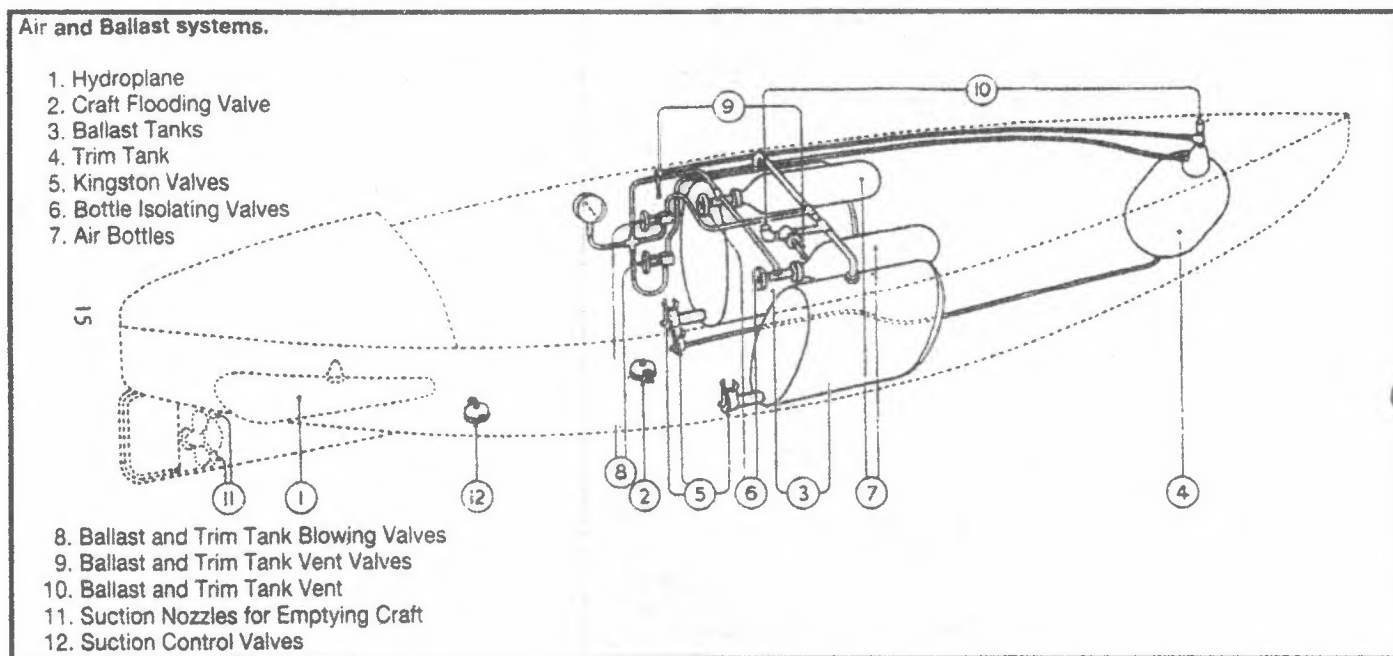
He could then remove his oxygen gear and once more proceed along the surface as an electric canoe assisted by a sail should the wind be suitable. He was then in a position to make his rendezvous with the parent craft, or alternatively, continue on

course and wait to be picked up in daylight.

Providing that the operator was fully trained in the use of oxygen apparatus for underwater diving, there was no reason why the craft

hours at full speed (15 minutes sailing in this time). Total distance overland 7.8 miles, distance effect of the tide was -7 miles (average tide 2 knots acting against the craft for 3.5 hours). Total distance through water was 14.8 miles. Note:-A considerable loss of

poising, power dives and quick resurfacing trials were made until 16:00. At this time Major Hasler RM took over the controls. A buff and buoyant line were attached to the craft and it proceeded at full speed out to sea in the trimmed-down position. At 16:16 he



should not be successfully driven underwater after 10 minutes instruction. The craft had a single control for rudder and hydroplanes, was easy to handle and had no alarming characteristics. To rise or dive it was merely necessary to pull the stick back or push the stick forward.

Test Trials

After preliminary tests at Staines, the first craft was transported to Southsea on the 12th October 1943. On trials the next day at 11:00, the craft proceeded on the surface from Southsea via the Dolphins: through Cowes Roads to a quarter of a mile West of the Salt Mead Ledge buoy. Cruising speed was utilised. Distance over the ground was 13.8 miles, and the time taken was 2 hours 48 minutes. The influence of the tide was +4.5 miles. The distance through the water being 9.3 miles and the average speed 3.3 knots. She then proceeded southwards and eastwards against a strong tide. The first quarter of an hour was spent at cruising speed: 3.25

distance was due to the foul tide and frequent stops due to engine failure of the attendant dinghy. When darkness fell, the batteries were not exhausted but the electric switch ceased to function.

For the second trial on 14th October 1943, a new electric switch was fitted. The craft was launched at 12.15. Put to sea at full speed she was then flooded up and dived to 15 ft. After resurfacing the vessel was tested through power dives and for underwater handling. Trials were found to be very satisfactory and concluded at 12.50. Conditions 2 knot flood tide, the sea was smooth and the wind force 1.

The following day she had two observers from the U. S. Fleet, plus an instructor and a lieutenant R.M., in charge of the attendant craft, with a representative of Dunlops who's oxygen apparatus was worn by Major Hasler, R.M. Conditions, tide full, low and flat calm, no wind. At 15:00 the craft was launched and put to sea. After flooding up, static dives, por-

made an excellent static dive and resurfaced 11.5 minutes later. Following a further static dive, he surfaced up to eye level only, and then disappeared in a power dive at full speed. From then onwards, he handled the craft excellently in the trimmed-down and submerged position, and made several underwater runs of 200 to 300 yards. At 16:45 the craft returned to the landing stage.

Endurance Testing

On the 16th there was an endurance trial with Sub-Lieutenant Riggs RNVR at the controls. The official text was written by Seaman Ship Instructor carried aboard the attendant craft.

"The object of the trials was to cover a distance of 35 miles, but in view of the shortness of daylight this was modified to a continuous run of 10 hours. Trial conditions on the day involved a course to Selsey Bill and Chichester harbour, 20 miles of which were in open sea and 14 miles in Chichester harbour, a total of 34

miles. In spite of adverse conditions, the plan was adhered to very closely, the total distance covered being 31 miles in 11 hours. The weather on the days preceding the trial had been quiet, and foggy with smooth water, but on the 16th the wind was South East all day, force 2-3, at 07:00, 4-5, at 12:00, and force 5 at 19:00. The course was off a lee shore throughout and consequently the vessel was continually having to contend with the more or less heavy sea. That she nevertheless covered such a long distance is a high tribute to her seaworthiness, and skill and endurance of her operator. On certain points of sailing, particularly dead to windward in a heavy sea, she appeared fully the equal of her attendant craft, a 26 ft Motor Cutter. Only during the final hour of the trial was a serious falling-off of engine power apparent, and it is certain that in smoother water she would have completed the course with ease. It is considered that the advantage gained by the tide through the days run, was more than discounted by the rough water experienced for most of the passage. The craft showed herself to be extremely seaworthy and quite at home in conditions which would have defeated a two-man canoe. Sea conditions, which may have been reasonable 5-6 miles off shore, were aggravated by a contrary wind and tide directions in the mouth of the Chichester and Langstone harbours; and in the shoal water 1-2 miles off shore to the West of Selsey Bill, and on the south shore off Havling Island."

Progress Report

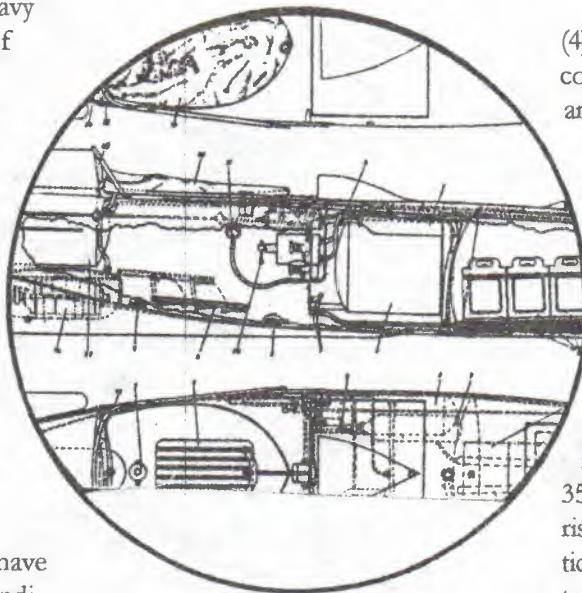
An extract of the summary of proceedings of the Special Craft Committee and progress of special craft during the period from 26th May to 26th August 1944, is as follows:

"A short exercise was recently carried out at Loch Corrie during which an undetected underwater attack was made on the target ship. The craft has proved extremely seaworthy during

other training exercises.

Early in May 118 of these craft were ordered from Fairmiles by the Ministry of Supply, the total order now being 141, of which 10 had been delivered on 18th May. The rate of production has reached 3 per week and provided that efforts to increase the labour force at the hull-builders are successful, this rate should be increased.

As a production contract was placed in May for a number of MSC, the craft is considered to have passed



outside the terms of reference the committee accept as regards further developments."

Potential Manoeuvres

It is of interest to note that in the Ship's Cover held at the Brass Foundry at the National Maritime Museum, there was also a series of sketches and copies of poor quality photographs used to illustrate the potential of these craft.

(1) Porpoise to the Surface the drivers head appears above the water for approximately 3 seconds and disappears again. Note: No part of the craft breaks the surface of the water.

(2) Steep Dive. Driver raises the control column to the hard to dive position and braises himself against the back of the craft. Note: the control stick should be brought to neutral position at 20 ft of depth in order to commence coming out of the dive.

(3) Vertical Rise. From 15 ft of depth and horizontal trim with motor at full speed the control column is drawn down to the hard to rise position. The boat rises very rapidly in the vertical to the surface, breaks through the surface until the driver's goggles adjust to wash. She then attains normal trim-down position.

(4) Slow Spiral Descent. Driver has control column at medium to dive, and uses half helm to cause slow spiral descent. To come out of the spiral, neutralise the controls into the normal position.

(5) Loop-the-Loop. To do this operation the driver must first give himself sufficient oxygen and close his exhaust valve. Then, with a heavily trimmed bow and running at 15 ft level he dives to 30-35 ft and pulls the controls hard to rise. The boat rises rapidly to the vertical, gathering speed, passes over the top of the loop and commences the downward descent. At this point is it advisable to switch off the motor and blow on the main blow. If the diver continues he may well pass the depth at which his ear-drums will burst before he has time to check the craft. The loop is made at the speed 4-4 1/2 knots. This operation is not a training operation and should only be attempted by the most skilled pilots.

Attack Modes

The sequence for attacking the target is similar, depicted by a series of sketches.

(1) The SB picks up the silhouette of target (only drivers head above water) he immediately dives, turns 45° and commences a tactical approach. In the event of a light mist on the

water, a direct run in with one further porpoise is an alternative at the driver's discretion.

(2) The Sleeping Beauty contacts the side of the ship by bumping on a specially constructed rubber bow. The driver switches off and the boat slowly descends, at a rate of approximately 1 foot in 2 seconds. When below the ship, the driver moves forward by the use of his hands or by slow ahead. Note: The special design has made the propeller thrust go below the centre of gravity under water, thus giving

the boat a tendency to surface when powered by motor. This allows the craft to be safely driven underwater with slight negative buoyancy. The driver places the charge in a suitable position and operates the timing delay. Note: The driver is in undisturbed water, he is almost rigidly attached and is working without risk of detection. All points conducive to a successful operation. Breathing gear is explanatory only. Compare this to a bobbing canoe in a cold wind amidships of the boat at night. The charges left on the plates and having vented underneath,

the craft the dives away and passes out longitudinally from the ship. At 60 to 100 yards from the ship his head will surface preparatory to picking up a course to leave the enemy harbour.

Further Development?

This fully describes the function of the craft which was put to limited use and good effect in the Far East in the closing months of the second world war. One wonders about their present developments fifty years on?

WEATHER

Tell fact from fiction

There are loads of old wives' tales and sayings associated with the weather, but how many are actually true? We asked the Met Office to give its verdict on six well-known examples.

Red sky at night, shepherd's delight. Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning

TRUE The Met Office says, "The sky appears red due to dust particles or dry air. As English weather systems mostly move from west to east, a red sunrise indicates dry weather moving away to the east, which means that rain is on the way. Conversely, a red sunset is a sign that dry weather is approaching from the west."

If cows are lying down, rain is on the way

FALSE The Met Office says, "It may sometimes rain when cows are lying down, but this is not the rule of thumb."

When the wind is from the east, it is neither good for man or beast. When the rain is from the east, it is for four-and-twenty hours at least

TRUE The Met Office says, "An east wind does herald the coldest and bitterest weather, and records show that rainfall from the east generally lasts for at least 24 hours."

The weather that comes in with the moon will stay the same for a month

FALSE The Met Office says, "Although it is widely believed that the moon affects the weather, the two bear no relation."

If there is damp fog or mist accompanied by wind, expect rain

TRUE The Met Office says, "Wind and damp fog usually occur when a weather front or a moist airstream is approaching – the classic forerunners of rain."

Expect rain if the stalks of clover stand upright

FALSE The Met Office says, "A nice thought, but this weather saying from the North Riding of Yorkshire is not a reliable way to predict rain!"

● For up-to-the-minute weather information log on to the Met Office's website on www.met-office.gov.uk or contact the Customer Centre on 0845 3000 300.

Ed. Percy is picking up on my article on the use of the BCU Coaching Scheme around the world. There has been quite a bit of feed back from many of you, for which I am grateful. An update on how I am progressing this issue with the BCU and ICF will come to you soon. Meanwhile, over to Percy.

COACHING AB INITIO

Percy Blandford

With its many ramifications the BCU coaching scheme is a power in the land, as well as worldwide, judging by the article in issue no. 39. I was in at

the start and one of the first coaches. Maybe I should put on record how the whole thing started.

In the immediate postwar years, interest in canoeing was considerable, probably due to the building of thousands of my PBK kayaks. Several of us were teaching canoeing without any reference to each other.

Obviously it would be better if we got together and co-ordinated our thinking and techniques.

At the instigation of John Dudderidge of the British Canoe Union about 20 of us were called

together in 1952 for a weekend at the premises of the Royal Leamington Spa Canoe Club - in those days converted cow sheds under a railway arch on the side of the River Learn. We spent our time comparing notes and techniques. Then we had another weekend on the River Hamble for sea canoeing in the Solent. Between us we thrashed out a fairly uniform approach to our teaching and examination of skills. About a dozen of us became coaches and the scheme was born.

RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER TO I.S.K.A. TODAY

Sea Weed - now there's a subject.

I am sure that for most people, sea weed is quite inconsequential. For us as kayakers though, sea weed can either be of no interest, fascinating or

part of the marine food chain, harnessing light energy and converting it into organic matter, as well as producing oxygen as a by-product. So my recommendation would be that you get to know them a bit better before discounting them entirely.

With this in mind, I've been dipping into a textbook I've come across

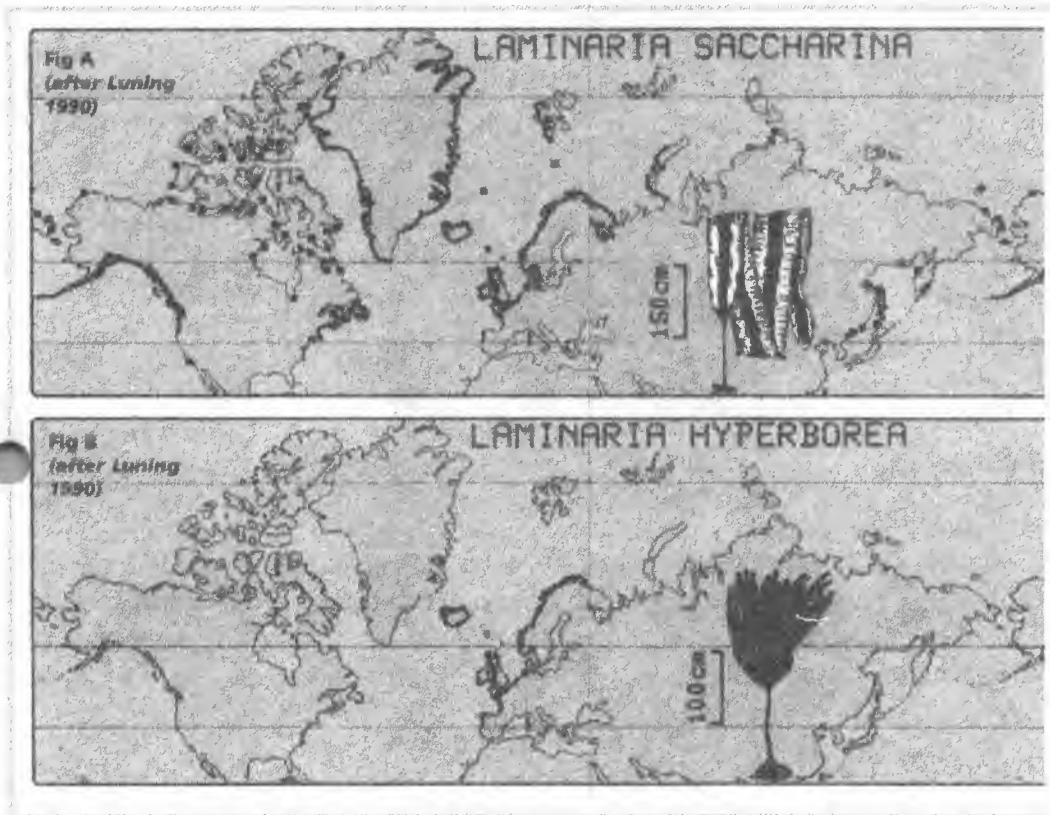
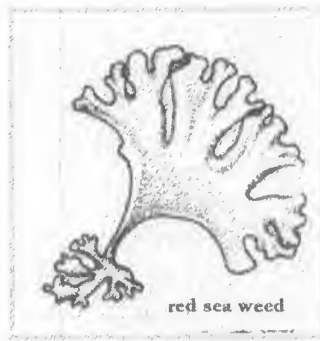
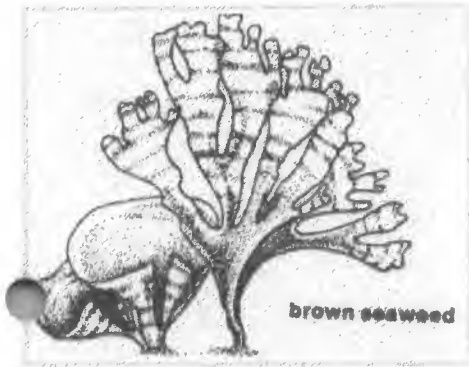
and most conspicuous ones.

Take sugar kelp *Laminaria saccharina* for example (also known as sea belt and poor man's weather glass). I was surprised to find this has a worldwide (or 'amphioceanic') distribution in the northern hemisphere, covering the north Pacific, the north Atlantic and the Arctic oceans (Fig. A). Its 'sister' species, *Laminaria hyperborea*, however, has a much more restricted distribution, limited to the north-east Atlantic, from the northern coast of Norway to northern Portugal (Fig. B). We tend to think of this species of kelp as being pretty common around our coasts, but clearly it's a different story elsewhere. Due to a lack of fossils, it's difficult for the experts to determine which cold water seaweed genera originated in the North Pacific

and which in the North Atlantic. The genus *Laminaria* has several quite diverse species in the North Pacific and it's thought that this is where the genus evolved some 15-19 million years ago. Just a handful of species (of which *L. saccharina* was one) managed to pass from here through the Arctic and into the North Atlantic.

So what other of our easy-to-recognise seaweeds are found on the other side of the world? The brown alga *Chorda filum* (known as bootlace weed or mermaid's tresses) is also found in the North Pacific, as is dabberlocks *Alaria esculenta* and the red alga *Palmaria palmata*

(known as dulse and often found growing on kelp stipes). Others with a restricted NE Atlantic distribution similar to that of *L. hyperborea* include channelled wrack *Pelvetia canaliculata* and thongweed *Himantalia elongata*.



just a damned nuisance as you slip and slide over weed covered rocks to go for that emergency pee or you try and paddle through a thick belt of it as it does its' level best to catch either your paddle or your rudder - or both.

However, whilst not being to everyone's fancy, they do form an essential

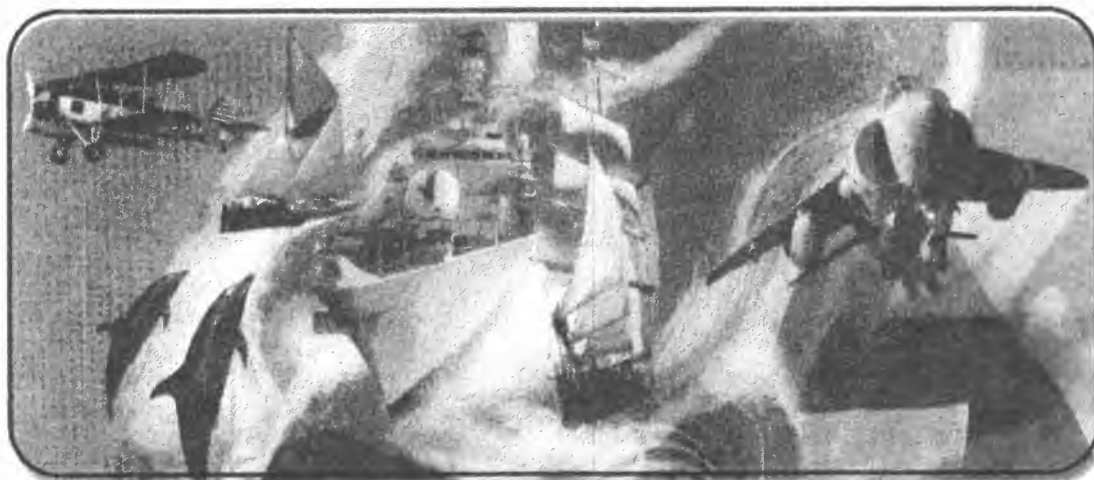
recently entitled **Seaweeds - their environment, biogeography and ecophysiology** by Klaus Luning (*John Wiley & Sons, 1990*). Not exactly your typical holiday reading, but fascinating all the same. Besides lots of interesting facts and figures about a myriad of different seaweeds species, I was surprised to find out the worldwide distribution of some of our common-

THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE SEA

Back in 1996 at the annual International Canoe Exhibition at the Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, it was suggested that I take the sea kayaking stand for the International Sea Kayak Association to exhibit at the forthcoming International Festival of the Sea to be staged at Bristol Docks during the summer. I had not heard of this festival; indeed publicity for this event never seemed to seep much beyond Watford Gap.

I initially rejected the suggestion to go along to Bristol but then the persuasion became a little more persuasive and not being one to turn down some fairly good concessions to add to the persuasion, I agreed. Best decision I had taken for a long time! I took the ISKA stand down to Bristol and had a great time. Lots to see and lots to do. In fact it was this event that sparked off my very successful connection with Newfoundland so I have a lot to be grateful for.

The 'Matthew' was on display. A replica vessel of the original as captained by John Cabot who 'founded' Newfoundland for Britain back in 1497. I remember visiting the Newfoundland Tourist Board stand - very impressive it was too, and being particularly attracted to the sound of one of their top make vocalists, *Harry Martin*. He has since come to epitomise the flavour of this country for me. But then I am digressing.



I also remember the Bournemouth Philharmonic playing to the accompaniment of moving water fountains and coloured laser lights - a really stupendous sound and sight, even if we did have to stand in the rain to enjoy it.

So when I was invited to attend the subsequent Festival, this

time to be staged at Portsmouth two years later, I accepted with alacrity. I was then trying to launch 'Ocean Paddler' magazine - an upmarket 'glossy' shortly to be taken over by a Mr. John Blackburn.

Again it was an interesting and action packed festival. The chance to visit the Navy's finest war ships and watch various military displays added to the event. I appreciated the opportunity to visit Sothebys' stand where maritime artifacts and books were being auctioned. I scratched the back of my head and came away with a silver replica of a kayak as presented to H.M.S. Eskimo - a lovely thing which I am still paying for!!

So to this year's International Festival Of The Sea. Here is an extract from their publicity:

"The underlying theme of the International Festival of the Sea 2001 is 'A Voyage from the Past into the Future' - an exciting mix of many aspects of the culture of the sea that reflect our great maritime heritage, whilst looking to the future and the high-tech world of the 21st Century.

A youthful sense of fun and adventure will permeate the entire site. The Festival will fall into two areas one of which will be devoted to the ships and displays of the world's navies (with a significant, RN input) and with some displays by the other UK armed services. The other half will be predominantly civilian and will include exhibitions and performance areas running into and including the themed performance within the Historic Dockyard representing the maritime past. The Tall Ships will again be an important element of the event as will the hundreds of smaller classic and modern vessels of all denominations which will be pre-selected.

There will be a continuous widespread programme of activity across the site with thousands of musicians and performers entertaining visitors throughout the day and into the evening. In the Main Festival Arena the programme will include an opportunity to re-visit some of the elements of the 'Royal Tournament'. With the inclusion of the other two Armed Services, military displays and civilian entertainment will combine with military and civilian stage performances.

Early in the evening Beating Retreat in the Arena will close the day's activities and change the tempo for the start of the evening entertainment. As the strains of 'Sunset' die away the Massed Bands led by the Band of the Royal Marines will lead a 'carnival' parade accompanied by performers from all over the site.

There will be no lull in the programme following the Parade - the Main Arena will be the focus for a series of high profile concerts (5,000 capacity audience). With music in all the villages during the evenings there will be 'dancing in the streets' as well as an opportunity to stop, rest, eat and drink, or promenade gently along quaysides lined with great ships!

And will I be there with our ISKA stand? You can bet on it. I have already asked the local canoe club to assist me in putting on a series of sea kayaking displays.

See you there. don't miss it. 24th to 27th August, 2001 at HM Naval Base and Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth.

The following letter is from Peter Hatt and is in response to my editorial in the March issue of 'Ocean Kayaker'

Hi John,

Wow! What a hornet's nest you have invited. Firstly I have to agree we are in the quick fix compensation culture. I was canvassed in my home town centre this very week. Did I want to stitch someone up we'll help you for twenty per cent. This was a team of people openly touting for business.

Where does that lead the debate? Firstly who's going to put their head on the block I certainly wouldn't and neither would many of my friends. My local paper is always appealing for scout and youth leaders those that have been involved are dropping out in droves. Why! Because legislation rules, and the correct bit of paper, and the regular update, inspection, verification do I need to go on.

I am fifty-five years old I had wonderful opportunities in my youth. At the age of fifteen I was a boy sailor at HMS Ganges. I was allowed (forced) to climb a ruddy 150 ft mast. Boy was I proud the day I managed to stand on the button a foot disc atop that mast. My only means of safety was wrapping my legs round the lighting conductor. I was let loose with sailing

cutters and whalers in Harwich's sea way. I got to go on expeditions. We were left on our own with just a daily check to make sure we were OK, and to ensure we weren't fagging it or visiting the pub. It was trust, development and leadership training. Can you imagine that happening today, No way.

Yes, we have to protect people and ensure they get the right training. But bloody hell! Is it not going too far when we actually legislate to dissuade. What happens, instead of people getting the correct training and joining the recognised body they abandon it and go their own way. Look at the problem of river access there are more paddlers outside the BCU than in it. Many are bandit running rivers in ignorance and in adventure often undoing years of haggling for rights. Can we really blame them? Yes, it's wrong, but it's also keeping alive that wonderful 'Spirit of Adventure.'

Finally I come to the BCU, I have no gripe with its structure and certainly none with its training. I feel it serves a purpose for some. Definitely those charged with the training, and the care of young people. Does it meet my needs and perhaps the needs of other sea paddlers that I know. The answer is a resounding No. I am quite capable of looking after myself know my limits, and act responsibly.

I could not consider the BCU coaching scheme is the most sophisticated and respected in the world. That certainly rings a little of colonialism. It may be equal to those of others. Surely our Australian and New Zealand cousins, to name but two other bodies might hold you in dispute there.

So summing up, I think each country should establish its own coaching scheme in accordance with local need and custom. I think the BCU or is it now the ECU should be doing more positive things to encourage sea kayakers to join. The Irish and Scottish Canoe Association's sea kayakers appear to have a very healthy and active membership. Their obviously getting it right, perhaps the BCU/ECU needs to have a long look at itself and as our politicians would say meet the 'needs of the people.'

*Hattie. North West Sea Kayakers.
January 2001*

The following is taken from the newsletter of the INVESTIGATOR Canoe Club, with grateful thanks.

all-round deckline system

by Peter Carter

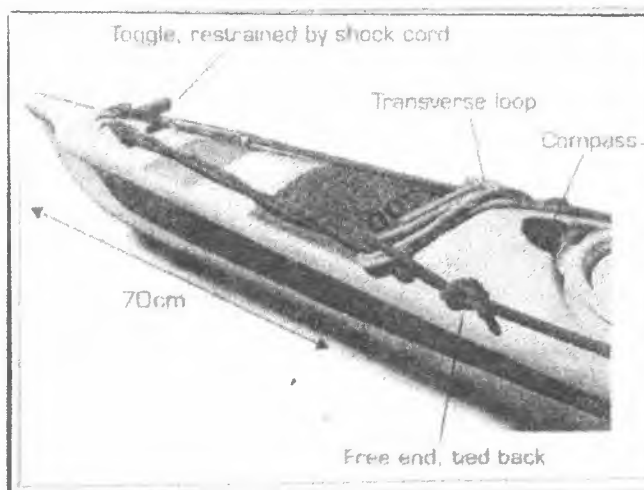
Member Craig Steel found that the decklines on his new 'Storm' were not like those on other people's boats: only 4mm diameter as against 8 or 10mm, with nothing less than 6mm.

He began an e-mail exchange with the manufacturers in North America, an exchange that ultimately led to an angry letter to the President of Australian Canoeing from the builders under licence in NZ. (I'd like to know more about this, Ed of ISKA) I think, however, they got the message: anything less than 6mm will not do.

Why have decklines? The main reason is to provide a secure grip of the boat anywhere along its length, as may be

needed in some rescue situations. A deckline can also be used to carry the boat, and a free end can be used to drag the boat through shallows, secure it for mooring, etc.

Whenever hands are going to hold the rope its size becomes important: too thin and it can be not only painful but cause injury. Rope of 6mm diameter has long been considered the



absolute minimum.- thicker is better.

What you see in the picture is essentially the system standardised in Tasmania in the 1970s: 10mm rope, secured at 70-75cm intervals along the

entire length of the boat, and with a metre or so of free end. The Tasmanians often thread lengths of hose on the line near bow and stern as carrying handles. The boat shown has a transverse loop forward of the hatch as an extra grab/carrying handle/wave break.

The line needs to be slack enough to easily get a hand around it, but not so slack that the boat is held loosely.

Old canoing books warn about paddles and people becoming trapped in decklines. They warn against having lines alongside the cockpit. Nonsense. I park my paddle by putting a blade under the deckline in the area shown in the picture: it takes a very deliberate push in the right direction

to get it there. As for alongside the cockpit, I know of no cases where anyone has been caught. Again, it would need a deliberate move to trap anything.

•paddle park or leash

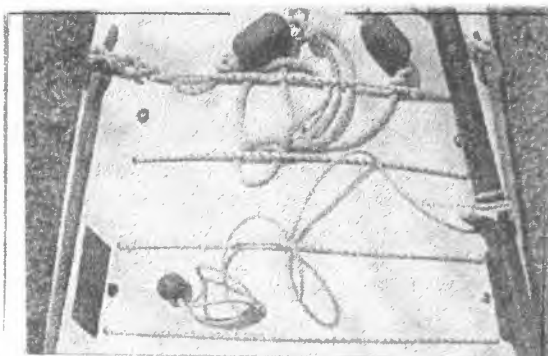
by Peter Carter

Immediately after the Palm article in Sea Kayaker there is one entitled 'Staying Connected: the case for tethers'.

Part of the discussion relates to paddle leashes, which are specified in the equipment for Sea Proficiency, hence the title of this item. The writer, Doug Lloyd, describes the usual options, from the shock cord to the wrist type to the coiled springy things. Shown in the picture are the two types I use, shock cord to wrist, and the two metre rope with RF-533 and float on each end type I devised years ago.

Whatever you use is a personal thing, and some experienced paddlers argue against them. You certainly need not and should not use them constantly. But I am continually annoyed when I

see would-be Basic Skills Instructors demonstrating rescues with paddles floating about all over the place or placed across the boat where they get in the way. If you know you will be doing rescues you should be pre-



pared.

Lloyd's article is verbose: why he takes the best part of a page to describe tethers for knives and whistles is beyond me. All they require is a suit-

able bit of cord. The first part of his article, however, is the contentious part, because he describes several paddler to boat tethers.

The only previous time I've read of them was in some Sea Tiger material years ago. The Sea Tiger was a UK boat with a cockpit like Voyager's (in fact both were derived from the same original) and the makers advocated a leash for those times when one was out of the boat, for whatever reason, emergency or not.

Lloyd's idea of a tether is a length of rope or webbing 3-5 m long clipped to the boat and attached to the PFD waist belt. If you are thrown out of your boat for some

reason you're less likely to lose it. I don't know anyone who uses a boat tether, and I'm not going to recommend one way or the other. I have never found the need for though.

Paddle the kayak...

Peter Carter

I was interested to see in successive issues (July, and September 2000) the three articles by David Youren, Geoff Miller, and Alan Byde. Each in his own way was talking about the same thing: the need to be able to paddle and pump a swamped kayak simultaneously.

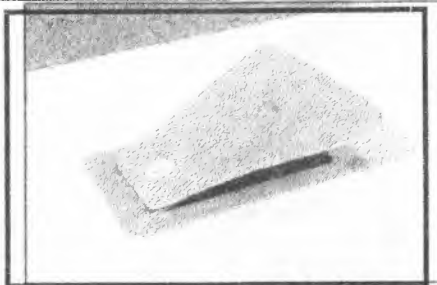
David's topic was pumps and self bailers, and he included a survey form to gain an overview of what people were using. His own favoured system is the dinghy self bailer, a device which allows water to drain away by itself when the kayak is moving forward.

When he first wrote up the idea in the mid-1980s in the ASKC (as it then was) Newsletter I did some investigating and developed a vortex generator to almost double the rate of flow. This was also written up in the Newsletter.

We found the self bailer to be a workable system, except when plodding to wind-ward in heavy seas. In that situation it was difficult, even with a vortex generator, to drain quickly enough to be satisfactory. I went to footpump systems, while most Australian kayaks have electric pumps. I favour foot pumps because of their 'fit and form' reliability: I have not touched the pump in my main boat in the 11 years since it was installed.



Two types of electric pump: self contained (Attwood (left)), and with separate power supply (Rule 500). Power supply for the latter is in the light-coloured waterproof box, with the switch operated by pushing through the spraycover.



Self bailer with stainless steel vortex generator plate

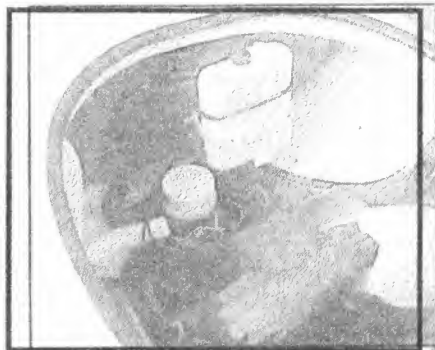
Modern electric pumps, provided they are maintained properly, are reliable, and certainly effective.

David asks: 'could you, on your own, re-enter your boat and pump the boat dry, with the pump in its present position, maintaining stability long enough to carry out the task?'

As he suggests, it's not a matter of practice, it's a matter of design and ergonomics. You need to be able to paddle and pump at the same time. Put down the paddle and you have lost stability, control, and forward progress, in the conditions that have just thrown you in.

With a 'no hands' bailing or pump-ing system you do have that stability, control, and progress.

Or at least you will if you are not trying to remove 100 litres or so. That's where Geoff Miller and Alan Byde come into the story with what they call the 'cockpit pod', what is known in Australia as the 'integrated cockpit' (i.e. seat and bulkheads integrated in



one mould-ing). As Geoff Miller suggests, with a paddler aboard, there will be 45litres of water at most in such a cockpit*. Much less water to slosh about (free surface) and upset things.

Now you can almost ignore all that water, although its weight will make things a bit sluggish, because the boat is still controllable. So with some form of minimum volume cockpit and a hands free pump you ought to be much safer than you would be with conventional cockpits and manual systems because you are free to concentrate on what you ought to be doing, paddling, not fiddling about.

At one stroke, all those schemes of holding one end of the paddle behind your head, poking a pump through the spraycover waist sleeve, paddle floats, and so on, are eliminated.

This is why the Australian Canoeing Award Scheme specifies 'minimum volume cockpit' and 'pump or self-bailer capable of "no-hands" operation.' (Award Scheme Handbook, page 10)

(For a commentary on the requirements see <www.canoesa.asn.au/ed/seakayak.html>.)

** Could you put a self bailer in an integrated cockpit? I've done that only once, and took it out after about a year. The problem is maintaining the flexible seal between cockpit and hull. For these cockpits the foot pump is definitely the better choice.*

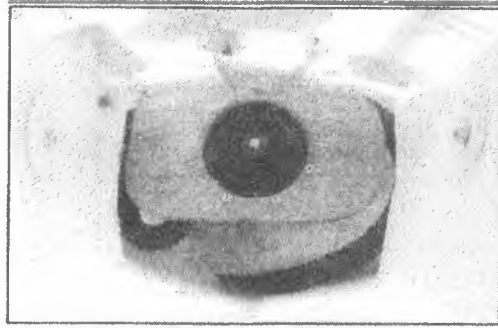


Foot pump in integrated cockpit (Voyager, which uses fin, therefore no rudder pedals). This small pump easily copes with the 40litre capacity of the occupied cockpit.

Until the manufacturers start building boats this way as a matter of course, you'll have to modify what you have. Installing a pump is not difficult, and there are several suitable systems, a few shown in the photographs. In boats with rudders, foot pumps may be difficult, so electric may be the better choice.

Minimising the volume is not difficult either. Fill any space aft of the seat with necessary gear in a water-proof container. Do the same with any space forward of the footrest.

Put buoyancy material (e.g. expanded polyethylene) along the sides of the cockpit where so much space is normally wasted. How you hold it in



Modified 'Chimp' as foot pump, with the ply plate as foot rest. Note the buoyancy material along the sides to reduce cockpit volume.

place will depend on seat and footrest construction: the idea is to wedge it beneath things where possible. In my Nordkapp# I used a couple of studs just below the gunwale line, with grp discs on their inboard ends to stop

them pulling through.

In aviation, the rule is 'Fly the aircraft', and there is the HOTAS (hands on throttle and stick) principle.

For us, it's 'Paddle the kayak', with both hands on the paddle. To do that you need a minimum volume cockpit and a hands free pump or bailing system.

(Peter Carter is an Australian Canoeing Senior Sea Instructor, and Secretary of the Australian Board of Canoe Education.)

(# Still in regular use Frank, 23 years after it was built)

From Tony Ford. Germany

Hallo John,

In the latest edition of the German Canoe Federation magazine is an article written by the lawyer Carl Schlagen) for the family of the paddler who died on the Wattenmeer as a result of a ship's captain not going to the rescue, when advised that there was a man in the water - seen by a ship's passenger. The outcome is a fine of £8000. Are you interested in an article on this court case and its findings for ISKA. There are some

important lessons which we must bear in mind when paddling in "foreign waters" when we do not quite know the local rules. In this case, the defence gave originally the reason for not going to assist the paddler was that a kayak is not a vessel as recognized by the German Maritime Law, and therefore the captain of the vessel was in his right not to go to the kayakers assistance. I know that in Italy, the Rescue Services (ie, military helicopters) will not go to the rescue of paddlers in distress - their job is purely to go to the

assistance of military pilots in distress. I am sure there are similar "stories" around the world, and you may wish to use this as a theme in some future issue of ISKA Newsletter.

Regards

Tony

Of course I've asked Tony to let me have the article on the court case. I agree with him that there must be some important lessons for us as sea paddlers. Ed. I will include this article as soon as it comes to hand.

With great sadness we have to announce the death, in NeskaupstaQur, Iceland, of **Neil Shave (Reynir Neil)**, one of our members, at the age of 54.

Neil was a very active member of the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee back in the days when I chaired this committee. He was a source of experience and knowledge which he brought to bear on our business to great effect. He emigrated to Iceland a few years ago but kept up his membership of ISKA.

Neil had outstanding qualities and skills in helping young people, and many of our present and former members will remember him with great affection and respect. His instruction at canoeing at the level required was second to none. In addition to that he made a major impact on many other activities -on the hills, on camps, on cruises, at Scout meetings.

His ex scout group says, "If you have ever done any of these activities with us, then you must thank Neil, for he either ran the activity, introduced us to the activity, or set the standard somewhere in the background: canoe rolling, swimming pool canoe circuit rafting, training for BCU awards, canoeing at Westward Ho! (North Devon), Horstead Mill, and Cardington, and 5 Norwich School Expeditions to Iceland. His research and enterprise set much of the programme for the Jersey camps, and the quality of his shore-based instruction on just about any Scouting topic was quite outstanding. He will be dearly missed.

Padding Five Hundred Kilometres Round Islands of Estonia Three Weeks with Light Houses, Rocky Coasts and Lots of Ship Wrecks



We organised a three week sea kayaking trip to the Western Islands of Estonia. We, three paddlers from Helsinki, started by taking a ferry from Finland to Estonia. From Virtsu on the West Coast we paddled a four mile crossing to the largest of Estonian Islands, Saaremaa. Our plan was to paddle round the islands Saaremaa and Hiiumaa and return to the mainland in Haapsalu. And we did it – sleeping all nights in tents. On very rocky surface, by the way...

Padding in the Baltic Sea

Padding was very easy in good weather. But in bad weather the visibility got poor, waves big and landings difficult. Unfortunately we had quite a lot of bad weather; first it rained, on the second week the winds were strong and on the third week there was a storm which made us stick to the shore for three days.

We had to navigate all the time with sea charts, in order to find the safest routes between the surf zones and rocks in the coastal waters (we use topographical maps usually in Finland).

The longest crossing we did was ten miles (18 kilometres) from *Saaremaa* to *Hiiumaa*. We started out at four in the morning to avoid the forecasted bad weather. When we

got to the *Hiiumaa* shore the local border guards drove to the kayaks and wanted to know, if we came all the way from Sweden (100 km crossing) but we had to disappoint them and tell we only came from *Saaremaa*.

As the coastline waters are very shallow and rocky we did not meet much people on the waters. Once we saw a rowing boat and sometimes motorboats, but not often.

On two days we had to paddle fourteen miles (25 km) on the open sea, as the surf zone was wide and the rocks made it impossible to paddle on the coast side. The visibility got bad, and we only occasionally saw the tops of the Soviet watch towers. We navigated by following the shallow water lines on the sea chart and using compasses to ensure the right course. Another day we had sea smoke – total white-

ness out on open sea near *Vilsandi*.

Puppy on board

The *Vilsandi National Park* is one of the main areas where Baltic Sea ringed seals have puppies. Last spring 350 puppies were born in the park. As we were leaving the park we saw fifty seals on some stones. There was a young puppy who was so interested in the kayaks, that she swam to us, circled us and finally climbed on top of my kayak. Well, she climbed over the other kayaks as well.



Camps on rocks

The typical Saaremaa shore was flat, broken limestone covered with green grass. The land could be only ten twenty centimetres higher than the water. As there are no tides in the *Baltic Sea* that was no problem, but on windy days reaching the land through the thousands and thousands of rocks was difficult. Also it was impossible to land near the "panka" limestone cliffs. But they were perfect for hunting fossils.

Hiiumaa had more beaches but the grassy patches were really stony. We quite often shared a campsite with animals, once with young bulls running around all night.



One morning we woke up to odd noises – some cows came to inspect the kayaks and lick the tents.

Light houses & shipwrecks

We took a task of seeing all light houses along the route. So we paddled to the outer 'rahu' stone reefs to have a look at the light houses. One

was named *Allirahu*, situated three miles to the open sea. The reef was only one hundred meters long and ten wide. The coastline was big round stones and we just managed to get the kayaks on shore. *Kõpu* light house is remarkable - it is the second oldest working light house in the world. The top was 100 m above the sea level. In the early days there was a bonfire on top of the building. It was important for the Hansa traders sailing the Baltic Sea as it guided the ships safely off the 'Hiiu madal' Hiiumaa Shallows.

All the light houses are still important for navigation, as the coast is shallow, rocky and there are sand banks underwater. There are wrecks of small boats and big rusty ships stuck abandoned on sandreefs all over.

Forbidden zone

Soviet military history is evident everywhere. Soviet watch towers cover the whole area – always in the best possible place where one could control the whole area. The military vessel tracks are only just starting to fade after the Soviet years. There is one small island, *Harilaid*, with a whole former Soviet army base, that was left empty.

But strangest place is *Ristna* Peninsula, the most western point of Hiiumaa. From the sea *Ristna* looked like a nice beach with lovely round hills and pine forests. *Ristna* used to be also one of the most Western points of the Soviet Union. It was strategically



The most beautiful light house was on the South end of Saaremaa – a black and white tower facing to the South, Latvia. This was the scene of the last Second World War battles in Estonia.

important, as one can follow all ship traffic to other parts of the Baltic Sea. When we walked there we noticed that the lovely hills were only halves – the land side was full of roads and doors covering the military equipment kept inside the fake hills.

The Soviet past also explains why there are no houses and people on the shores. There used to be a two kilometre wide forbidden zone on the coast. We found some Russian signs declaring the forbidden zone in the forests. So, villages are two kilometres inland, and shores are mainly unused land, pastures, and forest.

We had to fill the water containers and shop food in the villages – meaning long walks carrying the food. The stores were good, but it was impossible to buy potatoes, vegetables and fresh food, as everyone in the countryside was self sufficient with those.

On our own

In many ways the whole trip was like entering another world. The villages and towns are old and charming. No powerboats around, just paddling on the sea with sea eagles and seals and living on the shores. We did not have weather forecasts, we followed the sky and winds and we did not have a timetable. Is there a better way to spend your summer?



Ristna



Route: Virtsu on mainland – Muhu Island – Kuressaar Town (Saaremaa Island) – Sääre Puol-saar – Vilsandi – Panka Pank – Sõru (Hiiumaa Island) – Ristna – Viskoosa – Tahkuna – Harilaid Islet – Vorms Island – Haapsalu on mainland.

500 kilometres = 277 n. miles

The trip was organised by Helsingin Melojat kayaking club.
<http://www.helsinginmelojat.fi/>

The participants were:
Vilma Venesmaa & Nordkapp
Ari Saarto & Nordkapp
Alli Lind & Nordkapp Jubilee



© A. Lind 2001

Dear John,
Thank you for the reminder to renew my subscription. One of the many things I have neglected whilst I have focussed my attentions on planning for our forthcoming expedition to South Georgia in January 2002. I was fascinated to read the article by Angus Finney on his attempt. I had found reference to it in other accounts of paddling in South Georgia and it will be a very useful reference. Can you confirm when the expedition took place? It has reminded me of the immense challenge we face, particularly because we have such limited time in which to complete the circumnavigation.

I noted that they carried 38 days worth of food, no wonder the boats

were heavy! We are having to take a different approach with the Government insisting that we have a support vessel on standby for the duration of the expedition. Although this takes away some of the challenge, it is non-negotiable and will allow us to make a film of the expedition. Due to the huge cost involved in chartering a vessel capable of doing the job (we have provisionally booked Jerome Poncet - Golden Fleece Cruising Expeditions) we will only have three weeks to complete the circumnavigation. We will be relying on making the most of any weather windows. The team, Doug Cooper, Ian Wilson, Jim Morrissey and myself are capable of paddling long distances pretty quickly

and will use this speed to negotiate the exposed west coast, taking time to explore the more sheltered east coast. Our web site can be found at www.expeditionkayak.com and we welcome any comments and support from the ISKA membership. In particular we would love to hear from anyone interested helping to find funding for the expedition and feel free to pass my details on to any prospective sponsors. There may be the opportunity of a berth on the support vessel and a chance to have a unique look at this fascinating island. Thank you. Yours sincerely, Sean Morley <sean@expeditionkayak.com> 51 Florida Drive, Exeter, Devon, U.K. EX4 5EX. 0044 (0)1392 662982

Davis Strait crossing: in the Wake of Leiv Erikson

by ROY WILLY JOHANSEN

A thousand years ago, the Viking Leiv Erikson and 35 men set sail from the Norse settlement in southern Greenland. Driven by a sense of adventure and aided by a talent for seamanship and a courage to meet challenges, they explored the coasts from Baffin Island to Labrador and the northern tip of Newfoundland

He was searching for areas with potential for settlements, that had rich and fertile pastures, timber for building boats and houses, peat for roofing and extraction of iron ore, and bountiful stocks of game for hunting and fishing. All of this they found in the bay on the northern tip of Newfoundland, or "Vinland" in old Norse. Today, the area is called L'anse aux Meadows, "the bay by the grassy meadows."

One thousand years later, in the year

ROY WILLY JOHANSEN

1963 - 2000

Roy Willy wrote this story about his crossing of Davis Strait while he was in Florida, recovering from his frostbite, suffered whilst making the 243 mile crossing from Greenland to Baffin Island. Even before he had fully recovered he was back in training to prepare his completion of this trip.

The injuries to his hand and feet did not prevent him from writing this story - nor from even doing a little line dancing.

Having lost seven weeks of seasonable weather, Roy Willy did not resume his trip to Baffin Island but began paddling in Labrador in order to schedule his arrival to L'Anse aux Meadows on the Northern Peninsula in Newfoundland on Leiv Erikson Day, October 9th, 2000, a 1,000 years after Erikson had landed there.

Roy Willy flew to Goose Bay, Labrador, and began to make his way eastwards along Lake Melville, heading for the coast. He stopped in the settlement of North West River on the 21st of September. On the 26th he was found in his kayak where it had drifted ashore.

At the age of 37, Roy Willy had died of a heart attack.

Roy Willy's crossing of Davis Strait is a remarkable accomplishment and a fitting tribute to a powerful and passionate kayaker and a remarkable character.

2000, I wanted to follow in his wake in a sea kayak. Who am I? A Norwegian, born on an island in southern Norway, 37 years old, unmarried, 6

I suffered from the intensely cold water, freezing winds and strong currents.

feet 7 inches, and strong, as a Viking should be. My name is Roy Willy Johansen. I have been paddling kayaks on the ocean for 22 years on different continents in various weather conditions.

How does a crazy idea like this occur? This has never been done in a kayak: To cross from Greenland over the Davis Strait to the Canadian side of the coastline, and then follow the coastline along Baffin Island and the Labrador coast before crossing over to Newfoundland. First of all, it's open seawater for 243 miles over to the other side, and then 1600 miles down to Vinland. Plus, there is an eight-day crossing in an area that has the strong potential for bad weather.

As I paddled this portion, the waves were 16 feet high and washing over me, fog hung thickly over the water with two-foot visibility, and icy rain pelted me until it stung. I had to deal with the dangers of icebergs, ice floes and several polar bears.

To start from the beginning,

I got a phone call three years ago from a friend named Gunnar Rerno. He had read a book by Helge Ingstad, a Norwegian archeologist and scientist, who discovered and excavated the settlement at L'anse aux Meadows in an attempt to prove that the Northern American continent was populated by Vikings five hundred years prior to Christopher Columbus' discovery of America. Ingstad's book

is about Leiv Eriksson and his journey to and discovery of North America. Gunnar asked me if I would be interested in making that trip with him in a kayak. After looking at maps and placing phone calls to Greenland regarding weather conditions, I said I would go with him on this extraordinary expedition.

One of the first questions I'm asked is why would I want to do this expedition. First of all, it's the challenge of doing something that's never been done before, then it's to honour the memory of the ancient Vikings who dared to make the trip. I was also interested in finding out what I could learn about myself, because I believed the trip would be just as tough mentally as it would be physically.

First, we contacted Helge Ingstad, and asked him the most important question: "You did this trip in a large fishing boat on your way to excavate the settlement of the Vikings. Is it possible to do the same thing in a kayak?"

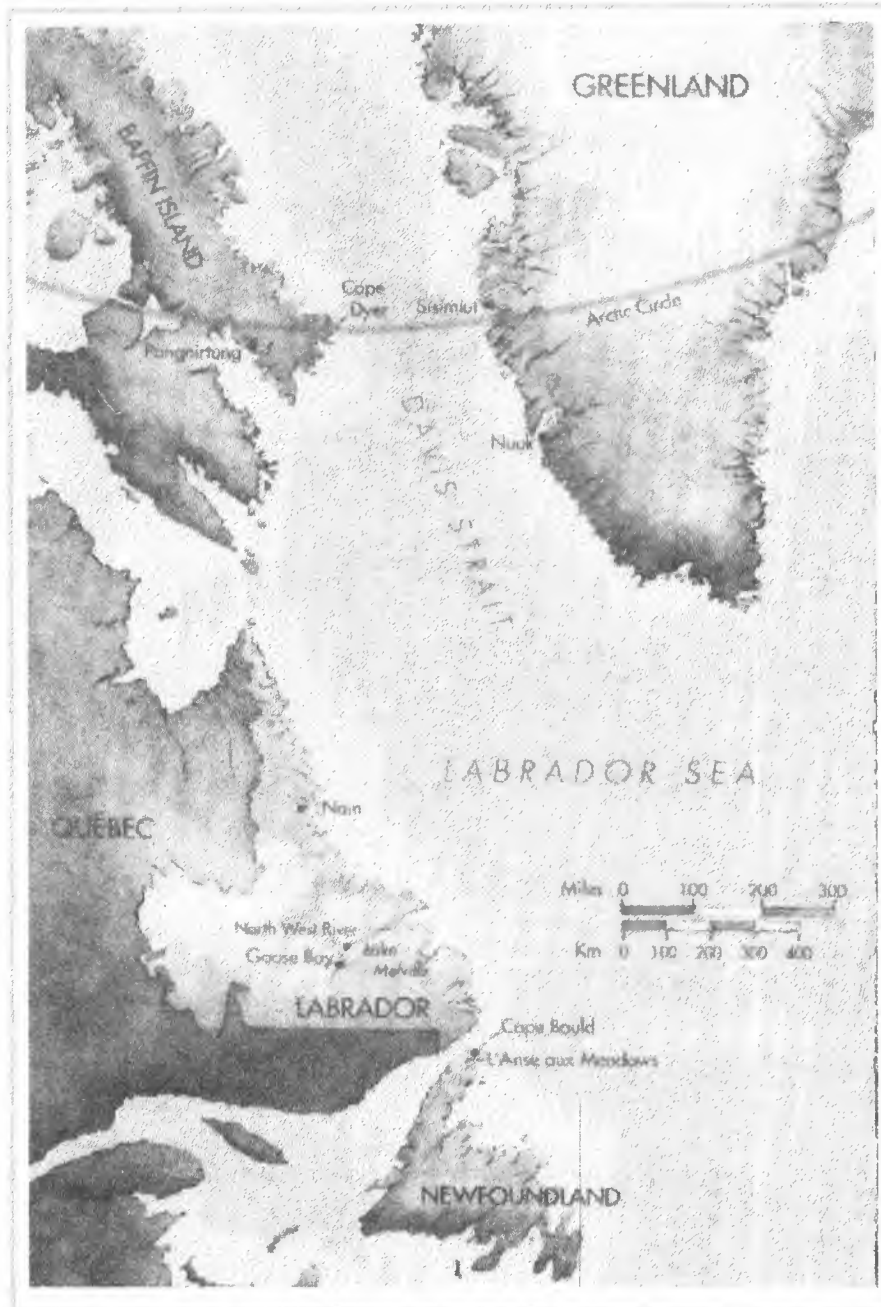
"Yes," he said, and we excitedly started to plan our expedition! Then Gunnar got cold feet and tremendous pressure from his family, so he couldn't do the

myself and without any support.

The next two years were tough, as my family, friends and girlfriend did not like this at all, and tried to talk me out of it.

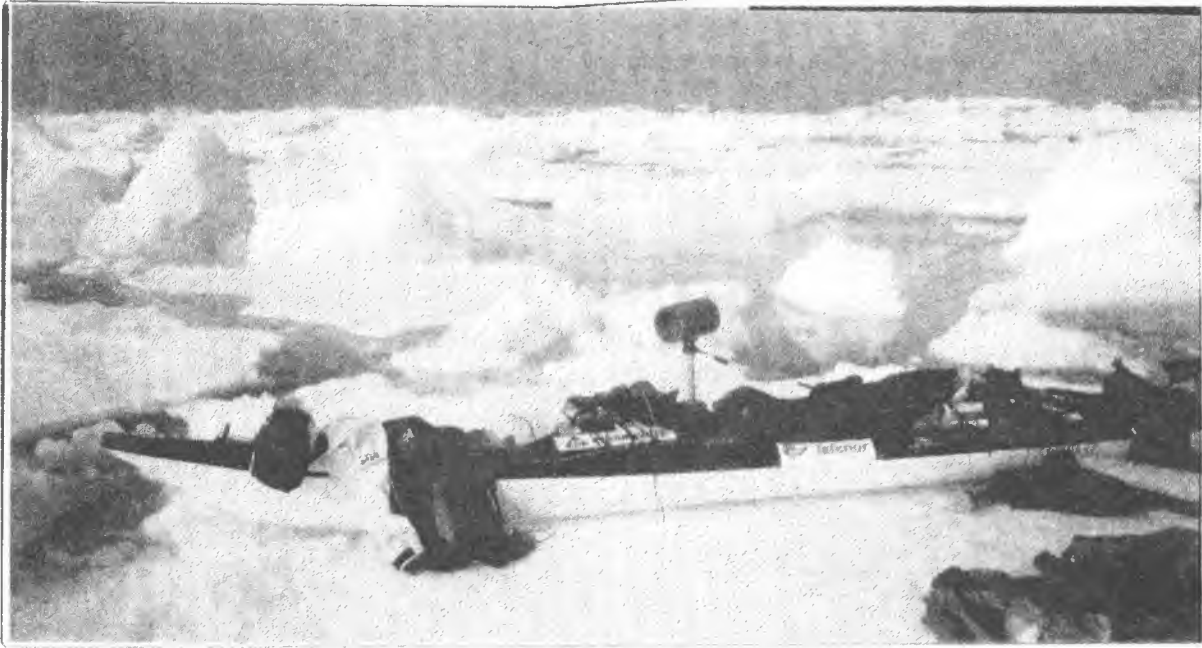
During this time, I tested out different models of sea kayaks that would have enough room for me to sleep in, as it would take me about one week to cross Davis Strait. To find a kayak that had enough room for me to sleep in, as well as for all my equipment, that was stable, fast, and easy to maneuver wasn't easy.

I finally chose a K-2 sea kayak from Seaward Kayaks on Vancouver Island. I went there and did some modifications with the steering, and tested the kayak. It was made of Kevlar, giving it



trip. "What now?" I thought. "Shall I get a new partner, or go by myself?" There didn't appear to be any security in having another partner, because if the weather got really rough it would be difficult enough trying to save myself. The only thing I'd miss would be the company. I don't know of anyone as stubborn and strong as I am when it comes to long distances. Besides, I wanted to find out how a long journey like this—three to four months—would affect my psyche. My decision was made: I would do this by

enough strength to cope with the rough weather that could be expected. Then I had the kayak sent to Norway so I could test it out further. Next, I had to choose my gear, which included a dry suit, dried food, water bags, a urinal, fishing gear, a shotgun and a rifle, a custom-built pontoon for extra stability, a drift anchor, camera equipment, a satellite telephone and dry bags. My food supply would consist of a protein drink and dried fruit, so I would have to fish and hunt to supplement this.



About to be packed in by the ice as I attempted to find a clear route to Baffin Island.

My journey began in Sisimiut, Greenland, on July 22 at 9:00 a.m. I didn't feel very well, but I thought it was because of the excitement and the waiting. I launched my loaded boat into the water at the kayak club in Sisimiut, with about 50 people there to see me off.

Sisimiut is a small town with a population of about 5,000. Since I had been there for a couple of weeks waiting for equipment and good weather, I had gotten to know a lot of the locals. A couple of Inuit paddlers followed me for a while in their homemade kayaks, and an Inuit followed me in his motorboat. When I reached open water, he fired three shots in the air, and almost scared me to death! He later explained that it was for good luck and a safe trip. Well, that kept me awake for a while!!

Two hours later, I didn't feel good at all, and started vomiting. I considered turning back to Sisimiut and starting another day, but a strong voice inside me said "NO!" For the next 16 hours, I turned my stomach inside out several times, and was not able to drink or eat anything. I fell into a state of semi-consciousness for about six

hours, too exhausted and out of my senses to do anything but lie in the kayak. The weather grew increasingly worse, with 16-foot high waves, fog and cold wind. Sometime during this period, I came to and managed to get something to drink and eat without feeding the fish. After a couple of hours, my body started to work again, and I started paddling once more.

I had been in the kayak for 24 hours by now, and badly needed some rest. My plan was to attach the pontoons, then to crawl down into the boat and get some sleep, but the weather was now very bad, with waves sweeping over the kayak and me. In order to sleep, I had to remove the spray skirt, but with high waves coming over my boat, the water started rising in the kayak. I was forced to sit up again and keep on paddling. The ice-cold wind mixed with the freezing cold water was another problem. The cold went right through my dry suit and wool clothes, and I started to freeze with the cold. I was now in deep trouble, because real rest or sleep were impossible with 15- to 16-foot-high waves, fog, and the extremely cold wind.

For the next two days I just kept on paddling, and stopped only for a few

minutes to get something to eat and drink. If I tried to rest, even for a few minutes, I started to shake from the cold. At some point, I was so exhausted and disoriented that I lost track of time and fell asleep while paddling. I awoke instantly in fear and shock as my head plunged into the biting cold water. My adrenaline spiked as I braced back into an upright position. I was surprised that my boat hadn't tipped over. Now my head, my hands and my feet were really cold. It was all that I could do to stay in the kayak and just keep on paddling. In addition to being cold, I was now wet, I had an infection in my arms since I hadn't given them any rest for several days straight, I was running a fever, and I was sleepy and exhausted.

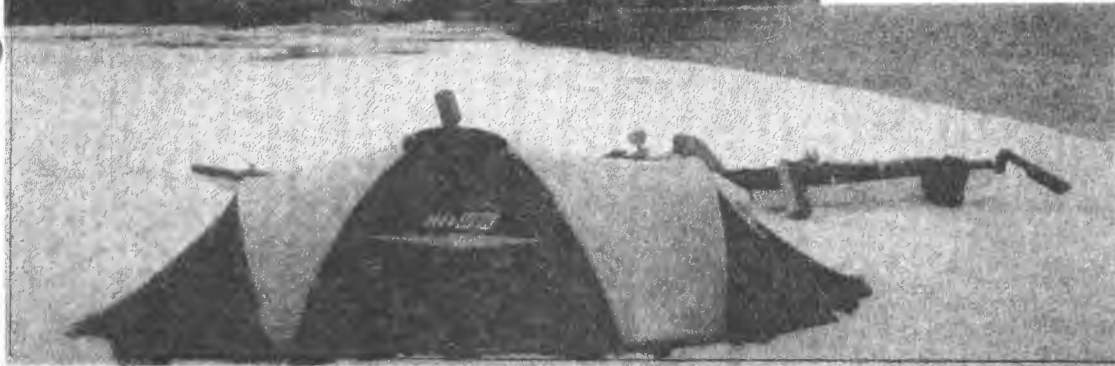
Finally, after almost four days, the wind stopped, and I saw an iceberg I could get some rest on. I couldn't feel my feet, and I had major trouble getting up onto the iceberg and dragging the kayak up. For the first time in four days I could get out of my clothes and into something dry. Because of the bad weather, I hadn't been able to take my dry suit off to pee, as I had been doing the first two days. The result of that was that I had to pee in the dry suit five times. It was terrible.

The urine had made my body sour and uncomfortable. As I peeled off the dry suit, the smell was awful.

Then I took my socks off. Both of my feet were black and purple, and looked as though they had been

arm, leaving most of my equipment on the iceberg. With loud pops, creaks and a groan, the iceberg juttied upward, then tipped over with a huge splash, taking my fuel, water, spare paddle, knife, sun glasses and some clothes with it. I searched the water

water: I could use the snow and icebergs as water, I thought. For the next four days, until I reached Canada, I ate "ice cubes"—snow and ice that I melted with the remaining fuel. The area I was now paddling through had a lot of ice floes. I could finally get up



My campsite when my ice floe was still attached to land. At top: The view out my tent a short time later, when my drifting ice floe crashed into land.

onto a safe place to sleep, compared to the risky icebergs, which had a habit of tipping over.

Now halfway to Canada, I was sitting on an ice floe, watching the sun set into the sea. A golden glow

through a meat grinder. It was not a pretty sight. Oh, oh, I thought—this does not look good! Frost bite was the last thing I needed now. I put on some dry socks and started to jump

and down to get my circulation going, but I was so tired that I collapsed into my sleeping bag.

I fell asleep instantly, but I woke up two hours later with a strange feeling. I took a

quick look around. The iceberg was smaller, and it seemed to be tilting slightly. Suddenly, I realised that it was about to tip over with me on it! I just threw the kayak in the sea and jumped into it with my sleeping bag over my

around the edges of the iceberg, but was able to recover only a water bag and some clothes. When I realised how close I had come to being under there with my gear, I started to cry. What now, Roy? What the hell should

spread out to bands of peach and rust, topped by a scattering of dark gray clouds. I cooked some dinner and fell asleep in my sleeping bag next to my kayak. About four hours later, I woke up by instinct again. Did I hear

Did I hear something, or was I just imagining things? No, there was some sort of sniffing at my feet and, instantly, before I saw it, I knew it was a polar bear.

I do now? Despite this setback, I was grateful to still be alive, and I was determined to keep on paddling.

My problem now was drinking water and fuel for my stove. Ice cubes are

something, or was I just imagining things? No, there was some sort of sniffing at my feet and, instantly, before I saw it, I knew it was a polar bear. My shotgun was on the left side of me, but it was still in the water-

proof bag, and I knew that I would need a couple of seconds to take it out and aim at the bear. A polar bear doesn't need two seconds to strike at me, so I got rid of that thought quickly. My other, and final, solution was to use my signal flare. It was on my right side, and I could shoot him in his mouth if he attacked me. I raised up and pointed at him with my signal flare and yelled at him at the same time. The polar bear looked back at me with surprise and shock on his face, then it reared up on two feet, jumped immediately into the water, and started to swim away. It stopped twice and looked back at me as though I were an alien or something,

before it vanished through the water. I fell asleep again for a couple of hours more before I packed my kayak and went on paddling

As I paddled, I reflected on the bear encounter. I had been so sure that I would meet a polar bear on my jour-

ney that I hadn't gotten scared, just excited. I couldn't understand why it didn't attack me. Two hours before I had reached the ice floe that I camped on, I had seen a dead seal. It was bloody, and had stroke marks on its back from the polar bear. I had probably scared the polar bear away then, and it followed me because it was curious and had never seen a human being. While it looked well fed, I had probably looked somewhat like a seal in my sleeping bag.

New challenges....after a few hours, my Global Positioning System suddenly quit working, and I had to use my compass. I knew that as long as I

kept on paddling west, I would bump into the Canadian coastline somewhere. I just had to remember to make adjustments for the miscalculation between magnetic and true north. For two more days, I kept on paddling among ice floes. The weather was clear and calm for a change, and I managed to get my spare GPS that I had borrowed from my friend, Johnny, to work. I had now been paddling for six days, and could occasionally catch a glimpse of Baffin Island between fog banks. I was both happy and frustrated to see it, because I knew that there were still two or three days of paddling before I could touch Baffin Island.

this, giving up only 60 miles from Canada—but I have never been a quitter, and I refused to give up now. Why was it so difficult to find a waterway that led to the shore? Suddenly, I had made it through and, for the first time, I could see clear water all the way to Baffin Island. Normally, I would have yelled out of happiness, but I was so tired that I just kept on paddling like a machine until I touched the mountain at Baffin Island, 14 hours later.

Unfortunately, more problems lay ahead. I was now so tired that I could barely stay in the kayak, and I needed some rest soon. The problem was that

it was impossible to go ashore anywhere. The mountains went straight down to the ocean, leaving no possibility to get ashore with the kayak. After two hours of paddling, I found an ice floe that was attached to land. I put up my tent and went to sleep at once. So far, so good, I thought. The worst part is done. I had crossed the Davis Strait in a

At some point, I woke up at the sound of a big BANG. My ice floe had crashed into something. I peered out of the door of my tent to see what was going on. My floe had crashed into a wall of cliffs.

The problem now was that the ice floes had packed so tightly together that it was impossible to get through. I searched for a waterway coming out from the island. Finally, I found a clear path, and followed it for an hour or two. Then the route was blocked, and I had to turn back. I was now more than tired, and my body was screaming for rest. I kept on paddling, because I was afraid that if I took a rest I wouldn't be able to continue. With mounting frustration and exhaustion, I was about to give up. I noticed wetness on my face, and realised that it was tears.

I couldn't believe it would end like

kayak, and it had never been done before.

But my troubles were not over yet. My ice floe broke loose and started to drift northward at quite a rapid speed. As I was travelling south, I considered launching the kayak and paddling on, but my body would not let me. I was just too tired. No sooner than I laid my head down, than I fell asleep again. At some point, I woke up at the sound of a big BANG. My ice floe had crashed into something. I peered out of the door of my tent to see what was going on. My floe had crashed into a wall of cliffs. I was too tired to care, and I fell asleep again. I

awoke sometime later, and looked out of the tent. Another iceberg was coming toward me, and I forced myself out of the tent to watch what was happening. The iceberg rapidly crashed into my ice floe, tipped over, and broke my ice floe into three pieces. I was lucky in two ways: The first was that the iceberg tipped over the other way; otherwise, it would have crushed my tent; and the second good thing was that the place I was standing on with my tent and kayak was still in one piece. My ice floe was now very small, and I decided to evacuate my camping site. I kept on paddling for another day, trying to find a place to stay on land.

I was very thirsty by now. When I saw a nearby glacier, I decided that I had to take the risk to climb up onto it, in search of drinking water. I had one water bag left, but had lost the stopper on it, because my hands were too numb to hold it. However, I had found a solution to keep water in it. I was tired, and had lost all sensation in my hands and feet because of the frostbite. Slowly and painstakingly, I hobbled up the glacier on my numb feet. By the time I got down to the bottom of the glacier, my whole body was feeling numb, and I had trouble getting down into my kayak.

After another eight hours of paddling, I finally found a nice spot with a grassy meadow and a little lake with a stream flowing out of it. I put some dry clothes on, got myself something to eat, guzzled fresh water from the stream, and put up my tent. Now came the worst part. As there was about ten metres of difference between the high tide and the low tide in this area, I had to get the kayak far enough up so it would not be taken

by the tide. I was so tired that I could barely drag the boat an inch. I had to lie down for a couple of hours to get some of my strength back before I managed to get the kayak above the danger zone. Then I fell asleep with the shotgun in my arms.

I stayed there for three days, hoping and waiting for my wounds and frostbite to get better. I went for a walk, and climbed up in the mountains to get an overview. I could not see anything except ice and snow—not even a polar bear in sight! Back in the tent, I called my doctor in Norway from my satellite telephone, and explained to him how my feet looked. He said that the frostbite was so severe that it would not recover without medical care. Then I called my father, Willy, in Florida, and my contact person in Norway, Hakon Wang, and explained the situation to them. They called the Canadian Coast Guard, who called me and asked if I wanted help and needed to be picked up.

I had to make the hardest decision of my life. It was not an easy task. The worst part of the trip was done, but I knew that my feet needed care. They were bleeding, and my heels and toes were black and purple. After a few seconds that felt like minutes, I said, "yes, pick me up." I gave them the coordinates from my GPS and, seven hours later, a Coast Guard helicopter arrived at my camping spot. They took me to a Coast Guard boat first, then flew me to a health centre at Pangnirtung, on Baffin Island.

They took very good care of me, and removed all of the dead tissue on my feet. They considered the damage extremely severe, and sent me to the hospital in Iqaluit for further medical

care. Iqaluit is a little town with about 5,000 people, mostly Inuit. I spent a week at the hospital, and the nurses and Dr. Stubbing took very good care of me. My feet were now hurting so badly that I couldn't sleep at night, even with the strongest pain medication. It was like standing on burning fire or thousands of needles. If I tried to stand on them, I passed out—that's how horribly painful it was. I'm used to pain, but I'd never before felt pain like this.

My father called, and wanted me to recover at his home in southern Florida. I didn't see any reason to just stay in bed at the hospital, and thought it would be great to see my father and other relatives in the States. An air ticket and wheelchair were provided, and off I went.

With lots of rest, I recovered quickly. The plastic surgeon who had been looking after me was very surprised by how fast I recovered. One of the reasons for the quick recovery, I believe, is that I started off my trip in excellent shape. While recovering, I ate healthy food, swam—although it's not recommended by doctors, because of the danger of infection—and had a foot bath/massage every day. It was so painful to even put my feet down in that thing; it felt as though I were being tortured!

Well, I survived all of that, and am now back in Canada for what I hope will be some more thrilling adventures. I expect this part to be more exciting! I am hoping to come across more wildlife: grizzly bears, eagles, caribou and wolves. I also hope to catch an assortment of fish so I can brag about it when I get back home.

LADIES PADDLING AGENDA

I am currently putting together a ladies paddling agenda and would very much appreciate any info as to suitable events, workshops, competitions, trips that are going on in the future to put on the www.playak.com website for the Ladies Agenda. Also the agenda to go to various boating magazines. (Good photos of female boaters are also very welcome for the website.) Please forward this email on to anyone who you may think has some input and all responses to me: Hannah@playak.com or Hannah779@compuserve.com Many thanks.>I have also had some initial contact from the British Canoe Union as to the Development of women in Freestyle and Recreational Whitewater and would appreciate any views on needs/wants from such a governing body. Maybe the BCU will move forward in the right direction if we have some input. OK, take care, and many thanks see you on a river or maybe in a bar! Hannah Paul (UK)

From Graham Bushill, Crewe,

Tel:01270 882158

Dear John,

Many thanks for the latest newsletter and subscription renewal reminder. I had overlooked the latter in the chaos around Christmas. Please find enclosed my cheque for £8-00 and I look forward to another year of 'Ocean Kayaker'.

I was interested in your Editorial on the current "blame" culture. It does seem to encourage a negative attitude in people and a reluctance to involve young people in Outdoor activities "just in case...". Well planned and managed programs are essential and I find time spent on proper briefing and debriefing helps participants and parents to understand and be more involved. We have always encouraged parents to participate with their children in many of our activities in order to encourage a healthy involvement in their child's development in the outdoors.

I am enclosing a passport size photograph as requested for the membership card, together with 4 second class stamps.

Regarding the questionnaire on the BCU Coaching Scheme. I introduce people to kayaking from a number of countries through the Capernwray Missionary Fellowship based in Lancashire. I normally issue our own "Oak Challenge" certificate stating that they have participated in a basic kayak course. Some have progressed to achieve 1 and 2 star awards but I am not sure how relevant these are in their own country when they return home. Also they are not usually in this country long enough to progress beyond 2 star level. I do not know what liaison takes place between countries but maybe some internationally recognised standards could be agreed which allow students to progress through the coaching scheme wherever they are. Eg If they pass 2 star in the UK this would be recognised in say the USA as exemption to their next level. Maybe this already happens - I would certainly be interested in any info.

I think any system should be kept simple any involve minimum administration - let's leave plenty of time to Paddle. If the BCU coaching Scheme

can be simplified then it should be. I am sending our

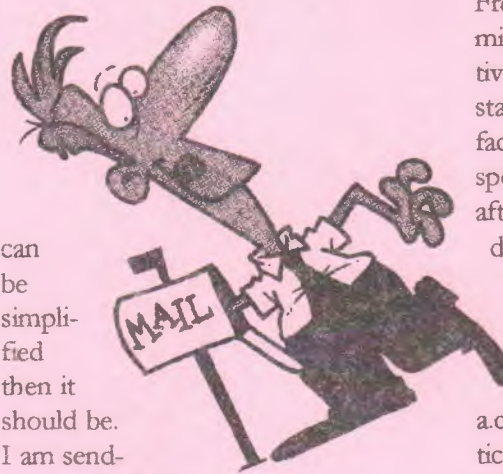
newsletter and details of planned trips this year. Some of your readers may be interested - particularly in the Isles of Scilly trip on 20 May 2001 or the Bahamas Tour from 21 November 2001.

(Ed, these opportunities sound good, phone Graham for further info.)

Best wishes,
Graham Bushill

From
Dick Faulder, Farnham, Surrey,

Dear John,
I typed the 2nd paragraph of this letter to you on 14 October 1998 in response to your Newsletter issue # 22, but apparently never completed it or sent it. I found it on my computer, when I went to type my draft letter in response to Newsletter issue # 39. With regard to the ICF, I think this is a symptom of a dichotomy going on throughout Europe - Some of us are striving to make a single group, while others are striving to divide into smaller groups. I am totally opposed to a Federal European State, but I also welcome a European Free Trading area. For the latter to work it is essential that there should be agreed International Standards, which define the best practice, but individual countries must be allowed the Freedom to reject those parts, which are not suit-



able or override cherished local standards; but for export, a detailed label must be attached detailing features which fall below the International Standard. I can hear people say it will not work, but we would still have our Freedom, and many manufacturers might well decide it was more effective to mass produce to the higher standard, selling rejects but to a satisfactory lower standard at home. 2 specifications are not impossible, after all there are 2 bathing water standards and many of us still have the freedom to use water at still lower levels, maybe on occasions with diminished enjoyment but with a risk, which we are prepared to accept, but risk is another matter particularly with the Nanny state."

(I think it was a NASA spokesman who said that Risk is the price you pay for progress. Few people are aware of the hidden costs of reducing a risk.) Hence in my opinion and in reply to your current questionaire :-

- 1) BCU awards should be available to anyone, provided the BCU is satisfied that it has sufficient control over the tester to insure that standards are maintained. (Difficult and time consuming if carried out outside the UK, and not really the responsibility of the BCU, or even the proper way to spend UK funds).
- 2) Ideally there should be an agreed International Code of best practice. (See 4 below).
- 3) All countries should be free to establish and control their own Coaching scheme, if they so wish, as long as they specify in what respects it departs from the International code.
- 4) The international body would need funds and some method of ensuring that a country claiming to conform to some sections of their code were in fact doing so.

None of this answers the problem of the foreign national, who is trying to buy the prestige value of a BCU qualification, unless the international code happens to be that of the BCU. Yours sincerely,

H.D.S. Faulder
