

OCEAN KAYAKER



NEWSLETTER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING ASSOCIATION

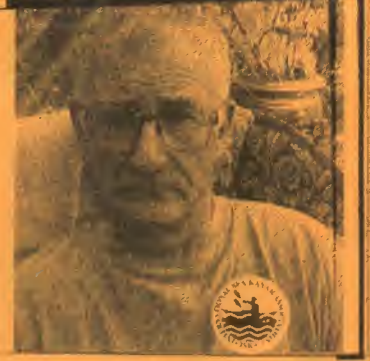


**An international & independent sea
canoeing association open to all
interested in this aspect of canoeing
with the objective of promoting safe
sea kayaking for everyone**

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Ocean Kayaker



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whether you kayak regularly or hardly ever you must have something to say. Share your views, information, trip reports and opinions with us. Like what you read, - say so. Dont' like what you read - then it is even more important to say so.

EVENTS

Please note that we are not including a guide to events within the newsletter itself. As we only produce this letter once every two months we have decided that a current list of pending events is best kept on our web site

<www.seakayak.co.uk>

So keep Chris Bolton informed of all your events by emailing him at

<seakayak@btinternet.com>

Ensure you include WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHO (i.e. contact details).

There is no charge for this service.

I still have a few T shirts, L and Extra L, grey with the ISKA logo, for sale @ £6.00

EDITORIAL

I'm recently returned from the 6th Newfoundland Symposium which was, yet again, a great success. The usual mix of workshops, mini-expeds and presentations. I was working this time with Peter Bray who is currently paddling around Newfoundland from the east coast going clockwise. He is, or at least was being followed by a lady showing him much unwanted attention. Her name is Gale. Peter escaped the clutches of Gale to join us on the west coast for the symposium before returning to rejoin his kayak and his circumnavigation. We wish him well and I look forward to including an account of his epic in this newsletter.

I am due to join the BCU Sea Touring Symposium this coming October which is being held at Salcombe in the deep south west. See at least some of you there.

I came across the following letter in CoDe - the magazine of the BCU Coaching Scheme

*Brave Raddlers assist in rescue!
I am writing to thank a group of canoeists recently surf kayaking at Widemouth Bay in Cornwall.
A mass rescue situation occurred, when some 15 people were swept out by a rip current. I asked for assistance from the above paddlers. The canoeists, who were courageous and skilled at their rescues, rescued several casualties and in some situations stayed with casualties beyond the surf break, to keep them afloat while the emergency services were called.
I can honestly say that had I not had help from the canoeists, who are anonymous apart from the fact they come from Harlow Outdoor Pursuits Centre, there would have been fatalities.*

Sam Roberts Atlantic Pursuits.

Well Done all! Superb effort by all con-

cerned -proof again that a Canoe in experienced hands can save life.

Finally I draw your attention to a two part and rather lengthy article on our liability when involved in outdoor adventure activity, both to ourselves and to others which starts on Page 17. The second part will appear in the October issue of this newsletter. I am currently setting up an expedition for young people scheduled for summer 2004 and I know just how important this issue is as part of our planning. If interested see <http://www.svalbard2004.org>

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Book Review

In, and Of : memoirs of a mystic journey along Canada's wild west coast

by Jack Haas

ISBN: 0-9731007-1-0. Category: Autobiography. Size: 5.5" by 8.5". Pages: 180. Binding: perfect. Price: \$16.00 10.50 GBP.

This is the modern, autobiographical account of the author's journey into the primitive wilderness of coastal British Columbia, and into the uncharted wilderness of the soul. It is both an inward journey, and an outward quest.

Letters

Dear John,

Just received here in France the current edition of Ocean Kayaker and want to let you know just how much I enjoy the style and the content. I always look forward to reading it and the useful information it contains. Keep it up and please don't change the format.

I was encouraged to see your proposed solution for loading a sea kayak onto the roof of a tall vehicle as suggested in the magazine of the Italian Sea Kayaking Organisation. I am 64, my own sea kayak is a Belouga and my vehicle is a tall one; thus I have had this problem for a while when on my own. With the sole exception of the "wheels" mounted to the stern of the kayak, my own "home-made" solution has been exactly the same in principle and works very well in practice - but with one reservation! When loading in a wind - even a moderate one - it remains difficult to control the stability of the kayak without help until it is strapped as quickly as it can be to the fixed roof - mounted cradle. The consequences of losing that control could be expensive and I can't quite see that the design of the Italian solution overcomes this. Furthermore I can't see just what purpose the stern-mounted wheels serve in loading. There can be few kayaks which are so heavy as to require such a device in the loading process and the wheels cannot other than hinder the stability of the craft in that process.

Thank you for your reliable and regular newsletter, John.

John Wild, France

John,

Thanks for the latest issue of Ocean Kayaker. I wonder if sales of Tim Tams will rise following its publication.

I note that you've published Larry Gray's account of the development of the Pittarak, taken from the Summer 2000 issue of Sea Trek, the journal of the Victorian Sea Kayak

The book is a rambling narrative, filled with unique insights, and presented in an introspective style. It is a true tale of adventure, misadventure, debauchery, wonder, mysticism, and miracles. It is a journey into rare experiences, and it is a journey home.

"In, and Of: memoirs of a mystic journey along Canada's wild west coast is an enthralling, true-life account of Jack Haas' personal travels through the wilderness of coastal British Columbia. His excursions embraced both the natural splendor that surrounded him, and a continuing quest to better understand the workings of the self. Because of its philosophical, emotional, and insightful narrative, In, and Of is very strongly recommended reading for students of metaphysics and the contemplative life." Midwest Book Review (Reviewer's Choice)

Club. I have a lot of respect for Larry as an expeditioner and instructor, but as a writer and 'designer' I think he's missing some key points. The fact that he spelled the names of three UK kayaks incorrectly (and that the Sea Trek editor didn't fix them) does not inspire confidence from the start.

We had a sea kayaking course near here last weekend. Weather was not the best: rain, strong winds, etc. leading us to change the program somewhat. Will write it up for you in a week or so, with pics (including video frames of a collision).

Cheers, Peter Carter. south Australia

Dear John, Thanks for the latest 'Ocean Kayaker', it makes me long for the sea again. I thought I'd let you know that I am still raising funds for the RNLI but could do with a new challenge and a few challengers. The e-mail address you have for me in the directory is out of date - I have grown up a bit and am no longer a mature student but rapidly approaching my second childhood as I plan to throw over the shackles of medicine to become a full time peasant. My current e-mail is - usualperch@doctors.org.uk. A propos the problem of over-protection of children, I have written before on my views that it is positively harmful producing beings who are either scared of everything or psychopathically unaware of the effects of their actions.

The increasing problem of obesity is but another effect. I am of the opinion that the lawmakers and the legal profession are guilty of failure in their duty of care both to the children and to society as a whole.

However, I'm not going to waste time and money trying to demonstrate that the legal system is intrinsically hypocritical. Finally, before you die of boredom and sue me for being the cause of your ennui, with regard to excessive overhang on page 14, my w/hopper, Circe, always wears a bowtie while on the road. Keep up the good work, best wishes from

Paul Schur.

John:

Peter Carter's excellent article on why kayaks turn into the wind reminds me about an aspect of the loss of the Bismarck with which sea kayakers might sympathise.

Bismarck was not far from the French coast and safety when she was engaged from the air. The weather situation was a Force 7 westerly wind. As a consequence of the air attack, she lost her ability to steer. Her only manoeuvrability came from the engines: when the engines were stopped,

she lay across the wind open to attack; when the engines were run she headed up into the wind, away from safety.

Those of us who paddle without skegs or rudders will completely understand how her captain felt!

Robert

Robert Craig
Paisley

You'll find Roberts' article "Lying Across The Wind" on page 15.

Padding on a Promise by Simon Osborne

Shortly before I lost my brother, Mark, to Leukaemia 13 years ago I promised him I would raise money for the Leukaemia Research Fund. On the 31st of August I finally kept this promise when I finished a 2500-mile circumnavigation of the UK in his memory, 'kayaking For Cancer.' The challenge was particularly fitting as Mark was also a keen kayaker and I am sure he would love to have been by my side physically and not just spiritually.

I decided from a young age that I would keep the promise I made to my brother to raise money for Leukaemia Research. The fundraising event had to be a real challenge that would push me both physically and mentally. At first kayaking the length of the Nile or Amazon seemed a good idea but people did not fully understand what that would involve. The idea to circumnavigate the UK was the idea that seemed to fit. The British public understands how far the expedition is and what the coastal waters are like.

The media in my home country would be easier to capture and money could be raised along the way. Now the decision had been made all I had to do was make it happen.

A year and a half later I was sitting at the waters edge nervous wondering what the summer was going to bring and would I be able to "put my paddle where my promise was". All of my family and friends had come to send me off on my way north. Little did I know at this point that over the next 112 days I would be pushed more than I could ever possibly imagine, by storm force winds, huge swells, 9 knot tidal races and many more challenges.

Aberystwyth in Mid Wales was the chosen start point for the expedition. I finished my University course there a year before and also starting here gave me the opportunity to tackle the more challenging west coast early on.

After the first 3 weeks I began to feel that the project was too big. I was over a week behind schedule and the summer weather was still hiding from me.

Day after day saw force 7-8 winds and on some occasions force 10.

Throughout the planning stages of the expedition a second person was hoping to kayak along side me. Unfortunately due to injuries and other factors this was no longer the case. I had never sea kayaked alone but I was now faced with this for the first two months of the expedition at least.

The expedition has so far raised over £18,000, which is still increasing. When I set off from Aberystwyth in Mid Wales and headed north I was unsure what I would encounter on the way due to my inexperience in expedition sea kayaking. My background was river kayaking from the age of 7 so it was a case of transferring my skills to the more exposed waters of the British coastline.

The first part of the trip was a real learning experience and a case of waiting for the weather to settle. My strengths and knowledge grew as I headed north especially during the sections I kayaked alone. I learnt a lot about myself mentally, and the conditions I could physically handle. My mental and physical limit was reached, in the first month, during what should have been a straightforward crossing of Morecambe bay. I surfed across the twelve mile crossing in under two hours as the waves broke all around whilst the swell and wind hit the flooding of the spring tide. I wanted to be off the water but with no land in any direction for six miles

I had to focus on keeping on my compass bearing as the wind increased and the land disappeared into cloud. A high speed Sea Cat appeared four miles away. We were on a collision course so I back paddled into the oncoming breaking waves for five minutes whilst, blissfully unaware of my presence, it passed in front. All I had to do now was wait for the bow wave from the ferry to reach me. As it did I was flung out of the water and given a view of the sea ahead. The view was white and messy as the waves broke in the shallow waters ahead. The swell was breaking in the now only two-metre deep water. The steep waves made the bow of my kayak dive in front of me and lifted the stern out of the water as I surfed for the remaining six miles to safety. This day focused my attention on the weather for the remainder of the trip and I was now

more cautious about taking the weather forecast as if it were set in stone! Having now completed 2500 miles I can look back on this time as a great learning experience, which has changed my focus on life.

The thought of kayaking along the west coast of Scotland had been driving me forward for the first section of the expedition. However, I had not intended to do this alone and so I was apprehensive about the exposed waters ahead. The scenery suddenly became spectacular as I kayaked along the south Scottish coast. It was to be the windiest May on record and I experienced wind against tide nearly every day I was on the water until the summer finally came in late June. On the 12th of June I reached Oban on the west coast of Scotland. This was a special day as it was 13 years to the day that my brother was taken by Leukaemia.

I spent the day on the shore as strong winds blew in from the west. I thought about the challenge left to come and was it beyond me and more dangerous than Mark would have wanted me to expose myself to. I was still on my own on the water and wished I could find someone to paddle the exposed waters ahead with me. As I sat looking to Mark for help I was contacted by two friends offering to paddle with me. This gave me new hope that I could achieve what I set out to do. On reaching Tobermory, the exposed Ardnamurchan peninsular was ahead and I found myself with a week on my own with no support vehicle and no one to paddle along side me. The thought of the sections ahead alone worried me but I knew I could do it if I concentrated and followed my instincts.

Tobermory June 15th:

The water in the harbor at Tobermory was a sheet of glass reflecting the bright morning sky. I packed my kayak alone at the waters edge getting it just right for rounding the Ardnamurchan peninsular in the forecasted winds.

I crossed the Sound of Mull in the still air of the morning to Kilhorn. It all felt good due to my independence but I was apprehensive about the Ardnamurchan peninsular ahead. I hitched from Kilhorn to the Ardnamurchan lighthouse to scout the section. I knew I could do it when I saw the coastline, but would it change between now and when I would be floating on it? I went back to my kayak to find it as I left it above the high water mark. I pondered for a while and finally pulled myself together and decided to poke my nose around the headland to see what it was like. There was always the possibility of turning back up to a certain point. After 45 minutes of kayaking the swell from the south-west was rolling in and creating a lumpy sea as the waves refracted off the sheer cliffs of the most westerly point I would kayak to. With the wind behind me and the tide pulling the kayak around the exposed coast I felt very much alone. I felt myself kayaking faster with every stroke to bring myself to the shelter

of Sana Bay, which was still five miles away. I was now at the point where it would take as long to go on as to turn back. I knew it would not get much more exposed so I continued at a heightened pace. The bases of the cliffs were lined with white spray that made me stay 100 meters off shore to avoid the confused waves. Fulmar and guillemots flew over to take a closer look before returning to their exposed cliffs. The end of the section was at the lighthouse I visited earlier in the day. For over an hour I hoped to make sight of the tower but the cliffs continued to hide it from me. Over my left shoulder black clouds gathered and I knew the forecasted 5-6 winds were not far away. Finally I set eyes on the brilliant white of the lighthouse in the evening sun. I knew at this point I was within a few minutes of a sheltered landing spot. I relaxed a little and enjoyed the last section of exposure.

After waking up in the most idealistic camp spot at Sanna Bay I quickly packed my kayak and headed for somewhere where I could sit out a storm. The forecast was for force 11 winds and it was not going to blow over in one night. A few hours had passed and the radio on my deck came through loud and clear warning of an imminent storm force wind warning. The air was as still as it gets where I was but you could feel that a change was on the way. I paddled as fast as I could across a five-mile wide bay to a settlement of a few houses and a road. I was unsure what to expect but the village of Glenuig turned out to be a real insight into the old way of life of the west coasters. I spent 3 days frustrated as the high seas rolled in just outside of the sheltered bay. Was the summer ever going to arrive?

While sitting and waiting only a few miles further north for four days for the weather to allow me to round the next challenging headland, Ruba Rea, I decided to exercise my legs as they had been in the cramped kayak for over 6 weeks. Unfortunately after only a few hours walking my left leg was unable to take my weight. Limping back to the support van sent pain right to the top of my leg. Worried that I had pulled a muscle I went to find a doctor to check it out. After explaining the pain the doctor looked puzzled and was unsure what the problem was. Whilst I was there I thought I would get him to have a look at a cut on my ankle and it had not healed for four weeks. To my surprise when I pulled off my sock it was heavily swollen and septic. Now it all came clear that the infection had spread up my leg and needed to be treated with Anti-Biotics as soon as possible. I took the prescribed Penicillin only to wake up the next morning feeling a lot worse.

My whole body was weak and it wasn't long before I was violently ill. I was allergic to Penicillin and needed to get medical help. My friends that were supporting me took me back to the doctors to get a new prescription.

Tears flooded to my eyes as the doctor sat in front of me and told me not to get into the kayak for at least

three days as he needed to see me again. Feeling physically and mentally drained of all energy whilst sitting in the front seat of the van which was parked looking out over the calm sea I

wondered if things could get any harder. As the days passed slowly I began to eat again and my strength grew. I was not going to give up yet. Mark had Leukaemia from the age of four and he didn't give up just like that so I certainly wasn't going to. After revisiting the doctor he drained the wound on my ankle and gave me a handful of dressings to change ever four hours.

Wellies were the solution to keeping it dry so a quick trip to the local store sorted that out. Seven days after surfing onto the beach I finally put the paddle back in the water and pulled it back with fresh arms. The kayak felt as if there was no friction between it and the water.

Unfortunately this feeling didn't last long and as I was to discover over the next week on my own on the water the illness had sapped my inner strength. Slowly, as I made my way northwards towards Cape Wrath, the lack of energy was replaced by a healthy diet. Cape Wrath was a heavily talked about section of coast but a friend Justine was to join me for this section and the week after it. The Summer isles provided breathtaking scenery and I felt proud of myself for kayaking alone with difficult seas and navigation to handle. Everything was going well and I didn't want the bubble to burst.

I met up with Justine in Scourie only 15 Nm from Cape Wrath at 2pm after her long journey up from Wales. There was a five-mile paddle before the last landing spot before the committing section of the Cape. The initial intention was to use the short afternoon to get Justine's kayak and equipment sorted. The weather that afternoon felt like a proper summers day something I had barely experienced up until this point. I didn't know it at the time but this was the proper start to the summer almost two months late.

The five miles flew by in just under an hour. We talked for a while at the last easy get out and decided to head around the Cape in the still evening air. It was 25 miles to the next easy landing spot and it was now 4pm. With this in mind we got going straight away at a good pace. Inside I felt nervous even though it was a flat calm because the section had been in the back of my mind since the day I left Aberystwyth. The Cape has a strong tidal race and is exposed to swells from the stormy North Atlantic. The distinct cliff line of the Cape was dominant on the horizon as we headed north. The swell was coming in from the north but was only a few feet.

When we finally arrived at the corner I was amazed as the section that I had fretted and sweated in my sleep about was one of the easiest and most spectacular to date. There was no wind at all and the sea was smooth and rolling.

The added challenge of the section was the Ministry of Defense firing range that spanned about 10 miles. There was a landing spot a few miles after the Cape but this was within the firing range and they were planning on dropping some bombs the next day. We left the firing range area at 11pm and the sun had only just set due to the long summer days.

The north coast of Scotland was very exposed with large swells coming in from the North and few places to land. Pentland Firth the most north-easterly point I would kayak had incredibly strong tides with peak spring flows of 9 knots. The day we were to tackle the races off Pentland Firth had 8 feet of swell. I was nervous yet again especially when I spotted the swell breaking when it reached the start of the tidal race from over four miles away.

The section was as committing as they come with no chance to paddle against a four mile wedge of water that flowed between the mainland and the Orkney Islands. We positioned ourselves in the center of the channel to avoid being dragged into shallow water near the shore where the 16foot faces were smashing onto the rocks. The GPS on my deck was displaying a constant reading of 10knots and this was only a neap tide. Fortunately the large overfalls only run on the west flowing tide so we just made fast progress.

After making it through Pentland Firth I could turn and head south, something I had been dreaming about for many days. This point in the expedition was a giant milestone that signified a change in my feelings and the weather. I knew at this point that I was capable of finishing this challenge. The further south I would go the more predictable the weather would become and the more distance that could be covered each day would hopefully increase.

The West coast of Scotland was by far the most challenging environment I encountered on the expedition but the East and South coast had a different sort of challenge. A balance had to be found between raising money and getting distance covered. The weather had now become summer like and regular ten to twelve hour days were possible. The challenge was to stare at a distant headland for five hours as it slowly creeps closer without letting yourself become frustrated at the slow speed. Some days were good, some were bad, but I just had to concentrate on the future and past and forget the strain of the present. At Aberdeen on the east coast of Scotland two friends from University joined me. Phil Clegg kayaking alongside on the water and David Brookes driving the support van. The main function of the support van was to raise money for the leukaemia research fund by promoting the cause and the expedition whilst I was on the water away from the public and the media.

It has to be said that the success of Kayaking for Cancer was down to the talented, energetic, and focused

support crew I had along the way. The drivers of the van made an enormous contribution to the fund raising effort and target. The support from the people who kayaked alongside helped me to complete the trip in such a short time. Phil took the second kayak off the roof of the van and paddled out to me, as I was a few miles offshore. I was more than pleased to see a familiar face on the water. I didn't know how long he wanted to join me for but he said, "well I would like to go back to Aberystwyth with you but I only have seven weeks". On hearing this I stopped my paddling rhythm and looked at him in disbelief for two reasons, firstly because he wanted to kayak for seven weeks and secondly because he thought he could cover 1300 miles in less than two months. This enthusiasm and drive that Phil brought to the expedition was just what I needed as the last two months had really sapped my energy.

Dave also helped motivate me in his own way. He decided that I had been going to slow up until this point and from now on things would be different. A quick visit to the shops and Dave had bought a poster size map of the entire UK to put on the wall of the van. It was this he would use to decide where we would kayak to each day and if we didn't get that far then we would have no food or bed for the night!

I blinked at some point and found that when I opened my eyes I was South and heading west finally towards Lands End. Due to the new team on and off the water the east coast had taken four weeks and with only one day off it had been quite a tiring experience. The end was in sight even though it was still over 500 miles away. The busy shipping of the south was a worry as I headed down the East coast and the first signs of what was ahead was crossing the Humber, the busiest estuary in the UK. The Shipping lane was well defined and it was a simple case of looking left then right and paddling as fast as possible for ten minutes. However, this was not the case with the Thames estuary as we crossed it at its widest point, 33 Nm.

There were distinct shipping lanes but with over 100 buoys confusing issues an eye had to be kept on the horizon to calculate possible collision problems. The Port of Dover was also a major worry but on radioing the port authorities an escort was sent out to make sure we made it safely past the two entrances. It was hard to believe the amount of ferries coming and going and it was frightening to be so close in front of the path of them. Bad timing on my count meant that I found myself in the middle of Cowes week in the Solent, which is an event that attracts sailors from all over the world. As a result there was more than a thousand vessels in a twenty-mile stretch to negotiate with two sea cats, two hovercraft and four ferries continuously crossing to the Isle of White. I am not sure how I made it through the day but keeping in the shallow water was a good decision. All we could do to cross the shipping lanes

was paddle slowly up to them and save our energy for the sprint across. The Hovercraft had minds of their own not paying attention to any of the lanes and at the speed they were going I would barely have time to get the collision flare out of my pocket before it would be on top of me.

The navigational planning was simple for most of the second half of the expedition. I was going to be on the water for twelve hours so I would have six hours of the tide with me and six hours against me therefore it didn't really matter when I got on and off. In some ways it felt better to not know what progress was being made. A GPS (Global Positioning System) was used during the trip and I found the main use for this was to find the most efficient line and paddle stroke in the varying conditions. It was possible to tell exactly where the fastest or the slowest tide was and if putting in the extra energy actually made much difference on overall progress.

Unbelievably navigation on some days could be as simple as keeping the land on the right and not turning left! As we quickly approached Lands End, the most southwesterly point in the British Isles the environment changed. The Atlantic swells rolled in and the sections began to feel more exposed. The paddle around Lands End is difficult to plan with very complex tides and eddies. The large swells and lack of safe landing areas make it a place to respect. With almost perfect calculations we spent eight hours on the water and covered 40 Nm with the tide pulling us around the coast for the full eight hours. On completing this section my mind had to refocus on the next challenge, the Bristol Channel. Lundy Island is situated in the middle of the Bristol Channel and is an ideal stepping-stone to Pembrokeshire, Wales. The crossing to Lundy is around 12 miles but the second crossing is more serious at about 32 miles. Fortunately the strong tides and busy shipping didn't cause any problems and the crossing to Wales took two days with a night on Lundy. We were escorted home to Wales by a pod of Dolphins swimming under the bows of our kayaks. It was good to see land that was familiar to me. I started to realize that the end was not far away and well within my grasp. The area known as the Bitches, a tidal race and overfalls area in Ramsey Sound was to be the last real challenge. The wind was force 5 against 6 knots of tide. A friend who had sailed down from Aberystwyth had met us and we could now sleep on board and have an escort over the last few days. Looking out to see from the yacht early in the morning the sea was dead calm but the skies were dark.

The tidal gate at Ramsey Sound was early but we decided to have a last blast in familiar territory and hit it at full flow. The Area is renowned for its main surf wave that forms on the flood tide. People flock from all over the world to surf the wave but on a day like today with swell and a force 6 against the tide there was to be no one around. As we approached the start of the sound

the water is sucked in-between the island and the mainland.

Once we were in the center of the flow moving at 11 knots we had to keep our eyes out for horses rock, a area of rocks just below the waters surface that create whirlpools and large standing waves. It approached us very quickly and we caught the edge of it to get a bumpy ride. The water behind the submerged rock formed a strong eddy that flowed at around 2 knots upstream.

Therefore as we flew passed at 11 knots it was possible to see for the first time close up exactly how fast we were moving. The end of the area sheltered by the island was ahead and the sea created by the wind met the tide in a display of white. We knew it wouldn't be too big so we headed straight for it and for over an hour we made incredibly swift progress over standing wave after standing wave.

The morning went by fast and for the first time the thought of the end frightened me. I didn't want this to end.

The time had come when everything was going the way I wanted, money was being raised easily, my sea kayaking ability had exponentially improved and most importantly I didn't have any plans for after the finish.

The finish date was decided three weeks prior to the day so that the welcome home party could be planned. I was not sure how well we would time it but we had a few days to spare to relax and let our bodies unwind. Phil had kayaked 1200 miles with me and had made it from Aberdeen to Aberystwyth in his allotted seven weeks so he was more than happy. I was unsure how I would feel but I was looking forward to seeing friends at the end. As I kayaked closer to the harbor mouth at Aberystwyth I saw the crowds on the jetty and realised that I had finally kept my word to my brother. I paddled the last few meters up the harbor to where two water cannons created a finish line. Sitting under the falling water with thousands of fireworks going off, my mind shut down overwhelmed by the feelings from within.

This was it, a moment in time that I had thought about so much for the last two years, but never being sure whether it would ever materialise. This was the end; I had completed the circumnavigation of the UK and reached my fund raising target. My thoughts went to Mark as I read a banner, "3000 miles in memory of Mark". I had finally kept the promise I made to my brother, over 13 years ago to raise money for Leukaemia.

One hundred percent of the 19,000 pounds donated has gone to the Leukaemia Research Fund and all of the expedition costs have been covered by trust funds and company sponsorship. This was always my intention but I was never sure if it was achievable.

A website was set up by the BBC to follow my progress on a daily basis. The award-winning site enabled people all around the world to listen to a daily audio diary describing my feelings and the conditions I experienced. This became a powerful tool and set this expedition apart from previous ones.

It is still possible to hear these reports and see images of the expedition through a link from my website www.kayakingforcancer.co.uk The thought of people checking the website daily drove me on in hard times.

The generosity of the British public amazed me along the entire journey. I was offered places to stay by strangers and large sums of money were donated on the basis of one short conversation. I met so many people and heard so many stories of how Cancer has affected people's lives so unfairly around the UK. Over half the people who put money in a collecting tin had been affected by cancer either personally, or new of a friend or family member that had cancer. This has made me even more aware of how important it is to raise money for the cancer charities. Leukaemia Research is close to my heart and touches people due to the way it takes people like Mark in the early years of their lives. I do not intend this to be the end of Kayaking for Cancer and I hope to raise money in the future by doing talks and writing a book on my experiences during the expedition, entitled, "Paddling on a promise". *Simon Osborne*

What's So Special About The Anglesey Sea Symposium?

by Jonathan Walpole

It was touted as the best sea kayaking symposium on the calendar and had been highly recommended by several friends, so I had to see if it was true. The event in question is the Anglesey Sea Kayak Symposium, organized by Nigel Dennis and based at the Anglesey Sea & Surf Center (ASSC) near Holyhead, Wales.

Attended by kayakers from all over the world, the Anglesey Symposium is certainly one of the best-known kayak symposiums around. In sea kayaking terms the event, now in

its 20th year, has a long history, but this is not the only reason for its widespread reputation. Part of the allure is its location and the sea conditions it enjoys. With a tidal range of well over 30 feet, and races and over falls that run in excess of 6 knots off numerous headlands, it offers a wealth of thrill-filled tours in most weather conditions. The coastal scenery is suitably spectacular, with impressive cliffs and caves, sheltered coves, sandy beaches and quaint villages. The coast here has a rugged beauty with the

strong tidal streams and changeable weather conditions bringing the sea to life on most days of the year. While flat-water paddlers may not find this description very appealing, sea kayakers with a yearning for challenge and excitement view this corner of Anglesey as a gigantic play ground.

This year's Symposium, as in previous years, was a three-day weekend symposium followed by a week of BCU courses and assessments. The weekend symposium involved a wide range of courses, tours and special interest events. On the water events consisted of tours and classes for virtually everyone from novice to seasoned 5-star sea paddlers. There were also Greenland paddling exhibitions and competitions, and coordinated rescue exercises with the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Off the water events this year included talks, slide shows, various theory courses on navigation and expedition planning, a Greenland rope gymnastics competition, and lessons on how to build a Greenland paddle and harpoon. There was even a guided tour of the local Coast Guard station.

I was there for the duration, planning to help out on some of the weekend events, soak up as many new experiences as I could, and then take BCU courses and assessments the following week until I was exhausted. It was going to be a busy schedule, but having used up my precious vacation time and traveled all the way from Oslo, Norway to attend, I was determined to get my money's worth.

I arrived at ASSC on the evening of Friday May 3, and immediately checked in with Nigel Dennis to see what the plan was. Plan? Ha! What was I thinking? "Just come to breakfast at 8 am tomorrow morning and we'll sort it out then", Nigel said in his usual laid-back manner. I hadn't expected Nigel to be quite so nonchalant on the eve of such a big event, but then I've never seen him flustered, I figured he must know what he's doing by now.

Outside, kayakers from all over the world were rolling in. I was delighted to bump into Shawna Franklin, Leon Somme and Chris Duff, friends from America who had arrived the day before. They were busy preparing their new NDK kayaks for a circumnavigation of Iceland, slated to depart later in the month. The kayaks were super-cool looking all black Explorers with yellow trim. I was instantly jealous. Despite the kayak envy, it was good to meet my friends again. I hadn't seen them since last year when I left my home in Portland, Oregon to spend a year living in Oslo, Norway.

We barely had a chance to finish saying hello when more friends showed up, including Peter Nicolai, fresh off the ferry from Germany, and Jeff Allen, tired from the long drive up from Cornwall. I had met Peter and Jeff earlier this year on a kayaking trip from Gibraltar to Ceuta, but that's a whole other story. In short succession I was intro-

duced to kayakers from England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, America, Canada, New Zealand, and Greenland. It was an impressive array of talent from a diverse range of locations. Later, I heard that people had come from ten different nations to participated in this year's symposium. Perhaps there is something special about this event after all.

Excited by the prospect of what lay ahead, I gathered my kit together and decided to pitch my tent before the rain, which looked imminent, started falling in earnest. I found a pleasant site at the high point of the ASSC grounds, from where I could see the mountains of Snowdonia and get a glimpse of the sea. It was a great spot, but I hadn't factored in the wind exposure. In a few days time I would find myself wondering why I didn't opt for a more sheltered camp site, or better yet a bunk or room in the center, like most of my friends.

Saturday dawned a bit on the wet and windy side. From my camp spot I could see plenty of white caps on the sea, and it looked to be blowing a force 4 already. As planned, I went down for breakfast with the coaches and listened as they organized the day around the weather forecast. Apparently, the normal procedure for the Symposium is for the coaches, led by Nigel, to decide what to do each day based on the prevailing conditions. This discussion takes place over breakfast and involves a lively discussion of who will lead each of the day's activities. This is followed at 9am each morning by a meeting of all symposium attendees in a big marquee, where Nigel explains the day's plans to everyone. At the big meeting everyone finds out who their leader for the day is. Then the various groups split off to work out the logistics, which include lining up transport and making sure everyone has a kayak. From the outside the whole process of trying to find a solution to an over-constrained problem, looks like chaos. In reality, I think it actually is chaos, but somehow Nigel mediates all the conflicts and everything seems to end up working out well. Nigel is very much the nerve center of this symposium, and surprisingly seems to like it that way.

So, here I was at the coach's breakfast, sharing a table with an illustrious crowd, a veritable whose-who of sea kayaking. The people I knew already included Nigel Dennis, Peter Bray, Pete Jones, Rowland Woolven, Fiona Whitehead, Chris Duff, Shawna Franklin, Leon Somme, and Simon Osborne. Everyone at the table seemed to be famous for some sea kayaking exploit or other. First, there were Nigel's trips in Antarctica, around Cape Horn and his milestone circumnavigation of Great Britain. Then there was Peter Bray's incredible solo, unsupported, crossing of the North Atlantic by kayak. Pete Jones had several Greenland expeditions to his name, Rowland Woolven's trips including a crossing of the Irish sea, Fiona Whitehead had paddled the South West coast of Australia, and my friends Shawna and Leon were busily preparing for their upcoming circumnavigation of Iceland with

Chris Duff. Chris had already done solo circumnavigations of Britain, Ireland and New Zealand's South Island, thankfully in separate trips! Finally, there was Simon Osborne's recent solo circumnavigation of Britain to raise money for cancer research. Suddenly, my day trips on the Oregon Coast didn't seem quite so impressive.

I could see how it would be easy to learn a lot in this company. And these were just the people I knew! There were others at the table I didn't know, but probably should have known. The first thing I learned was that, given a choice, nobody wanted to teach the navigation theory class that would spend most of the day indoors. As compensation for having a back injury, Fiona ended up with the class for two days in a row! Clearly, there was no mercy in this crowd.

I was much luckier and got assigned as an assistant to Nigel's group for the "Advanced Tide Races and Over Falls" class. Of all the classes offered that day, this was the one with the biggest thrill quotient, so most people wanted to be in on it. Despite the advanced nature of our class it turned out that 28 people had signed up for it, which was far too big a group for the rough conditions we expected. Fortunately, the depth of talent present at this symposium allowed the group to be split, at a moment's notice, into two advanced classes that could be run in parallel. Each class would still have a generous complement of highly qualified leaders and assistants.

The usual rush to gather kit and get on the water ensued. It was at this stage that I recognized the benefit of having my own car with me. Although the symposium provides transport, in the form of several minibuses and trailers, having your own transport allows you to operate on an independent schedule. Given the complexity of coordinating a large group of kayakers at the last minute, this can be a big advantage. However, since plans at ASSC have, on occasion, been known to change at the last moment, there is a danger in planning too far ahead of the game!

I drove to the beach a bit earlier than the rest of the group so I could prepare my kit and gather my thoughts without rushing. The day was to be spent on group leadership issues in five-star conditions. Once we were on the water we headed towards Penrhyn Mawr and explored a few interesting spots along the way, including a lively little gap between the cliffs and a sea stack that had some current, swell and wind waves running through it in various conflicting directions. Nigel spent a while discussing how to lead a group in such conditions and it was interesting to see his methods put into practice.

As we approached the over falls of Penrhyn Mawr it looked quite rough. The weather forecast for the day added to the intimidation factor. If things developed as expected it would soon be blowing at force 7 against a 5-6 knot current running off North and South Stack. In other

words, it would get seriously rough. We had originally planned to go there, but in these conditions it clearly wouldn't be a good idea. A wise leadership decision was made to avoid the races and instead we spent the remainder of the day paddling a roundabout route back to Porth Daffarch via Trearddur Bay. As the wind picked up and the waves got bigger the fun of surfing following seas replaced the disappointment of not getting into the tide races, and by the end of the day nobody worried about the forced revision to the course.

In the evening there was a well-attended talk and slide show on Greenland Paddling by Ray O'Brien and Greenland Kayaking Champion, Maligiaq Padilla. Having heard about Maligiaq's astonishing paddling skills, I had been looking forward to meeting him ever since I heard he would be at the symposium. In person, he turned out to be a very approachable and friendly young man. I was delighted to discover that we could communicate not only in English, which he spoke very well, but also in Norwegian which I had recently started learning during my stay in Oslo. It turns out that Norwegian is very similar to Danish, a language commonly spoken in Greenland. Of course, Maligiaq's English was much better than my Danish, but it felt nice to make an effort for once.

After the slide show most people went to the bar, and spent the evening catching up on the latest news from reacquainted paddling pals, and reminiscing about tall tales from past trips. I got the feeling that this was a well-established element of the symposium. After the bar closed the true veterans of the symposium would head back to Nigel's place to continue the party well into the early hours. It became apparent that the main endurance challenge for the symposium participants was not just paddling for nine days straight, but doing it on virtually no sleep and an abundance of alcohol. For the first few days of the symposium, at least, I tried to pace myself and get to bed at a reasonable time. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on your perspective, my discipline didn't last.

Sunday morning was a bit of a shock. I had spent the night being buffeted by the wind. When I looked out from the tent, tired and bleary-eyed, it was windy and raining. Even from a distance, the sea looked much rougher than yesterday. It was blowing a force 6, at least, already. So much for getting into the tide races and over falls today!

Breakfast with the coaches was interesting. It seemed that the conditions precluded many of the day's venue options and forced a rethink of the entire schedule. As for the staff assignments, I got lucky again and was assigned to assist with the advanced group again. This time it was to be led by Rowland Woolven, so I would have a chance to work with another top coach. The plan was to head to Trearddur Bay, along with most of the other groups and figure out what to do when we got there.

I car-pooled the 10 minute journey to the venue with my friend Jeff Allen. He had decided to "test drive" one of Nigel's new prototype kayak designs. It was a 20ft long speed machine, based on the Greenlander Pro. Because of its size, stark white color scheme, and a raised stern like a dorsal fin, we nick-named it "The Great White". Nigel had paddled it a couple of days earlier and the word was that it was well balanced in the wind but a bit tricky to handle in rough seas.

As we drove out of the center and passed Porth Daffarch, the entrance to the cove where we hand landed the previous day had taken on a whole different character. Today there were big waves rolling in, with breakers rearing up and crashing on the cliffs. The sea was angry and menacing with an abundance of spray and foam. As Jeff looked out I could tell he was already regretting his commitment to paddle The Great White. The words "tricky to handle in rough conditions" kept coming to mind every time we looked at the raging seas. It seemed too late to go back for another boat now though, so we spent the short drive joking nervously about it. He was worrying about whether he could handle the boat in these conditions, and I was thinking that since he was assisting in the same group as me it would probably be up to me to rescue him if he had problems. It made for a bit of entertainment, but in reality, I was confident Jeff could handle the boat. After all, he was one of the symposium's elite five star sea paddlers and I'd seen him in action before.

Almost the entire symposium was gathered at Trearddur Bay and their kayaks crowded the small patch of beach left exposed at high tide like a herd of elephant seals fighting for space in Antarctica. Our group gathered at one side for a pre-trip talk from Rowland. I was impressed by the clarity and thoroughness of his briefing, and his relaxed and cheerful manner indicated a wealth of experience leading groups in rough conditions. I was glad of the opportunity to work with someone at this level.

Once on the water Rowland led from the front and my job was to herd the group from the rear. Despite the distance, strong winds and rough conditions communication between us seemed relatively easy. We planned to cross the bay to a sheltered cove, then head out into the bigger stuff for a short loop before surfing back into the bay. We sat and watched the sets for a while. The biggest waves were breaking quite hard and we knew there was a significant chance of being caught by one during the short trip. However, so long as we stayed in the deeper water and kept clear of the cliffs and skerries, the breaking waves wouldn't pose much of a problem for us. We were assuming everyone had a fairly a reliable roll, of course.

After a period of watching the sets Rowland set out and the group duly followed. As is usually the case, the waves felt much bigger than they looked once we got out there. It reminded me of something I'd heard Nigel say in the past - "Remember, it's the sea out there. It is always worse

than it looks!"

With a force 6+ wind pushing us sideways toward the rocks, and everyone's attention focused on the waves ahead of them, I had some chasing up to do in order to keep everyone in the safe zone, but once we got further out things got much easier. The run back into the bay with a big following sea was a thrill. I could see everyone wondering whether the next wave to catch them would be a big breaker, but of course, no one dared look back to find out.

Back on the beach after the run everyone in the group was buzzing with excitement. I think most were relieved, and perhaps even surprised, to have actually survived the experience. There was bubbling jubilation as everyone recounted their experiences. The buzz continued until Rowland suggested that we go out and do the loop again! Immediately, a stony silence fell over the group. I was chuckling to myself as I saw people thinking "is he serious?" while I knew that indeed he was.

We did venture out again, but this time it seemed much less threatening. It soon became apparent to everyone that they had just had their sights readjusted through controlled exposure to conditions that had previously been beyond their own preconceived limits. It occurred to me, while observing this process, that this was the epitome of why people come to the Anglesey Symposium. If you want to push the envelope in terms of your paddling skills and experience, the sea conditions and leadership talent available here is just what you need to do it. This is a venue where you can really discover the possibilities. Back at the center we learned that over 60 sea kayakers had been taken out in 5-star conditions that day.

In the late afternoon we walked to the local pool and watched Maligiaq Padilla perform an astounding array of Greenland rolls and maneuvers. He had the audience in awe about half way through the demonstration, and I don't know anyone who left unimpressed. He definitely inspired me to get my Greenland paddle out and start practicing when I get back home.

As if the day wasn't already full enough, that evening, Simon Osborne gave an inspired and moving talk about his solo circumnavigation of Great Britain in aid of cancer research and in memory of his brother.

Monday, the final day of the weekend symposium, held some extra special treats. This was the helicopter rescue day I had been looking forward to. Over breakfast I heard people recounting their previous year's experiences. One gentleman described how he had been sitting in his kayak, a little separated from the group, watching the rescues from a "safe" distance, when he saw the helicopter turn and start coming towards him. He described how it got closer and closer, until he could see the whites of the pilot's eyes. Unable to run or hide he was unceremoniously capsized by the down-draft and forced to swim from

his kayak. The image he painted so vividly really captured my imagination. I'm not sure why, but I wanted to be part of this!

At breakfast we discussed how there would be various different helicopter rescue scenarios including a swimmer rescue, and a rescue of a kayaker from a raft of sea kayaks. Then there would be the "challenge" in which those who wanted to, could go out to sea and have the helicopter pilot hunt them down and try to capsize them with the down draft off the rotor blades. Oh, I had to be in on this!

After breakfast it was a quick change and into the marquee to listen to Nigel explain the plan to everyone. It was hilarious watching the audience as Nigel clarified, in his matter of fact tone, "if you don't want to be hunted down and capsized by the helicopter, don't go out on the water!" The look in people's eye's, especially the more timid members of the group, was something I'll remember for a long time. This definitely had a flavor that seemed unique to the Anglesey Symposium. Somehow, I just couldn't see this happening back home in America.

Once we heard when and where the helicopter would be, we quickly got out on the water and began to get ready for the various rescue scenarios. The swimmer rescue came first and we all sat in our kayaks at what we hoped was a safe distance. I didn't realize at the time that Nigel was actually inside the helicopter telling the pilot where to go, and more to the point, who to capsize. As it swooped in for the swimmer, it passed right over the top of a tandem kayak. Keirron Tastagh who is one of Nigel's full time instructors was out training another member of staff. They were immediately capsized and despite trying, couldn't manage to roll in the violent down draft. As if by chance, the helicopter stayed right above them until they were forced to swim, and ultimately chase after their kayak which was catapulting and cart-wheeling away from them across the sea. I think it was at this point that a seed of self-doubt began to creep in. Was this really a good idea?

It was too late now though, and our rafted rescue was next on the agenda. I was to be part of a raft of seven kayaks organized by Shawna Franklin. Fiona Whitehead was to be the victim who would be winched up into the helicopter. For my part, I had the dubious honor of towing Fiona's empty kayak back to Porth Daffarch in a force 4-5 and moderate following seas. With the severity of the down draft apparent to all, we decided to place our tethered paddles in the water under our rafted kayaks, and then reinforce the raft by reaching over and holding on to the kayak next to the one adjacent to us. This system worked well and held firm with the helicopter directly over head as Fiona was lifted off our fore decks. Not surprisingly, it was extremely loud and windy at this stage, and just to unnerve myself even more, I began wondering what would happen if the engine stalled while it was on top of us like this. No, that definitely wouldn't be a good thing! Don't think about

it! Now is not the time to panic!

Once the rescue was over I raced back to the beach with Fiona's kayak, and in the process discovered the benefits of using a drogue and a long tow line. In a following sea it is important to prevent a towed kayak from surfing into the person doing the towing - in this case me! Keeping out of the way of an empty boat in the following sea was trickier than I expected, and the landing, through albeit small surf, was a bit challenging.

Once the kayak was safely deposited on the beach it was a race back out before the capsize challenge began. Admittedly, I was not totally unprepared for the challenge. Jeff had told me how he had survived the past two years by lying in the water and using a sculling brace for support, and that the key to the technique was to scull on the up wind side. This sounded like a good plan, so I decided to go with it.

I hurriedly paddled back out to Jeff, who happened to be sitting close to Maligiaq, just as the helicopter came into view. As if by chance, again, it came directly towards us.

Unfortunately, it was approaching us from the down-wind side which forced me into the difficult position of having to start sculling downwind in a force 4-5 in anticipation of the helicopter down-draft eventually coming at me from the other side. As it got closer I could see the wind and spray blasting off the sea surface and I braced myself (literally!) for the impact. Once it was on top of us all hell broke loose, but somehow I was still surviving. It was obviously trying to give us a real beating, and occasionally I could feel myself being moved sideways really fast. It was hard to keep hold of the paddle, but I stuck with the plan and the technique worked. The hardest part ended up being breathing, which was mostly a matter of sucking in a mixture of air and salt water through clenched teeth.

The ordeal seemed to last for a long time, and only later I heard that Nigel was up there filming us from the helicopter. Eventually, though, the pilot just couldn't take the punishment we were handing out and had to submit to our superior technology. When he left we rolled up and laughed all the way back to the beach, and then most of the rest of the day too. Late that evening salt water was still draining from my sinuses.

In the afternoon there was a traditional Greenland kayaking competition, run by Ray O'Brien and Maligiaq Padilla. The symposium participants were divided into three teams, with each team selecting a member to perform various standard Greenland maneuvers and rolls. Each maneuver was first demonstrated by Maligiaq, then the competitors attempted it. Ray was the judge and kept an overall score of points for each team. Of course, everyone had to use a Greenland paddle, but I was impressed to see that some people had even brought along a skin on frame kayak for the event.

There was a semi-serious under current as the competition unfolded and I became more and more impressed with the skill level of some of the competitors. Shawna Franklin, Leon Somme and Chris Lockyer were on particularly good form, knocking off roll after roll to score points for their team. Even Maliguiq looked impressed at times, although I am sure the judges would have applied a lot more scrutiny in a more serious competition. Nevertheless, it was way beyond my capabilities.

Of all the events, the upside down kayaking race was the funniest to watch, as most people not only couldn't move, but ran out of breath without even managing to get their paddles in the water. I was glad to be watching, as it was much easier to offer advice and criticism from the shore than it was to actually do any of this stuff. Later, there was a Greenland rope gymnastics competition, which unfortunately I missed. However, judging by the bruises and rope burns on some of the competitors afterwards I think I made the wise choice.

The three-day version of the Symposium wrapped up with a talk and slide show by Pete Jones. Pete had recently taken an expedition to Greenland, and although it wasn't the real purpose of the expedition, it had a definite flavor of tak-

ing modern kayaking back to its origins. I thought the show, with its stunning photographs, was a fitting complement to the days earlier activities that had highlighted a nice meeting and integration of modern European and traditional Greenland kayaking.

While for me the Symposium was less than half over, on account of my up-coming week of BCU assessments and courses, many others were leaving the action-packed, three-day version of the event more than satisfied. You could definitely claim that the weather hadn't exactly cooperated, but most people, including me, felt that the symposium had been a great success.

So, what is so special about the Anglesey Symposium? That's what I came to find out, and I think I have it. For me, it's the unprecedented concentration of high caliber sea paddlers in an environment that allows them to test their skills to the limit in virtually any weather conditions. If what you are looking for is a luxury kayaking vacation with fancy food and service and all your needs taken care of, this is probably not for you. However, if you are serious about your sea kayaking and want to discover and surpass your limits in the company of a great group of friends, you'd be hard pressed to find a better venue.

Go to www.findelmundoexpediciones.net for a sea kayaking experience. *Here is a taster.....*

Everything has its ending.. including our expedition! It started a year and a half away with a dream, that dream became an idea: to search for the Lighthouse at the End of the World. This idea became an obsession during the 26 days that took the first circumnavigation in kayaks of Staten Island (Isla de los Estados). But, like all journeys, we, too, travelled in two dimensions and not only we traversed the island but also travelled the outlines of our spirit. During these -almost- four weeks we beared very

low temperatures that froze our hands and constant humidity that soaked us to our skin. We fought immense waves, strong winds and intense currents. Along the highest cliffs we sought for beaches to spend our nights.. finding sometimes only a few rocks not so willing to lend their eternal space. But also we contemplated breaks of days never seen by anyone else and millions of stars that lit only for us. We heard the singing of the mermaids and navigated with whales, dolphins and seadogs. We saw the light of the Lighthouse glow like a star touching the horizon and left our spirit fly over the

wings of some gigantic petrel. We learnt more about ourselves, about our limits and capacities. We learnt to be pleased with little, to tolerate and help each other. And the most important: we didn't give up. We fought every day, inch by inch, each wave and we got up each morning. We rowed, but in our kayaks you all travelled with us (old friends and new ones!). An it was a success. Not because we succeeded, but because we tried!

End of the World
Expeditions.



HEBRIDEAN ECSTASY

by Dick Foyster



with Harris, Skye, Mull, and Jura islands. Fishing, the raising of livestock, and tourism during the summer months are the principal occupations. Other economic activities include the growing of crops and vegetables, distilling, quarrying, and the production of woollen textiles, especially Harris tweed.

14/04/03

DEAR JOHN,

As promised when we spoke at the canoe show, an article for the mag, hope it's ok.

The sea was flat as we paddled from the beach heading north to the top end of the

Islands Located in Scotland, United Kingdom Also known as Western Isles Number of islands - 500

The Hebrides are an archipelago of 500 islands of western Scotland. The islands are divided into two groups—the Outer Hebrides and the Inner Hebrides—by the Minch and Little Minch straits and the Sea of the Hebrides. The chief islands of the Outer Hebrides are Lewis with Harris, North Uist, South Uist, and Barra. The largest of the Inner Hebrides is Skye, and the other important islands of the group are Mull, Islay, Jura, Tiree, and Colonsay. Fewer than 100 of the Hebrides



are populated, and most of the inhabitants live on Lewis with Harris, Skye, and Islay. The winters of the Hebrides are mild compared to those experienced in the rest of Scotland. The archipelago has a rocky terrain, which is broken by many bogs, moors, lakes, and valleys. The only forests of importance are on Lewis

island. Terns fished and hoodie crows quartered the shoreline looking for anything they could eat. It was hot and we paddled in tee shirts and shorts our paddling gear stowed under the deck, and no spraydeck. We stopped every so often to drink water from our bottles, and soak up the atmosphere.

Away in the distance, mountains loomed up straight out of the sea and hazy islands and rocky outcrops swam on the horizon.

A few swells appeared as we rounded the north end of the island and now on the exposed ocean-side there were few landing places as we headed south into the swells and a light breeze.

After awhile a sandy beach came into view, so anxious to stretch our legs we paddled in. Out of the breeze it was hot and the white shell sand reflected the heat more as we hauled our Klepper up the strand line. It

was unbelievable for we were on Taransay in the Hebrides, northwest Scotland in August, and it was hot, scorching in fact.

We swam in the sea to cool off then after more drink we set off again. It was my wife's birthday and she wanted to celebrate with a good paddle.

The bottom end of Taransay, Tarasaigh in Gaelic, was interesting and the Klepper bobbed about a bit as the clapotis came back at us but the sun beamed down and we found another beautiful sandy bay to stop for lunch.

We walked up the hillside, deep magenta orchids growing over the place, and the view up the sound of Taransay was stunning.

By the time we had meandered and paddled our way back to our tent on the machair we had covered over twenty miles, fabulous.

A few days later we were exploring the is/and of Scarp, just north of Taransay. A few locals had crossed over from the mainland in their boats to shear their sheep, and we chatted to some of the older folk that had lived on Scarp in the old days, for now the island is uninhabited.

There are some wonderful sea caves around Scarp and it was to these we paddled next. One big cave was like a cathedral and very black inside. As my wife said she was not happy as we crept in but I laughed and said it was Puff the Magic Dragons, cave.

From the black void beyond came a thunderous snarling roar and a big splash. Ali was into reverse and you could have surfed on our wake as she backed us out of that cave. I imagine we had startled a big old grey seal but I couldn't get my wife back for a second look.

Out in the sound porpoise fished on the ebb and a pair of sea eagles soared along the cliff face high above. The weather was changing and we faced wind and rain on the way back to our tent. The little cove into which we paddled was sheltered and as we landed we suffered a severe midge attack the worst I have ever known.

Next morning an Atlantic swell had developed and big boomers were coming up the sound. That coupled with the rain and grey sky was the signal to break camp. The flowers of the machair still looked brilliant even in the sombre light and we felt a tinge of sadness as we drove along the little single-track road back through the mountains.

For those interested, we used our Terra Nova Ultra tent we also took our Gore-Tex bivvy tents, M5R Dragonfly stove Knoydart paddling cogs and salopettes, little used. We normally paddle our singles but as we had just purchased it we took our Klepper Quattro and 54 sailing rig too.

Dick Foyster Haida Gwaji Wicklewood
Norfolk

GMDSS and Paddlers

by Anne Young of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

This article is intended to explain a bit about GMDSS, VHF DSC and what it means to the average paddler. The subject is full of jargon that I will explain or avoid using.

GMDSS -Global Maritime Distress and Safety System -is the latest legislation in force for all SalAS vessels. Commercial vessels can be considered SalAS vessels. A rolling programme was introduced in 1992 and became fully implemented on 1st February 1999. The idea behind GMDSS is to enable vessels, wherever they are in the world, to be able to transmit a distress alert, by two separate and independent means, at the press of a button. This allows more rapid deployment

of rescue units. Most of the equipment required for a vessel to become GMDSS compliant, are basic items of communication.

These items include VHF radio, VHF DSC (digital selective calling) and DSC watch keeper; NA VTEX and/or Satcoms EGC; EPIRB; a waterproof, hand-held VHF radio; SART (Search and Rescue Radar Transponder) and 9GHZ radar. The only items of GMDSS kit likely to be carried by a paddler are the VHF radio and the EPIRB. A gadget happy paddler might carry a SART but otherwise unlikely.

The GMDSS rollout programme has been extended until 1st February 2005 to reflect the potential

conflict between SalAS and non-SalAS vessels. What this means in plain English is all vessels, including pleasure craft, will be encouraged to fit VHF DSC. The reason for encouraging non-SalAS vessels to fit VHF DSC is the cessation of a headset watch on VHF Ch16 in 2005. It will still be monitored but only on loudspeakers, not a continuous headset watch as it is now, although this may change.

Digital Selective Calling is the equivalent of a pager. It sends an alert to a particular station, be that vessel or coastguard station, informing them that the caller wishes to talk to them. More importantly, it can set off a distress alert at the touch of a button. This distress alert will identify you and inform HM Coastguard what your position is. With the larger base-sets fitted to ships there is even an option to enter what type of distress situation the vessel is in, e.g., sinking, on fire or even piracy. Once the alert has been acknowledged, it is still up to the sender to broadcast a Mayday alert on VHF Ch16.

This allows HM Coastguard to confirm details and gather other information relevant to the rescue. It also informs other vessels nearby that may not have DSC. In order for this system to work, everyone has to have identifying number. This is the Maritime Mobile Service Identification or MMSI number. It is a nine-digit number where the first three numbers indicate which country the vessel is registered with.

For handheld VHF DSC the MMSI number will begin with 2359. The numbers 235 indicate a UK vessel and the number 9 indicate it is a portable radio. Obviously for this system to work properly the radio must be licensed with the Radio Communications Agency (as should all marine VHF radios, handheld or otherwise). They issue the MMSI numbers and should pass the details to MRCC Falmouth, hence if an alert goes off HM Coastguard are able to identify it.

Most of the information available refers to fixed radio sets of one kind or another, not portables. At present there is only one make of portable VHF DSC available, this is the SIMRAD HD52 costing around £300.

As technology develops and demand increases there will be other companies producing portable VHF DSC radios that will bring the cost down. The big problem with this radio is the method of updating the position. It is updated when the radio is in the charging unit, and the charging unit is connected to a chartplotter or other GPS source. Not very user friendly for your average paddler! Ideally someone will develop a handheld VHF radio with integral GPS to solve that problem. Even if no position were entered HM Coastguard would be able to respond to a DSC distress alert, it would just involve a larger search area and take longer. Handheld VHF DSC units do not allow alerting other stations, they simply have a button to press that will send out a distress alert (see picture). The button requires to be held down for 5 seconds to initiate the distress alert. There is a cover over the button to prevent accidental alerting. There is a potential problem with the DSC alert being received but the following verbal MAYDAY is not received due to the vagaries of interference or simply distances involved. However, a DSC distress alert is the equivalent of shouting MAYDAY and will be treated by HM Coastguard as one.

In conclusion, sea kayakers require handheld VHF DSC with integral GPS and this is not available at present. I hope this article helps demystify digital selective calling. If there are any queries I can be contacted at MRCC Aberdeen on 01224 592334, or call your nearest Coastguard station, they should be able to help.

Anne Young
Aberdeen Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre

Lying Across the Wind

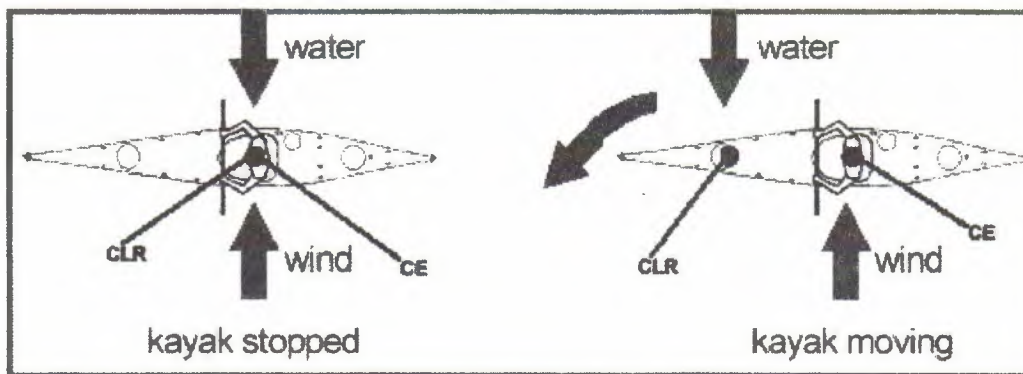
A few more thoughts on sea kayaks in the wind. by Robert Craig

I enjoyed Peter Carter's article "Going Straight" in the June 2003 issue of *Ocean Kayaker*. The ideas presented are identical to those in my article "So Why Does It Keep Turning?" reprinted in *Ocean Kayaker*, May 2000, though Peter expresses them better. I thought it might be worth extending these ideas.

There are two very obvious features about how most kayaks behave in the wind: when they're moving, they turn up into the wind; and when they're stopped, they lie beam to wind. The first of these effects is explained in detail in the two articles mentioned above, so I'll discuss here only what happens when the boat is stopped and lying beam to

wind.

The two articles mentioned introduced the concepts of a Centre of Lateral Resistance (CLR) expressing where the water forces act on the boat, and a Centre of Effort (CE) expressing where the wind forces act on the boat. The CLR is in the centre of the boat when it's stationary, and moves forward dramatically when the boat starts to move. I contend that the C of E stays at the paddler in the middle of the boat ('cos that's where most of the windage is), whereas Peter believes that it moves a bit according to the apparent wind, but no matter, the effect is the same: the centres don't line up when the boat is moving, and there's a torque trying to turn it head to wind.



When the kayak is lying stopped beam to wind, it's not enough to say: ah, the CLR and the CE line-up, so there's no torque". That is true, but there is a torque when the boat is stopped and not beam to wind. This torque needs to be explained. It's not a trivial effect: I've been out in a strong wind and had to try really hard to get the kayak to turn when stationary. There's a big torque coming from somewhere when the boat isn't beam-on.

What I think is happening is this: if the kayak is sitting stationary and beam on, the CLR and CE line up, so there's no torque and the kayak sits there. If it turns slightly – say bow upwind a bit – the wind starts to blow it not just sideways, but also along the length of the kayak. It's much easier to push the kayak along its length than sideways. So now, in the example I've chosen, the kayak is moving slowly backwards. So the CLR moves towards the stern and no longer lines up with the CE; so there's a torque turning the boat back to the beam-on condition. The kayak turns back to the beam-on condition unless the paddler fights the effect. The same thing happens if the stern turns upwind a bit.

I believe all substantially all ships do this. It was all brought back to mind by reading a book called *The Loss of the Bismarck*. Towards the end of the Bismarck's last voyage, she was steaming flat-out in a easterly direction heading for the safety of Brest, and pursued by a number of

British warships.

There was a strong westerly wind – about Force 7. Almost within the safety of air cover, Bismarck lost rudder control (due to a torpedo). Without rudder control she was like a sea kayak without a skeg: with the engines stopped she lay beam to wind; with the engines ahead or astern she rounded up into the wind and back out into the Atlantic and her final fate.

John D. Heath

15th April .1923 -14th July 2003

John was born in the town of Cameron in Texas and was a big man, both in physical stature and intellect. He developed an interest in paddling at an early age, building a canvas covered kayak in his early teens and paddling it on the nearby river and local ponds.

Uncle Sam interrupted his paddling career during World War II when he trained as a fighter pilot for the Army Air Force, only to be transferred and finishing his term of duty as a draughtsman. This technical drawing skill was to benefit the kayaking world later when John measured and recorded many different

kayak types.

After the war John applied his draughting and design skills in a variety of engineering industries, from ice cream making machinery to internal layouts for the Boeing 747, not to mention supersonic aircraft projects. In so doing he moved from his native Texas to the Los Angeles and Seattle areas before returning to the lone star state to pursue design work for the oil drilling industry, to his own account. In retirement he became involved, in a small way, in farming. In 1954, whilst residing in the Seattle area, John took to paddling again but thought that the commer-

cially produced kayaks then available did not show as much design logic as the native kayaks he had seen in museums. About this time John attended a lecture by the Arctic explorer Admiral Donald MacMillan whose film of Greenland rolling convinced him that recreational paddlers had a lot to learn from the Inuit about handling skills as well as design. Thus began a long and ever more serious study of the performance of authentic replicas of native kayaks and learning the associated paddling techniques. John probably knew more about the practical side of handling Inuit craft and more rolling method than any non-Inuit of his generation. He did not keep this knowledge to himself but wrote many articles on the subject in journals like *American White Water and Sea Kayaker* as well as learned publications such as the *Bark and Skin Canoes of North America*. He also developed the much copied method of illustrating rolling techniques by showing the starting position on the page then turning it upside down to follow the movements to complete the roll. At the time of his death John was in the process of bringing out a book on Greenland kayaks.

I first knew of and corresponded with John in the early 1960's when he was involved with the visit of Ken Taylor to Greenland, having got Ken to have an Igdlorsuit kayak built for him. Unfortunately, there was only enough sealskin to cover Ken's own Kayak

So John had to make do with a frame. However, Ken's Kayak subsequently gave rise, directly and indirectly, to over thirty distinct kayak designs in Britain alone, some of them highly successful commercially. John contributed to many sea kayak symposiums in America as well as being an honoured guest at others in England, France, Jersey and Scotland. He travelled to Alaska, Canada and Greenland to study kayaks and learn techniques directly from the natives. Also visiting many museums in America, Canada, Denmark, England, Greenland and Scotland to survey ancient kayaks. He arranged for the young Greenland kayaking champion, Maligiag Padilla, to visit America, accommodated him in his home and accompanied him on a tour of events and demonstrations of Inuit skills.

Apart from all that, John was a thoroughly nice individual with a great sense of humour, always playing the joker and an animal lover extraordinaire. I will miss him. He is survived by his wife Jessie and son David, who have my sincere condolences.

They are endeavouring to have his last great work on Greenland kayaks published. I hope they succeed, it would be a suitable memorial to him.

Duncan R Winning OBE

Honorary President Scottish Canoe Association

WHERE ARE WE WITH THIS LIABILITY (FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS) ISSUE?

Fears about liability are becoming a real concern to paddlers and coaches and as such some individuals are already becoming wary of taking responsibility for others in any context, believing themselves to be immune from blame if they bury their heads in the sand and regard themselves as having made their own decisions to paddle in a peer environment, free of what they see as being the constraints of formal leadership and responsibility. Some paddlers consider themselves best protected from liability by not becoming coaches. Some coaches believe themselves best served by 'taking days off' from being a coach when they wish not to be held responsible for the actions or injuries of others. We are, however, faced with a dilemma. We all want and demand 'freedom'. We would all wish to paddle without the specter of blame or ultimate responsibility hanging over us. Indeed concerns over the situation are effecting paddler perspective on the leadership of others and the coaches perspective on when they do and don't carry responsibility for others and when, if at all, they can 'have a day off'.

Firstly we should acknowledge that some forms of canoeing have an inherent risk factor and unfortunately tragic accidents can occur at all levels of participation. Regrettably, when a tragedy does occur, the media tends to react out of all proportion to the

actual very low incidence of fatalities within the sport. In consequence, incidents can become distorted beyond recognition, and the dividing line between freedom of action, and responsible provision, becomes difficult to define.

Numerous examples of this process can be cited, sometimes leading to increased litigation, media speculation and legislation. Secondly we should appreciate that the difficulty for all coaches and paddlers, is to tread the border zone of taking reasonable precautions, yet retaining the adventurous nature of those

aspects of the sport which carry an element of danger. Such reasonable precautions should reflect the individual 'duty of care' that we carry and ensure that a cost/benefits analysis assures that activities take place in an environment of calculated and acceptable risk. Best practice, reasonable behaviour and dynamic risk assessment applied to all paddling experiences will protect those taking part and those responsible for activities and ensure that we are never in a position where our actions can be challenged. Thirdly we should all ensure that we have appropriate third party liability insurance cover.

Best Practice, Reasonable Behaviours and Risk Assessment.

The fact of the matter is that we as paddlers cannot be above the Law and as far as we can tell, at this time, the law would establish blame or other wise on the basis of 'duty of

care' and whether this was discharged appropriately. The Law would currently establish this by firstly establishing with whom that duty lay, taking a measure of the experience and knowledge of all those involved irrespective of whether they are qualified or not, paid or unpaid. While formal leaders are considered to have a higher duty of care we are therefore who we are and as such we cannot abdicate responsibility for others.

While such comment may cause many paddlers and coaches even greater concern we should all be conscious and comforted by the fact that duty of care responsibilities are based upon 'reasonable' common sense behaviors and 'Best Practice' and that to be seen to be at blame requires that you need to be proven negligent. As paddlers and coaches our training should provide us with the judgment and skills required to effectively discharge our duties -as long as we act reasonably and in everyone's best interests, apply best practice and apply the precepts of risk assessment to everything that we do we will always be safe from being considered negligent.

In the UK, all ADULTS who participate in adventurous activities and WHO ARE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS THEY MAY FACE, are considered in law to be liable for their own actions. In other words, they can always say "I'm not doing that" and are unlikely to successfully sue a leader if they are involved in an accident unless criminal negligence can be proved. There is a grey area where people of vastly different experience are involved. In other words if a complete novice decides to paddle a hazardous rapid a court might deem that he or she lacked the experience to appreciate the real nature of the hazards involved. If a vastly more experienced paddler were present, the court

C.R.I.S.I.S.

- C. Clarify hazards and risks
- R. Re-assess and revise
- I. Involve all participants
- S. State simply and in writing
- I. If too risky, don't do it
- S. Share knowledge & experience

might rightly decide that he or she had a DUTY OF CARE to advise the other paddler not to run the rapid. This would apply whether the more experienced paddler was qualified or unqualified

and paid or unpaid. However, formal leaders are deemed to have an enhanced duty of care.

Consideration of some of the defining principles of liability and negligence may help bring some perspective to our understanding of how the courts (Civil or Criminal) might view or establish liability and or responsibility.

1. Duty Of Care

"The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible"

In the eyes of the law we all have a duty of care to our neighbours -a neighbour simply being anyone whom we may come into contact with and whom if you thought about it might be injured by your negligent acts and or omissions. In order to have been seen to discharge our duty of care we must have been seen to behave as a 'reasonable person' would have, taking into account their specific skill, knowledge and experience. For a person to be found liable, they have to have been in breach of their 'Duty of Care' to the injured person(s) and the damage must result from that breach of duty of care.

As Paddlers we owe a duty of care to others who are closely and directly affected by our actions.

We all, irrespective of experience or qualification, carry a duty of care to our neighbour, however, our individual duty of care will depend on our experience and knowledge. Clearly in circum-

stances were we might be deemed to have the greater degree of experience and knowledge we would be seen to carry an enhanced duty to our neighbours and indeed in a formal leadership situation we would be seen to carry an enhanced duty of care and a responsibility to ensure an appropriate standard of care for those in our charge.

2. Responsibility

The principles of duty of care mean that responsibility for injury or harm to others may, in the eyes of the Civil and Criminal Court, be seen as being in hands of the person or individual most experienced as opposed to most qualified.

Therefore within a situation where a level 3/4 coach was perceived by the group to be the leader they may not carry full responsibility if another member of the group was deemed to be more experienced and better placed to make judgement as to the safety of the group.

Joining a group or being a part of a group as a peer paddler and group member although a qualified coach, with the premise that you might 'take a day off' as a coach could be misleading if in fact you are the most experienced paddler on the trip.

Accepting a place on a trip as an experienced paddler and or coach thinking that you do so only for your own enjoyment and satisfaction and that responsibility for the trip remains with the designated leader does not necessarily remove your responsibility and 'Duty of Care', if in fact you are deemed to be the most experienced paddler present.

3. Standard Of Care

The crucial part of all this is what that standard of care will be? In the context of a group (two or more), the standard of care owed to other(s) will be higher for the more experienced member.

A practical example of this might be that whereas you might not routinely check your experienced partners boat for buoyancy and or your experienced partners personal paddling equipment, you would be expected to do so for an unknown novice / intermediate paddler joining a trip or activity for the first time.

Other factors that should be considered before deciding on standard of care issues should be; your perceived and or actual formal position within the group you are paddling with, the nature of the trip or activity being undertaken (a responsible adult would be expected to be aware of any associated risks and potential for injury), the foreseeability of an accident. Again, as before, greater experience and formal status places greater emphasis on the standard of care you are expected to deliver. As stated all ADULTS who participate in adventurous activities are considered in law to be liable for their own actions as long as they ARE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS THEY MAY FACE. With this in mind it is important, if it would be deemed as being part of our individual duty of care, to make sure that paddlers not having the experience to make informed decisions are placed in a position of being able to do so by being informed and consulted. Should an incident occur during an activity thus managed it would then be possible for the principle of law that states 'a willing person cannot be injured' to be recognised.

4. A Willing Person Cannot be injured.

Another defence linked to participation as an instructor is 'Volenti -non fit in jura' - A willing man cannot be injured - passed as a defence by the occupiers Liability Act (1957) Amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to remove occupiers and Landowners liability for anyone injured as a consequence of the natural features of the landscape. **18**

The principle in law of 'volenti non fit injuria' means that where an adult participates voluntarily in an activity which involves known and obvious hazards, then he or she is unlikely to succeed in a claim for recompense against those leading the activity, if the injury sustained is a result of falling victim to a known and obvious danger, e.g. Canoeist pinned against a rock in white water.

This principle may have some bearing when groups of "friends" within the club are participating in canoeing ventures, which might only loosely be defined as "club activities". It is not known how a court might view a given set of circumstances, but in such instances it would seem unlikely that an adult complainant with personal experience compatible with the journey or venture being undertaken would succeed in a claim either against the individual presumed to be the leader, or the club's officials, where injury or death results from a "canoeing" cause. There could obviously be a case to answer if the accident arose from some other circumstance.

It is perhaps important here to reflect on the issues of 'duty of care' and 'standard of care' - It is 'reasonable' to expect that those with experience and knowledge of an activity or venture should be seen to share information about a planned activity or venture in order that a less experienced individual considering taking part could actually do so having made up their own mind after being in a position to balance their own experience against a risk and benefits analysis of the highlighted trip or venture. Certainly being in a position, after the event, to indicate that important information was given and acknowledged by the injured party could reduce liability under the principle of Contributory Negligence.

5. Contributory Negligence

Contributory Negligence is another factor that can reduce the liability. This concept is fairly simple - A novice forgetting essential supplies or equipment despite being informed that they were required. A paddler in a peer group situation deciding to run a rapid despite advice that would suggest they make an individual decision to portage. Any negligence by the group leader or the individual recognised as carrying responsibility may then be reduced depending on the circumstances.

6. The Chain of Causation

The Chain of Causation means that loss or injury has been caused by the act or omission in question rather than by something else. In a negligence case, the negligent act must have caused the injury. If there is some other factor, such as another person (or the person who was injured), which caused the injury then the chain of causation between the alleged negligent act and the injury is broken and the person who committed the alleged negligent act will not be responsible for the injury.

7. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful explanation of what in your work could cause harm to people, so that you weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm and keep people safe. Identifying the risks and hazards of an activity enables you to take precautions

I shall include an interesting response to this article from a Lecturer in Law from one of our Universities in the October issue of OCEAN KAYAKER.

Is there anyone out there who can tell me who GERHARD KREMER was and explain his relevance to us as sea kayakers? No prizes for the first correct response, only acknowledgement in the next issue as ISKA trivia champ. (Ed)

Bruynzeel plywood sea-going 16 foot DK21 kayak with 10 year guarantee, made by Dennis Davis: excellent condition, £250 ono. Contact Jean at 0121 453 3129
Jean Massingham

and put measures in place to make the risks and hazards acceptable.

The Five Steps to Risk Assessment. -For many of us, particularly those in a formal leadership role or position of responsibility risk assessment conjures up written risk assessments of each and every activity we may take part in, along with each and every venue where activity may take place. While now a necessary part of life and providing opportunities to establish a cost/benefits analysis of activity we should acknowledge that such risk assessments are general and may not reflect the dynamic nature of the I paddling environment.

We should also reflect that individual duty of care also suggests that we each have a duty to undertake a risk assessment of everything we do and that we should also take account of the variables that exist within an adventure sport - in a peer group situation, particularly, we should not feel that this may require a formal 5 steps to risk assessment approach of every trip we may undertake. It does suggest however that we should be aware that the safety of an individual or a group is dependant, to a large degree, on self discipline, knowledge and the skills of the individual person(s). The 'Dynamic Risk Assessment' is therefore the final link in a full risk assessment process. It takes place within circumstances that are unforeseeable and or are changing constantly (i.e. a white water river environment). It is this final assessment which we rely upon to allow us to carry on our paddling activities safely and to make careful considered judgements. The dynamic approach is a continuous thought process.

Ref -5 Steps to Risk Assessment HSE

Assessing risk at the wet end -Code 96 Dec 2000

Conclusions

Reflecting on and having a clearer understanding of the above principles should hopefully provide some clarity of thought and perspective to the matter of liability and the effect upon us as coaches. Certainly from my point of view, while there is no doubt that society has become more safety conscious and more apt to seek to establish blame and recompense, my responsibilities as a coach are the same now as they have always been. BCU Insurance cover is in place however, to protect me from any claim relating to paddles port activity as outlined earlier. While I consider this a major comfort and a significant benefit of membership, knowing it is in place does not place me in a position whereby I can ignore my duty in law to others. Indeed it would be a matter of pride that whatever the outcome of a claim for negligence might be that I could stand behind my actions as having been in the best interest of all concerned.

Settling the personal conflict within myself that initially saw my personal freedoms and experiences being challenged, and having a greater understanding of liability and duty of care issues enables me to ensure that my behaviour, actions and judgments as a coach reflects my responsibilities and the best interests of everyone including myself.