

# 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**

OCTOBER 2003

ISSUE # 54

# Ocean Kayaker



address for copy for this  
newsletter is:-

5, Osprey Ave.  
Westhoughton,  
Bolton

Lancs  
BL5 2SL  
email

<jramwell@provider.co.uk>

*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

There goes another summer. It has  
been a busy one for many of you, what with  
symposiums continuing to dominate the  
scene and with the occasional serious expedi-  
tion.

I have just heard from one of my  
buddies in Newfoundland that Peter Bray is  
returning home having successfully com-  
pleted his solo circumnavigation of  
Newfound. A great trip Peter, and not with-  
out it's difficulties. We are now looking for-  
ward to hearing how it went. I know Peter  
is telling the tale at the forthcoming BCU  
Sea Touring Meet scheduled for early next  
month on the South West coast England. I  
shall be there myself so hope to provide  
both an account of this as well as Peters'  
journey.

A Robert McLaughlin completed his  
circumnavigation of Britain on September  
4th at Westminster. The GLC have  
expressed a wish to make him their Guest of  
Honour at the coming London Festival, an  
honour for the sport in general. We know  
that this journey has been done by others  
but it will always remain a remarkable  
achievement. John Chamberlin is wanting  
to add Roberts' exploits to his 'history of  
UK circumnavigations'....can you help?

Raleigh International is intending to  
lay on another training/selection weekend  
next April, 2004 at Nigels' place, Anglesey  
for those interested in kayaking with them  
in S. Chile. For more info. contact Tory  
Nixon on 0207 371 8585.

I receive many mags. and n/letters  
from the States and most of them carry pro-  
motions for BCU courses, many with Brits.  
as major contributors. Some are skill cours-  
es (like the one this month at Bodega Bay,  
CA) and others are coaching courses. So we  
are capitalising on our intellectual capacity.  
Personally I would much rather see the  
Americans sell their own skills and coaching  
courses to their paddlers. There is absolute-  
ly no reason why they shouldn't. It is every  
bit as good as ours.

## CONTENTS

Editorial.....	Page 1
National Map & Chart Agencies.....	Page 2
Trangia cooking - banana pudding.....	Page 2
Duty of Care for Paddlers <i>David Wilkinson.</i>	Page 3
Death to Midges.....	Page 4
The Sixth Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium <i>Alan Hardwick.....</i>	Page 5
Criccieth to Fishguard <i>Dave Rawlinson.....</i>	Page 6
Scratchy & Itchy Around Skye <i>Andy Biggs .....</i>	Page 8
Letters to Editor.....	Page 10
Description of two Greenland Kayaks <i>Hugh Collings.....</i>	Page 11
Buying a Kayak <i>Timothy Williams.....</i>	Page 17
West Cork/Cape Clear <i>Ian Stevens .....</i>	Page 19

## National map and chart agencies around the world

### Topographic maps

**Australia:** Australian Surveying & Land Information Group (AUSLIG) PO Box 2, Belconnen ACT 2616  
Tel: 1 800 800 173  
www.auslig.gov.au

**Canada:** Centre for Topographic Information (CTI) Natural Resources Canada, 130 Bentley St, Nepean, Ontario K2E 6T9  
Tel: 613-952 7000;  
www.maps.nrcan.gc.ca

**France:** Institut Géographique National (IGN) 136 bis, rue de Grenelle, 75700 Paris  
Tel: 01.43.98.80.00  
www.ign.fr

**Germany:** Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (bkg) Richard-Strauss-Allee 11, D-60598 Frankfurt-am-Main  
Tel: 0 69-63331  
www.ifag.de

**Ireland:** Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) Customer Services, Ordnance Survey Ireland, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8  
Tel: 01-802 5300  
www.irlgov.ie/osi

**New Zealand:** National Topographic/Hydrographic Authority (NTHA) Land Information New Zealand, Private Box 5501, Wellington.

Tel: 04-498 9691  
www.linz.govt.nz

**UK & Northern Ireland:** Ordnance Survey (OS) Customer Information, Romsey Rd, Southampton SO16 4GU  
Tel: 08456-050505  
www.ordsvy.gov.uk

**Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland (OSNI).** Colby House, Stranmillis Court, Belfast BT9 5BJ.  
Tel: 02890-255755  
www.osni.gov.uk

**USA:** United States Geological Survey (USGS). USGS National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA 20192.  
Tel: 1-888-275 8747  
www.usgs.gov

### Nautical charts

**Australia:** Australian Hydrographic Service. Locked Bag 8801, South Coast Mail Centre NSW 2521.  
Tel: 02-4221 8500  
www.hydro.gov.au

**Canada:** Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS). 615 Booth St, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6.  
Tel 613-995 5249  
www.chs-shc.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

**France:** Service Hydrographique et Océanographique de la Marine (SHOM). BP 30316, 29603 Brest CEDEX.  
Tel: 02.98.22.15.84  
www.shom.fr

**Germany:** Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie (BSH). Bernhard-Nocht-Strasse 78, 20359 Hamburg.  
Tel: 0 40-31900  
www.bsh.de

**New Zealand:** National Topographic/Hydrographic Authority (NTHA). Land Information New Zealand, Private Box 5501, Wellington.  
Tel: 04-498 9691  
www.linz.govt.nz

**UK & Northern Ireland:** United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO). Admiralty Way, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2DN.  
Tel: 01823-337900 ext 3342  
www.hydro.gov.uk

**USA:** National Ocean Service (NOS). SSMC4, 13th floor, 1305 East West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.  
Tel: 301-713 3070  
www.nos.noaa.gov

### FRANGIA COOKING -BANANA PUDDING Serves 2

#### Ingredients

1 1/2 tbsp rice flour/ 2 tsp corn flour/ 2 1/2 tbsp sugar  
Pinch salt /1/4 cup coconut milk powder/ 1/2 cup desiccated coconut /1-2 banana or dried banana chopped into small pieces water

#### Method

\*At home mix all dry ingredients and place into a plastic bag  
\*When in the field pour dry ingredients into a small pot. Slowly add water and mashed bananas, mix well. (The consistency

should resemble that of a very thick cake batter).

\*In a larger pot place a small amount of water (this can be salty if fresh water is in short supply) then place the smaller pot into the larger to create a double boiler.

\*Cover, place on heat and boil rapidly for 10 minutes or until you can break a small piece away from the centre easily.

\*Note: be sure not to let the large pot boil dry or on the other hand be sure not to have too much water in the larger pot, as it will boil over the edge into the pudding.

## DUTY OF CARE FOR PADDLERS - DOES EXPERIENCE COUNT

by David Wilkinson Lecturer in Law Keele University, BCU L2 Coach

In the article "Where are we with this Liability issue?" on Page 17 of the last (August) issue of OCEAN KAYAKER there were some interesting suggestions about liability which may worry a great many paddlers. In particular it was suggested that, as paddlers, we can be liable for an accident merely because we are the most experienced person at the scene. I want to take issue with this idea because, in my opinion, it is putting some people off becoming coaches and going out on rivers with less experienced paddlers.

In the article it was suggested that, "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 might rightly decide that he or she had a DUTY OF CARE to advise the other paddler not to run the rapid"

In fact, and with respect, that is not correct as a general proposition. The law does not require anyone to act as a "Good Samaritan" and assist others who may be in danger or at risk from self-inflicted harm. As it was put in a Canadian case, 'No principle is more deeply rooted in the common law than that there is no duty to take positive action in aid of another no matter how helpless or perilous his position is. The fact that a person can, as a result of their experience, foresee dangers that another person faces is not in itself sufficient to warrant the imposition of a legal duty of care. *There is no duty to warn a blind person who is about to walk off a cliff of the dangers involved!*

Later on in the article it is put a different way in terms of a general proposition:

"In the eyes of the law we all have a duty of care to our neighbours -a neighbour being anyone whom we might come into contact with and whom if you thought about it might be injured by your negligent acts and or omissions"

Yes, true, BUT since landmark cases in the mid 1980s English courts have been conservative in their application of negligence law. The House of Lords now says that, "foreseeability of likely harm is not in itself a sufficient test of liability in negligence". In addition to (i) foreseeability there must also be (ii) a close or "proximate" relationship between the victim and the defendant and (iii) it must be "fair just and reasonable" to impose a duty of care. This is known as the "three stage test". Because of the three stage test I'd say that a court would take some convincing that an experienced paddler had a duty to warn a less experienced paddler, who just happened to be on the same

stretch of river, of the risks involved in tackling a rapid. If it were otherwise then, on events such as the Dee Tour, bank safety people would find themselves lobbing warning notices and guidebooks onto the spray decks of passing novices as well as the usual tangled web of throwlines!

Having said that, it is crucial to consider the particular circumstances of the case. Situations could arise in which a paddler's experience was relevant to the imposition of a duty of care. In a claim arising from a canoeing accident the court would listen to arguments that justify the imposition of a duty of care. Factors which might achieve this would include (but not be limited to) the following:

-If the experienced and novice paddlers were part of the same group on the river, and the experienced paddler had assumed a leadership role. This could be achieved in a number of ways e.g offering to "lead" the group, offering to give coaching during the trip, accepting payment etc;

-If a more experienced paddler had led a novice paddler to believe that she would look after her;

-If the novice paddler was a child, or had a disability, and the experienced paddler had assumed responsibility as such for this.

All that is not to say, of course, that as part of the paddling community we shouldn't look out for one another at all times. Of course, we should. It's common sense.

The article goes on to suggest that if a paddler is part of a group and is the most experienced member of that group then he or she may have a duty of care to the others even if the group is in the charge of a properly qualified coach. What is misleading about this suggestion is that it implies that experience alone generates a duty of care to the group. But that's very unlikely, for reasons that I've already given. The presence of a qualified coach in charge of the group can only make it even more unlikely. The only situation where I can imagine a court imposing a duty of care in such a scenario is where for other reasons the more experienced paddler already had a duty of care to the group e.g. a centre employed her and these were paying clients. It's certainly not likely, in my view, to apply to peer group paddling. Of course, as a matter of good practice we should be clear that the people that we are paddling with are up to the river in question given its condition and their own condition on the day but that's a different matter.

In relation to the Standard of Care, it is suggested

that experienced paddlers have a duty 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". True, particularly for novices or others who are dependent on your advice. However, the courts would certainly expect an adult, who knew the general characteristics of paddling (i.e. it's a risky sport due to risk of drowning or injury), to put some effort in to find out for themselves the nature of the trip, river, or rapid. This is not the Nanny State. We are not expected to baby sit our paddling partners. Particularly in peer-group paddling, it is likely that the courts would expect each paddler, even those with less experience, to make efforts to check out hazards for themselves, both in general terms (i.e. reading the guide book and discussing with other paddlers before they get on) and in relation to a particular rapid (i.e. making enquiries from fellow paddlers as to its suitability for them). Peer-group paddling works best when friends feel a shared responsibility for checking on their own and the group's safety. It's important that we keep it this way.

Finally, I draw some conclusions about how the courts are likely to apply the principles of negligence by looking at one of the very few actions in a UK court following a climbing accident. A climber sued a guide whom he had paid to introduce him to the sport, when he fell off a crag that he was leading, with the guide seconding. The less experienced climber's protection failed and he hit the deck, sustaining serious injuries. He claimed that the guide had failed to properly instruct him in the use of protection, had failed to supervise his protection placements, and had failed to stop the fall. His negligence claim did not succeed. In answering the point about instruction in protection placement the judge commented "the (climber) is not a child, he was at the relevant time an intelligent adult of 48 and the (guide) was entitled to treat him as such". The judge concluded by saying -

"If you are going to engage in rock climbing you must acknowledge and accept the risks you take and not expect to off load responsibility on others. That is not to say that a mountain guide does not assume responsibility for his client -clearly he does, but the nature of that responsibility must depend on the circumstances of the case, on the experience of the client and on the activity undertaken.

Thus when the (climber) began to lead he had to accept a degree of risk from which the [guide] could not protect him

So too would the courts expect those involved in canoeing to assume responsibility for their own actions and accept a degree of risk.

The article alerts us to the need to take care of our paddling partners but I'm keen that we indeed keep things in perspective and don't start unduly worrying about law suits arising purely because we hold BCU qualifications or have plenty of paddling experience. Qualifications and experience are a benefit for us to share with others, not a burden for us to carry alone.

David Wilkinson

*In this article David is able to place issues of liability in a different context perhaps to that of the article in the last issue of OCEAN KAYAKER. However I would stress that the intention of the article was to inform and raise awareness of current liability issues. It certainly wasn't to frighten paddlers or coaches. Indeed I wholeheartedly agree with David's closing comment where it says 'qualifications and experience are a benefit for us to share with others, not a burden to carry alone'.*

*BCU members' insurance arrangements reflects this and indeed it is recognised that affiliated clubs may not always have qualified coaches and therefore may need to rely on experienced club members when running trips and events.*

*Going back to the original article. Its intention was to raise awareness to possible scenarios and issues relating to the increasing number of civil actions and liability matters that in the main are settled out of court. Such cases provide little or no precedent in law, however evidence does suggest that settlements are based on duty of care and standard of care matters referenced in the article. Again let us not take fright at this let us instead be clear about such matters.*

*David's comments and references are however equally important to bear in mind. Hopefully what both articles confirm is our need to reflect best and informed practice so that we take whatever reasonable steps are required to cover our own and our neighbours safety.*

### 'Avon Calling' .....DEATH to Midges thanks to a Beauty Product

An Avon skin care product has been achieving record sales thanks to a recent discovery. It works wonders as a midge repellent! 'Skin So Soft', which comes as a lotion, shampoo and soap is reputedly proving to be an able repellent. This news is brought to you not by the company who are reportedly rather embarrassed by the findings -imagine selling a wrinkle cream with the line 'and It repels midges too!'

That It works has become a fast moving piece of folk law -word of mouth from user to user. This word has just crossed the Atlantic where the sales have been climbing. The 'beauty' -sorry, is it's also a lot cheaper than repellent (and wont burn holes in your clothing!) Think -you can repel midges whilst Ironing out those wrinkles at the same time, No more wizened explorers but fresh pink faces returning from extremis. No, this Is not April the 1st. -get yours now and see If the word on the water is sound! .

# The Sixth Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium

A REPORT FROM ALAN HARDWICK, INVERNESS SHIRE.

After a few year's break, May 2003 saw the return of the Scottish Sea Kayaking Symposium, held on the Isle of Skye. The organizing team of this Scottish Canoe Association event, Gordon and Moral Brown, George Maskell and Duncan Winning, OBE, were left in no doubt about its popularity by the huge oversubscription.

The 150 + early birds who were squeezed into the Gaelic College at Sabhal Mor Ostaig enjoyed fantastic views across the Sound of Sleat, and the overflowing campers on the well kept lawns were only slightly troubled by the

occasional rain shower, but not at all by midges, thankfully.

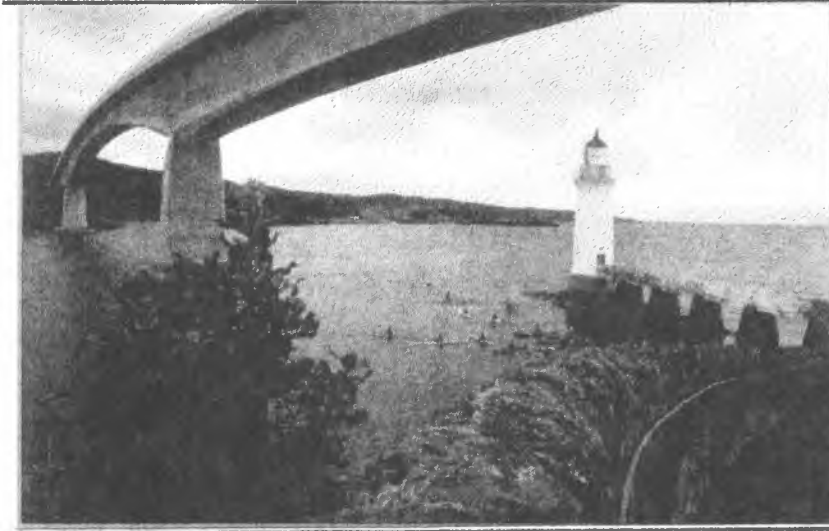
More than two dozen contributors, each experienced in different aspects of paddling, wildlife, the environment, local knowledge, safety and medical matters, shared their expertise with delegates in an enormous range of sessions, both active and relaxed, which were crammed into the busy three days.

Amazingly there were 22 practical classes held within the college campus itself covering just about every aspect of kayaking expeditioning from designing and building a traditional skin kayak to planning trips, navigating, camping, catering, understanding and respecting the environment as well as dealing with any incidents and medical emergencies.

Out on the water a further 17 sessions offered the opportunity for paddlers to improve skills under expert observation. Topics covered in addition to foundation skills included forward paddling, alternative strokes, Inuit style paddling, handling tidal flows, towing, incident management, rescues and something which beforehand had been a contradiction in terms to me "precise navigation".

When the going got too tough, or the head was still ringing after a highly successful Saturday night ceilidh, there were, thankfully, more than a dozen escapist talk and slide

shows to relax to. Without moving a muscle it was delightful to enjoy trips to Greenland, Vancouver, Ireland, the Faroe Islands, Denmark, St Kilda, the Channel Islands, Alaska, Spitsbergen and New Zealand, all in the company of some of the world's top paddlers.



Keynote speakers were Christian Morel, from France, and Clare Jones, who was on home territory. Christian spent 60 days kayaking amongst the icebergs of Greenland and in his presentation of "Quest of the Brash" his experiences were stunningly relayed in a surrealistic blend of projected multi-images blended with an ethereal

real soundtrack. A truly magical journey.

Clare also kept a packed lecture theatre enthralled with her down to earth account of how an "ordinary wee lassie" tackled the "Inside Passage", a journey of 1000 miles by kayak, from Vancouver Island in Canada to Juneau in Alaska. There were plenty of challenges to overcome on the 92 day voyage which received financial assistance from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, and Clare reckoned the experience was well worth missing 50 episodes of Eastenders for.

The audience's appreciation of the talk was easily gauged by the £300 it threw into a collection bucket for the Jen Duncan Memorial Fund. To finish off the £1 for every mile paddled that Gare was trying to raise Jim Wilson of Carlisle Canoes chipped in the final £100.

The whole Symposium was deemed a great success and is scheduled to take place at the same venue in 2005, alternating years with the Channel Isles event. Delegates will be limited to the same numbers as this year so book early if you want share in the fun.

(PS The college bar staff will be gearing up for the challenge too, now they know how much paddlers drink. They assure everyone that they will not run out of beer at the Ceilidh, as they did this time ..... twice in one night!

# CRICCIETH TO FISHGUARD - THE LINK

By Dave Rawlinson

as taken from the Portsmouth Canoe Club Newsletter

Over the years I have been fortunate to paddle the Southern Welsh Coast as far north as Fishguard, and the Northern Welsh Coast as far south as Criccieth. It has been in the back of my mind for some time to join the two sections together by paddling from Criccieth to Fishguard. Each year I had thought "Some day I'll do it."

This year I decided to stop putting it off and get on with it. One reason for the long delay was my thought that it was a boring bit of coastline. I was reluctant to ask others to waste (?) their time helping me to fulfill a long standing ambition, so I decided to go solo.

Solo paddling is very risky, you do not need me to remind you of this. Since I am not a very brave chap, and I cannot hand roll a bath tub below

Niagara Falls, I wanted a period of settled weather in which to do it. However having a family and a full time job meant I could not pick and choose the best moment. I gambled on the week of the 14 July; the start of the week was magnificent but a change was forecast on Wednesday with stronger winds to follow.

I drove up to Criccieth on the Sunday evening. I looked for a launching point near Portmadog, but the nearest I seemed to be able to get to the beach was 100m. With only me to carry the kayak this was no good. So, I drove on to Criccieth where it was possible to drive down to the shoreline.

Having sorted out the launch point I then needed to find somewhere to sleep. It was 23.00hrs by this time so I parking in a lay-by, pulled out the sleeping bag and slept in the

car. The night was beautiful; a clear sky with a "blood stained" moon and a placid sea.

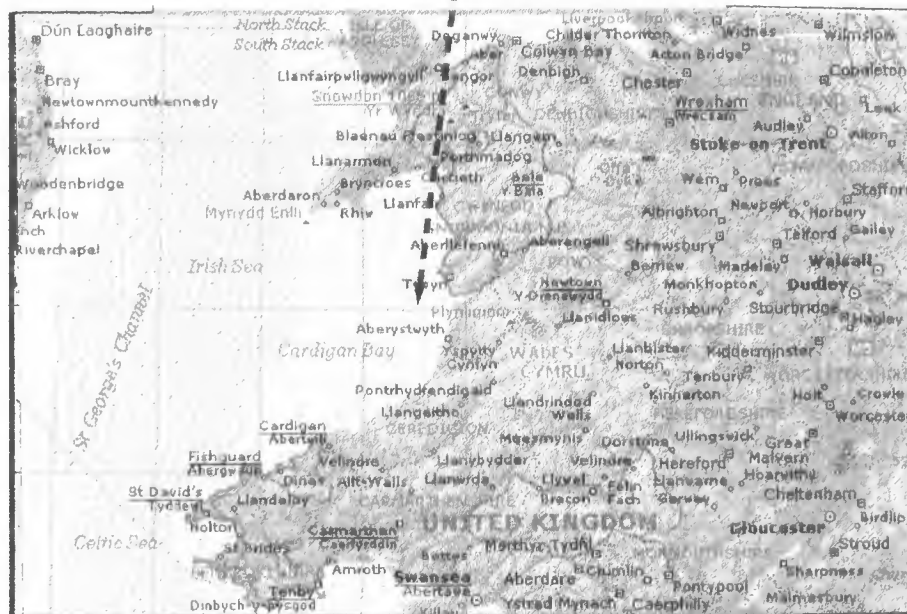
Next morning was as good as I had hoped so I made an early morning start after leaving the car parked in front of a local hotel. I crossed the bay, about a quarter of a mile from shore and was soon paddling southward. This section, as far as Aberdovey, has sandy shores with plenty of getting out points. I camped in the dunes just north of Aberdovey and after a leisurely meal I went to bed early.

I slept through my alarm call at 05.30hrs, for the morning shipping forecast, but I was on the water by 09.00hrs. The day was as hot and sunny as the previous day. Soon the shoreline turned more rocky with sections of coast where landing was not possible. Aberystwyth soon appeared and it was time to take on water, get rid of some fluid and have a "Slush Puppy", at the

beach stall. The coast remained more rocky, although it would be possible to land in some places to stretch legs, but escaping up the cliffs was often not possible. My second campsite was 6 miles south of New Quay. It was a gently shelving beach with a flat sandy section ideal for an overnight camp.

I woke for the forecast. I said Force 2/3 with Force 5/6 later.

Time to get a move on; I could finish the paddle today before the weather deteriorated. I was on the water at 06.30 hrs. The sea was still placid and in spite of a north flowing tidal stream I was able to make good progress. Soon I passed Cemaes Head and three miles further on I stopped for a much needed coffee and chunk of



malt loaf. Revitalised I moved on as the visibility slowly began to deteriorate. As I turned Dinas Head, and saw Fishguard before me, the first spots of rain fell.

I landed by a slipway which, fortuitously, was in front of the Tourist Information Office. They have a boat storage area behind and allowed me to leave my kayak there while I busied and trained it back to Criccieth for the car. I was lucky with my connections and collected the car at 23.00hrs that night. I drove as far as Aberystwyth that night then curled up in the car. Another early start next day, in the rain, brought me to Fishguard by 08.30hrs. I packed up in the rain, had some breakfast by the car then headed home.

The whole journey was 84 nautical miles. I managed 24 miles the first day, 33 miles the second day and 27 miles the third day. Although I was aching, salty and covered in sand it was a memorable trip, which I would recommend. It may not have the serious open crossings or tide races of some parts of Wales, but it is an area not to be underestimated. In uncertain conditions it could be a serious trip.

The trip had some interesting aspects such as :

- The first section had gently shorelines with the magnificent backdrop of the Welsh Mountains.
- The second section had gently rolling hills as a backdrop but the rock formations were stupendous. There were curved sheets of rock reaching up for 150 feet; magnificent rock folding with deep caves and so many beautiful examples of anticlines and synclines.
- In the first 30 seconds after launching at Criccieth I saw two porpoises surface 50m from my kayak. They continued to curl out of the water as I paddled across the bay. I took this as a good omen.
- A couple of seals popped up to study me. On one occasion a fish leapt out of the water besides me. I was so astonished, then as I looked behind me, I saw another seal glaring at me with a similar look of wonderment.
- As I paddled past Tywyn I saw a children's inflatable boat about 250m off shore. Since there was a gentle off-shore breeze I thought it best to check it out. There was a man kneeling facing out to sea and he was apparently quite agitated. I thought he was having difficulty getting the motor to start, though I didn't think they had motors. I asked if he was OK. "Oh... yes", he blustered, looking awkward. "Oh yes", came a female voice from somewhere in the bottom of the boat..... say no more.....

- I had another experience with an kiddies inflatable boat, which was potentially more serious. I was south of New Quay, crossing a mile wide bay. To one side was one of these inflatable boats but this time the occupant was at rest watching the world go by. I said nothing and continued looking for a suitable campsite. At the other end of the bay was a headland called Ynys-Lochlyn. As I rounded this headland, against a 2 knot tide race, it occurred to me that there was no obvious place where the chap in the boat could land in the bay and he was not going to be able to paddle against that tide race.

With growing concern I paddled on to the next village at Llangranog. I called in at the local pub to speak to the landlady. I was hoping there might be a local auxiliary coastguard I could talk to.

The landlady said she would look into it so I went back to wait with my kayak. After 30 minutes nothing had happened so I returned to the pub. She has phoned 999 and reported it to the coastguard. They had asked for me to ring them. This I did. I explained the situation, which was that at the time there was no emergency but in an hour there could be, and promised to contact them again when I found a campsite. By this time there was only about 90 minutes of daylight left. I paddled quickly passed the cliffs until I found a campsite about a mile away. I then rang the coastguard again and left my mobile phone active for an hour. When I returned to Southampton I made contact with the coastguard office that I had dealt with but nobody could find a record of my telephone calls!!!! So I cannot tell you the outcome of this story.

- If you paddle solo with a fully laden kayak you can have difficulties getting your kayak to a safe campsite above the high water mark. It is amazing what you can do with a Karrimat to assist you, but there is a right and a wrong way to fold the Karrimat.

I ought to finish with a comment about solo kayaking. This article is not intended to advocate going solo, I do not paddle alone very often and this is the longest solo trip I have paddled. Solo paddling has many obvious risks; a simple problem in company can be life threatening when alone. I would not have done this trip alone in anything more unsettled than the conditions that prevailed. Having said that, being alone made this a more memorable trip and paddling from north to south gave a progressively more serious journey. But whether you paddle alone or in company, do not dismiss this section of coastline, it has its own special magic if you look for it.



# Scratchy and Itchy around Skye

Andy Biggs - August 2003

The title is actually slightly misleading, as the midgies were kept down by some reasonable and at times quite strong winds. However they did strike later. Last year we'd travelled up to Mull on two occasions and on the second visit had paddled all the way round. The West Coast of Scotland is a sea-kayaking wonderland, with prominent headlands, spectacular scenery, wonderful wildlife, remote golden beaches and numerous off shore islands. We decided to return this year to paddle around Skye, although we knew the island well from the land side it would be a new experience to actually paddle there. Initial plans suggested that it would take around 10 days and this was later confirmed when I actually met someone who had completed the trip last year. Skye is shaped like a hand with long peninsulas and sea lochs, this makes the total distance around difficult to calculate accurately. We estimated a realistic distance of 260 Km, which included some open crossings, to hug the coastline could double this distance. Skye is a committing trip, with long stretches exposed to westerly winds with few options to escape, as much of the coastline is made up of dramatic sea cliffs.

It took us a day to drive from Stoke to Staffin on the northern tip of the island, where a friend runs a bed & breakfast and artist workshop at Quiraing Lodge. We packed about six days of food, with the intention of adding to these supplies of the way round. The first two days we were carried on our way by a light NW wind and favourable tide, which took us under the Skye Bridge and on the way to Knock Bay, near Armadale. Where Simon caught our first fish, that was cooked in tinfoil on an open fire. However by the next morning a strong SW wind had blown up and stayed with us for the next three days, as we slowly made progress, via Elgol, Soay and into Loch

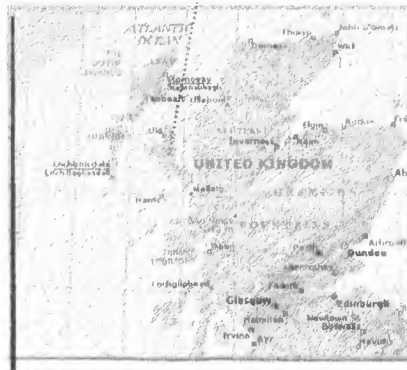
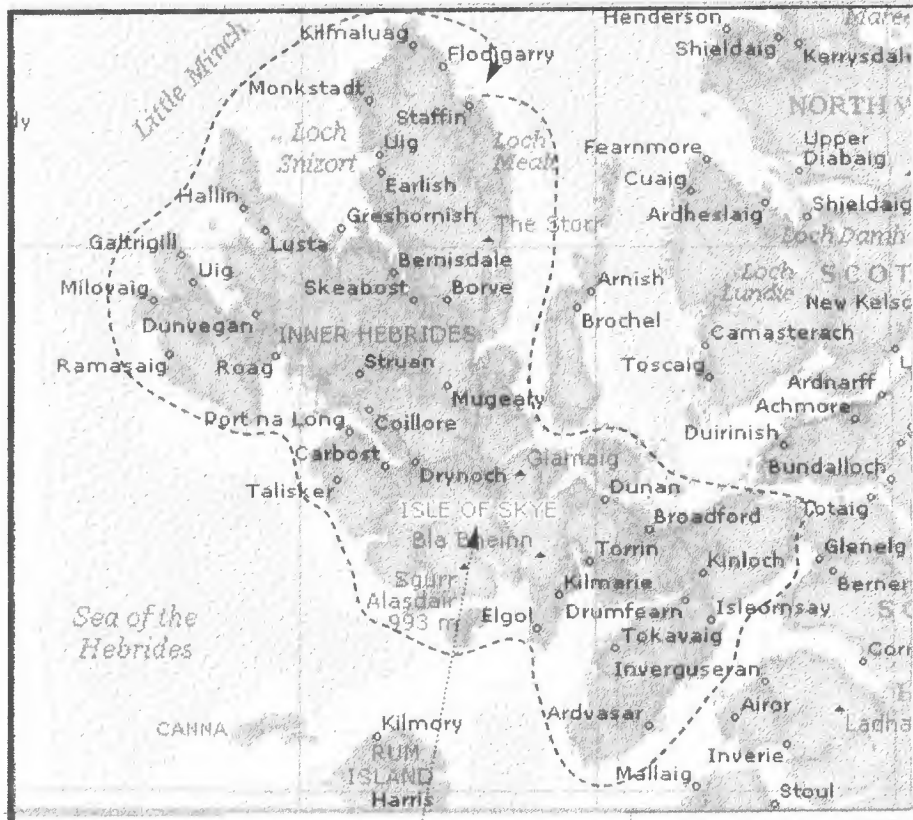
Eynort. Where a force 6 blew us into the Loch and to spend the night in the luxury of a disused farmhouse, a welcome change from our tent. Along the coast the sea

had been very confused, especially around any headland. With a NW swell, wind blown waves and the clapotis caused by the sea cliffs. By now the beer had run out and we passed the time playing draughts, using shells and stones on a board drawn on the back of our map. Each morning we had listened

to the shipping forecast, to hear that a low pressure system was slowly moving towards Iceland, to be replaced by a growing high pressure system over the south of the country. We had done a little shopping at Elgol, a tin of corned beef and potatoes, now we were thinking we should have bought more. By day 6 the wind eased and although the sea state was far from flat, we decided to press on as far as possible and we reached Moonen bay

after the tide had turned and were greeted with a tide race around Hoe Rape. We stayed here the night, camped high above the sea and watched the tide race around Neist Point. This is a like a finger sticking out into the main tidal flow that causes a large back eddy the sweeps round to hit the main flow at 90 degrees, causing large and confused seas. That evening two fish were caught that saved our tin of corned beef. This would prove important for the next day.

The following morning we reached Neist Point about an hour after the tide had started to flow and were greeted by waves coming from all directions, even though the



wind was quite light. However once in the main flow were swept along the coast, seeing our first whale, a minke that swam with us for a few moments and then dived out of sight. We had lunch on the Ascrib Islands and reached Camas Mor, north of Uig, to find a small a small campsite. Here we lifted the boats onto, for once, a flat grassy place and laid on our backs in the sun. However we then realised that the food had nearly run out, there was no local shop or pub, but the campsite owner gave us a tin of beans and half a loaf. So with our tin of corned beef, some jam and tea bags we prepared dinner. Breakfast was one and a half slices of bread with jam and black tea, our last bag of peanuts took us back to Staffin after 8 days paddling. However the highlight of the trip was seeing a killer whale on the last morning. A mirror sea was broken as it surfaced and swam into the tide, passing about 100 metres to our seaward side. We had seen numerous porpoises, seals and bird life; all would come to within a reasonable distance but once they had satisfied their curiosity would turn away, natural instincts warning them off.

After a showering and being fed a fried breakfast, in the afternoon, we felt much better. The following day we went to watch the Highland games in Portree. Where we saw large men wearing skirts, throwing even larger things around a playing field. The smallest competitor was from Spain; he was dwarfed by his fellow competitors. It was not until later in the day when I met him, did I realise he was actually larger than I was. Just how big were the others? The next day we retraced our paddle strokes and crossed on the ferry from Armadale to Mallaig. Leaving the van at Arisaig, we left for a three-day trip around Knoydart. By now the hot weather had moved north and the midgies came out in a vengeance. As the wind dropped in the evening they would arrive in swarms, driving us into the tent. Even using the most powerful repellent, which melted my plastic watch had no effect. Here I had a unique experience, as Simon refused a beer, claiming he could not face leaving the tent during the night to relieve himself. The whole area offers endless opportunities for exploring by kayak, just be prepared for the local wild life.

#### SUMMER 2003 - AROUND SKYE

<i>Tuesday 29 July</i>	Staffin Eliean Tigh, then east coast of Raasay Scalpay, Camas na Geadaig	Departure from Quiraing Lodge Stoney Campsite, good view	Misty no wind
<i>Wednesday</i>	Kyleakin, with following tide Knock Bay	Lots of fire wood	Blue Sky NW force 2
<i>Thursday</i>	Armadale Point of Sleat Caradal	No shop, only a café Pleasant place	Grey SW force 4/5
<i>Friday</i>	Elgol Soay Harbour	There is a shop here Little space at high water	Grey SW force 5/6
<i>Saturday</i>	Camas a' Mhurain Loch Eynort, Kraiknish	Disused House	
<i>Sunday</i>	Talisker Bay Ramasaig Bay	Wonderful view	Clearing skies SW force 3
<i>Monday</i>	Ardmore Point Ascrib Islands Camas Mor'	confused sea at Neist Point Simple Campsite for £5	Mist then blue sky S force 2
<i>Tuesday</i>	Staffin	Return to Quiraing Lodge	Blue sky, no wind

#### MARY BELL'S FRUIT AND NUT CRUNCH

According to Mary Bell, this healthy snack food is practically a complete meal.

2 cups rolled oats  
1 14-ounce can no-fat, sweetened, condensed milk  
1 cup dried grated coconut  
1 cup dried banana slices  
1 cup dried canned peaches  
1 cup beer nuts  
1/2 cup dried pear slices  
1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1/2 cup raw cashew pieces  
1/2 cup slivered almonds:  
Mix together oats and 1/3 of the condensed milk in a large bowl. Use a knife to cut the condensed milk into the oats.

Add beer nuts and mix. Add the second 1/3 of condensed milk and blend. Separate the pear slices from one another and add cranberries, cashews and almonds. Add the last 1/3 of condensed milk and blend thoroughly. Let sit one hour.

Lightly oil two leather sheets. Spread mixture evenly on each sheet. Splash water on the palm of your hands in order to press this sticky mixture flat on top of the dehydrator sheets. Dry approximately three hours, until the texture is similar to peanut brittle. Cool and break into 48 2-inch squares. Pack- age in an airtight container.

Bell suggests varying ingredients, adding that she's used apricots, mandarin oranges, plums, strawberries, mangoes, and other types of nuts.

## LETTERS

From Chuck Sutherland, USA

Dear John,

## THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY....

On the Delaware bay, we used to see massive flights of shorebirds during spring migration when the horseshoe crabs were breeding. On the best day I ever saw about 10 years ago, a quarter mile of shoreline was covered with shoulder-to-shoulder shorebirds feeding on crab eggs. We could approach to within a few boat lengths without flushing the birds. When they did fly, they came off the shore as a rug pulled up at one end and taken out over the bay as a solid ribbon of birds (turnstones, red knots, dowitchers, dunlins, and blackbellied plovers). They flew about head high relative to us in our boats. When the swept past us, the mass separated just enough to go a paddle length to either side of each of us before again closing the gaps.

That doesn't happen now because industrial sized harvesting of horseshoe crabs has been going on for the past half dozen years. Marginal fishermen drag the bay with nets when the crabs aren't breeding. When they are breeding, the fishermen show up with semi-trailer trucks and fill them with tons of crabs picked off the beach and out of the marshes. The numbers of crabs has fallen 90% in past few years. Until recently, there was no limit on the take of crabs. etc. etc.

Form Dr. Paul SCHUR

Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 7LR.

e-mail; usualperch@doctors.org.uk

11.08.03

Dear John,

I was very interested in the article in Ocean Kayaker 53: Aug 2003, pp17-19. I have been interested in aspects of liability and duty of care for a while in the context of Life Saving but it is equally applicable to canoeing. Recently, I have tried to sort out some queries I have with lawyer friends but could do with a second opinion and wonder if your legal contact could pass comment on some scenarios I can envisage.

In the book 'Life Saving' it is stated that if someone is in difficulties and you do nothing to help them, no one can touch you but if you go to their rescue you are then subject to a duty of care. This has been similarly stated in the BCU CoDe magazine. I felt this encourages selfishness and selfishness is the basis of anarchy, hence my hypothesis that the lawmakers and interpreters are creating an



DEAR JOHN.....

anarchy in England and Wales. Obviously the law in the rest of Europe is different and may be so in Scotland.

Scenario first; Nervous Canoeist (NC) accosts a stranger, Lone Paddler (LP), asking to accompany him/her. They agree. NC does something silly and drowns; there are no witnesses. The relatives of NC say (s)he was a novice and should not have been encouraged to paddle on that water. LP is sued, what would be the outcome? If LP is injured in an attempted rescue or if either of them was under 18yr, how would that affect liability?

Scenario second; Macho Ace (MA)

paddler launches his canoe while the worse for drink despite being advised against it. (S)he gets pinned on a rock so Hero Coach (HC) leaps to the rescue getting drowned or seriously injured in the attempt. Joe Public (JP), a passer-by, suffers severe stress watching this but MA, with one bound, escapes unscathed. Can HC or JP or their estates expect a claim against MA to succeed? If HC had refused to help MA, what would be the legal implications? If a rescue rope snags round MA's neck and kills him/her, how does that affect the outcome?

I have been told that *volenti non fit injuria* would apply. If so, in scene 1, if LP claimed that (s)he had got into difficulties and NC had come to the rescue, would there be no case to answer? In 1c, what would be the position of the parents of the injured canoeist? In scene 2, HC's estate would have no claim or can one argue that, by his/her training and moral code, (s)he is not really a volunteer? If (s)he was a doctor, nurse, fireperson, paramedic or policeperson, would that affect the position as a volunteer? In 2b, would the employment of HC affect the liability or is (s)he inviolate despite the pangs of moral conscience? In 2c, would the snagging of the rope be negligent or could it be that MA should have not allowed it to happen? JP or representative would presumably have a case as they had nothing to do with it and were not volunteering for anything or does walking past a stretch of difficult water constitute volunteering to view any sad occurrence? If they do have a case, against whom would it be directed?

As far as I understand the concept of Duty of Care, it is all inclusive and is the basis for a secular ethical code implying 'do as you would be done by' or 'think of others before yourself' which is, in a way, how Sartre viewed existentialism. However, it would seem to be selectively applied mainly to those who take on responsibility. All we read about in coaching and teaching situations is that it applies to the 'leader' (in the broad sense). Surely a duty of care exists in everyone which means that the inexperi-

enced, psychopaths, drunkards, the parents of anyone under 18yr and the like all have a duty to everyone else in the community. I am a cynic these days and would like to offer an explanation of this inequality in its interpretation. When did you last hear of a legal team being arraigned for failure of duty of care when the wrong person is found guilty or let free? When did a politician last get penalised for sending us to war on a lie? They make the rules. The reason that activity leaders get sued successfully is that they are insured and are therefore a suitable financial target. Non-leaders may not be worth suing and the main motivating force for the law is the remuneration of lawyers (or so I am told by another legal friend). The take home message would appear to be - don't get involved (especially if you are insured or rich).

I look forward to hearing that the motivating force of the law is moral rightness and having my cynicism expunged but I won't stay under the surface 'till it's time to celebrate.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr. Paul SCHUR)

-----  
From: John Chamberlin  
To: John Ramwell  
Sent: Saturday, August 30, 2003 6:33 AM  
Subject: Paddlers round Britain?  
John,

I've just been sent a copy of the October 1983 issue of 'Canoeist' by Stuart Fisher. On p. 7, in 'Undercurrents', is the following item:

Robert McLaughlin completed his circumnavigation of Britain on September 4th and was met by a crowd of about forty at Westminster, including Deputy GLC Leader Ilyd Harrington. The GLC have expressed a wish to make him their Guest of Honour at the coming London Festival, an honour for the sport in general.'

Do you have any knowledge of Robert McLaughlin (I can't see him in the ISKA Directory)? I would like to track him down in order to add to our knowledge about who has paddled around Britain, and in what circumstances, etc. Any chance, please, of asking around, or printing an item in your mag. for anyone who might still be in touch with Robert to contact me. My Email address is: <JohnSea@BTInternet.Com>

All the best.  
In deep water...  
John C.

-----  
My reply....  
*Hi John, delay in replying due to absence this last couple of weeks. Trying hard to catch up. I have'nt hear about Roberts and his exploits but will include a request for info. on Robert McLaughlin in next issue of Ocean Kayaker.*

---

## **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TWO GREENLAND KAYAKS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

*Hugh Collings Torshalla, Sweden*

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the eighties, just before I moved from the UK to Sweden, I had the good fortune to meet John Brand from Colchester, England. John had already spent a lot of time surveying and documenting arctic kayaks in UK and Danish museums. He showed me his immaculate draughtmanship, generally fired my enthusiasm and initiated an understanding of good design: the balance between form and function.

As an arctic kayak expert he strongly advised the surveying of kayaks as a way of preserving their shape for future generations and enabling replicas to be built and assessed. Seal skin covered kayaks on the whole do not fare well in museums. Their wooden frames distort and collapse and their coverings are sensitive to temperature and humidity (the 17th century Skokloster kayak has fared extremely well: no doubt due to the palace's thick stone walls which

create slow temperature changes and the museum's policy of not dressing the skin covering).

In the UK John knew that every year several kayaks would fall into such a state of disrepair that they had to be destroyed. Recording kayaks was a race against time! At the beginning of the eighties I built a replica of the Lowie Museum kayak from the Aleutian Islands -and then other more wordly commitments took over!

In 1988 I contacted Christian Lagerkrantz of The Ethnographic Museum (Folkens Museum), Stockholm and sought and obtained permission to survey a couple of kayaks. The museum's boat store was packed tightly with a world- wide collection of canoes and kayaks (including a rare Chukchi kayak from Siberia collected by the North-East Passage explorer A. E. Nordenskiold).

Two Greenland kayaks were chosen, from the east and west coast. Both were built by Greenlanders for

Europeans, with larger than usual widths and depths. The two kayaks were surveyed during two intensive days when I was ably assisted by Howard Coombs an authority on small craft.

### SWEDISH KAYAK TRADITION AND SWEDEN FORM

My "other" motive for carrying out the surveys was to enrich and inspire the already strong Swedish kayak tradition.

In 1869 John McGregor toured Sweden in one of this "Rob Roy" clinker built paddling canoes. His journey became a sensation! In 1873 Commodore Carl Smith (the father of Swedish canoeing) purchased an English canoe while on active naval service in Malta and took it back to Sweden. Soon others were imported from England and local boat-builders started producing a variety of paddling (double-paddle only) and sailing canoes. These were all exclusive and expensive.

Around the turn of the century more modest canoes were being built by canoeists using canvas-on-wooden-frame construction. Magazines printed drawings for the home-builder and improvements in design were being continually made. Paddler/ designers like Gerhard Hogborg and Sven Thorell were especially prolific.

Slender racing canoes (in Sweden and the UK the term "canoe" and "kayak" are interchangeable, a "Canadian canoe" refers to an open canoe) had similar dimensions and form as their counterparts of today. Designers copied the "double-wedge" shape of contemporary low-resistance motor-boats. They were sharp and deep at the stem with the hull becoming flat and shallow at the bow. These motor-boats were long and narrow and were considered the ideal shape for racing or fast touring kayaks. The idea was that the sharp bow would cut through the water which would exit easily under the flat stem. Although these canoes were fast, when the "double-wedge" or "swede" form was extreme they became difficult to manage in a following sea.

The term swede (or Swedish) form remains today and denotes a canoe which has its widest beam aft of the midpoint. Some of the kayaks from the eastern Canadian arctic and formerly the Polar Eskimo kayaks from northern Greenland had this form.

In 1919 Thorell made drawings for a "langfardskanot" (travelling kayak) length 5.00 m, width 66 cm. The kayak was called "Aland" after a group of islands between Sweden and Finland and had a very slight swede form. The design has proved to be exceptionally sea-worthy and is still manufactured today in reinforced plastic by Ingvar Ankervik of Vituddens Kanotvarv (VKV), a canoe workshop which has been in business since the early 1920's.

There has always been a strong "home-build" tradition in Sweden, no doubt due to the availability of canoe plans and good quality timber. Between the two world-wars many thousands of boys and young men, often with very meagre resources (Oute sacks replaced the more expensive canvas!) were putting together their own canoes in cellars or attics.

It is hoped that the availability of these two Greenland kayak drawings will encourage a continuation of home-built craft tradition although in the arctic kayak tradition.

### THORILD WULFF'S WEST GREENLAND KAYAK

This kayak was collected by the Swede Thorild Wulff during Knud Rasmussen's Second Thule Expedition 1917. The expedition's goal was exploration of the most northerly part of North Greenland. At the time of the expedition Wulff was 40 years old and had already a renowned career as botanist and ethnographer after travelling in Island, Siberia and the Far East.

During the coastal journey north by boat Wulff visited several West Greenland settlements. He observed the hunters in their kayaks and was determined to practice "kajakrodd" (kayak rowing). Already in Egesminde (Aasiaat) he tried in vain to squeeze himself into a kayak.

On Disko island a specially built kayak was made for him. When he tried it out he discovered that there was not enough room for his legs! The kayak had to be rebuilt! On page 81 of "Thorild Wulffs Gronlandska Dagbocker" ("TW's Greenland Diaries") is a photograph with the caption "Wulff practices kayak rowing at Disko". The kayak is unmistakably the one in the Ethnographic Museum.

Wulff sits there rather stiffly with the paddle at rest, one tip of the blade touching the calm and almost ripple-free water. He is warmly dressed in a haired seal-skin anorak. Its the same anorak shown on page 83. On one side of the kayak, just aft of the cockpit and floating on the water, is a long, narrow object. It is perhaps a seal-skin pontoon. Such devices were used by young boys when learning to balance a kayak. They worked as an outrigger stabiliser.

One wonders what is going through Wulff's mind as he takes his first kayak lesson. After overcoming the initial fear of capsizing, maybe his thoughts turn to the forthcoming expedition. He knows that he will need all the strength and courage he can muster. Before continuing north the kayak together with paddle and other ethnographic objects were crated so that they could be shipped to Stockholm. ..

The Second Thule Expedition ended in a double tragedy. Earlier on the Greenlandic explorer Olsen became lost and despite a search was never found. The party that

Wulff belonged to crossed an area devoid of game. The members became hungry and extremely weak. Wulff became ill and eventually so enfeebled that he was unable to continue. He begged his comrades to leave him and try to rescue themselves. This they eventually accepted to do but would return and rescue him. He was never found again.

depth 10 mm narrowing to 9 mm at sheer

The Kayak

Dimensions

Overall

- Length (bone knob missing at stem) 534.0 cm
- Width (max at front of cockpit) 57.0 cm
- Depth (max to sheer) 22.1 cm
- Depth at bow (100 cm from bow) 25.6 cm
- Depth at stem (480 cm from bow) 17.4 cm

Cockpit

- Length (overall) 46.2 cm
- Height of rim 36 mm

Structural members (in cockpit opening)

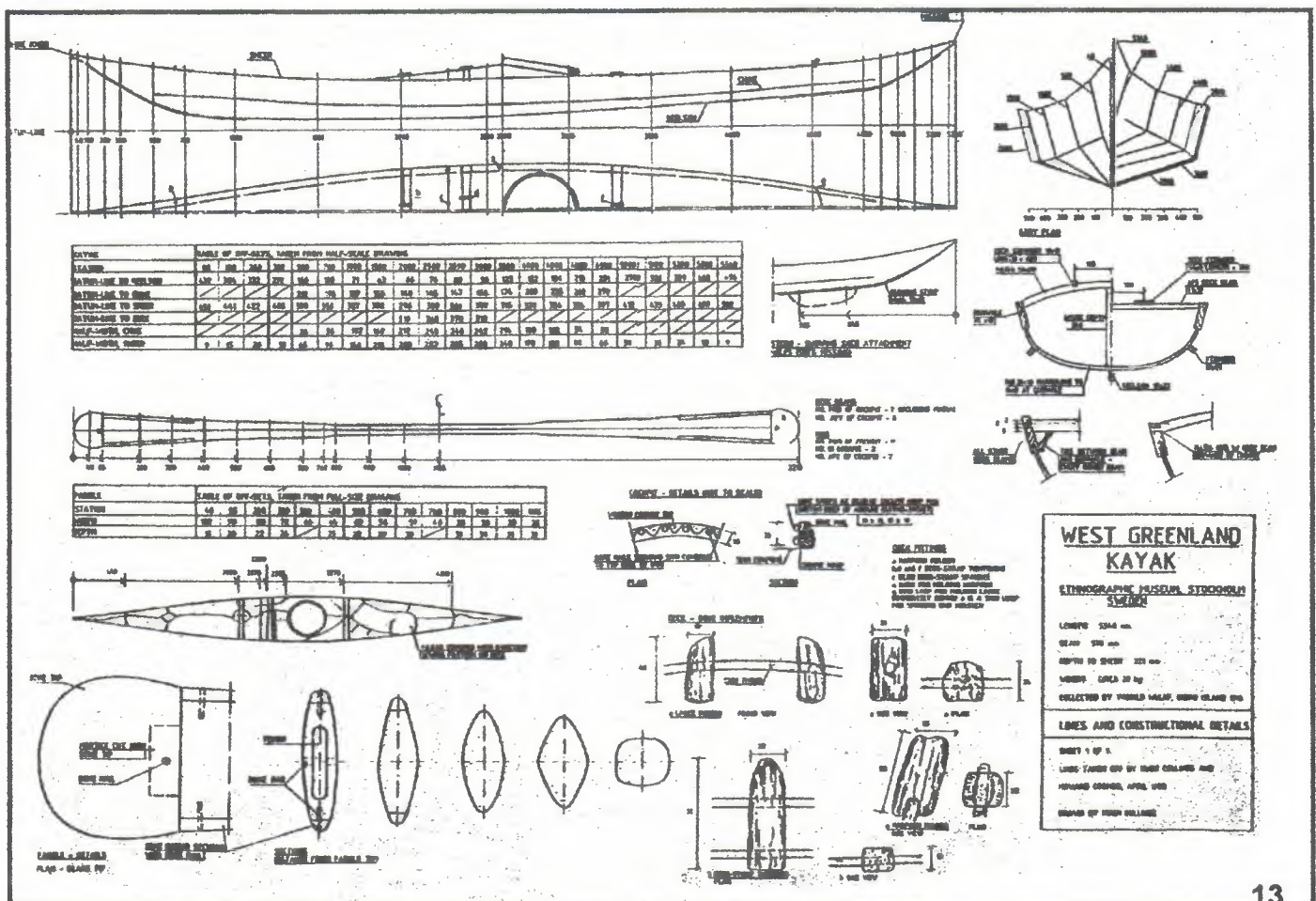
- Sheer planks, width 18 mm  
depth 78 mm
- Keelson, width 19 mm  
depth 27 mm
- Chine stringer, width 19 mm  
depth 27 mm
- Ribs, width 24 mm narrowing to 16 mm at sheer

Form and function (See drawing below)

By West Greenland standards this is a large kayak. The builder must have made allowances for Wulff's fairly stout figure and, more importantly, appreciated the difficulties Europeans have in bending their legs the "wrong way". Young Greenlanders used to be taught at an early age by their fathers how to exercise their knee joints which enabled them to squeeze into their low-decked craft.

Despite the kayak's size it has pleasing lines. The chine stringers are placed well out from the keelson, making a deep v-hull which would provide sea-worthiness and directional stability. In order to keep the kayak from lying too high in the water it has been given a fair amount of rocker in the keel-line. The bone keel skid at the stem (64.5 cm from the stem point) has been drilled with two holes (c/c distance 28 cm). These holes are probably for attaching a wooden skeg which would counteract any tendency for the kayak to yaw.

In a following-sea the relative lack of buoyancy in the shallow stem (compared with the bow) would prevent the bow from plunging too deeply into a wave. The upswept stem would give ample reserve buoyancy to keep the rear deck free from water. This is undoubtedly a stable and sea-worthy design. The larger than usual dimensions would give ample leg-room and stowage for camping gear for those



considering replication.

The kayak is in good condition and the framework joinery of a high standard.

The Paddle (see drawing previous page)

Total length (with bone end fittings) 221 cm

Max blade width (bone end fitting) 10.2 cm

The paddle is double-bladed with long, narrow blades in the same plane. The bone-end fitting is attached to the end of the blade with mortise and tenon joint (the mortise is in the bone-end fitting). The blades are edged with bone edging strips which are attached to the blade with small bone pegs.

JORN RIEL'S EAST GREENLAND KAYAK

This relatively short East Greenland kayak was used by the Danish writer/ethnographer Jorn Riel for a 300 km journey along the east Greenland coast in July 1968. The kayak was donated by Riel to the Ethnographic Museum. He was married to a Swede and lived in Sweden for a short time.

The kayak was built by Masanti in Inigssalik but it is not known if it was specially made for Riel. He has written many novels and children's books about Greenlanders and Greenland. I wrote to Riel in Greenland where he lived according to the Danish authors' "Who's who". The letter was returned: person unknown. I have since read on the back cover of a recent novel that he lives in the Far East! It would have been interesting to have learnt more about the kayak's origins and performance.

The Kayak

Dimensions

Overall

Length (including bone knobs) 500.0 cm

Width (max at front of cockpit) 50.8cm

Depth (max to sheer) 17.0 cm

Depth at bow (100 cm from bow) 18.5 cm

Depth at stem (400 cm from bow) 17.8 cm

Cockpit

Length (overall) 45.0 cm

Width (overall) 42.0 cm

Height of rim 36 mm

Width of rim 24 mm

Structural members (in cockpit opening)

1 Sheer planks, width 14 mm  
depth 51 mm

Keelson, width 18 mm  
depth 30 mm

Chine stringer, width 18 mm  
depth 29 mm

Ribs, width 31 mm  
depth 19 mm ifl,

Deck-beam in cockpit

Front, width 45 mm

depth 15 mm

Rear, width 50 mm

depth 19 mm

Floor board, either side of keelson

width 75mm

depth 9 mm

Form and function (see drawing on following page)

This kayak has the "normal" east Greenland shape, that is almost flat-bottomed and shallow hull, steeply angled sides, long overhang in stem and stem and flat deck. The two exceptions are the relatively short length (usual length 550 cm) and the slightly greater depth in front of the cockpit.

The short length might allow easier sledge transportation during the winter. The short water-line length would limit a high top-speed. I have paddled a number of short kayaks (with relatively low wetted surface area) and have been surprisingly fast. My paddling experience in the East Greenland type is very limited and it is difficult to have an opinion about the sea-worthiness of this kayak.

The kayak has both original paddle and paddle-holder.

This is a short piece of shaped wood which is held in place by the deck-straps in front of the cockpit. One end of the paddle is placed under the paddle-holder and the rest of the paddle lies perpendicular out from the side of the kayak with the paddle blade on or just under the surface of the water. This set-up would act as a stabiliser outrigger and enables the hunter to have his hands free of the paddle without Capsizing.

Many of the bone fittings on this kayak are of a very high artistic standard. I wonder if they are older than the kayak. East Greenlanders are renowned for their bone carving. Some of the bone fittings for the cross-straps are of different phallic shapes -maybe a visual pun! On the paddle-keeper is a superbly carved seal.

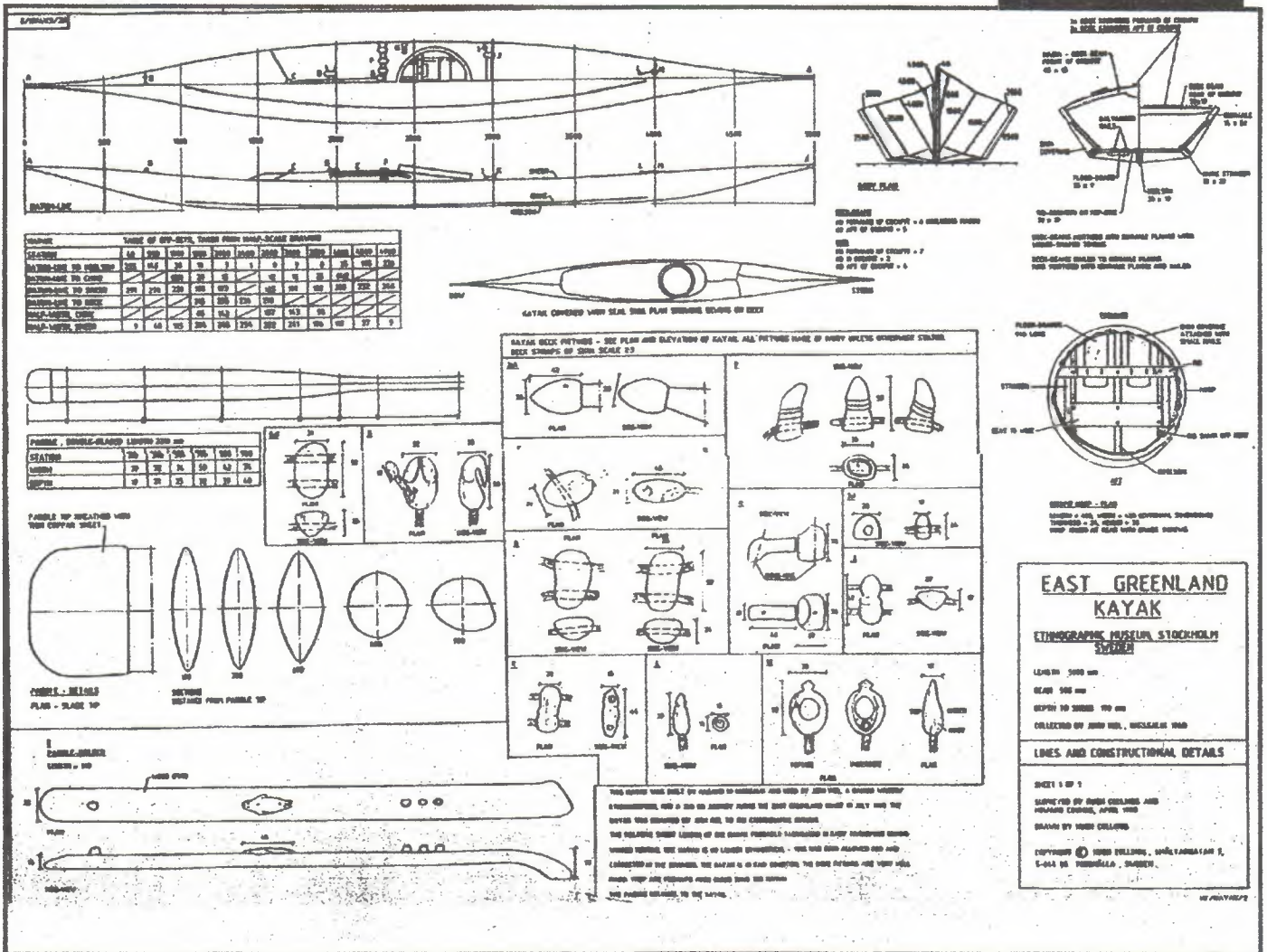
The kayak is in fair condition and the framework joinery of a simple standard. The keelson and chine stringers have been attached to the ribs with galvanised nails -this is common practice on the east coast. There are quite a few gaps between the ribs and the stringers. These have been filled out with r slim wooden blocks.

The Paddle (see drawing following page)

Total length (with copper end fittings) 221 cm (same length as Wulffs paddle!)

Max blade width 7.9 cm

The paddle is double-bladed with long, narrow blades in the same plane. The sheet copper end fittings are attached to the end of the blades with small tacks. The blades have no protective edging strips.



EPILOGUE

Someone, sometime ago, gave me the following passage. I do not know where it comes from but here it is.

*"According to the Danish explorer, Peter Freuchen, who lived with the Polar Inuit at Thule for many years, an old Inuk, before he became too infirm, would call for a feast of prime mattak for his family and friends in order that that they might laugh and talk, and share once more the stories from times past. The shating over, he would walk quietly with them to the shoreline or the edge of the ice, and taking leave of his family and friends, he would ask his wife or eldest son to help him into his kayak. This done, he would paddle proudly out to sea until he was quite certain that he was alone and unseen, and with a determined thrust of his paddle, capsize his kayak for the last time."*

REFERENCES

Ardney, E. Tappan & Chapelle, Howard I.  
 1983 "The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America" Smithsonian Institute Press, Washington

Arima, Eugene Y. (Editor) 1991 "Contributions to Kayak Studies" Canadian Museum of Civilisation

Brand, John  
 1984-88 "The Kayak Book" Pis Colchester, UK

Hutchinson, Derek  
 1976 "Sea Canoeing" A. & C. Black Ltd., London

Jensen, P. Scavenius  
 1975 "Den grønlandske kajak og dens redskaber" Arnold Busck, Copenhagen

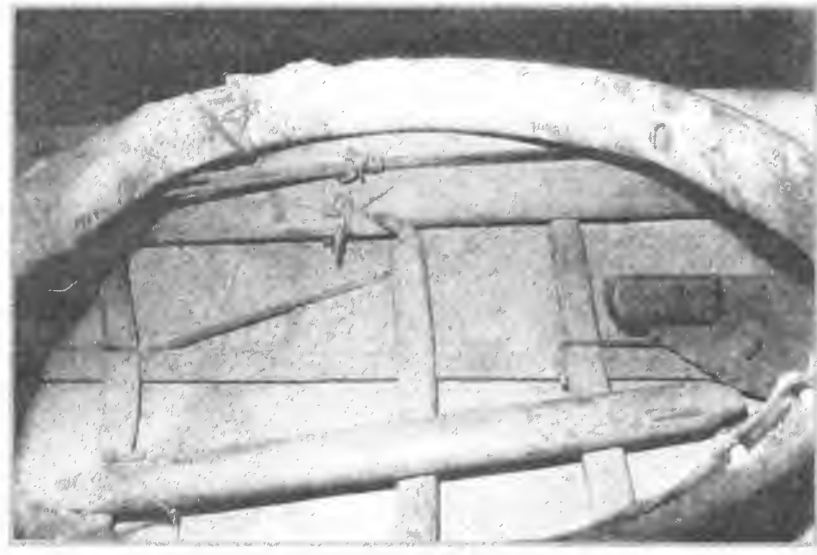
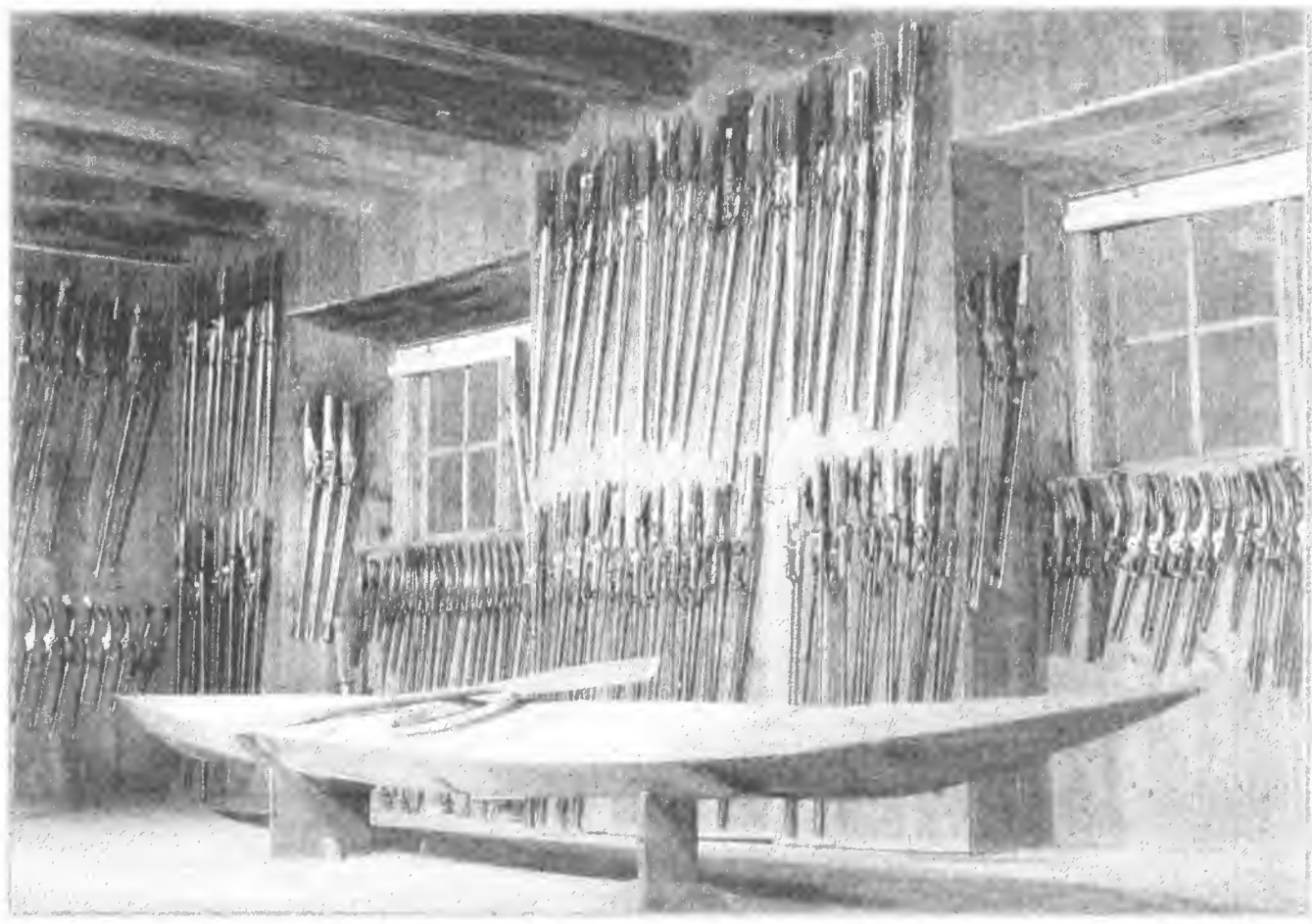
Mikkelsen, Ejnar  
 1913 "Lost in the Arctic" Heinemann, London

Nomnan, Lars  
 1957 "Inok" Tidens Bokklubb, Stockholm

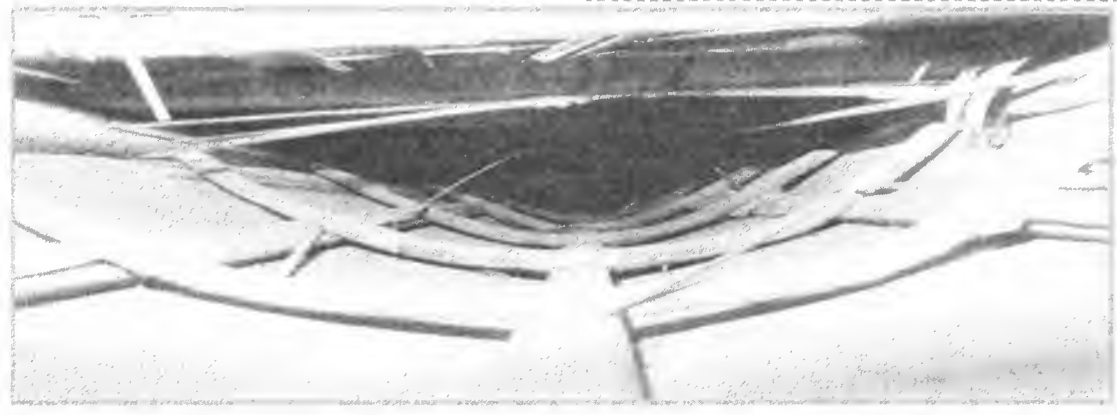
Petersen, H.C.  
 1986 "Skinboats of Greenland" Roskilde, Denmark

Wulff, Thorild  
 1934 "Grønlandske Dagbocker" Bonniers, Stockholm





view into the cockpit showing loosened deck beam aft and mustak (forward deck beam which supports cockpit rim).



view from cockpit looking aft.

# BUYING A KAYAK - IN THREE PARTS

By Timothy Williams (as first appeared in ANorAK - Journal of the Ass. N. Atlantic Kayakers)

## BUYING A KAYAK, PART ONE

Here's how to buy a kayak. Find a boat listed: in a classified ad, on the internet, or in a store. Pay by cash, cheque, or charge. Any questions?

## BUYING A KAYAK, PART TWO!

Kayaks are available in many materials, shapes, sizes, and price ranges. How does one who has little experience, nay--may have never have paddled a boat--avoid making a major mistake ( and purchase a boat that is unsuited to his ) particular body type and size, paddling ability, or desired use?

This article will attempt, in a number of installments, to shed some light on the subject of first time kayak purchasing. It will give the buyer some helpful information which will increase the chances that a boat purchased will serve the paddler for many years to come and become part of the paddler's stable of boats. ~ Note: I use the word, "stable," as most ANorAK readers are aware of the severe karmic penalties for selling a used kayak. This stems from the misguided, immature, yet persistent belief that the kayak is the only acceptable means of transporting the dead kayaker's spirit across the Strait of Styx into the after-life. If a kayak has been borrowed by a friend's spirit, then another must always be available for the recently departed's. It must also be matched to the current conditions of the Styx, especially the tidal races there. Therefore, one must always have' suitable transportation at hand for this task. Meaning, owning as many boats as possible. Or go to Hell. .

Buying a second, third, or fourth kayak ' is relatively easy. Paddlers look at the criteria I important for the selection of a new boat. Positive and negative attributes of other owned or known boats are included in the equation. They then do some editing, reducing the number of available choices as their desires become more clear. Finally they paddle the remaining boats considered, determining whether the boat: performs as well "on paper" as it does in the conditions they desire to paddle in.

The above process, especially for the seasoned paddler, is a fairly straightforward one. It usually results in the purchase of the boat the paddler wants; one that has met that individual's standards for their personal paddling style. Most kayakers who have purchased a few boats recall how difficult it was to purchase their first boat. The wealth of knowledge available from other paddlers is significant and should be explored. This resource will be treated in the next installment.

### CRITERIA: SEA KAYAKS IS SEA KAYAKS

Sea kayaks, as referred to in this discussion, are those boats with a beam (width) of twenty-five (25) inches or less, and a length of fourteen (14) feet or more. They are boats that are capable of performing adequately in waters commonly

referred to as, "The Ocean." ISKA readers will more commonly paddle these boats than recreational or sit-on-top varieties.

The purchase of a kayak is a big decision for a new paddler. It may mean the person is ready to get beyond the rental or borrowing phase of kayaking to a point where they will have a boat outfitted to their own specifications. For others the boat will be their first experience in a kayak. This group needs the most help, and is most susceptible to the opinions of others: store salespeople, other kayakers, and advertising.

### LET'S BEGIN: STEP 1

The first consideration a kayaker will have is the intended use of the boat. I will relate my own experience with boat purchasing. I had not paddled yet, but was certain I would love the sport. I was of limited means, though, and wanted to make the smartest decision possible. Prior to buying my first kayak I determined the places I would be doing my paddling.

As I lived on a three mile long lake, I desired a boat that would be suitable for frequent use as a cross-training device. It must go quickly and track straight. It had to be light enough to carry single-handed.

I also had a desire to paddle in the rivers of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. These rivers were very close to home, were slow flowing, and were beautiful. They were also quite narrow and in many places too shallow to float a canoe, requiring portaging. Therefore, the kayak I needed had to be able to negotiate the winding ways of these waters. It had to be suitable for quick exits and entries (i.e. have a large cockpit), and again, had to be light for easy portage.

The third use I envisioned for my boating was ocean paddling. In particular, the surf zone. I had heard that kayaks were a lot of fun in the wild waters of shore breaks, and wanted to explore these areas. I needed a boat that was tough enough to withstand this changeable, wild environment. It had to be maneuverable and light enough to carry single-handed to and from my car.

### ARMED AND DANGEROUS

My first experience shopping for a kayak occurred in the winter of 1989. I went to a paddlesport shop, stated my desire to begin paddling, and was given a boat to try out. I transported the boat to a local lake, donned a PFD over my heavy cotton sweatshirt, and insulated from the cold by my blue jeans and heavy boots, paddled precariously around the shallow lake. I was so scared of falling out of the boat that I never really understood the features of the boat. The shop's owners used a low pressure sales

technique commonly referred to as ignorance to ensure that none of my questions were answered, and that I left with more than I came in with. I bought a car top rack from the dealer instead, moved to central Pennsylvania, and went skiing for the next nine years.

Personally, with a few exceptions, I don't see much point in on-water testing before kayak purchase by a beginner who has not paddled before. Most first-time kayakers are unable to fully understand the performance characteristics of a boat adequately to make an informed decision. The ease with which a boat rolls, its secondary stability, and its performance in rough conditions are usually beyond the scope of a novice paddler, and more than the liability insurance or common sense of a paddle shop will cover. Some might disagree with me, but I know the difference from when I began paddling and my current ability to evaluate a kayak for a particular use.

#### MATERIALS

The construction of the boat is a major consideration. The five types of materials generally used to manufacture boats are: polyethylene (poly), glass-reinforced plastic (GRP or fiberglass), wood/epoxy, Kevlar, and carbon fiber.

Polyethylene boats are made of a heat-setting plastic (thermoplastic) and are formed most often by a process called rotomolding. One company, the German firm Prijon, makes a boat using a process called blow molding for their boats.

Poly boats are the least expensive available, averaging about one-half the cost of a like-featured fiberglass boat. They are sometimes referred to as "Tupperware" boats. They are considered rather durable. This means that they will withstand being thrown around by waves, being thrown onto rocks, and being thrown up in after the first two activities. In crash tests, polyethylene boats reliably retained cosmetic appearances, although their occupants were nearly always killed.

The plastic is capable of withstanding high impacts, and provides a suitable length-to-weight ratio. Poly boats, though, are susceptible to a condition known as "oil canning" which can occur if the boat is tied too tightly to a rack in the heat of the day. This denting may sometimes be remedied by applying heat (hair dryer) and weight (bricks) to the boat in the opposite direction of the dent, but the repair is usually not perfect and may compromise the performance and resale value of the boat. Prijon's plastic and process are supposed to decrease the chance of this condition occurring initially.

Polyethylene is also susceptible to abrasion and will gouge upon contact with rocks. Abrasion will slow the boat, and may affect performance somewhat. This gouging may be repaired with sandpaper, files, and a "candle" of polyethylene which will bond to the hull material if applied correct-

ly.

Plastic boats have been known to leak at their bulkheads, due to the failure of sealants and expansion/contraction that occurs within the boat in the presence of heat and cold. One manufacturer, the British firm Valley Canoe Products (VCP) actually warrants their plastic boats to be free from such defects for life. This is the only such warranty I've heard of. Other manufacturers guarantee their bulkheads under the basic one year warranty.

Due to the nature of the molding process, polyethylene boats require a well-fitted spray-deck which will not disengage in vigorous conditions if used in such. Also, due to the nature of the materials used, poly boats usually have softer lines than other boats. This may affect the boat's ability to reach and maintain a high speed and to track well. There are reports I thought that some plastic boats actually outperform their fiberglass versions due to subtle differences in length and lines! I've not experienced this phenomenon, and remain skeptical.

All glass boats I've seen maintain finer, sharper lines than their plastic analogues (see below).

All poly boats (in fact, all kayaks) should be stored out of the sun in a cool place with a cockpit cover to minimize the chances of rodent and marsupial infestation. Their expected life varies, but estimates of from five to ten years is usual. The boats, not the rodents.

GRP, or glass-reinforced plastic boats are known collectively as fiberglass kayaks. Fiberglass is a fine material for kayak construction, as it allows the designer's lines to be more accurately transferred to the boat.

Usually hand made, fiberglass boats are more costly than poly boats, and are stiffer, lighter, and possess greater longevity. Repairs are able to be performed in or near the water, allowing continuation of trips far from civilization.

Fiberglass is more brittle than poly and will crack or shatter upon high impact with rocks or other boats. Certain types of glass cloth used in the manufacture may lessen a boat's tendency to have holes punched in it by rocks. As more hand operations are required to produce these boats, quality control issues may develop, some of which may affect the long-term performance of the boat.

**WOOD! EPOXY BOATS** are mass produced by only a handful of manufacturers. Many of the same designs are available as kits for home building as well. They are usually fairly light, strong, and expensive. They are repairable, and are able to reproduced with fine lines, allowing good performance. Wood is flexible yet stiff enough to give a lively feel. As these boats are hand made, some irregularities occur which may affect the appearance of the boat. These include the aforementioned asymmetrical appearance, and waves in the hull surface. Careful inspection prior to

purchase will lessen the chance you'll take home a boat that doesn't meet your quality expectations.

KEVLAR is an aramid fiber, pound-for-pound stronger than steel. It is used in place of fiberglass cloth, and produces a boat with the same general appearance and performance as fiberglass, but lighter. And more expensive--up to 30% more \$\$\$. Kevlar is more difficult to repair in the event of puncture, but on the positive side, it is less likely to have holes punched through it.

CARBON FIBER (CF) is a material commonly used in Formula One racing cars and aerospace applications but now is finding its way into the realm of kayaking. Light weight, stiffness, and high cost are some of the main reasons persons seek these boats out. Negatives are the high cost, poor repairability. A word of caution: there are some

rumors circulating among the kayaking cognoscente that CF has an attraction for lightning strikes. I do not wish to be a kayaking Benjamin Franklin and paddle in a electrical storm in order to find out if this is true.

All materials commonly used to build kayaks are generally suited for the task. The major differences affect overall performance, life-span, and cost.

*About the author: Tim Williams does not have enough boats, and has been thwarted in his attempt to have one of every design by a lack of funds, limited storage space, and restrictive zoning statutes.*

Next issue: Part Three: Stability, rudders and skegs, design and handling characteristics, and weight.

---

### WEST CORK /CAPE CLEAR ISLAND - Ian Stevens

An unusual stable northerly airstream marked the weather pattern over the Easter break. Offshore winds, cold arctic air and blue skies made a change from the usual Glasgow southwesterlies gales and greyness.

Combining a family, work and outdoor adventure often requires the skill and fine diplomacy we witnessed during the Northern Ireland Peace Negotiations. The balancing act is even more precarious when weather, kayaking friends and destination enter into the equation.

It is with a certain amount of pride that I report that I managed to satisfy wife, 'wean', friends and self in a brief trip away from the Cork mainland.

Ireland is renowned for many things and all my holidays and friendships have reaffirmed the stereotypes -friendly generous people, great music food and drink. The rendezvous with five other paddlers in Schull even surprised me. Borrowed Nordkapps were collected from a farmhouse in Glandore. The team was composed of representatives from Claire, Glasgow, Dublin, Kerry and the Irish St Tropez Kinsale. Information maps and advice were gleaned from Jim Kennedy at Atlantic Sea Kayaking in West Cork.

As usual in complex Irish arrangements the departure was planned around wind, weather and tide but left when the team were assembled with boats full of Clonakilty black-pudding, minced beef and drink.

The planned destination of Clear Island was a good choice -an open crossing, fine islands to explore and served by a ferry to make a family reunion possible. The mornings calm weather had changed to a moderate breeze, which then strengthened as we made our way to the calf, islands. As half of our group seemed intent on heading towards Fastnet Rock, myself, Stuart and Nicola made steady progress around the middle of the three calves aware of a

moderate beam sea and strengthening wind. We made good time to the harbour at Clear and the 12 kilometres were eased with a pint of the black stuff.

Clear is an interesting venue and is a popular setting off point to the famous Fastnet Rock lighthouse as well as having a plethora of mixed English and Irish signs being a summer home to many students of the language. The next days' paddling was memorable for the organised early rise - a rarity in my experience in Ireland and the overwhelming clarity of light and stillness. We paddled as a group of four, Mike returning on the boat as dutiful Father and Valerie relinquishing her role as Mother for a few hours of freedom. The other two in the party had returned to Schull the previous evening to tend a more restrictive creature than any young infant -their dog.

Our westerly circuit around the island was interrupted by cries from deep within the seacaves near the Promontory. My boat momentarily disturbed baying seals and their breath was clearly visible in the cold still air.

It was unusual after many trips off the Scottish west coast to explore a few islands in calm weather and apart from some minor concentration between Clear and Sherkin island, the ability to converse with friends was savoured. Our return into Baltimore with its prominent beacon was marked with the fins of some porpoises drifting by a perfect end to my first offshore Irish coastal experience.

As a footnote, anyone interested in a great holiday in Ireland with some excellent Sea Paddling should contact Jim who runs trips from the surroundings of Marias Schoolhouse an unusual hostel specialising in good food, music and lots of friendly folk.

Address Atlantic Sea Kayaking, Union Hall, West Cork, Ireland tel 00 353 (0)28 33002 or e mail: atlanticseakayaking@tinet.ie