

OCEAN KAYAKER



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION,
THE NORDKAPP TRUST & PADDLERS INTERNATIONAL



"WITH HIS LIGHT CANOE HE CAN GO ALMOST
EVERYWHERE"



**An international & independent sea
canoeing association open to all
interested in this aspect of canoeing
with the objective of promoting safe
sea kayaking for everyone**



MARCH 2002

ISSUE # 45

Ocean Kayaker

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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*

With the next issue of
'Ocean Kayaker' (May)
you will receive the
ISKA Members
Directory. This will give
me chance to include
those joining at the
Canoe Exhibition
February 23/24, at the
NEC, Birmingham.

Here is to a wonderful
paddling year in 2002.
Remember to share
your journeys with
other ISKA members
through 'Ocean
Kayaker'

editorial by John Ramwell

hi! The International Canoe Exhibition looms, 23/24th February at NEC, Birmingham. I am hoping we can produce this newsletter for distribution to those of you who show up. The uncertainty is due to me going off with Raleigh again to Southern Chile to assist with the kayaking. Those of you who enjoy taking young people off into the wilderness and get a kick out of their discovery of the meaning of expeditions should get in touch with Raleigh. They are always looking for kayaking leaders. Can you hack it?

I recently went to the conference on "Adventure & Risk - A Sporting Balance" as organised by the British Mountaineering Council. The introduction said, "It is through adopting good practice in an appropriate management framework that we can help make sure young people and novices get inspirational and safe introductions to adventure activities.....". Many of the issues raised concerned all of us engaged in outdoor activity. Lead or instruct and you take on quite a lot of responsibility. so much so that some choose to steer away from taking on these roles which, of course, is a great pity. Young people in particular, lose out. I know of many in the teachers who used to share their interests in the Great Outdoors with their students but no longer as Heads and LEAs discourage such activity, fearful of litigation. You cannot dodge the responsibility issue when you simple join a group on the water. Why? Because we all have a duty of care to each other and even if you are not leading the trip, if you have experience and/or qualifications in excess of the leader, you may be seen as neglectful if an incident arises. I have to say that none of this bothers me too much. I have no problem as I mentioned at the start of this editorial, from taking young, totally inexperienced paddlers of into the wilderness. What matters here is that we are all aware of the changing climate. Should this make us more careful. Not really in so much as we should always take the utmost care of both ourselves and others no matter what the social or political climate is. Litigation does tend to focus the mind somewhat, but then is this a bad thing? "A Sporting Balance" is, for me at least, a balance between adventure and safety. Be too safe and there is no adventure—then young people will find their own. Too much risk and an accident is waiting to happen. So how do YOU achieve this balance? Write and tell us!

Jersey International Sea Kayaking

Symposium 2002

by

JERRY
MICHEL

Jersey, Channel Islands will again be the venue for the sixth International European sea-kayaking symposium from 31 May to 7 June 2002.



Photo-David Law

Now in its 12th year the bi-annual event continues to draw paddlers from across Europe and further afield to the island of Jersey. With a 40ft tidal range sea kayakers are assured of some dramatic coastal and offshore paddling. Already an impressive programme of kayaking trips and clinics has been planned drawing on the in depth experience of both local paddlers and well known names from across Europe.

Opportunity

At a cost of £85 per person the week-long programme of events gives sea kayakers the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of

kayaking. Whether it is a quite coastal paddle along the Southeast coasts superb intertidal zone where miles of reefs are uncovered at low water, or caving on the North coast. Offshore, the famous Ecrehous islets and Paternosters beckon. Further afield the feudal island of Sark is a planned destination. To the South the isolated Les Minquiers reef, home to the most southerly toilet in the British Isles offers possible relief to tired paddlers.

Top-level coaching

Those who enjoy surf kayaking will be equally at home. With Jersey the current World Champions in surf kayaking the west-facing beach at St Ouen's should offer plenty to keep the keen surf kayaker busy. Moreover, there should be no shortage of top level coaching from members of the Jersey team.

For further details of this non-profit making event contact

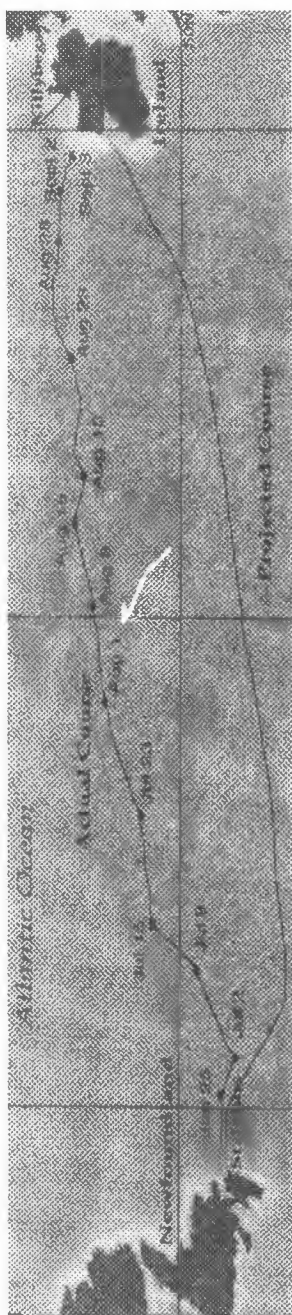
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North Atlantic Kayak Challenge

by

PETER
BRAY

The morning of June 22, the forecast was good: gentle westerly winds with calm seas. I decided to leave at 20:00 on the ebb tide. On leaving St. Johns the weather was ideal—flat seas and no wind. My sequence of targets for the challenge was to survive the first 24 hours (because of the events of last year), cross the Newfoundland waters, reach the quarter mark, reach the halfway mark, enter English waters and land in southern Ireland.

Two days out, the sea state started to worsen. The rough seas prevented me from cooking, and for the rest of the journey I ate all my meals cold. The Coast Guard informed Jim that I was experiencing October weather in June; it was the worst weather they had on record. In one night, Mother Nature forced me backwards—60 miles to the north. A couple of weeks into the journey, I encountered several problems, starting with a snapped rudder cable, which caused difficulty steering. Because of the size of the boat, a rudder was necessary to control the boat. To repair the cable, I tied paracord from the cable to the steering plate.

A couple of days later, the steering plate broke. The only way to repair this was to cut a strap from my lifejacket to make a stirrup-like fitting, as I had no means of riveting the plate back together. Shortly after completing the repair, as I was just about to start paddling, I heard a knocking sound. On investigating, I discovered the shackle from the sea anchor had disappeared. In order to repair this problem, I had to brave the elements and swim to the back of the boat. The sea

state was about Force five. Not wanting to lose another shackle while undertaking the repair in such rough conditions, I decided to use another length of paracord. On getting back into the kayak I cut my hand and my blood washed off in the sea. Not long after this a shark appeared! After changing my underpants, I decided that if I kept paddling, it might think I was a machine and not an edible delight. To my amazement, this seemed to work.

During this time I had not seen the sun once; therefore, my solar panels were not performing as well as they should have been. Everything electrical had to be switched off so that the tracking device would not fail. My desalinator demanded too much power, so I started rationing water. One hundred miles from the halfway point, after a good days' paddle, I undressed (as I did after every paddle) in preparation for getting into the cabin. I lifted the hatch to find that the right hinge had broken. This had been the only imaginable scenario that would have the dire consequence of putting an end to the expedition!

I could not believe my luck; yet again my crossing was to fail due to a 'technical' problem. All I could do was to scream out and cry.

I contacted Jim by satellite phone. I could not get hold of him, so I left a message on his answer machine telling him that it was all over. I called Jim back later about five minutes after I had calmed down, and suggested a possible solution: call for aid from a ship to help me replace the hatch. Jim told me he needed a couple of hours to try to

sort something out. In the meantime, I was to get in the cabin and secure the hatch as best I could to prevent the sea from coming in. Jim informed me there would be an engineer from the design firm on stand-by in the morning and to recall what equipment I had onboard for a possible repair. He also suggested we pray for calm seas.

In the morning, the sea was flat and deadly quiet. On contacting Jim he gave me a number to call the engineer, Mark. The first thing he asked was what tools I had on board, to which I replied, "A junior hacksaw, a knife and screwdrivers." First I had to find a tube measuring approximately one quarter of an inch in diameter by one and a half inches long, that I could cut into a hinge shape. The only thing that would fit this description was the soft metal casing on my file. Not having a vice or any engineering equipment, I had to use my knees to hold the tube as I cut away sections with my junior hacksaw. Imagine trying to saw while lying on your back in an enclosed space with your knees bent, acting like a vice, and holding the phone on your shoulder to receive instruction.

Having heard me swear rather loudly, Mark asked what the problem was and I informed him that I had cut through my knee! Mark asked me if I was ok. "It's only blood!" I replied. A few moments later, I swore again. Mark asked, "What's wrong now?" I told him that I had cut my other knee! Hearing me swear yet again, Mark asked, "What's the matter now? You've only got two knees." I said, "I know—this time I've cut my finger!"

During the call with Mark, I told him that there was a major design fault with the hatch and that it was absolutely useless, and perhaps he should inform the management what rubbish it was. (After the crossing, when I was back in England, Mark phoned to ask how things were. It was then I found out he was actually the boss, and they had developed a new hinge!)

After cutting the tube, I had to cut through a bolt which took some time. I had to cut it precisely, so that it protruded through the end of the tube. Once this was done, they had to be joined together. Without a welding kit, all I had on hand to join them was the sticky tape wrapped around my food. The hinge was protected by a plastic cover,

which was held in place with some tape. This whole operation operation took over five hours! For the next four days I endured yet another storm and was stuck in my cabin the whole time. Thankfully, the hinge worked and, after the initial failure, it went on to survive the duration of the challenge.

The sea was undulating with 20 to 25 foot swells, visibility was down to approximately 100 yards and it was very quiet. The only noise was from the 'splash', 'splash' of my blades going into the water, and then suddenly there was a 'splosh.' I was puzzled as to where this other sound was coming from. After about five minutes I managed to angle the kayak in such a way that I could see behind me. Lo and behold there was a huge dorsal fin! As I looked to the left of my cockpit I saw the head of a killer whale directly below me. My initial reaction was to paddle to the right to get away and to shake it off. Believe it or not, the whale followed me. So I then paddled to the left—it stayed with me. I then paddled in a circle but it still stayed with me. After what seemed like a long time, I stopped paddling and shouted, "Get lost!" and to my amazement, it did! The consequences of being up-ended by a whale would be disastrous, because it could severely damage the boat.

The Canadian Coast Guard informed me (through Jim) that I was too far north. For a very long time now, the current was keeping me going northwards as opposed to south. This was making me very anxious because I was in an Icelandic current and not the Gulf Stream, which is where I had hoped to be. If I continued to drift north, I was afraid I would miss Ireland altogether and be heading towards more treacherous waters.

Luckily the winds changed to north-westerlies, which helped to steer me back on course.

Two hundred miles from Ireland, paddling in a Force five or six, I sighted my first ship after many weeks of no human contact. As I paddled towards it, I saw that it was the deep-sea fishing boat Mendoza. I approached and paddled around the boat. I shouted, "Good morning!" Their faces were a picture and they kept looking at each other, pointing at me in total disbelief.

From the time I repaired the broken hatch, I was unable to vent the cabin. Condensation



cockpit and the hatch to the 'cabin'

had built up considerably. Over the following weeks the electronics become troublesome due to the moisture. Four days away from the finish, the main phone ceased to function. The only option open to me was to use the emergency mobile phone, which, due to the limited power source, provided just two days of communication with the out-

could spend another night sleeping at sea with the cliffs so close—I was determined to paddle as far as I could and then land. About 17:00 hours I saw a small fishing boat and asked where the nearest harbour was. They told me and I headed towards the village of Beldereg, County Mayo.

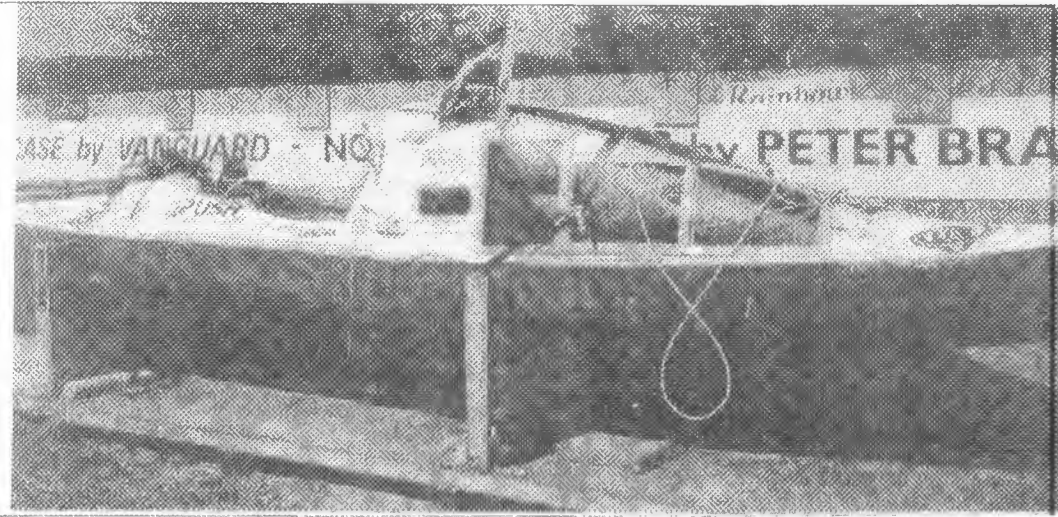
Upon entering the harbour, I spotted two gentlemen and shouted to them. At the same time a Coast Guard helicopter flew overhead. I had been forewarned that a helicopter might come looking for me. I tied the kayak up to the harbour wall and climbed up the ladder. The two gentlemen offered to help but I flatly refused, explaining that I had to walk on my own first. As I took my first step, I fell over onto my knees. The gentlemen asked, "Can we help you

side world. If this wasn't bad enough, the tracking device also started to act up. While in contact with Jim, he informed me Stratos' was having trouble locating me via the tracking system. Unfortunately, the communication and tracking devices were not designed to withstand such battering in a small craft like a kayak. The fact that they had worked so well for so long under such adverse conditions is a credit to the company that manufactured and fitted them. Forty-eight hours away from landing, the condensation situation worsened. Consequently the whole system shut down. In spite of all these problems, I was not fazed as I knew it was only a matter of days before I reached land. 09:12 hours on September 4, I spotted land to the south! I paddled east and the wind pushed me towards the land. From analysing the surrounding land features, I knew I was in Donegal Bay. During that night as I mopped out the cabin with a chamois cloth, I spotted three lights on the horizon. I soon realised what they were, and quickly got undressed from my one-piece fleece suit and lunged into the cockpit, naked—I had no time to get into my paddling gear!—as a fishing trawler missed me by a mere 100 feet! At dawn there was a thick sea mist encroaching, but around lunchtime the mist cleared to reveal the cliffs of southern Ireland. There was no way I

now?" "Yes, please do," I replied. When I asked, "Where am I?" they looked confused. I explained that I had just paddled from St. Johns in Newfoundland and had been at sea for 76 days. They helped me around to their cottage, approximately 300 yards away, where I was offered a cup of tea—my first hot substance in 74 days. While I was drinking the tea, the helicopter landed in a nearby field. Jim and the air crew jumped out and escorted me to the helicopter. We flew to Killybegs—the place where my friends and family had been waiting for more than three days for my arrival.

The helicopter touched down on a football pitch in Killybegs where numerous friends, family, and the media gathered to meet me. After the initial greetings I was taken to the local hospital for a medical check up. The doctor was astounded by how fit and healthy I was, considering my ordeal. Most people were impressed that I was able to walk (if a bit wobbly at times), since I had been confined in a small area for a long time and was unable to use my legs properly.

The aim was to raise £100,000 for two children's hospice organisations, and to achieve the 'Everest of kayaking.' With the right boat, equipment, and mental attitude, I knew I could succeed in making a solo, unsupported crossing of the Atlantic.



Global Positioning System of GPS



Within a few years, we'll all be relying on GPS - which stands for Global Positioning System - to show us the road ahead. So what on Earth is GPS? Well, in fact it's something quite literally out of this world.

In a roundabout way, GPS was born while the US was all at sea. In the twilight of the arms race came the desire for precision targeting - the ability to strike accurately from afar. During that period, most of the US's nuclear weapons were on the ocean wave, transported in the hulls of boats and submarines.

To hit with pinpoint accuracy, fleet commanders needed to narrow down their launch positions to within a few feet - a key factor behind the creation of the Global Positioning System. On US Department of Defence (DoD) blueprints, the idea seems straightforward: put two-dozen satellites into criss-crossing orbits and set them to beam a continuous stream of location and time data back to Earth. Back on the ground, a portable GPS receiver can then be used to pick up the GPS data and use it to determine its position extremely accurately.

The implementation took many years and by the time the network was operational, the world had moved on. The cold war had

thawed and the US military found further applications for GPS technology, like coordinating ground-based operations and bombing raids during the Gulf War.

Since they're nothing more than data-carrying radio waves, GPS signals have always been freely accessible to the wider world. However, until recently the DoD used encryption to degrade the accuracy of the positioning data - a policy known as 'selective availability' - burdening non-military receivers with a 100m margin of error.

In May last year, the US decided to switch off selected availability during peacetime — granting civilians access to navigational tools newly-blessed with pinpoint accuracy. The upshot is that GPS is now taking off as a consumer technology. Where once you would have had to spend big money for even a basic receiver, powerful handheld models can now be picked up for under £100 and car manufacturers are fitting GPS-based route-planning equipment to many models.

THE BASICS

The principle behind GPS is a basic mathematical equation: **speed x time = distance**. The speed of the radio signal from the satellites is constant - light

speed (186,000 miles per second). Since the time it takes the signal to reach the receiver is also known (the satellites contain a highly-accurate atomic clock and the signals are time-stamped), the receiver's distance from the satellite can be calculated. With enough satellites, a GPS receiver can pinpoint its position precisely.

How exactly?

When a GPS receiver locks on to three signals (at least five satellites are always 'visible' at any time, at any point on Earth), it works out the signals' point of intersection and so calculates its own position. The more signals there are, the more precise the positioning. This all happens in a flash and thousands of times a second, ensuring an accurate fix even when moving at high speed.

This being three-dimensional space, the circles are actually spheres and if four spheres are used (for instance, four satellite signals), the GPS receiver's altitude can also be calculated. This is known as 'resection' and not, as commonly believed, triangulation.

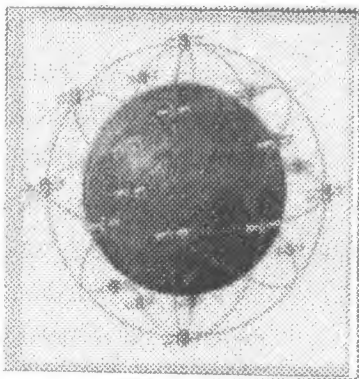
THE SCIENCE

The global positioning system is a constellation of 24 satellites, each of which orbits the Earth twice a day at an altitude of 10,900 nautical miles. The last was shot

into space in March 1994, completing a formation designed to ensure that at least five of the Rockwell-built Navstar satellites are above the horizon at any one time, at any point on Earth.

The time it takes for a satellite's signal to reach the surface of the planet is minuscule-as short as 0.06 of a second. A GPS receiver uses signal speed, along with travel time to perform calculations enabling the receiver to determine its (and hence its owner's) position in three-dimensional space (latitude, longitude and altitude).

In order to tune in to a data stream, a receiver must be in line-of-sight contact with the transmitting satellite. For this reason, GPS technology does not work underground or beneath water



and can be unreliable in towns and cities with sky-obscuring high-rise buildings. Atmospheric conditions can also affect the GPS signals but GPS receivers use complex mathematical models to compensate for this.

WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT

There are some key points that potential GPS receiver purchasers should bear in mind. Walkers should concentrate on devices with route-tracing features, such as waypoint logging and built-in compasses. Climbers a GPS

receiver with barometric facilities.

Lightweight devices that display contour maps on a small, monochrome screen are useful for outdoor types but colourful screens whose maps are much easier to read at a glance. Drivers should consider in-car GPS systems that provide spoken directions, allowing eyes to stay focused on the road.

Globetrotters, meanwhile, should look out for devices with switchable maps. All GPS receivers can pinpoint a location using latitude and longitude but not all can plot this on an overview map. More advanced handsets can be configured with highly detailed maps, transferred from a computer as required.

Encryption is the science of scrambling data - be it text, audio, or video - so that it can only be read by the authorised sender and recipient. Encryption can also be used to embed identifying markings in data, so that it can't be undetectably falsified.

GPS receiver is a device which receives positioning data from orbiting satellites in order to calculate its exact co-ordinates anywhere on earth

Taken from the Sunday Times, 22nd December, 2001

Likely story of the week

A meteorologist says ancient seafarers charted their position by dipping their testicles into the sea. Penehuro Lefale told a conference in Samoa that sailors used this method to test the water to see how far away from land they were. The further away they were, the more their scrotums tightened. "If their testicles shrank they knew they were moving away from land," he insisted.

The World Wildlife Fund - Ocean Recover Summit and The Edinburgh Declaration for Oceans Recovery Our Dynamic Earth Centre Edinburgh 23rd October 2001

The venue for this prestigious summit could not have been bettered. Situated just off Edinburgh's Holyrood Royal Park the "Our Dynamic Earth" Centre is well worth a visit in its own right. Its lecture theatre was filled to capacity with invited guests to witness presentations in support of the WWF Oceans Recovery campaign.

Contributions in person and by video were delivered by a great variety of experts in different fields from Cabinet Minister, Margaret Beckett to the celebrity Chef Ross Burdon, who doubles as an active marine biologist.

Of particular current interest was the input from Martha Holms of the BBC Natural History Unit about the filming for the Blue Planet series, including many spectacular shots which did not make it to the small screen.

Competently chaired by Michael Grade CBE, the Summit was followed by a buffet lunch in the centre's Stratosphere area. Here, the opportunity was taken to lobby about the lack of support for cleaning up our inshore waters, demonstrated by some local authorities.

The Edinburgh Declaration in support of the Oceans Recovery Campaign was signed, on behalf of the Scottish Canoe Association and British Canoe Union, by the Association's Honorary President, Duncan R Winning OBE.

Sea Kayaking Cooking Equipment By Harry and Chris Simpson, Balerno, Scotland

LOST — a friend

I lost a very dear friend, friend who supported me through some hard times and whose friendship meant a lot to me. It started through mail, and we never personally met. I was really sad to find that Peter Clark (of Paddlers International) is "at least at piece".

Now is too late.

However, I would like to see published a short exert from one of his e-mails, letting some light on a part of his life that, I am sure, not many Paddlers International members knew about.

This e-mail I received in Belgrade on 7 May 1999 while NATO missiles were aiming over my country: "You, and all those suffering in the conflict have my deepest sympathy enduring, what I consider, the unnecessary conflict in your country. People should be able to sort out their problems without resorting to aggression of any kind, but then not everybody is that intelligent.

"I have experienced bombing of a civilian population, though it was supposed to crush the morale of the people it did exactly the opposite. I lived in London as a child, during the Nazi bombing, over 200 days and nights, hundreds of thousands of properties were completely destroyed, and many people were killed, maimed or just left completely homeless. We moved from house to house, four in all, and everyone was bombed, many of my relatives lost their lives.

"People have to live through a war, experience the degradation and devastation before they are able to accept that it is something that nobody should ever experience. I hope peace and harmony soon descends over the whole of the former Yugoslavia, and that people will learn to coexist as human beings."

I was not surprised to hear that Paddlers International amalgamated to ISKA after Peter resigned: PI was more than a club, it was a bunch of Peter's personal friends and in Paddlers World, PI's newsletter, we all wrote on who has recently married or got a child at least as much as on paddling issues. We all miss him dearly.

**Yours in canoeing,
Dragan & Duda Simic
Gaborone, Botswana
d_v_simic@yahoo.com**

Sea Kayaking Cooking Equipment

By Harry and Chris Simpson, Balerno, Scotland

On our trip to Sweden, with Karin, I spent the first evening, camped on a rock somewhere in the Baltic, taking my Whisperlite stove to bits to get it to work. It was brand new and had been tested at home with unleaded petrol and Coleman fuel. I opted for Coleman fuel, as it seemed less sooty. After a bit of persistence I did get it to work, basically, we had no alternative. The priming either involves letting some of the fuel out and setting fire to it, at the risk of losing your eyebrows or using some kind of starting paste, both of which are fiddly and has to be done every time you turn the stove on. On the plus side, once you get it going, it is great and is easily turned up or down. Fuel is easily obtained and it does have a range of fuel options. Once you turn it off, between courses or whatever, you have the hassle of starting it again. For me the Whisperlite is for mountaineers who by need every ounce of heat they can get. And the way it is expensive.

Forever to boil

The first thing against the Trangia is that it does not fit in Valley hatches. The second thing is that it takes forever to boil. Methylated spirits are not recognised in the US where the nearest thing appears to be denatured alcohol but I await our American colleagues to keep me right on that one. My son took a party of boy scouts to the US (a few years ago) and he had the problem of finding meths, only to be told by one of the scouts, who shall remain nameless, that he had brought a bottle in his suitcase!! The dubious benefit of covering your dixies with soot is a big price to pay for not cleaning them! A little soot goes a long way. So having tried all kinds of stoves over the years, from petrol, paraffin, meths, solid fuel and even Camping Gaz, which kind of stove do we use? We use a Primus gas stove using re-sealable cartridges burning a mixture of

Propane and Butane. Screw the cylinder on to the stove, ala Whisperlite, turn the gas on and click the piezo ignition. Stove on and fully controllable. Turn it off between courses without a second thought. No smelly hands, no priming, no lost eyebrows.

Biggest advantage

The biggest advantage to me is that I can get a cup of tea in bed in the morning, as my wife can light the stove. Chris also says that the stove is just as hot as the Whisperlite and your hands and food do not smell of petrol. We had a Coleman version first, as we were going to the US, and thought that we would be able to get cylinders over there. We got them eventually but only with a lot of searching. The piezo packed up on it after a year, and we exchanged it for the current Primus version. Karin and most of our European friends that we paddle with favour this kind of stove. Another plus is that it is not expensive. A 440 gm cylinder usually cooks the meals for two for a week, including a litre flask of hot water for lunchtime stops. Cylinders are available relatively easily and you are not restricted to a single manufacturer. I have tried really cheap Propane/Butane cylinders from B&Q but they don't work. It is as though only one of the gases is burning and you have to keep shaking it to keep it going.

An adapter

Finally I have an adapter that "converts" non re-sealable canisters into re-sealable ones, which means that we can use almost any gas canister. We use stainless steel dixies that seem to stand the rigours of being dropped on beaches better than aluminium. An aluminium teapot is a single purpose luxury that cools down quickly and is too small to fill a thermos flask or make two decent cups of tea.

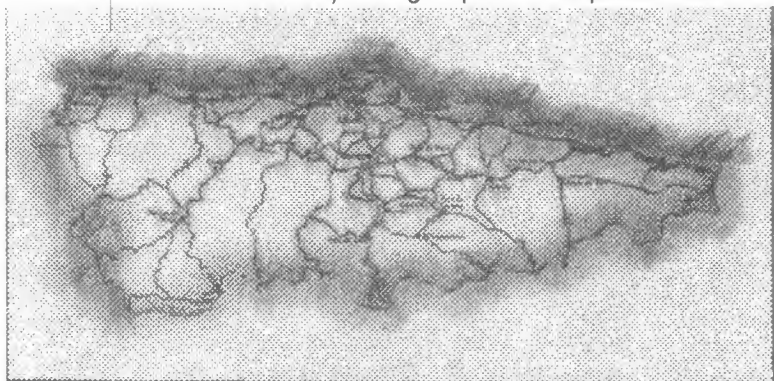
Destination . . .

Cliffs and Waves

La Costa Asturias

byPHILIPPE
LASNIER

The Gulf of Biscay is well known for its rough waters and the north coast of Spain is particularly inhospitable with cliffs falling down to the ocean and big rollers crashing onto its few beaches. So the challenge proposed to the European paddlers for the International Sea Kayak Adventure 2001 trip was a difficult one. 15 experienced paddlers attempted it but 3 of them withdrew after the first day. The group was composed with 6



Asturias coast, divided in two parts by Cabo Peñas

women and 9 men, 1 English, 1 Swedish, 2 Spanish, 2 Dutch, 2 Italian, 4 German and 3 French. In spite of the difficulties, the weather was relatively clement and we enjoyed this trip along the rocky coast with its mountainous backdrop.

Monday, August 20th

15 kayaks were lying on Playa de Peñarronda, which we had to roll, drag and carry from the camping place nearby. We look at the dumping waves with perplexity. We have to get out through that! Ever the gallant gentlemen, it's girls first! This way they can have a big push. Carmela capsized. Eventually, with a few difficulties, there

are 13 of us on the other side of the breaking zone. However, Dieter and Guy are still on the beach and are signalling us. Jacques goes back to them, taking his VHF radio so we can stay in touch. Dieter had capsized because his foot-brace came apart in the powerful surf. We wait about an hour in the boats while it is repaired. Finally, it is about noon when we set off. Two hours late!

We stop for lunch at Viavélez, protected from the waves at the far end of the harbour. We decide to cancel the middle afternoon stop because of the lost two hours. Carmela is paddling very slowly and we must tow her all the afternoon. Astri also needs a tow. Her arm aches. She still has not completely recovered from a bear attack in Canada in September 2000. In the afternoon, Gerard capsizes and we have difficulty getting him back in his kayak. In spite of our recommendations, he was not wearing his life-jacket and his kayak had no pump. Some of us, far ahead, didn't hear anything and continued to Playa de Navia where we landed with difficulties because of the rollers dumping on the sand. The others rescued and then towed Gerard to a small harbour before joining the first group.

Tomorrow we will have to discuss the problems. Gerard joins us in the evening, with a local Spanish paddler who helped with transport. He decides to withdraw, which seems wise.

Tuesday, August 21st

All the morning we discuss and analyse the events of the previous day. There are several concerns. Paddling without wearing a life-

jacket in a force 5 wind is taking a risk for all the group (Tito also was not wearing one). It is not possible to continue towing Carmela all the trip. Due to the weather conditions, we have to be in closer contact. Tito and Carmela decided to withdraw and to visit the country instead of paddling.

We launch at the beginning of the afternoon after a tiring portage, because it's low tide. Eventually, we are now twelve: Guy (GB), Gabi and her daughter Becci (D), Jürgen (D), Dieter (D), Federico (E), Carmen (E), Astri (NL), Anders (S), Brigitte (F), Jacques (F) and me (F). Becci is thirteen. I accepted a dispensation of the minimum eighteen years old rule on our trips because she is a very good paddler, she proved she was up to it. The oldest, Jürgen, is seventy four. He too will have no problem because he is used to paddling all the through the year and is really fit.

The weather is very fine today. The group returns to its normal serenity. Our arrival at Playa de Otur is in the surf. Carmen does an eskimo roll. We improve our landing technique: it will prove to be useful. The first paddler lands alone. Then, from the beach, he directs the others so that they can avoid the biggest wave sets. Sometimes some of us wade back into the water, to stabilise and take the stern of some of the kayaks as they arrive through the surf.

Wednesday, August 22nd

A wonderful wild cat is climbing the cliff above our tents, glaring at us for having invaded it's territory. Weather forecast is west then north about 3 to 4. It's high tide. The sun is rising through the fog. We launch into the dumping surf. We need about half an hour to get the whole group out through the breakers, not counting the portage of loaded kayaks: needing four of us to carry each one (six for Jacques!!!).

Passing by Luarca, we are surprised by several explosions. It is a feast-day and the locals are setting off some very big fireworks in daylight. Luckily we are paddling far out from the coast because suddenly huge sets start passing by, breaking irregularly but with incredible force. This swell, coming from the middle of Atlantic is at least four metres high. The wind is turning east, in front, but

still low about 2 to 3. The swell increases to eight metres at times. It's very impressive! We passed the Guardia Civil del Mar boat. They know we are there, having been told by the coast-guards. They don't manage to contact us but look to see if all is O.K.

Nearing Cabo Busto, a zodiac meets us. Locals warn us about passing too near to the approaching headland. From the top of the swells we begin to see the danger. We round Cabo Busto a long way out, to avoid any difficulties. The sight of the eight-metre swell crashing onto submerged rocks is awe inspiring.

At three in the afternoon, we landed on Playa de Cadavedo. The entrance to the bay is difficult to find because of the big swell crashing onto the rocks and cliffs but the beach is protected and the landing is not difficult. Astri is tired after five hours on the water. The next possible landing point being three more hours paddling away, we decided to call a halt for the day.

This evening, we have dinner at the beach restaurant. We have few places for the tents. We are obliged to pitch them on the path by the local fishing boats and indeed, some of us end up sleeping in these boats!

Thursday, August 23rd

Carmen and I have been ill during the night. Probably from bad water or food. In spite of this, we launch. I am not well. Carmen, being better than me when we started, becomes very poorly en route. Fortunately, there is no wind. The big swell has decreased but is still four metres high. The passing of Cabo Vidio is another extraordinary sight, with eight metre waves. We landed at Playa de San Pedro at about one PM. Some of us capsized. Carmen recruited some porters...

Considering that some of us being ill, we decided to stay put. There was a camping site above the beach there, but it had been closed. Nevertheless, it was a beautiful place to pitch our tents and even had a cold shower. Being very tired, I had difficulty in pitching my tent. Astri give me a helping hand and then I collapsed inside to sleep. Upon waking, I learn that it is Guy's turn to be ill and he has a bad fever. Carmen is better. I have still some problems with my stomach.

It is a feast-day and the locals are setting off some very big fireworks in daylight.

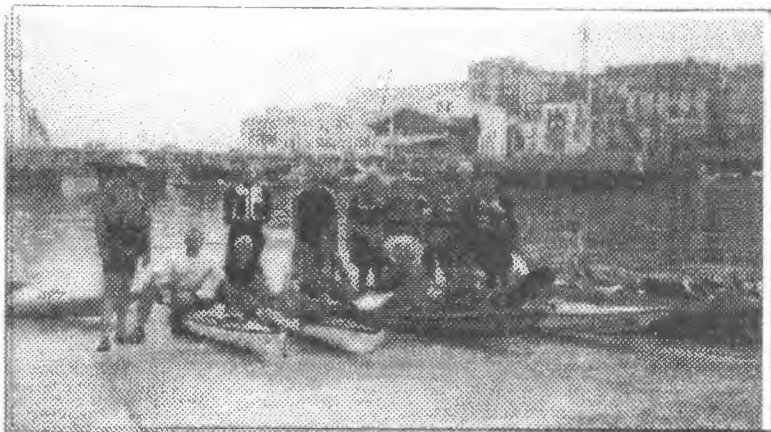
Friday, August 24th

Today was planned as a day off. Guy suffered in the night with his stomach and fever. Carmen organised Luis, the man in charge of cleaning the beach, to take him to the local doctor. The doctor didn't even examine him but gave him some medicine against this "tourista" illness he knows well.

During the afternoon, Anders, Federico and Jacques went surfing in the rollers on the beach. In spite of wanting to join them, I am not enough well enough to do so and stay by the tents. Brigitte is improving her eskimo-roll with Carmen's help in Rio Esqueiro, a small river near our campsite. Becci is drawing for us. She comes up with an animal for everyone and makes a drawing, which she sticks on each tent as a souvenir. Then the Guardia Civil visit us. Camping is forbidden here. Carmen, negotiating, talks them into allowing us to stay until the morning. A little later they come back with their chief. They order us to strike the tents, except Guy's because he is still not well. This night, we will sleep under the stars! Nevertheless, a treat is in store for the evening. Guy had stopped at the village fishmonger on the way back from the doctor to buy some tuna steaks. Jacques cooks these over a campfire on a griddle, near the river. With foil-baked potatoes, it's a very tasty meal.

Saturday, August 25th

Launching in rollers. Those launching first generally fared better, as the others helped



The twelve European paddlers, before leaving Gijón

them to time their departure in between sets. I managed to get hit by eight big waves in succession, each breaking over my head. Normally, there were not more than three or four big waves per set. I don't understand

why all of a sudden they had to double up! I lost my bag of fishing gear from off my deck but luckily Federico retrieved it. Later this evening, I will find that I have damaged my spectacles. Guy, who is still not fully recovered, paddles in front. Our rhythm is good. The weather forecast is for a southerly force 3, which we will have in the afternoon but for now it's a flat calm. Occasionally there is still a big swell, but little waves from the wind. We had planned a stop at San Esteban de Pravia harbour but the big swell against the strong current of the Rio Nalón dissuades us from trying this difficult entrance, where steep waves are breaking. Passing Cabo Vidrias is very impressive. There is a accentuation effect on the waves between Isla la Deva and the main land, just before the cape, in the place we pass. It is very exciting. You can see others, not more than ten metres away laterally but about six metres below, then above you!

The entrance to the bay of Santa Maria del Mar is one of the most impressive and interesting yet. At first we can't spot a gap between the waves washing against the cliffs on the left and those on the right. We are a long way out but the breaking zone seems to extend in all the way in to the beach! Jacques goes ahead and I listen to his comments on the VHF radio. It is possible, with good timing, to find a safe passage through. After a while, the waves are not so hard. We land in surf at low tide on a black sand beach.

The official camp-site is full and only a few places for tents at the top are remaining. We decide that it is too far and too high, so bring the kayaks to the top of the beach. We will wait for dark and pitch the tents here, although it is forbidden. It's Gabi's turn to be ill and Guy still has a bad stomach. With Becci and Astri, they will go to sleep at the camp-site, to be near to the toilets. Meanwhile, we will look after the kayaks.

Sunday, August 26th

In spite of the proximity of a night-club to the beach and the singing youngsters coming and going during the night, we slept better than those in the camping site.

We launch in a calm sea with small waves. Clouds soon give way to sun and we have good weather. Guy and Gabi are still not well. There is sometimes a little swell. We

pass Cabo Peñas without any difficulty, avoiding breakers between the cape and Isla Erbosa. At the cape there is a cave passing through the headland, which we could have paddled through, weather permitting. But the swell is still too interesting for that.

Today, again, we have cancelled the lunch stop because of the lack of landing sites.

At Playa de Bañugues, the Spanish Red Cross Coast-Guards say we are not allowed to land because the beach is reserved for swimmers. Fortunately, the waves are small, this area being protected from the swell by Cabo Peñas. We turn back to find another place. At Playa de Monielo, we find a small paradise. This bay is protected by rocks, making a shelter for fishing boats, and for the first time since our start we land without surf. We put the boats on pebbles. The only building is a restaurant with a grassy parking area where we are allowed to pitch our tents.

We enjoy the sunny afternoon: sunbathing, a little swim in warm water. We end in the evening having dinner at the restaurant. The big room at the top is only for us and we are served by the owner herself. The atmosphere is very good and the evening will end with a French Basque song, with body movements, which will finish in a lot of laughing.

Monday, August 27th

To treat our invalids and relax a little, we have decided to have a lie in. It's raining a little when we strike the tents. We launch at noon, under the eyes of tourists and restaurant owners who come to see our start. The grey sky will soon give way to the sun. The wind is north-east 2 to 3 and the sea is calm. There is a big contrast with the first section, before Cabo Peñas. We make a short stop at the next beach where a friend of Carmen's, an old K1 paddler, is renting kayaks to tourists. He takes a picture of the group on the beach, which fills rapidly with curious people.

We pass the wonderful Zona Residencial Perlorá, composed by small beautiful holiday houses, reserved for mining people. We always fish but catch nothing. A few days ago Carmen took a small fish but, it being too small for twelve starving paddlers, threw it back into the water. This was the only fish caught during the trip. A marked contrast to Norway, where we caught and ate a great

variety of fish every day.

A gas carrier ship is waiting off Gijón before entering the harbour. We stop for a short time on Playa de Xivares before entering the town. The waves are tall because nothing is protecting the beach from the open sea. Brigitte capsizes when landing and then Guy, crazily, manages to go over in just twenty centimetres of water! He has a wet exit, not being able to eskimo-roll because of lack of water. Seeing this, Becci is afraid and doesn't want to land. We raft my kayak alongside hers and land together as Jacques and Anders take our sterns when passing. We stop on the sand without any difficulty.

After lunch, we paddle out through the waves. The water is incredibly hot in some places. There are enormous gas tanks on the top of the hill near Cabo de Torres, behind which is Gijón town. Passing the headland is very beautiful and a contrast with the sea wall that we come upon next, protecting the harbour. Before crossing the channel, we have to wait for the "Polar Sky", which had been waiting for the pilot and now is entering the harbour. Seeing the town is now a big contrast with all landscapes we had before.

Two local paddlers came out to us and guided us to the sailing club slipways. We are welcomed there by Pepin, the president, who shows us to the hot showers and lets us lay our bedding out on the floor in the club.

This evening, in the town, we visit a wonderful fishing store. The owner explains to us how to catch the fish we have been after, without any success, since the beginning of the trip. Some of us buy fishing lines, hooks and lures. Afterwards we go to a restaurant. The speciality in this area is cider (cidra). Nothing at all like the cider from Brittany. This one is more acid and less filtered. Before drinking it, you must oxygenate it.

Tuesday, August 28th

We had a huge thunderstorm during the night. Fortunately, we were inside. Guy and Anders came back early in the morning, after having quality-tested several pubs in the town. It was at this moment that Guy slipped to the water, in his attempt to gather a few crabs to keep Jacques company in his sleeping bag...

The weather forecast says a low pressure

Brigitte capsizes when landing and then Guy, crazily, manages to go over in just twenty centimetres of water!

system is coming over Portugal. For us it's a 3 to 5 wind coming from north-east, with gusts up to 6, with thunders. The trolley used by the sailing club for dinghies helps us to bring the kayaks down to the water. Pepin has come to see us off. We have poor visibility, but the wind is still low.

At Playa España, where we had planned to stop, the waves are dumping directly on the sand and it seems difficult to land. We go on to the next beach, named Playa de Merón, where we land in surf. We have lunch on the grass, above the pebbles and the sandy beach. The sun is coming out, warming us a little, but the wind is coming too.

There is no possibility to land along the next



The whole group, before Anders leaving

section of coast until Tazones. Astri's arm is aching less, helped by massages. The pretty village of Tazones is nestling among the hills. On the east side, between the rocks, as in several places around, are some fossilised dinosaur footprints, which can be seen at low tide. Unfortunately, the swell is still too high, preventing us to come near and land. We will have to be content with our tourist-guide pictures.

We paddle up the Ria de Villaviciosa, surfing the waves upriver in the estuary, to find the camping place. Having just landed at the camp-site, we faced a memorable thunderstorm with a lot of rain. Carmela and Tito, having joined us for the evening, take shelter in the open bathroom. Eventually, the weather eases. Those who had attempted to pitch their tents now retrieve them from the shallow lake that they are floating upon, in places ten centimetres deep! Some of us will find another place for the tents and Carmen negotiates the use of a caravan for the oth-

ers. We have dinner at the restaurant and a good night.

Wednesday, August 29th

The camp-site owner is coming to make pictures of our leaving. There is little wind this morning. Surfers are playing on the Playa de Rodiles waves, just at the end of the ria.

The coast is beautiful, less arid than before Cabo Peñas, but still steep. Passing Lastres harbour, we land easily further on at Playa de la Isla, perfectly protected from the waves by some islands.

During our lunch, wind has increased coming from north-west, about 3. It is coming from our rear quarter until the next cape, which we have to round far out to sea because of the breaking waves. We continued to Ribadesella with big surf coming from behind. Nobody notices our entrance to the small town up the river. They are used to seeing kayakers there. Ribadesella is the end of a well known rally, on the river Sella, whose start is so particular with all the kayakers aligned on the bank and all the paddlers standing back, before running into the water to launch as the starter gun goes off.

We are welcomed at the nautical club by Juan Feliz, who is renting river canoes at Arriondas, the start point of the river trip, few kilometres higher. He helped us a lot during our trip, managing to transport us to the start point and to take care of our cars during the fifteen days. We pitch our tents and take hot showers. All is OK. Today is my birthday. Carmen has gone to the village to buy a wonderful birthday cake and some candles, making a surprise for me. I open a bottle of Champagne, which I had been carrying since the first day. Everyone is very pleased. Guy and Astri invite me for dinner and we finish the evening in the village.

Thursday, August 30th

The weather forecast is for a north-westerly wind about 3 to 5. Yesterday, we landed at high tide and there were only few steps to get at the top of the bank. This morning, at low tide, it is a little more difficult because of seaweed on the lower steps. The local journalist, who interviewed us back at the start, has returned with a photographer.

The grey sky is not wonderful. Certainly there is a front approaching. The wind, coming from side, pushes the waves onto

the unbroken cliffs, producing a confused sea. The paddling becomes more technical. A line-squall hits us, increasing the wind from 3 to 5. The crossing wave patterns are truly interesting but not for beginners!

Having passed Cabo de Mar, we return to a rather calmer sea. We land on a white sandy beach with just a few unbroken waves.

We started after lunch. Astri's arm is still aching. Guy must tow her. Several times I have to call Brigitte who is paddling much too near the cliffs and far from the group. In spite of my requests and those of Jacques, she never comes back to us. I think I must discuss the situation with her before she will be allowed to come again.

We soon arrive at Playa de Torimbia, the most beautiful beach of the whole coast. It is surrounded by cliffs and there is only a small opening to the sea. Unfortunately, there is not enough place for the tents at high tide, so we will not be able to camp there. So we landed at Playa de Niembro, protected from the waves by some small islands.

Friday, August 31st

It's our last day. It was raining all the night. The Guardia-Civil came at midnight to make us leave. Carmen negotiated our stay till the morning. The rain eases a little when we strike the tents. To the east, there is a bright hole in the clouds. We launch in drizzle. Wind is north-east, force 2. There are few waves. The coast is beautiful with a lot of caves and arches. We paddle near the small harbour named Llanes. The big blocks, protecting the wall inside, are painted with bright colours. It's an amazing effect, making a contrast with the low grey sky hiding the mountains behind.

For the lunch stop, we land at Paya de Vidiago, which is oriented exactly in front of the swell. Becci is afraid. We try the same rafting operation as before. The waves being greater, we try to do it with three kayaks, Becci between Guy and myself. Jacques and Anders are in the water to help. The first wave is very steep and lifts Becci and myself onto Guy's deck. He is turned sideways to us and lets go in order to free his kayak.

Jacques and Anders have not enough strength to hold us, so Becci and me begin a big surf, separated by the wave, we fall together between our boats. I eskimo-roll

taking support for my paddle on Becci's down turned kayak. As soon as I am up, Becci took a grip on my kayak to roll upright without her paddle. We rafted together and continue to the beach without any difficulty, being now in smaller waves.

Guy, landing afterwards, discovers some damage to his compass. Fortunately, no water enters it and it will be possible to repair. There were other casualties. When landing, Jürgen broke his wooden paddle in half, during an eskimo roll.

We recover our emotions, having lunch under the sun which had come during this time. Anders will leave the group here

We launch at 2 PM. The coast reveals its beautiful secrets we weren't able to approach before. There are wonderful caves and arches everywhere. Astri and I enter an impressive and long passage. The width is decreasing as we follow it, waves increasing to about two metres. It is not possible to go all the way through because waves are making the water choppy, as they rebound off the walls, then combine with others coming from the other side. We back-paddle before turning around.

We are near the end of our maritime journey. Becci, being a little tired, is towed by Jacques. Ria de Tina Mayor entry is difficult to see when we are far from the coast. It's only an indentation in the cliffs and, if we had no charts, it would have been difficult to find it. We leave the waves, entering the calm of the river. To the right, Asturias, to the left, Cantabria. We have completed our trip along these difficult waters. A smile is on Astri's face. For her it's a great achievement, after all she has been through over the year.

We land in the midst of a fun fair, in the small village of Unquera. An employee of Juan Feliz is here to ferry the drivers to their cars. We will end the evening in the nearby camp site restaurant with a glass of "melo-cotton", as unforgettable as the trip. There, Carmen will give us the two newspapers, published this day, in which we are pictured. A rendezvous is organised for next year in Finland: we will paddle in the Åland archipelago, in the middle of the Baltic Sea.

Philippe LASNIER

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To the right, Asturias, to the left, Cantabria. We have completed our trip along these difficult waters.

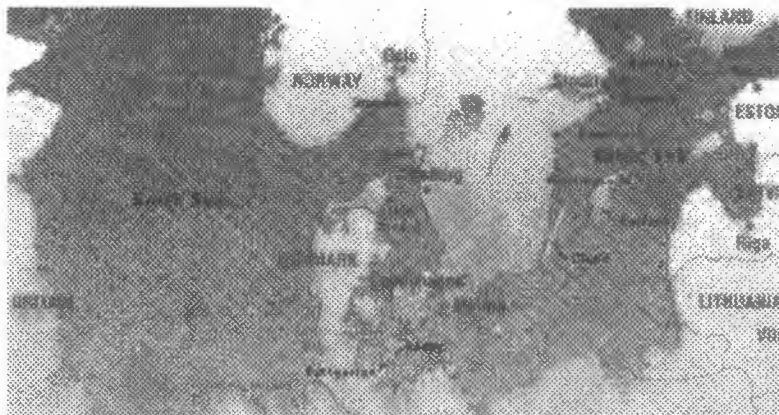
Destination . . .

See Kayak Expedition SWEDEN 2001

byMIKE
FITTER

In June Linda and I explored the North Sea archipelagos from Stromstad (near the Norwegian border) down to Gothenburg and via a different route back north to the island of Orust. During July we explored three archipelago areas in

standing of local conditions. Sweden has a relatively short summer period where historically July and August are the hottest and calmest months. We chose to start in June to avoid tourists and accepted that the weather may not be optimum.



the Baltic to the north, east and south of Stockholm. The weather was mixed, very cold initially but much warmer during July in the Baltic and F5/F6 winds were experienced on many days. We were out of the UK for 56 days and paddled on 35 of them, covering nearly 600 Km. On three occasions we met up with Swedish paddlers who joined us for a few days. This account is written as a summary of our experiences and may be of use to other paddlers thinking of kayaking in Sweden.

Preparation

Back numbers of UK canoe magazines surprisingly didn't reveal any articles but the ISKA members' directory led to email contact with Swedish paddlers and this greatly assisted our learning and under-

Travel

Ferries between Newcastle and Gothenburg, Harwich and Esbjerg (Denmark) tend to be expensive but have the potential to reduce travelling time. We opted to take the Dover/Calais ferry and drive through northern Europe, use the Puttgarten (Germany) to Rodby (Denmark) ferry and then the new tunnel and bridge between Copenhagen and Malmo in Sweden. The 1000 miles from West Sussex to Malmo took two days with an overnight stop in Germany.

TBE

Tic Born Encephalitis (TBE) is a problem in the Baltic. The disease affects the neurological system, is difficult to treat, leads to varying degrees of paralysis and in extreme conditions death. TBE wasn't mentioned in any of the tourist information or guidebooks we obtained! TBE is transmitted by ticks on animals and birds and it's on the increase, particularly in the Stockholm area. Sheep and cattle graze and deer roam freely between the islands in winter when the Baltic freezes. Sea kayakers and campers are therefore at risk in grass allowing ticks to jump onto legs and arms. Ticks move quickly to warm fleshy parts (groin, armpit etc), bury their

heads to suck blood and vary in size dependent upon how long they've been feeding. Tweezers are required to remove the black coloured tic and it's important to ensure that the head is removed to prevent other infection. I found three on one day and a family group we met were routinely removing 10 per day per child! Our local health clinic was aware but inoculations were not cheap and cost us £75 each for a course of two jabs!

Everyman's Right

Sweden enjoys an ancient right regarding public access known as "Allemansrätten" or "Everyman's Right". This allows the public to have access across other peoples land, provided you don't cause any damage or drive vehicles off the road. You can go ashore, camp and moor your boat, provided you do not go too close to houses or restricted areas, such as nature reserves, bird or seal sanctuaries.

Swedish Coastline

With literally thousands of islands making up the archipelagos that are on both the North Sea and Baltic coasts the area is just sea kayak heaven. The number of routes is almost unlimited. You can paddle way out with just ocean on one side or you can weave what ever route you like dependent upon your mood or weather. The whole of North Sea islands are more rugged with fewer trees than in the Baltic and in both areas the small outer islands just tend to be smooth glaciated rock. Many coastal villages have the picture postcard look but with the decline of the fishing industry, the houses are now mostly holiday homes and occupied for only a month or so in the summer. Not a good place to go looking for a shop or water out of season. Smaller islands may have a small number of traditional red/brown huts but the vast majority are uninhabited. Most houses, even small huts, have a flagpole to fly a national pennant when occupied.

Tide

In the Baltic there is no astronomical tidal effect and to our surprise there was only a small tidal effect on the North Sea coast. Water levels are influenced more from

change in atmospheric pressure where high pressure produces a low water effect and conversely low pressure produces a high water effect. Whilst this is largely unobservable in the UK, we saw changes in water level of about a metre. Some of the channels closer to the mainland are very shallow and may be impassable during times of high pressure. Possibly another reason to carry a barometer.

Weather

June on the North Sea coast was cold despite being sunny and cags were not often removed. On the Baltic side at the start of July there was a marked rise in temperature. The expedition was characterised by high winds where paddle leaches were a comfort and occasions when it was difficult to stand up. Finding a sheltered route and protected pitch for the night became daily routine. Due to rain, the tarp was used for two nights in the North Sea and for four nights in the Baltic.

Sea State

Distances between the islands are not large so swell and waves are not as big as on the open ocean. We found that it was possible to paddle in higher wind speeds, as the resulting sea state was not so challenging. The winds however produced very short wavelength choppy conditions and there were many occasions when a ferry glide across the water was required. Some of these were just like breaking out into a tide rip and had to be treated with respect. Many headlands and narrow channels exist to concentrate the wind and I heard a local kayaker say, "There are tides here".

Sea Kayaks

During our Croatia expedition in 2000 we felt that the capacity of our Pintail and Sirius kayaks were just too small for extended expeditions and we purchased two new Quests from P&H. Performance from the outset was impressive. Despite the winds experienced we found the skeg position could be finely "tuned" to keep the kayak on track. The boats provided a relatively dry ride into the waves and gave a feel of stability when surfing. The three

You can go ashore, camp and moor, provided you do not go too close to houses or restricted areas, such as nature reserves, bird or seal sanctuaries.

Kajaksport hatches never leaked, provided really good access even for bulky items and speeded up loading & unloading. For us the Quest proved to be an excellent expedition boat and one we will continue to use.

Navigation

Navigation in the archipelagos was a challenge and tested skills to the limit. Frequently islands could be seen in all directions and sometimes it was not possible to follow a direct compass bearing. It was very easy to get disoriented and required a reappraisal almost after every paddle stroke as the view of the islands changed so quickly. This was especially noticeable in the early days when still getting to grips with map, topography and speed particularly in following winds. We were told that the Swedes go for orientation practice in the archipelagos when the Baltic freezes in the winter and I can well believe it. To prevent being grounded the tell tale water characteristics of rocks awash were quickly learnt. We avoided boat leads (shown on the maps) but on many an occasion yachts were found well inside a maze of islands gently moored up to smooth contoured rock.

By contrast there is plenty of open water. In the approaches to Gothenburg, the largest port in all Scandinavia, multiple sea-lanes are thick with ferries, taxis, yachts and other craft. Ferries towering above islands appeared at alarming speed and the frightening sound of their horns made me jump out of my skin, as first thoughts were that it was directed at us. Even the sanctuary of being outside the shipping lanes did not relieve the tension as yachts and smaller boats still came from all directions.

Maps

We used both land based 1:50,000 Grona Karten (green maps, similar to Ordnance Survey Landranger series) and sea charts and there is no doubt in my mind that the Grona Karten maps are the easiest to navigate with. They show topographical information, boat leads, major buoyage, all the islands, rocks and even rocks awash. Sea charts show very little

land information but are good for night paddling (not much good in the summer as it does not really get dark). Grona Karten maps are available from Stanfords in London and as they usually only cover a 25Km square area you need a lot of them an extended trip. We were extremely grateful to local paddlers who very kindly lent us all the maps we needed.

On one exposed 9Km crossing in poor visibility we unexpectedly came across some low lying islands and a lighthouse. I just couldn't see the islands or lighthouse on the map. Later I discovered them hidden under the seal strip of the A3 map case.

Compass

I found a hand held orienteering compass absolutely vital and on a number of occasions used the sighting prism to help determine our position. Both boats were fitted with deck compasses.

GPS

On one occasion during an early part of the expedition I decided to use the GPS to verify our position. To my dismay the GPS gave a completely erroneous reading as the map datum and grid format for the Grona Karten map series had not been correctly set! Whilst at the Orust Kayak centre we learnt that local paddlers use another sort of GPS. A "General Purpose Stick" used to haul out kayaks over rocks. They store them in the cockpit and some have lengths of cord attached to ease recovery after launching. Thereafter in the Baltic Linda and I looked for any piece of timber or log on which to haul out our boats.

Camping

"Everyman's Right" enables wild camping and is one of Sweden's attractions from a sea kayaking perspective. TBE however impacts on the choice of pitch to be used. In the Baltic bare rock minimises the risk of picking up ticks whereas on the North Sea coastline it is safe to pitch on grass. You'd think that with so many islands to choose from and the concept of being permitted to camp almost anywhere, the search for a pitch would be simple. Alas

Ferries towering above islands appeared at alarming speed and the frightening sound of their horns made jump out of my skin.

no. Whilst there were many places, to find one out of the wind was not easy and often took some time.

We took a Terra Nova Quasar two-man tent, a tarp and gortex hooped bivi bags. It was impractical to pitch the Quasar on bare rock, as there was no effective way of pegging it down. We saw few boulder beaches but there were usually just enough loose rocks to "peg" down the tarp. Pitching the Bivi bags on bare rock was not a problem as they had few anchor points. Care was however needed to avoid small hollows that collected the monsoon rain, even when pitched under the tarp. Local paddlers use self-supporting tents (those which pitch outer first) for camping in the Baltic archipelagos.

Even with a silk liner, we found our three season sleeping bags were on the limit of comfort in June! Fires are not allowed on bare rock to prevent damage nor if there is a risk of it spreading. Three x 650mL MSR fuel bottles with petrol comfortably lasted 6 days and propane/butane 500 size canisters 5 days each.

Food

We were advised to bring as much food as possible as Sweden was "expensive" but foot and mouth restrictions prevented us taking any meat or dairy products onto the continent. A visit to Cite De Europe in Calais solved the initial shopping problem. Subsequently we felt costs were on par with the UK as the exchange rate was about 14 Kroner to the Pound at the time. We aimed to eat "fresh" wherever possible and fruit and vegetables stored well in the kayaks. We found it prudent to top up with supplies and get water whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Foraging

We were told that the fish stocks were seriously depleted in both the North and Baltic Seas. Maybe our lack of experience was not the only reason for being singularly unsuccessful and we were glad not to be relying on catching fish to supplement our diet. However mussels, winkles and blue berries were collected and eaten with relish. Sea cabbage was cooked on one occasion but its bitter, irony taste and subsequent diuretic impact put it in the "well

we tried it" category.

Water

There are no rivers on the islands. The maps show huts but these may only be occupied in summer and then only spasmodically so obtaining water can't be guaranteed. We could carry enough water for about three and a half days (30L) and on one occasion when storm bound collected rain off the tarp. Baltic sea water was used to boil vegetables, pasta and rice, as the saline content is so low. On this expedition, water was the key commodity governing how long we could stay out in the archipelagos.

Mid Summer

This is an important day characterised by dancing around a Swedish maypole to traditional music and celebration in a more liquid fashion. There are no "drink driving" laws for the water and music and sounds of jollity were often heard. In one area unsupervised young children in powered inflatables raced around us at great speed and was their way of celebrating mid summer. This was not a good day for wild camping and being in the Gothenburg area decided to go to a commercial campsite.

Conclusion

Travel options from the UK enable use of your own vehicle and kayak equipment. Allemansratten and the Swedish culture make for a very sea kayak friendly environment but TBE should not be ignored. Apart from needing to handle high winds, effective navigation skills are required to minimise stress levels and prevent early grey hairs. Sweden provides excellent sea kayak exploration potential and no doubt you could spend a lifetime exploring the archipelagos. There are many more islands further north up the Baltic coast particularly near the Finish boarder. The Finish islands of Aland 150Km north east of Stockholm offer further opportunities.

Thanks to P&H, Lendal and Phoenix of Nottingham for their support.

Mick Fitter

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On this expedition, water was the key commodity governing how long we could stay out in the archipelagos

"Sea Kayak Rescue"

by Roger Schumann & Jan Shriner — Reviewed by Melinda J. Bean

You show up all excited at your first coastal kayaking class. You get to do your first wet exit, a paddlefloat re-entry, and perhaps try a T rescue. At the end of the rescue section of the class, your instructor encourages you to practice, practice, practice, until these new skills are automatic. The next week, you and some friends get together at a local lake to practice the paddlefloat self-rescue. Now the debate begins.

Do you right the kayak before or after inflating the paddle float?

Do you position yourself at the stern or at the cockpit?

What am I doing wrong as I keep "flashing the yellow rainbow"?

Do I rotate towards the paddle or away from it?

For lucky owners of *Sea Kayak Rescue*, flipping to Chapter 5 reveals the "Step by Step" section for a Paddlefloat Self-Rescue. Here all questions are answered. Now you're wondering whether anyone ever uses this rescue for real. Seems the author anticipated this question, so at the end of the section is a sidebar called "Real

Life Rescues" where the author recounts the tale of a sea kayaker using the paddlefloat rescue in a "real life" situation. I found myself reading all the "Real Life Rescue" sidebars first. Each is interesting, some are "nailbiters".

This approach of a "Step by Step" section often accompanied by a "Real Life Rescue" sidebar gives you the general look and feel for this book. Most sea kayak books devote a chapter to rescue techniques. *Sea Kayak Rescue* is an entire book on rescues. Each rescue is described in detail.

There are several rescues and rescue techniques beyond basic paddlefloat and T-rescue which serious sea kayakers should have in their inventory of skills. The first three chapters are dedicated to preparation and prevention. Safety guidelines on dressing for immersion, checking weather and tidal forecasts, paddling within your limits, having the right gear, and bombproofing your braces are all discussed. Granted this information might seem basic to a seasoned paddler, but may

save the life of someone newer to the sport.

The authors recommend a change in the name of the basic paddlefloat rescue and T-rescue to "Paddlefloat Recovery" and "T-Recovery". They emphasize there is nothing wrong with tipping over - you pushed the envelope and tried something new. You just "recover" and move on. To me, this equates to my many falls on a ski slope. I was never "rescued", just "recovered" and

continued my path downhill. Seems a single name change might minimize some of the initial fear and apprehension of a new sea kayaker learning these skills.

Roger Schumann is an ACA Instructor Trainer Educator and Jan Shriner is an ACA Instructor Trainer. Consequently, the descriptions and techniques presented in this book closely mirror the training guidelines of the ACA. This makes *Sea Kayak Rescue* an excellent resource for those taking ACA coastal kayak courses or seeking ACA coastal kayak instructor certification.

For those new to sea kayaking, this book is a definite add to the library. I also recommend this book to those with more experience as an excellent reference book

"I Paddled My Own Canoe"

by Oliver J. Cock, MBE

I have known Oliver for ever. I first came across him whilst undertaking a course at Plas Y Brenin Mountain Centre in North Wales. As I became more involved with the sea kayaking scene 'a la' the BCU and became Coaching Officer for the East of England, etc. I became to know him well and was the richer for it. He has been a member of our Association since it's inception. His name is mentioned in the BCU Coaching Manual, when it describes the early days of competitive canoeing. With Brian Sheen, Kristine Apps and Jack Travers he wrote the 7-volume Canoe Lifeguard Manual, particularly the sections on Reading Water and on Weather Forecasting. You should add it to your canoeing library not only because of the subject material but also because of WHO wrote it. Educated in England and Switzerland, Oliver Cock began his working life as a mechanical engineer. In the Depression he joined the family wine-shipping business and during the Second World War he was called up as an engi-

neer. Afterwards he went back to the family business and began to devote all his spare time to canoeing. To this day, Oliver Cock doesn't know what prompted him to buy a folding canoe from a former colleague who was setting up his own business. But he was instantly hooked. From those days in the Depression, when he spent his weekends and holidays canoeing and filming expeditions, to the present time, the thrilling sport has been a way of life. For some years, he followed a career, first as a mechanical engineer and then travelling with the family wine business, but canoeing eventually overtook his working life too. He has coached the British team in wild-water racing and he has set up a proficiency testing scheme. His main concern has always been that those who love for the sport should be well trained and practise it safely. He formed a committee to test canoeing proficiency for The British Canoe Union and became coach to the British slalom team. "One day when training with the

slalom team. I picked up a tennis ball and threw it at somebody. He threw it back. The game became more and more spirited. We started throwing footballs at each other, then picking two teams and seeing which scored the most goals; with entirely imaginary posts each side of the river. Thus started canoe polo! World championships are already being held! He also became the BCU's National Coach, going round the country teaching school teachers how to teach canoeing safely. Even when he retired in 1982 at the age of 70, he got involved with another variation of the sport, becoming President of the British Dragon Boat Racing Association. Twenty years later, he has just retired to live a quieter life.

£16.45 (inc p&p). Copyright reserved, ISBN 1 85776 539 7

Published by: The Book Guild Ltd, Temple House, 25 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2LU.

Tel: 01273 472534, Fax: 01273 476472. E-mail: monty@bookguild.co.uk



Letters . . .

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

Write to us about all things paddling and any bee in your bonnet you want to air. Ask other readers about trips you plan or kit you might buy—ed

Hello, John,

My subscription renewal form and cheque are on the way by snail mail. No problem at all with the slight increase its still well worth the money.

I read issue #44 immediately on receipt over the weekend and was very interested in Patricia Benoit's letter regarding "The World's Most Beautiful Bays Club" and how they are planning a visit to Carbis Bay next June. I wonder if you would be so kind as to pass my contact details onto her as I would like to join them if I can.

I imagine that you probably have already answered her queries about the two local clubs who do a lot of sea kayaking - namely Penzance CC and Hayle CC both of which I am a member.

As a Cornishman, there was just one point in Patricia's letter that I would correct - Mounts Bay and Carbis Bay (she refers to it as St. Ives Bay) are both in Cornwall not England.

*Regards
Jerry Rogers*

Hello, John,

Hope you remember me from the expedition to Cape Horn!!!

Fortunately I have found your mail again...So I wanted to tell you that we have made another expedition, this time to the Isla de los Estados (Staten Island) where the Lighthouse of the End of the World was settled and made famous by the Julius Verne novel!! So, if you are interested in this new expedition you will find any info in our site: www.findelmundoexpediciones.net.

For further info, please, do not hesitate in contact me!!

*Kindest regards,
Pablo Basombrio.*

Hello, John

I saw you'd had an enquiry from in ISKA about air travel with sea kayaks and the transportation costs etc. Joyce Frank's letter, January 2002.

In fact costs can be very low if you play your cards right! The trick is to shorten the kayak so they can store it in the plane easily.

Stan Chladek and Nigel Dennis decided to circumnavigate Easter Island a couple of years ago... not a huge distance, but quite challenging, as it sits squarely in the South East Trades and the coast-line has very few landing places.

I'd always wanted to go to Easter Island, (I'd been fascinated by Thor Heyerdahl's book "Aku-aku" which I'd read twenty odd years ago.) so volunteered to go as their land back-up party - there seemed to be a need for a person on-shore to help guide them in through the surf to a safe landing. In the past Easter Island was visited by ship once every six months or so if they were lucky. But NASA decided they wanted an emergency landing strip for their space shuttle in the Eastern Pacific, so offered to build the Easter Islanders a runway F.O.C. that could be used by Jumbos as well. So now it is possible to fly in from Santiago.

For many years now we've produced split versions of all our glassfibre kayak designs by fitting double bulkheads that can be bolted together with stainless bolts.

We made a Nordkapp for Stan in three pieces. The centre cockpit section fitted into a specially made haversack that he carried on his back and the bow and stern sections were fitted with handles so he could carry one in each hand. Since he could pre-pack all his gear except his passport into the kayak, he just checked in his rather unusually

shaped luggage in the normal way. Not only that, he was within the weight limit, (the luggage, not Stan himself) and he only paid the normal air-fare... no excess baggage charges.

The boats weigh very little more than normal, and indeed can even be made lightweight in areas away from the bulkheads so that overall they are standard. You can bolt them together in less than ten minutes.

We've made a good many three-piece kayaks over the years and they've proved very reliable, not only for air-travel, but also for people with storage problems.

Commercial air-lines are much happier to take sporting goods on board these days, but I took two complete slalom kayaks to Australia over twenty years ago now, at no extra cost. I just rang the man in charge of baggage handling of the air-line concerned every month for six months before I flew, until we were on Christian Name terms.

"Hello John, it's Frank... just checking that there are no problems with my kayaks when I fly to Perth next month."

"No problems at all Frank. Hope you have a good trip."

On the day of my flight I arrived at the check-in desk with a kayak in each hand.

They said; "You cannot bring THOSE in HERE."

"But John says I can."

"Who the hell is John?"

Me, sweetly; "John is your boss."

Perhaps you had better phone him."

One phone call and one minute later I was checked in and my kayaks labelled. So maybe it is worth giving the air-line a ring before you make your final plans. It worked like a charm for me.

*Best wishes
Frank Goodman*

Hello, John

From Clive Palmer

Please find enclosed my membership fee for next year. It is great value for money John and I enjoy reading the articles which are reliable and interesting - more than can say for CoDe and Canoe Focus. Whilst these BCU publications may have a different 'remit' as it were, the fact that the ISKA publication is not cluttered with advertising and other glitzy rubbish is refreshing.

Yours, Clive

Hello, John

From Derek Hairon, Jersey.

The introduction of controls by the French government to make sea kayaks to meet specific buoyancy and equipment requirements has led to changes in the leadership of the CK Mer organisation.

In 2001 new laws were made by the French Government to control sea kayaks in French waters. Under the new law, kayaks that do not meet the 6th category will be classed as beach craft and cannot be paddled more than 300 metres from a beach. If a kayak has the requisite safety equipment and is able to pass the buoyancy test then it can be used up to 1 mile from a beach. The 5th category requirements are still unclear and there seems to be some question as to whether the authorities will continue to permit kayaks to obtain this category. Currently the 5th category demands kayaks meet additional safety standards. Broadly speaking this approximates to 4 star plus levels of equipment. The 5th category enables paddlers to travel up to 5 miles from a beach. These matters were discussed more fully in a previous article I sent to you. (If by any chance you did not get it or want to re publish it then I can send you a copy).

The introduction of this law reflects the controls already existing for other sailing craft and appears to be an attempt by the French government to standardise things.

One area of contention has been the requirement for kayaks to have a specific ratio of fixed buoyancy. Air bags are not accepted. Equally, the size

ratios of the kayaks has also been viewed as a problem area. The law sets down specific ratios for size and therefore buoyancy. Again this is an adaptation of the laws already laid down for other sea going vessels and craft.

The situation for old and existing kayak designs to pass the 6th category is an area of contention. Some see the Nordkapp for example as likely to fail the test due to its dimensions. Others are not so sure and there are reports that many existing designs are getting passed. All new kayaks sold in France must now meet the new law. Visiting paddlers may get around this providing their kayak meets their own country standards. This could be a problem if a country does not have any controls on sea kayaking. However, there may be ways around this judging by some letters I have seen from the French department for maritime affairs. See my previous attempt to explain the new controls.

Many paddlers have been critical of the FFCK (equivalent of the BCU) response to the new laws and do not think they have fought to gain adequate exemptions. (It is worth noting that the old "derogation" were negotiated by sea kayakers in Brittany and not by the FFCK many years ago). The department for maritime affairs sees the FFCK as the logical organisation to engage with in dialogue. However, the FFCK has been perceived to ignore the needs of sea kayakers. It is only recently that a specialist committee incorporating touring and non-competitive aspects of kayaking been developed.

The CK Mer organisation (think of it as roughly similar to your group John) has therefore had difficulty getting its voice heard by the FFCK. The CKM have tried to develop a dialogue with the FFCK and some input seems to have taken place. This has generated considerable unease among some paddlers in France who feel that the FFCK does not represent sea kayaking views and the CKM has therefore not been effective. This is because of the CKM attempt to try and work with the FFCK. Many paddlers therefore feel that the CKM has not got its voice heard and now want to create a separate organisation that will be listened to by the government and seen as the voice of sea kayakers.

The upshot of this is that at the recent AGM a new organisation came into being with the remit to fight to become the body to whom government will talk with instead of the FFCK. Most of the CKM committee resigned and have been replaced by people who want to try and develop an alternative position whereby the government will discuss directly with them sea kayaking issues. The result is that there is now another organisation appearing with a claim to represent sea kayakers in France but with links with the CKM.

Does this really concern us in the UK, well yes and no. The whole issue of controls on sea kayaking appears to be creeping onto the European agenda. Already I am hearing reports of similar thoughts being voiced in Italy to incorporate kayaks under safety categories. What is at the heart of the issue is a different approach to the sport. In the UK we seem to have gone down the road of seeing education as the way forward. Elsewhere, legal controls are viewed as a way of increasing safety. Whatever we may think about all the recent debates in France, we must be prepared to see a similar debate being raised in the UK given the impact of EU laws in the future.

In the UK we are perhaps lucky that the Sea touring Committee has been a specialist committee for a long time. Also, from a very early stage there has been specific sea kayaking certification and coaching awards. It is probably thanks to the existence of this structure that after Lyme Regis stringent controls were not implemented. Had there been no clear structure of coaching, then I suspect we would be faced with some significant controls. It means that whatever we may think of the BCU there is at least a path for debate should issues start to be raised by government. I suspect that in the future UK paddlers will also need to start looking out for potential difficulties before government implements them.

But the big issue is whether the pressure will increase on the UK to bring in laws in order to harmonise with Europe..