

Sea Touring

An informative manual
for sea canoeists

J.J. Ramwell
B.C.U. Coach



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TO KEITH, ROBIN AND FELLOW PADDLERS



The Farne Islands, off Northumberland Coast

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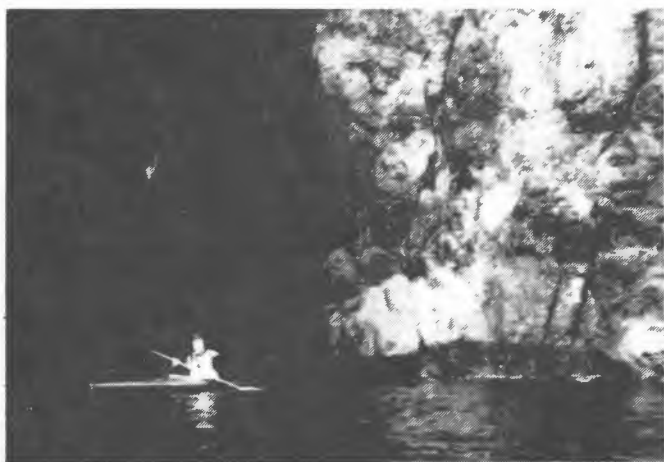
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I have drawn on many sources to write this booklet and I am indebted to many people.

I must first mention Mrs. Ruby Wightman whose patience with my writing and spelling and with her typewriter has helped to put together the finished article.

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I am indebted to Practical Boat Owner for allowing me to publish diagrams of buoyage; to the publishers A & C Black Ltd who have allowed illustrations appearing on pages 11, 12, 14 and 16 from Derek C. Hutchinson' book on Sea Canoeing to be used.



FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION

I first put this book together in 1975 when preparing to take the Advanced Sea Proficiency Award. It grew out of the notes I put together at the time and as I could not find a book with all the necessary subjects under one cover I decided to publish these notes in book form.

My efforts at the time appear to have been justified, as here I am introducing the third edition three years later.

I have enlarged some of the present chapters. I have added information about the Rescue Services. With the introduction of the I.A.L.A. System A buoyage I have given a fairly full explanation with illustrations of the system. I have added a few paragraphs to explain the practical applications of the art of navigation.

I am always happy to receive criticism and/or suggestions as to how I can improve this book. Feel free to write to me at the address given on the first couple of pages.

John J. Ramwell.
February, 1978



INTRODUCTION

From the beginning men have recognised the sea as a supreme wonder and paradox of the natural world - at once a thing of beauty and terror, a barrier and a high road dividing and uniting mankind. A source of life and a fearful and capricious destroyer.

The sea poets of every land have sung in exaltation of its sunlit moods and in awe of its fury and fathomless deeps.

Life itself emerged from the sea; the basic fabric of all living things was initially determined by it; the entire system of nature composing man's environment is governed by it.

More than any other physical feature of the planet it is the sea that makes the earth unique.

It is this majesty and vastness that attracts me to the sea and to canoe upon it.

Before going on the sea it is necessary to know about its moods, which are as changeable as a woman's, about its environment, its dangers and its activities.

Because the sea canoeist has to pick up his knowledge from so many different sources I have compiled this handbook on the subject.

I am limited by space from going into too much detail so I am discussing the subjects only briefly. In this way I hope to be laying the foundations upon which you, the reader, may build by further research. I have made a list of books I consider worth reading on page 102.

CHAPTER ONE

Why Go Sea Canoeing ?

To this question there are as many answers as there are sea canoeists. There are probably some reasons which are common to most of us. I will concentrate on these and add a few of my own.

Sea Canoeing is a Challenge.

When you take on an advanced sea trip you are accepting the challenge of nature. The weather and the sea cannot be beaten so it is not worth trying. None the less the elements are a challenge against which you use your learning and experience to master the art of surviving in a canoe at sea.

Sea Canoeing is An Escape.

In these fast moving automated, computerised times, with their noise and pollution it is great to get away and enjoy solitude and peace. There is plenty of this well mixed with space and freedom, air and water out in a canoe at sea.

Sea Canoeing is Cheap.

Once you have bought your equipment, then apart from getting yourself down to the seaside, there is no cost involved. I have heard that certain Port Authorities insist on harbour dues, but so far I have never been asked to pay them.

A Method of Exploring.

There are rocks, cliffs, caves, hidden beaches that are inaccessible other than by small craft. The best of all small craft is a canoe because there are no engine noises to frighten away bird life, nor sails which make manouevring difficult, nor a keel which rules out shallow water.

