

Canoeing

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MARCH 1963

SPECIAL FEATURES

A FORTNIGHT
IN THE SUN

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UNION A.G.M.

A SEA TOURING
KAYAK

A SEA TOURING KAYAK

Photo: D. WINNING



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Canoeing

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Editorially Speaking

The Coaching Committee has submitted to the Council of the B.C.U. for its consideration the following statement, drafted by the B.C.U. Safety Officer, on the question of life jackets:

"Considerable public attention has recently been drawn to the qualities of life jackets which are on the market and the desirability of establishing a standard or standards for this type of equipment.

Suggestions have been made from several sources that the British Canoe Union ought to make some pronouncement on this matter.

At the present time a number of organisations, among them the British Standards Institution and the Ship and Boat Builders' National Federation, are considering the question of standards and development is being carried out by manufacturing concerns.

Through its National Coaching Committee, the British Canoe Union is keeping in touch with these developments and is being consulted in several of them.

The Council proposes to await the results of the present independent enquiries and to examine them in the light of the equipment then made available to the public.

The Council does not consider that a useful purpose would be served at the present state by adding to the number of investigations now being made or by making a pronouncement while these investigations are still uncompleted."

As one of the 'sources' who have urged that the B.C.U. make a pronouncement on the questions of life jackets we can only regret that the Coaching Committee should decide to sit on the fence a little longer. We would agree that a separate investigation is unnecessary, we would agree that a final recommendation can only be made when further evidence has been gathered. But what of the present?

Until this new equipment is put on sale, canoeists must make do with what is at present available and this is what we require guidance about. People will not stop paddling until a final report is published, nor, regrettably, will the number of deaths by drowning decline. As the national body controlling our sport, the B.C.U. must be concerned with the welfare of present members as well as those of the future.

We hope the Council will return this recommendation to the Coaching Committee, and ask for an interim report which they can make available before next season.

A Fortnight in the Sun

DESCRIBED BY M. THOMSON, W. HORGAN, J. HOOPER

For a long time the three of us had cherished the idea of a canoeing holiday on the Mediterranean, prompted by an article we had read in *Canoeing*. We chose Toulon as a convenient starting point, as it was away from the crowded Riviera and yet offered similar climatic and scenic advantages. We had two rigid canoes of home construction, one plywood and the other canvas, while the third was a folding Klepper T.6. Originally we planned to travel from Toulon eastwards to the Iles d'Hyeres, but after seeing the coast to the west from the train, we decided to go that way instead. This made no difference as we were camping and carrying all our kit with us.

Once out of the harbour of Toulon, we noticed that the sea was very clear and blue, and not very rough. Due to the tideless nature of the sea, currents were absent, but the prevailing westerly winds often produced some exciting seas. One day the wind so impeded our progress that we were forced to seek the shelter of the land. With the type of canoes we had, going into the wind and waves was pleasant and at times quite exhilarating. Going with the wind presented steering problems, and to check the sometimes uncontrollable yawing, a rudder would have been very desirable. Only the Klepper had one, which gave much greater directional stability. Spraysheets were essential, not only to guard against spray and drips from the paddle, but also against the waves which occasionally broke on the deck.

We usually found landing easy, because in spite of the height of the cliffs, there were many small secluded beaches at the foot. Originally, we had planned to stay at organised camp sites, of which there were quite a few, but most nights we spent on out-of-the-way beaches, pitching our tent on the shingle. In the morning we would awake feeling hot and immediately cool ourselves by jumping into the sea a few yards away. If we didn't feel like canoeing, we would spend the time swimming (with face masks) and sunbathing.

We ate cold food most of the time, although for the first week we breakfasted on hot porridge brought over with us, and at one time had an International Christmas Pudding. Food we found slightly dearer than in England, but since our tastes were simple and we didn't mind browsing through the shops and market stalls, we lived fairly cheaply. Little English is spoken in this part of France and we had interesting times making ourselves understood, especially when we wanted some local delicacy. We never had any difficulty in obtaining food, as even the smallest village had its 'Alimentation', open till all hours of the night.

The rugged coastline is indented with many inlets and bays. The smaller inlets present enticing little coves backed by high cliffs, whilst the large bays sweep round in stretches of sand to include the little towns and seaside resorts. The towns are old and picturesque with narrow streets and small harbours from which the fishing boats go out everyday. Fishing is very important and we often used to watch the men unloading their catch in the evenings.

We arrived at Toulon early one Sunday morning and collected our canoes from the customs office at the railway station. After repairing some damage suffered by the canoes in transit, we took them down



to the quay on our folding trolleys. After a few hours interesting paddling, we were out of the French naval harbour and in the open sea. By the first evening we had almost reached Les Sablettes, and as it was dark by this time, we curled up in our sleeping bags on a piece of grass just above the beach. Another day's voyage brought us the very short distance to our camp-site under some tall cliffs near the tiny resort of Fabregas. This was a short voyage because high winds persuaded us to seek shelter! We stayed at this perfect place for a few fairly idle days before moving on round to Le Brusac with its market place on the quayside. That night we made the port of Sanary and put up at the municipal camp-site which seemed at one time to have been a terraced vineyard. There was quite a sprinkling of nationalities here; even some English, but we avoided them.

In the morning we set out for Bandol. It was quite choppy in the wide Bay of Bandol, so we were hungry and exhausted when we arrived. We went into the town, bought food and rested awhile before moving on in the evening to find the camp-site.

The next part of the journey was along a very rocky but not very dangerous piece of coast to an official camp-site at Les Lecques. There were some pleasant cafes here, as there were at Bandol, very much alive in the evenings. When we came down to the beach in the morning, we were surprised to find six or seven giggling girls sitting on the upturned canoes, eating their lunch. No damage was done and the situation was too amusing for us to be annoyed! They gave us a good humoured push as we set off from the shore.

We were now bound for La Cistat and this proved quite a good haul across the bay. We spent quite a while exploring the town, the second largest we encountered. There was a small shipyard as well as the port and a prosperous residential area. We paddled out to the curious Ile Verte and made camp. The next day we explored this island of natural concrete and old gun emplacements, which plunged straight into the sea on all sides. The sea was very cold as well. We tried to photograph some of the enormous colony of lizards without success, and then set off on the return journey.



With the wind behind us, we made good progress back across the bay and round to Bandol. The rest of the journey was equally comfortable and uneventful save for a broken paddle (moral - take a spare one always!) and a broken stringer, sustained while portaging over the sand bar at Les Sablettes.

We had prepared for the holiday the week before, going up to Victoria Station in the evenings to get out tickets and register our baggage. Once passed through the customs at Victoria, we didn't see the canoes again until we reached Toulon, thus leaving us time to wander around Paris on the way. Our return fares came to £17 and the canoes travelled free in France although it cost £6 to take them to Folkestone. The registration fee is not much, and we managed to keep just within the 66 lb free baggage allowance each. Folding canoes travel free in England as well, and are much less liable to damage on transit. The total cost, per person, for this wonderful fortnight, was somewhere in the region of £35, but could have been made much less if we hadn't spent so much time in cafes!

BOAT SHOW REVIEW CORRECTIONS

In our Boat Show Review feature in last month's issue of 'Canoeing' we gave the 14ft. Norvall's glass fibre canoe as a single seater. This should have been double seater.

We also gave the length of the Jalcraft glass fibre double as 10ft. this should, of course, have been 16ft. Messrs. Jalcraft do not produce any craft under 14ft. in length.

We apologise both to the manufacturers and to our readers for these errors in proof reading.

Devizes - Westminster 1961

BY DALE JOHNSON

I was able to realise my ambition of competing in the Devizes-Westminster Canoe Race in 1961. The only canoe available was my PBK22 (launched March 1960) and I realised from the beginning that this was not a very suitable craft with its limitation of 15ft length and 30" beam.

A friend, who although a keen sportsman had not previously done any canoeing, was eager to enter with me, and in February and March we canoed together, on five occasions, a total of about 80 miles. Being fairly fit and with this paddling behind us our aim was just "to complete the course".

"Pilot" underwent the following modifications in preparation for the trip: fitting a rudder, provision of webbing carrying straps at bow and stern, fitting fibre glass seats (which have since been removed as unsatisfactory) and attaching canvas bags between the frames to take our loose kit.

Good Friday afternoon saw us at the assembly area for the start-The Wharf, Devizes. We were not downhearted by the slick lines of the other canoes or even the remark of another competitor to his companion that our canoes looked "... like the Queen Mary".

The kit having been checked and packed, we were a little surprised at the total weight as we carried the canoe across and put it in the water. We had only taken what I thought to be the minimum but various items were not very light in weight - we had a camping primus stove and a full size tent and groundsheet. On looking back we could have lightened the canoe by several pounds with more careful selection of kit and omitting the spare paddle which we carried on the fore deck.

Having paddled up to the start, we were on our way at about 2.30 p.m. and battling along the $14\frac{1}{2}$ miles of level before striking the first of the locks as dusk was falling. There were two sections between locks, each of some 200-300 yards with little or no water, and carrying our heavy canoe around these additional hazards proved quite a strain on the back muscles.

We paddled through the night to stop about 7.30 a.m. just short of Reading for breakfast. This meal consisted of warming up two pre-cooked steaks, and a quick brew of coffee before pushing on through Reading to join the Thames at 9.40 a.m.

Progress down the Thames on Saturday seemed slow although we paddled steadily - at one stage both of us dropped off to sleep for a few minutes during a short breather while we were drifting with the current. Evening came, darkness fell, and not knowing the river very well or wanting to take any chances with the weirs which sounded most ominous in the dark, we decided to spend the night at Chertsey Lock which we reached at 9.40 p.m. Laying the groundsheet on the bank we were in our sleeping bags within a few minutes.

Unfortunately we didn't wake up until 6.30 a.m. and after a quick brew of coffee and soup we were chasing downstream in the hopes of catching the last of the tide below Richmond Lock. This we just managed to do and continued paddling hard to get as far as possible before it changed to come racing up against us. With 6 miles to go

(at Putney Bridge) the water turned and we battled on with the tide getting stronger every minute.

With a head wind blowing the tide and a heavy shower of rain against us, the last mile was extremely hard going. On the outside of that final bend with the worst of the tide race and the elements conspiring against us we could only inch our way along to pass the finishing line at about 2.15 p.m.

We gratefully accepted the offer of the race officials to take the canoe out of the water - and we were both amazed that it needed four of them to lift it! To our surprise, the excellent race organisation gave us a hot meal, and then we left for a hot bath - and a good long sleep!

My aim in writing this article is to encourage other canoeists who are thinking of entering this year's race and show that the distance can be covered in an ordinary canvas covered canoe without special training. Naturally a number of lessons were learnt from our first attempt and these I summarise as follows - although elementary in nature they have been learned the hard way.

1. 15ft. is quite definitely too short for ease of paddling and speed - length should be at least 16ft. and preferably 17ft or more.
2. Both canoe and kit must be as light as possible - those 77 portages certainly take it out of you.
3. Some form of timetable must be worked out to make use of the final tidal section - don't leave it to chance as we did.
4. Any knowledge of the course will prove invaluable.

We were very pleased to have achieved our aim of completing the course at our first attempt - our actual placing was 54th (117 competed, 65 finished) with a time of 47 hours 43½ mins. Had we planned our starting time better and obviated the time spent in sleeping at Chertsey, then our time might have been reduced to about 37-38 hours. I hope to put the lessons I have learned to advantage this coming Easter.....

Readers interested in acquiring further first-hand information on the D/W Race should consult the May 1961 issue of 'Canoeing' where we reported an interview with that year's winner - Capt.W.S.Crook. A few copies of this issue are available price 1s.3d. (post free) from: The Circulation Manager, Canoeing Publications, 6 The Mall, Brentford, Middlesex. Ed.

Canoeing is a non-profit making magazine
produced by canoeists for canoeists

British Canoe Union A.G.M.

The 27th Annual General Meeting of the British Canoe Union opened promptly at 5.30 p.m. on the 26th January, and by 6 p.m. the minutes of the previous meeting had been accepted, J.W.Dudderidge, O.B.E. and E.Owen had been returned unopposed as President and Treasurer respectively, Miss E.McLellan, and Messrs. H.Bruce, J. Bright, and H.Barton had been elected to Council, the annual report had been adopted, and the accounts had been accepted without a murmur. But this was the lull before the storm.

There were three motions before the meeting with a total of ten subsections, but these could be split into two groups; one, tidying up of detail, e.g. the term 'youth' to be used instead of 'junior' to avoid confusion with 'junior' as a competitive designation, and, two, a far reaching proposal making all members of the B.C.U. individual members at a fee of 7s.6d. per year, and inviting clubs to become registered for a fee of £2.2s. per year.

As might be expected such a sweeping change was not to be allowed into being without considerable opposition, and some of the members from the Midlands made an excellent plea for further consideration of this important step. Their cause, however, was not helped by one or two supporters who appeared to be more 'agin the government' than against the idea. However, under the President's guidance the motions reducing the individual members subscription from 15s. to 7s.6d. was passed by a substantial majority, as was the abolition of the Individual Membership Entrance Fee. For the Council this was the turning point of the day, for if their theory is correct that an 'impulse' subscription will bring in the lone canoeists, then the passing of this motion meant they could begin a recruiting campaign regardless of the basis of club membership. At 8 p.m. skirmishing was still continuing and it was interesting to note that very few people spoke in favour of the motions at this point, or indeed at any time during the evening. However, when it was put to the meeting that the critical motion Number 3 be referred back, the proposal was soundly defeated. With this the life seemed to go out of the struggle, and although it was nearly 9.30 p.m. before the meeting was declared closed the result was a foregone conclusion. All the motions submitted by the Council were adopted, a new membership structure of the B.C.U. had come into being.

Undoubtedly the Council were fortunate in that their judgement was trusted by the majority of those present, for this can have been the only reason for the lack of verbal support from the floor of the meeting. One is forced to wonder, however, how far people are swayed by speeches on these occasions; the answer would seem to be very little, for the claim by a number of speakers that there had not been sufficient time to consider the proposals in detail would seem to be a very valid one. At the same time it must be recognised that in principle, the motions have been known for some months. It is doubtful if further consideration would have made any difference to the result, and we must hope that the Council in preparation for the expected success has drafted a publicity scheme which will make known the B.C.U., and the advantages of membership, far beyond its present

restricted circle. Some speakers doubted whether anybody would want to join the B.C.U. as an individual member, and this is an important point. But more important is the fact that if club members must be compelled to pay 7s.6d., then clearly they have not been getting value for money. If the B.C.U. does its job properly then the question will not be 'Can I afford to join the Union?' but 'Can I afford NOT to join the Union?'.

During the business part of the meeting the President called for a break when the competition trophies were presented, and when for the first time the B.C.U. Awards of Honour were made. These went to our President John Dudderidge, O.B.E. and to the National Coach, Oliver Cock. The presentations were made by Past-President Dr. Gillies.

The evening concluded with a film show presented by Maurice Rothwell of the Manchester Canoe Club.

Before closing what has been a difficult report to write, mention must be made of the lads of the Woolwich Canoe Club who with a battery of card indexes swiftly separated those with voting rights from those without. Also the C.8 Development Group who maintained a running buffet for nearly five hours, a service which helped to make the meeting more palatable, even for those who came away unconvinced that the right decision had been made.

F. C. Sk.

News Flashes

AN APOLOGY

We must apologise for the quality of the printing in some copies of the February issue of 'Canoeing'. This was due to the reduction of electricity supplies affecting the vacuum feed for the offset litho machines. Would any readers who file their copies permanently, and who would like a replacement copy from a second printing, please write to the Circulation Manager.

HOW TO BUILD A KAYEL KAYAK

The second edition of this useful little booklet by Ken Little-dyke is now available from John E. Pearton (Kayaks) Ltd., 42 Fitzjohn Avenue, Barnet, Herts., price 1s.6d. Intended mainly for those building a Kayel design, this pamphlet forms a very useful introduction to this ingenious method of construction.

CANOE VENTURE 1963

"Canoe Venture 1963" is the title of a canoeing journal to be published in May by the Oxford University Canoe and Kayak Club. It is intended that this should be an annual affair, and a high standard of production is being aimed at. Further details of this project will be appearing in later issues of 'Canoeing'.

C.C.P.R. SPRING AND SUMMER COURSES

A booklet giving full details of the C.C.P.R. Spring and Summer Courses is now available from the C.C.P.R., 6 Bedford Square, London. W.C.1. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when making enquiries.

A Sea Touring Kayak

DESIGNED BY DUNCAN WINNING

In the January issue of 'Canoeing' we published a letter and photographs by Duncan Winning of the Scottish Hostellers Canoe Club. The letter dealt with a Greenland kayak which had been brought to Scotland in 1959 by Ken Taylor, and Duncan Winning went on to mention that he had developed the lines of the Greenland Kayak and built a plywood sea touring kayak which had proved very successful for cruising off the West Coast of Scotland. We were very impressed by the lines of this boat, and it seemed to us that there was a need for the lines of such a canoe to be made more generally available. The result is that Duncan Winning has prepared a set of full working drawings with written detailed building instructions, and copies of these are now available, price 12s.6d. the set (post free), from The Circulation Manager, Canoeing Publications, 6 The Mall, Brentford, Middlesex.

The kayak is 16ft. long with a beam of $24\frac{3}{8}$ inches, it is planked with plywood and is of conventional chine construction. This method of building with its shaped stringers is not quick, but it does give great strength and this is important when extensive sea work is being considered. Additional reinforcement is given by a strip of glass fibre tape along the outside of the chines and keel. In the finished canoe there are only two frames and these form watertight bulkheads at stem and stern. Provision is made for emptying and repairing these watertight compartments in the event of damage.

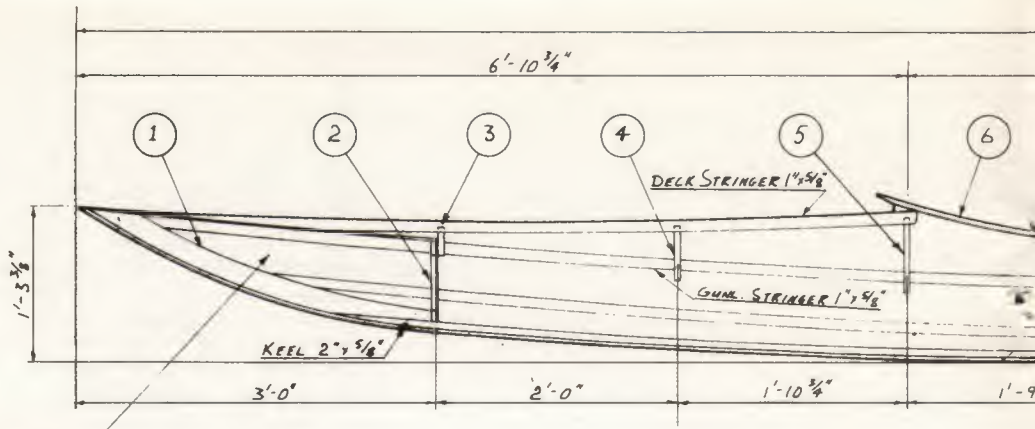
In building this canoe it is necessary to set up a number of temporary frames on a building plank, and these forms the mould upon which the stringers are laid. This method of construction will appeal to schools and clubs for the mould can be used as often as required, and, provided it is accurately built, each canoe taken off the mould will be the correct shape.

Although not shown in the drawings overleaf provision is made for a rudder and full constructional details are given. The entire control bar unit may be removed for ease of stowing gear.

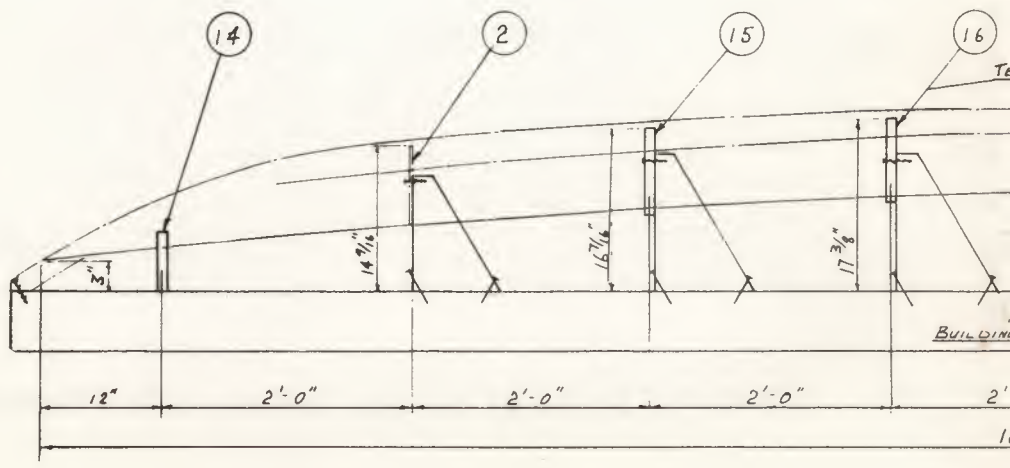
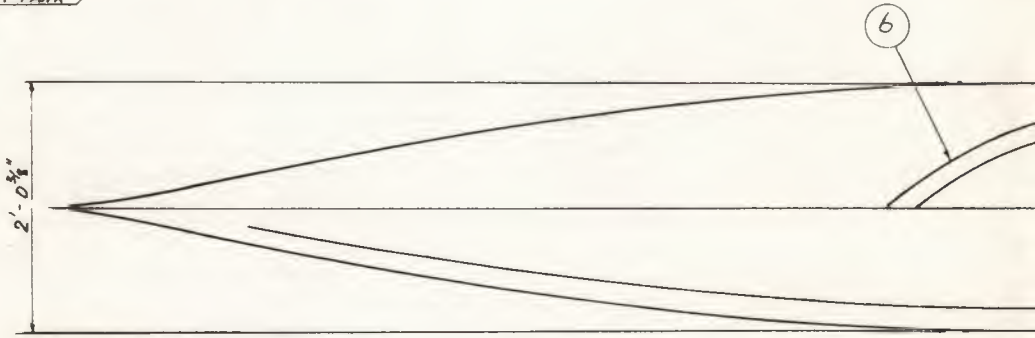
The finished canoe is not light being approximately 52 lbs in weight, but for the kind of cruising anticipated the designer considered that complete reliability was the criteria to be aimed at.

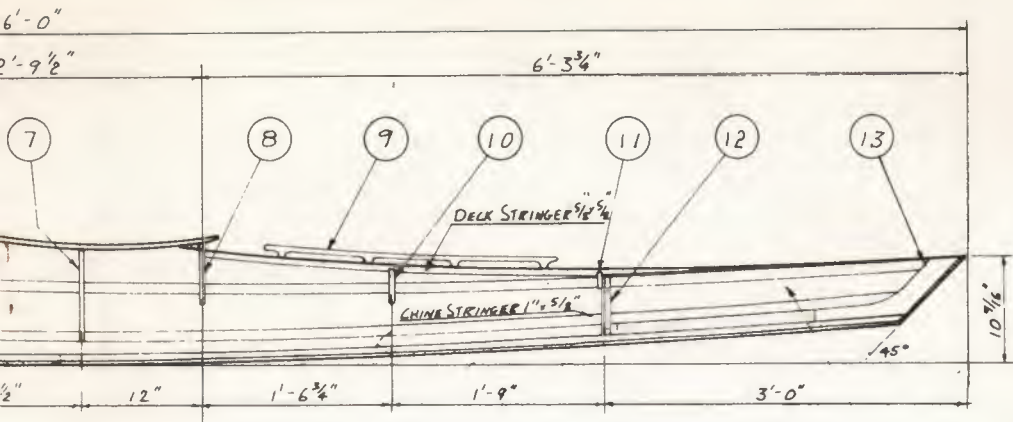
We believe that this specialised design will have considerable appeal amongst those who do, or intend to do, a large proportion of their paddling along the coast. Its good lines, robust construction, small cockpit, built-in bouyancy tanks, will all make for comfortable paddling and over long distances this means less fatigue. We are pleased to be able to give these plans the wider circulation they deserve.

For a full list of Canoeing designs, see the advertisement pages

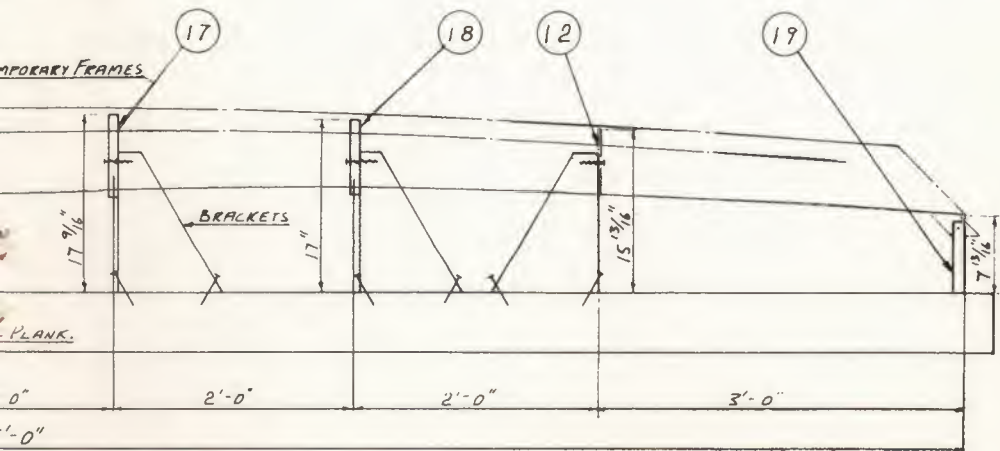
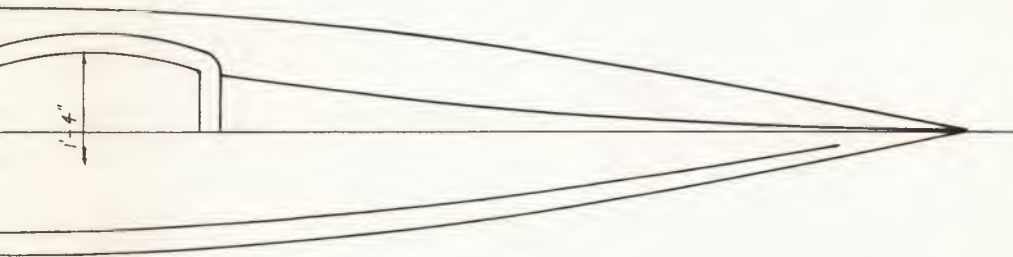


WATERTIGHT TANK





WATERTIGHT TANK.



First Year of a Coaching Scheme

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS FROM GEOFF. SANDERS

HON. SECRETARY, B.C.U. NATIONAL COACHING COMMITTEE

I felt it a great honour to be asked by John Dudderidge and Oliver Cock, some eighteen months ago, to become first 'Hon.Sec.' of the new B.C.U. National Coaching Committee. Both of them had worked hard at laying down the proposals and I knew that it would be an exciting business helping to introduce a brand new coaching scheme. The occasion of producing the committee's annual report - often an irksome task in itself - did enable me to assess what progress had taken place in this our first year and to suggest possible lines of development for the future.

Statistics give us a clue as to progress. The scheme was officially initiated on January 1st, 1962 with the appointment of a number of Hon. Coaches (31) and Instructors (4). After this date entry to the awards was to be by examination only and by 31st. December 1962 a further 4 Coaches and 33 Instructors had been added to the lists (plus 6 candidates who had passed the Hon. Coach examination but had to qualify for appointment by taking a life-saving award). As the Hon. Coach award is to be considered basic to the whole scheme and not one which can be undertaken lightly, the slight increase during the year is only to be expected. If the aims of the scheme are to be fulfilled and members of it accepted by outside authorities as reliable exponents and teachers of the sport, then high standards must be maintained.

On the other hand, the fact that a large number of candidates entered for the Instructor's Award in this first year can be regarded as an happy augury for the future. Many of the Instructors took this more elementary examination as a helpful preliminary to taking the Hon. Coach examination; others were "touring" canoeists who commendably sought a qualification to give them 'authority' to introduce others to the sport; but perhaps the largest number was of young people under the age of 21. I have found from experience that young men and women make excellent instructors and demonstrators and the more I see them at work, giving useful service and yet thoroughly enjoying themselves, the more I am convinced that we did right in introducing an award which could be taken by people of 17 years of age.

Eventually it is the aim that the coaching scheme will be administered by local panels who will be responsible to the National Coaching Committee for the arrangement of coaching activities (which will include the organisation of courses for potential instructors and coaches) and conducting of examinations in their regions. The West Midlands and North Eastern areas already have their own panels - each has a firm nucleus of coaches and instructors - and it is not unreasonable to expect that other parts of the country will soon be able to follow their lead. Yet, to be truthful, there are one or two surprisingly 'under-developed' areas as far as the coaching scene is concerned - notably North Midlands, which comprises the counties of Derby., Leics., Northants., Notts., Rutland and Soke of Peterborough, and yet only boasts of one Hon. Coach.

It has been obvious, however, that most of our Coaches and Instructors have been busy teaching canoeing to all kinds of groups brought together by canoe clubs, local education authorities, train-

ing colleges, youth bodies and so forth. There have been many requests for examinations to be conducted by our members - for B.C.U. tests and canoeing tests arranged by other organisations. Notable amongst these have been those for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Tests - a healthy development as far as we are concerned as aspects of the awards which feature canoeing have in the past often been conducted by examiners with little experience of canoeing and thus standards have often varied alarmingly.

One of the greatest contributions that can be made by our coaching scheme is, in fact, to emphasise the importance of sound standards, in relation to safety in all its aspects as well as to general techniques. Our future aim is clear: to establish the means by which we can offer the services of qualified teachers and examiners to all in this country who are anxious to take up the sport of canoeing or who, having once sampled its delights, wish to learn more.

The National Coach is, of course, an integral part of the coaching scheme, and it is obvious that his tours have been greatly appreciated in many parts of the country. In the first nine months of his travels he has had more than 153 engagements, ranging from single film-lecture sessions to practical courses of a week or more in length. Two comments might, perhaps, be made in this respect. It is to be regretted that certain authorities, such as local youth organisations, seem reluctant to call on 'outsiders' (such as the B.C.U. and its coaches and National Coach) for help, when both would undoubtedly benefit from closer liaison. This is a barrier. I think, which coaching panels should try and break down in the future, though it may need great tact and patience if success is to be achieved. Secondly, I know that the National Coach is anxious to meet and work with the clubs in the areas that he visits; he would very much like to know how things 'tick' and how he can help. An informal chat, for example, can often be of great value. Full co-operation between the National Coach and the clubs would surely help all.

The Proficiency Tests are administered by the National Coaching Committee and deserve a mention. It was natural to expect that with the increase in examiners (coaches and instructors are empowered to examine tests) there would be an increase in the number of candidates entering the tests. The recently introduced Novices' Test has been well received and the increase in numbers taking the standard Proficiency Test has been impressive. From June 1952 when the test was first introduced up to the end of 1961, 289 canoeists passed the test: in 1962 alone there were 246 successes. Although one can claim a 200% increase in 1962 in the number taking the Advanced Proficiency Test in kayaks, this does give rather a false impression ... in 1962 there were 4 passes, bringing the total of those who hold the certificate to 6! - a figure, I am sure, which will be increased in the years ahead.

It is interesting to note that as yet no tests have been taken in Canadian canoes. With the appearance on the market of reasonably priced Canadian canoes and the availability of kits for home construction I can foresee that this type of canoe is likely to be more popular in the future. Transportation of such a boat offers no great problem in this mechanical age and the intriguing number of skills to be mastered in handling a Canadian will commend it to many. I don't think that I would be over-hasty in predicting that Canadian tests will become more popular in time.

And so to our second year of the coaching scheme. I know that the National Coaching Committee will want to join me in offering sincere thanks to all coaches and instructors for all their past services and at the same time wish them every success in their future coaching activities. And may we extend a cordial invitation to all canoeists at present outside the scheme but who enjoy introducing others to the pleasures of our sport to join our 'team' in the coming year?

(Readers who would like details of the coaching awards or proficiency tests should write to Geoff. Sanders at 33 Orchard Avenue, Solihull, Warwicks. A stamped addressed envelope would be appreciated.)

The Camping and Outdoor Life Exhibition 1963

For the second year in succession, 'Canoeing' had a stand at the Camping and Outdoor Life Exhibition at Olympia. The appalling weather put an end to any hopes we might have had about this being a bumper exhibition, but we dealt with a steady stream of enquiries, sold a large number of magazines, and were glad that we had taken this opportunity of reaching a fresh public. The demands on time which an exhibition of this kind makes are enormous, and we would particularly like to thank those of our readers who offered, without any prompting on our part to help out in manning the stand.

There is undoubtedly a large demand for unbiased information about canoeing, and we were able to help satisfy a small portion of this by providing the catalogues of our advertisers, stating the types of craft in which they specialised, and leaving the final choice to the enquirer. We do not consider it our function to discriminate between particular makes, we simply say that we know from experience that these firms can be relied upon to give value for money and that their products are seaworthy.

The only canoe manufacturer at the show was TYNE FOLDING BOATS who was exhibiting a Compact folding two-seater, a 16ft. Canadian-canoe in veneer, and his three new glass fibre reinforced kayaks. The glass fibre Compact two-seater (length 15') was attracting particular attention from campers who wished to buy something for the car-top which was tough and did not require much maintenance. The Slalom and White Water canoe had obviously more appeal for the serious canoeists and its appearance on the market will make it even more difficult for the white-water canoeists to decide which is the one most suited to his needs. Particularly interesting on the Tyne stand was a new double-bladed paddle - the ALUMAC. The interest lay in its blades which, although of conventional shape and appearance, on examination proved to have a thin sheet of alloy sandwiched between the outer veneers. The price of these paddles is £3.10s., which if they are as strong as they seemed makes them a very good buy.

For the remainder of the exhibition, there was something for every type of camper and although by their bulk the frame tents seemed to dominate the exhibition there was a good selection of light-weight tents and equipment. Altogether, everyone seemed to think it was a good show - even the Royal Marines who were Eskimo rolling three times a day in unheated water.



Splodge Turns the Wheel Full Circle

NARRATED BY ALAN BYDE

In days of yore before the war thrill hungry bods despairing of the lack of summer snow, swapped their ski sticks for paddles and brought slalom to the waterways. These facts learned Splodge while studying for his Hon. Coaching badge, and as he sat and shivered by his northern fire he watched the snow fall and the rivers freeze.

The frost continued. We will remember this one. The snow continued with a melted top which froze again and made the local snow slope, Observatory Hill, quite quickish. Reflecting on the past caused Splodge with agile mind to decide to carve fresh history with fibreglass canoe, a rather batter Klepper vintage '61.

Came Saturday, a rash promise to a pal, he set off to collect the fibreglass canoe and slalom paddle. They met on the hill. Incredible looks from the skiers. Splodge giggled. I must look a fool, he thought, I'm not with me. They towed the canoe about half way up the slope, to a quiet corner of the big field. Sneers from the skiers. Ridiculous really, 14ft. of mobile splint on the end of a piece of last year's hairy slalom string.

Some doubt. How to get into the thing when it persisted in moving off. Obviously keen to go, on this crusty quick slope. With a fifty yard run ahead, and the bows firmly wedged between his oppo's feet, Splodge wriggled his padded bulk and boots (again?) into the cockpit.

Stand away. Cast off. Splodge eyes wide, hands tight on shaft under gloves slowly slipped into top gear, then old man snow let out the clutch with a rush. This beats ham sandwiches, thought our lad. Whooping madly, fearing a roll, the bottom being the top, Splodge whipped into the fastest telemark, short of surfing, that he had ever done. Uphill, or should that be upstream, the paddle was laid, searing fluff off snow in sheets. Total sideways rush, balanced on gunwale, and paddle flat. Moved paddle blade gently forward, and

rotation renewed. Tail slides away faster down hill, bow lurches uphill, swift transfer of weight to opposite telemark. Standing skiers, vertical blurs and one too close, gone by and uphill, stood still at 20 mph. This is ridiculous. Spinning wildly, finishing in swim up position, paddle ready as for reverse screw roll, flaying ice crystals from the hill. Stop. Dragging feet from hull. Stay there, please Splodge, must have this on film. Anxious lady, stumbles across, he must be hurt, silly man.

Not to worry madam, he is well. Pal now tries it for size. Laughing, grinning, fixed rictus of fear, smiling, not on your life. Teetotum juggernaut, dervish. Spins frantically held, lost, regained. Finish in swim up position, slowly, as speed drops, anorack over head, sweater, second sweater, shirt, string vest, snow methodically rolling clothes around neck. Splodge was relieved by the thought that his pal's trousers would at least be pulled up, not down by this dastardly snow. Oppo, downhill, laughing weakly, Lord, my wife will be annoyed, mops first trickles of blood from lacerated tum. Nicely rockered, thought our lad. Oozing but healing quickly, uphill for next try.

Splodge, crutch strap fastened, tried the fast stretch beside the sledgers. Skiers highly amused, hard looks, is he, er, away with it? The hill is in three sections, gentle, steep, long run out. Faster than the other, speed leaping up in a straight line, steering by touching the snow with the paddle. Now leaving the ground, leaping. And there, ahead and to the side, a girl on the sledging track. Splodge yelled, but she heard him not at all. Converging, appreciably faster, startled faces waving arms, must stop. Swing 14ft. of boat sideways, dig in for brakes, carve out swathe among watchers, but do not ride up on this sledge at this speed. Flick. Side. Sitting up. Lay over. Can't. Whump. Cross track and ridges. Airborne! Yahooo! Missed sledge. Tail drops, spinning, balance rattled side to side. Faster than surf. Still upright, speed easing, face now stung by snow crystals, paddle screw-wise throwing sheets of ice from edges. Mouthful of sharpness. Fear?

Crawling out of miraculously unbattered Klepper, Splodge agreeably pleased to see look of awe on face of small boy. Respect from skiers. Pal helpless with laughter. Boy! Your face! When you were airborne. Expression said, I'm not in control, what in the hell is going to happen next, I'm going like all the clappers, don't know where it is I am going, but wherever it is I'll be there very soon.

Later, Splodge, did a modified Eskimo loop, and many telemarks. Learned how important correct and immediate paddle application is at that speed, how delicate the control with only a patch as big as a tin tray in contact with the snow. Draught about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Try it, it's a canoe bender, but steer clear of sledgers. Small children are fascinated by the onrush of the whole ridiculous thing and may not leap clear. It is a great sport!

(We understand that part of this epic voyage has been filmed for possible showing at B.C.U. A.G.M. 1964! Ed.)

Letters

Dear Sir,

Re: B.C.U. Canoe Insurance Scheme

With reference to this Insurance Cover I feel that the attention of your readers must be drawn to the fact that, although the maximum sum insured shown on the proposal form is £150, I am able to arrange cover for amounts larger than this.

This leads me to the point where I must emphasise that this cover can be utilised for club fleets, with special reference to Canadians, KI's, K2's, K4's and any other special craft. This point has been missed by most clubs.

Your readers must be aware of the fact that these specialised types of craft are extremely expensive, both to buy, and repair, and it seems to me th t any club which does not take the trouble to insure its own craft would not seem to be acting in the best interests of its members.

Last year we heard of fires in two clubs, both of which appealed for aid in replacing their equipment. Obviously they were not properly insured. While I am not happy to see claims occurring, I am even less happy to see that, even after such occurrences, most clubs would still seem to be tempting providence.

I am, in fact, an Insurance Broker myself and, through various sources, have had confirmed, my belief that no other insurance cover available in this country gives better cover, at equal, or lower, cost.

The solution is simple; insure through the B.C.U., whose duty it is to provide its clubs and members with services such as this.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTIAN F. MUTEAU
Hon. Secretary (Insurance)
B.C.U.

Dear Sir,

From the small drawing you published in the January issue of "Canoeing", Ken Taylor's Kayak appears to be very similar to the old, pre-war Grazer Kayak, of which there are three or four left in this country. Taylor's kayak may have a little more rocker than the Grazer, which latter was also fitted with a skeg to prevent it broaching to in a quarter sea.

It is interesting to compare this kayak with the "Kayel" Ang-massalik kayak, which is a line copy of one in the Scott Polar Research Institute of Cambridge. Although this design is hardly made for canoe touring, it is quite the most sea-worthy canoe I have ever handled, capable of going out in force 8 gales - if one has to! We have had them in such seas at Polzeath, North Cornwall.

Yours sincerely,

O.J. COCK.
National Coach.

P.S. I am writing to Charles Ranshaw for some copies of the drawings to add to my file on kayaks. I have one of the Grazer, so I shall be able to get a close comparison.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for the magazine 'Canoeing' which is sent regularly to my address.

In the January number I found an article about the rivers of Czechoslovakia. We read it with great interest and are happy that you like our country.

I thank you for your appreciation and publicity which you have given to our country and wish you the best of success in your work and sports activity in this year 1963.

Yours sincerely,

VACLAV VACEK.
Czechoslovakia.

(It is always pleasant to hear from our readers, and especially those from overseas. Vaclav Vacek is a member of the I.C.F. Technical Committee and it was through his efforts that the Czechoslovakian Canadian-canoe designs, which we publish, were made available to British canoeists. Ed.)

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