

Canoeing

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SPECIAL FEATURES

Canoeing 'Down-Under'
Australia - Part 1

Paddling with a
Vasepot

At The Boat Show

The Liffey Descent:
E. Lawrence Shooting
Palmerton.

photo. Mike Clark.



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New Boats for Old

While considering our reply to the letter from the Consumers' Association which appears on our correspondence page, we paused to wonder for a moment on what will be the pattern of the secondhand market in canoes in two or three years time. In the past when canoes were built from wood and canvas there was a fairly steady rate of deterioration: the canvas rotted, the wood rotted, and when further repair became uneconomic one simply chopped up the frame and used it as firewood. But what of glass fibre canoes?

At the present time, with the exception of white water models, the lifespan of a glass fibre canoe would appear to be indefinite and while the competitive canoeist will need the latest model the vast majority of paddlers may well see no need to change his seaworthy craft. Further, if glass fibre canoes prove to be long lived are we going to reach the stage when the number of secondhand canoes is so great that it could imperil the production of new canoes? After all, although the motor industry can build-in planned obsolescence it is difficult to see how this can be achieved with canoes.

Finally, when a glass fibre canoe reaches the stage when nobody wants it, just what do you do with it? Can it be that the time will come when canoe hulls will join with the car bodies, cisterns, and so on which deface our rural landscapes?

Canoeing 'Down-Under' : Australia - Part 1

BY JOHN LAWRENCE

It was a relief to reach Australia, and to settle into a routine again, - although some might not apply that word to Outward Bound; however after some months of living fancy-free, we learnt you can have too much of a good thing. Andrew Macle hose became a master at Timbertop, and Roger Houghton taught French at one of Sydney's top schools. I was at Fisherman's Point, finding my way round the New South Wales coastal bush, and the waterways of the Hawkesbury. We were sited five miles from the nearest road, and boats of any sort were functional to the running of the place. It's surprising how quickly one picks up matters maritime when a run to the pub depends on it. Boats were at such a premium, that on two occasions when no powered craft were available, startled guests were given a canoe in which to wend their wobbly way on a seventy minute paddle (- if wind and tide played ball -) to catch the all important train to civilization.

Most of the expeditions were done on the inland and estuary waters of a large river. It was fortunate, therefore that, through the industry and enthusiasm of Ralph Blain, then the Warden, some canvas singles came to be born, among them another Tyne eskimo. Costs of new canoes in Australia were dizzy : a new Klepper Dart retailed at £196 (Australian) So wood and canvas and borrowed plans are the story. It was a real pleasure to glide over the salty, sparkling green of Broken Bay in a kayak again, while the escort launch wallowed and pattered. The new one had been made out of bright yellow PVC, and looked rather dashing. Memories of the faithful, much esteemed, familiar and well-travelled blue lady often came back, but since she was in an Afghan garage, absence made the fond heart wander, and I was entirely seduced by the new blonde.

Canoeing in Australia has a flavour all of its own. The school canoes were stout touring doubles, strongly built in Marine Ply, and made to last, not to portage. Almost flat-bottomed, they were as stable as a church, and good proof against the sudden tidal chops encountered in the seaward stretches of the Hawkesbury. We had little opportunity to strain the best marriages in them - but certainly, over a two-day paddle covering sometimes fifty miles in differing conditions, young Australians had every chance to learn about young Australians at close quarters.

Capsize drills had to be learnt exclusively inside the narrow limits of our shark-mesh pool, which kept back the sharks, we supposed, because we never say any, though not the pink stinging jellyfish, as big as footballs. Once out in the river, or the bay, there were very few capsizes; the flora and fauna of that part of the Pacific being sufficient incentive to remain afloat. All drills for man overboard or capsize were designed to get the victim out of the water as speedily as possible; the canoes were secondary. The rock oysters, delicious to eat raw when prized off the rocks, made the foreshore like a barbed wire fence to a swimmer trying to land.

Up the creeks, it was a different matter. The Hawkesbury has one of the deepest mud bottoms in the world. A dubious honour, and you would not suspect this in the lower reaches; brochures which gush about 'The Rhine of New South Wales' do not usually mention it,



nor show pictures of the inlets at low tide, or the mangrove swamps, naturally enough. Of all the creeks, Marra Marra creek was the favourite. It seemed the centre of most of our expedition work.

At first it appeared as the usual wide-mouthed expanse of mud, covered with thin poles bearing white notices. These warned of oyster farms, where the young bed oysters were cultured on shelves stretching all over the flats, and invisible at high tide. There was a high fine for damaging these beds.

Once in the creek proper, it began to close in, with banks of tussock and reeds leading through the swamp back to the patchy, brown hillsides, covered in dry tea-tree, and pale blue-gum bush. In summer, the cicadas completely drown conversation or paddle sound, and a canoe can slip right up to the cranes, before they creak away, startled into clumsy flight. Imperceptibly, the banks steepen, the bush thickens, white sand replaces the mud on the edge, and occasionally, there is the sound of running water from springs, an unusual enough sound in Australia. At the head of navigation, mossy rocks mark the margin of salt water, above this point it is fresh and drinkable, and running even in summer, when most others are dry. The sides now are several hundred feet high; aboriginal middens and firemarks can be seen in the deep sandstone caves. It was not many years ago, that one could have looked up onto the ridge, and seen a wild figure, half naked, and carrying a spear.

Any further progress up the creek is a question of man-hauling; so canoes are pulled up, and one or two men break into the bush to look for a convenient site, or cave in which to sleep. A crashing of twigs ahead pulls the lead man up short to listen: the clear 'thump thump thump' indicates a wallaby, pogo-ing his way up the gully.

Arriving in the site, and clearing it for a fire, if there is no dog in the party, (my young alsation Solomon often travelled with us) it is as well to stamp about a bit, and watch your hands when picking up the dead wood, in case the snakes are asleep. Most Australians would rather have a snake than a bull-ant, at least the snake does not look for trouble. The bull-ant is either red or black, always belligerent, can lift a paper clip unaided, and

frequently kills wasps (whose sting he easily outdoes) in single combat. Over an inch long, he stands at you, paddling his paws like a knuckleman, and while you are wondering what to make of this remarkable threat, two of his mates are doing fire and movement up your socks, putting in a final assault somewhere behind the knee. If you see a digger dancing in the bush, he is not generally waltzing matilda, but is bitten by a bull-ant.

The balmy bush nights are never to be forgotten. The fire dies down, though the woodsmoke still tangs the eyes, the mosquitoes are beginning to indicate a move to the safety of the hammock with its zipover net, - a final cigarette, and the knowledge that you have a 2½ knot ebb all the way down the creek tomorrow, makes for drowsiness, and the chuckle of the mopoke, the bush owl, is an effective lullaby.

Your alarm-clock is the kookaburra, only there are dozens of them. They start their story session before first light begins even faintly to wash the sky. It is impossible not to smile, even at such an unchristian hour, at their filthy laughter, they make a thoroughly good start to the day. By sun-up, they have quietened down. In no time, the boats are launched, and paddling steadily down amongst the plopping mullet. They frequently jump over the bows, and once, one jumped straight into the cockpit, a pound of gleaming silver fish! The occupants were not too stunned to grasp the advantage, thus clinching the fishing story to end all others.

Down near the mouth again, cutting a corner, which was perfectly feasible yesterday, is another matter now, on the ebb. Suddenly the boat begins to brake unaccountably, accompanied by the sound of an overtaking stern wave, a sure sign of shallows. A soft lurch, and then stillness... although you are surrounded by water for half a mile, you are well and truly aground. The shore is far away, it is not deep enough to swim, and if you get out, you sink immediately to your thighs. So there is a marathon ahead. Taking a deep breath, and punting into the ooze with both hands down the side of the canoe, you shove backwards, seeking the channel, - unseen -, that you came in on. Almost always, you miss it, and the foul punting continues, until, with aching back, and slime to the gunnels, you find with considerable relief that you have paddle depth.

There is another aspect to this, which used to appeal enormously to the senses of humour of those not actively engaged. In unfamiliar bays, where it was necessary to leave boats for a while, and go inland, the practice of pulling them up well beyond the high tide mark could easily backfire. If the type of shore, and the time of return, had not been gauged pretty accurately, it was possible to get back to find two hundred yards of mud separating the canoes from the water. There was no way round it, these flats stretched for long distances, and faced with a scheduled return to school that day, it meant getting afloat, or no supper. The eventual arrival of such a party, looking like minstrels, and smelling like the bottom of the monkey's cage, was huge, as long as you were one of the audience, - onstage, it was bad for the soul.

One of the main problems on long paddles in the bay, was the one of sunstroke, or similar ailments. The light reflected off the water played havoc with skin, or whole systems; thus long trousers, long sleeved shirts, and wide brimmed hats were



Above, 'head of navigation' in Mangrove Creek

found to be absolutely necessary. We almost never canoed in fast flowing fresh water. The only approach to this, apart from tidal rips, was when the river was in flood, and then it was not to be fooled with. You don't take people canoeing for the first time in a brown expanse of swirl in which somebody reported seeing a house a while ago.

One began to long for the swift song of a rapid, the musty smell of spray below a fall, instead of the scuttle of mangrove crabs, or the tender nosegay of rotting logs.

The only canoe I actually bought in Australia, was, very cheap indeed, from an exhausted soldier, who thudded into our wharf at lunchtime one day, his expression somewhat congealed from a seventy mile paddle down the Hawkesbury. He had blisters in unlikely places, as it was evidently his inaugural trip in any canoe. It seemed he had started out 'to get fit'. He pleaded for a powered boat lift to the station, stating in soldiers' terms his marked determination to keep away from them things in future. He was in no mood to do a Rothschild; I had to practically force him to take money for it.

There are many sides to those two years that I gladly gave away. But there are just as many that it is impossible to remember with anything but real affection.

The sight of the whole mile of water off the Point cloaked in a thick pall of smoke from bushfires in high summer, which turned the sun into a dull orange disc. The incredible gleam of phosphorescence from bow wave or paddle drips, which made a canoe so clearly visible at night, and the view of Broken Bay and the open sea, the islands shimmering in the distance, the long vistas of white sand, and the formations of long snouted canoes, with their behatted, sunburnt occupants, dipping and rolling on the wide swell of the Pacific.

Tailoring with a Gluepot

BY M. C. POWELL

We've had rather a craze for making wetsuits recently at Worcester. Alan Wonfor started it when he took a school party to Grandtully last Whitsun. He made each of his boys buy a sheet of neoprene at a guinea, hack it out into some kind of a singlet and wear it underneath whatever anorak or jacket they happened to have. His report on this was that making them was so easy, and they were so effective, that he wished he'd spent more money and gone into the business more seriously. The cheaper kinds of neoprene do not have any fabric "backing", which means they are hard to pull on and off when wet, and they are more easily torn.

As some of your readers already know, my brother and I are "dry" paddlers. We make anoraks and spraydecks all in one piece, which cost only about £3 and are more comfortable than tight neoprene so for quite a while we held off and muttered darkly about young fellows having money to burn. Robin is still in that frame of mind; but I cracked somewhere about midsummer. Standing for half an hour or more in an icy river teaching rolling is enough to make even the most dedicated coach feel the need for some warmth round his bowels. I had just scraped together enough pennies, and persuaded my wife we didn't need a bedroom carpet, when I found that our Club Treasurer had just lashed out on twelve guineas worth of best-quality 3/16 nylon-backed. Knowing that Ber is as talented as he is wealthy I sat back to learn by his mistakes.

The stuff he had came in sheets 3' x 2'; there was a brown paper pattern which had to be adapted to suit his measurements; and the whole of it had to be butt-jointed together with Evostik. The instructions said make it to 1" less than your true measurements for skin diving, or to exact measurements if the suit was for dinghy sailing. Being a cautious fellow he built it up bit by bit. First a sleeveless corselet like a Roman Centurion, then a pair of short sleeves on it (Altered about three times, as the armholes needed to be made bigger and slewed round to the front for a good paddling position). Then a crutch-piece. Getting in and out was torture, so at this point he cut it down the front and fitted a zip. The instructions say that it should measure from crutch to Adam's Apple; but since most canoeists lean their necks forward to paddle this means an unpleasant pressure on the windpipe. Ber wishes now that he had a shorter zip.

I was only planning to make trousers myself, so I watched his with particular interest and came to the conclusion that there were basic faults in the pattern supplied by the firm. This indicated that each leg was to be made from a single sheet of material, with only one seam, that running up the inside of the leg. Now unless you are exceptionally deformed, the inside of your leg is relatively straight. Most of the curves and hollows are on the outside or the back of it. This means that you can only achieve a skin tight fit by a system of darts and gussets, or by putting a very uneven tension on the material in certain places. I decided that mine were going to be made on more or less the same lines as a pair of jeans - a seam up the inside and the outside of the leg.

Measuring to make your own pattern is a thing to be done only by consenting adults, in private. Expose one leg and buttock;

mark a vertical line down the centre at back and front, using a washable felt-tip marker - then similar lines down the sides, where the seams are going to come - then horizontal lines encircling the leg at ankle, mid-calf, below knee, above knee, mid thigh and about 2½" below the crutch. This gives you a gridiron pattern which can be measured section by section and transferred onto paper to give you the size and shape of material for the front and the back of your leg. Then you need similar measurements for the trunk. Waist, widest part of hips, and vertical measurement from waist to 2½" below the crutch at both front and back. The snag from a canoeist's point of view is: should those measurements be taken standing, or sitting in the paddling position? I compromised by taking both and striking the average. Doing the above carefully, and transferring the results to paper, is a good three hours work. After that, putting the garment together is dead easy.

Cut out your paper pattern, and draw round it on the neoprene. (Don't forget to "turn" your pattern for the second leg, otherwise you will find you have two lefts - or rights!) Transfer your horizontal lines as well, they help you to line up the various pieces accurately. Glue the inside-leg seam first, then the vertical seams from waist to crutch. If you are patient enough, leave it overnight for the glue to set hard, and then try it against your legs before glueing the outside seams. You may well find that you can take half an inch off all the way down it, and it gives you a chance to make last-minute corrections. Leave it another twelve hours, and then be careful as you try it on. The seams will not be really secure until you have reinforced them with neoprene tape; but it is hardly worth putting this on until you are sure the fit is as good as you can make it. To open a seam and re-cut it, rub solvent into it (not on the nylon-backed side) and pull at it slowly. Most people put re-inforcing tape on the outside only. I did mine on the inside too, which increases the strength at the cost of some reduction in comfort. If you decide to do this, take care not to disturb the nylon backing at a time when the glue is wet. It needs two coats of it to penetrate properly, and the nylon is temporarily "loose" because of the solvent in the glue.

In the above description I have been assuming that your piece of material is long enough to reach all the way from waist to ankle. In fact, it isn't, and you have to make a joint in it somewhere, or be satisfied with trousers that are short-legged. In my own case I made the legs first, one piece was enough to reach from hip-bone to ankle, and then joined the upper part on after I had made sure of the fit of the legs.

Do they work? Yes indeed! I tried them out for a brief swim in mid-December, then paddled around for twenty minutes and finished so steaming-hot that I went for another dip to cool off a bit.

Feel cautious about tackling such a big job without experience? In that case I suggest you club together with someone else and make yourselves a pair of neoprene "socks", very comfy, very warm, and when you've done that you will know whether you dare risk your cash on something bigger.

I spent £6.14.0d. and for that I got trousers, "socks" (with re-inforced soles and heels), warm cuffs for my anorak and a pair of nice insides for my wife's slippers. Now I'm trying to persuade her that neoprene nappies are the coming thing.

NOTE: Our supplier was: Sub-Aqua Products, 63 Twyford Road, Eastleigh, Hants.



At The Boat Show

Once again a trip to the Boat Show for the canoeist meant a visit to only one stand, unless of course the canoeist had his mind on bigger things. The stand in question was as in previous years that of Ottersports, and although there were other 'canoes' to be seen they were not of the type to which our readers were likely to have given a second glance.

For the first time Ottersports were showing two glass fibre canoes, a single and a double tourer. Although round bilge they both showed a strong Littledyke influence, and the construction was of mat with the centre section re-inforced with cloth. At the present time the boats are only available in completed form, but we suspect that the growing trend towards glass fibre hull with deck-and-cockpit kits was in the minds of the designers for the construction would lend itself readily to kit form. We would stress, however, that only the complete boat is being sold at the moment.

Another new design on show was the Kayel-Otter Nipper an 11' single with a 22" beam designed for youngsters between 7 and 11 years old. With the recent spate of mini-canoes which has recently hit the market (triggered off by our own Water Flea) it is perhaps worth stressing that the baths trainer should not be confused with the boat for the junior paddler. There is, of course, a certain degree of overlap, but prospective designers, builders, and purchasers should be quite clear as to their requirements before acquisition otherwise an excellent design may be condemned simply because it is not suitable for a purpose for which it was never intended.

Backing up these new designs were a number of the established P.B.K. and Kayel models and a wide range of accessories including the various patterns of Ottersports lifejacket.

Throughout our visit there was a stream of enquiries, some technical, and some idiotically simple, to the initiated, and it was the latter which caused us to reflect once again on how difficult it must be for the novice to gain an overall picture of the current canoeing scene.

This A.G.M. was breaking new ground in two ways, first in that it was being held in the North of England and second, that it was being held in conjunction with a Canoe Conference organised by the C. C. P. R. and the B. C. U. at Bury. The marrying of these two events, both landmarks in the canoeing calender, was highly successful due to the enthusiasm and organising ability of Manchester Canoe Club and the C. C. P. R. officials.

The Meeting opened with an address by the President Mr. J. W. Dudderidge in which the main point was the holding of the A. G. M. and Conference together. He also welcomed to the Meeting three members of the Irish Canoe Union, Mr. D. Martin, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Lawrence. The Minutes of the previous Meeting having been read and approved with no matters arising, the adoption of the Annual Report came before the Meeting. The President read highlights of the Report enlarging on the growth of membership and of the need for counting heads when applying for Ministry Grants. The growing problem of access was of particular interest to a large number of the audience, as the Ribble is at the moment being contested for rights of way. Mr. Kennedy of Manchester Canoe Club asked about the fund of £1,000 set aside for fighting legal actions about access. The President replied that a motion had been put forward for the creation of a fund at a previous A. G. M., but was not carried. He added rather wryly that the Union did not have £1,000. The last item concerned the Insurance Scheme, which thanks to Mrs. J. Baker was on a very sound footing, but unfortunately had been left out of the Report for which the President apologised. The Report was then proposed, seconded and carried unanimously.

The Hon. Treasurer Mr. T. Owen reported that it had not been a good financial year. Council's budget early in the year had allowed for extra grant aid, but extra grant had not been forthcoming and as it was too late in the year to cut back on the proposed expenditure, a deficit showed on the balance sheet. The Motion was taken and the accounts were carried.

The last Motion before the Meeting was Mr. G. Law's Motion for changing the subscription rate and levying each competitor each year. The President put the Council's feeling that the subscription rate should not go up and down, but remain as stable as possible. The competitive committees were also against the motion and four members spoke against the motion from the floor. When the vote was taken no-one supported the motion, everyone was against. This concluded the formal business of the Meeting.

After the President had declared the formal business of the Meeting over and before the presentation of the prizes, Mr. R. Eames made an appeal for funds to train the potential Olympic canoeists. To this end he was asking for people to buy and to sell tickets for an Easter Draw. Mr. Dudderidge then presented Mr. Eames with a photograph of the team he had taken to East Germany.

CANDIDS AT THE A.G.M.





Three Awards of Honour were presented this year, for three very different aspects of canoeing. Mr. G. Sanders who was Secretary and is now the Chairman of the Coaching Committee and who built the Coaching Scheme into the fine organisation it is today; Mr. J. Spulher, the guiding light of British Slalom from its earliest days to the present time when representative British Slalom Team is a force to be reckoned with, and who has served on the I. C. F. Slalom Committee for many years; and Mr. R. Tyas whose Services to canoe touring include the compilation of the B. C. U. Guide to Waterways as part of his numerous activities for the Union over a long period.

Prize giving, usually rounds of applause for absent champions, had a few surprises this year. The audience nearly brought the house down for Dave Mitchell, Slalom Champion and Dipper badge winner for five years running. Also Oliver Cock presented Charles Evans with a bottle of champagne for winning the Sella River Race two years in succession.

CANOE PLANS FOR THE CONNOISEUR

The plans service which we have been operating under the above title for some years will in future form no part of our publishing activities. This decision has been made since we felt that we no longer had the time to promote the designs to the extent which we believed they merited.

Fortunately, Dick Gays and two fellow members of Leicester Canoe Club have offered to take over the service and will be running it under the auspices of the B.C.U. The name of the new service will be 'Canoe plans' and their aim will be to make available plans from which the home constructor, school group, or canoe club, can easily make a variety of canoes and canoeing equipment to fulfil every need. The service will continue to specialise in plans of types of canoes and equipment not readily available from any other source.

Designers are invited to submit details of any canoe or equipment they have developed for consideration of inclusion in the service. Details of terms offered to designers will be sent on request. All suggestions and ideas regarding the service in any way are welcome and will receive prompt attention. All enquiries should be addressed to Dick Gays, 55 Conaglen Road, Aylestone, Leicester.

Note. Enquiries concerning the D.K.I. should be sent direct to Dennis J. Davis, 'Ganilly', Pilgrims Lane, Chilham, Canterbury, and enquiries concerning the Single Sea Touring Kayak and the Double Sea Touring Kayak should be sent to Duncan Winning, 1 Ashbourn Gardens, Gourcock, Renfrewshire.

GUIDE TO THE WATERWAYS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

(B.C.U., 16s. to members, 21s. to non-members)

It is now thirty years since the first B.C.U. guide to the waterways appeared and this 1966 edition is a partially revised and reprinted version of the 1961 edition. The revisions would appear to be mainly in the important preliminary information, and four outline maps have been included.

Undoubtedly the publication of such a guide is one of the most valuable services which a national association can provide for its members, but we wonder whether in view of the changing pattern of the sport combined with the mammoth task of keeping such a guide up to date, it is any longer justified. What we have in mind is this; we have two main groups of canoeists: those who want general details of waters available, and the fanatics who will head for a mountain stream at the first sign of a cloudburst which will make it canoeable. The first groups are admirably catered for by Percy Blandford's 'Canoeing waters', but the detailed local information cannot be economically included in a general guide. This being so, it would seem there is a case for the B.C.U. to turn from producing a general guide, and instead to produce a series of area guides of considerable detail.

These local guides would have the advantage that their revision could be the responsibility of local canoeists, that the numbers produced could be related to the popularity of the area, and that local advertising of a non-canoeing nature could be sought and thus reduce the retail price. One person who is already enthusiastic about the idea is Colin Mortlock, Warden of the Woodlands Outdoor Centre, Glasbury-on-Wye, who has already done much detailed work on the rivers of mid-Wales. Leeds Canoe Club have done similar work on the rivers in their area. Now what is needed is a co-ordinating and planning committee to pool ideas and establish the best means of publication.

All this has brought us some way from the present guide which is under review. Undoubtedly the Guide to the Waterways is a most praiseworthy publication particularly as it is in the hands of honorary officers and at 16s. to members is a first class value. Canoeists need guides to the waterways and now that this one is off the presses it is time to consider what is the best format for the next edition.

SHIP MODELS, sailing ships and small craft,
(H.M.S.O. 18s.)

by B.W. Bathe

There can be few people who are not fascinated by models, and for those who find their sport on the water, model ships have an especially interest. This book contains eighty colour photographs of model boats in the Science Museum collection at Kensington and is an ideal dip-and-browse book. The models have been chosen to illustrate the development of naval architecture from Egyptian times to the end of the 19th century, and to show how local conditions and materials have also had their influence. Photographs cannot, of course, be a substitute for studying the actual models but this book is bound to stimulate interest and make a later visit to the museum more rewarding.

Letters

Dear Sir,

New Lincolnshire Canoe Club

You may be interested to know we have formed a new canoe club at BOSTON. Most of the present Members are interested in L.D. racing and are looking forward to competing in '67. It is hoped to stage a L.D. race at BOSTON round an unusual circular course in the Autumn. A number of tours for non-racing members are also in preparation.

Yours faithfully,
Frank Royle,
Hon. Sec. Boston Kayak Club,
West End, Benington,
Boston, Lincs.

Dear Sir,

Buying Secondhand

We were interested to read the encouraging review of "Buying secondhand" in your January issue. May we reply briefly to your comments?

In our necessarily enforced brief section on canoes, we were concentrating on points which could be checked fairly simply by someone with limited experience. Rigidity, trueness of hull and straight running involve elaborate inspection, and some previous know-how. Our book was written primarily to guide the uninitiated through their first pitfalls, and since, as you say, rigid canoes are more popular nowadays, it is the folding ones which are more likely to be found on the secondhand market. (Incidentally, tarred canvas is mentioned only as a type of skin covering likely to be found on a secondhand canoe, rather than recommended as an "acceptable" one.)

Yours faithfully,
Edith Rudinger
Head of Publications
Which?
Consumers' Association,
14 Buckingham Street,
London, W.C.2.

(We are pleased to print this reply to our comments, but feel that it only strengthens our view that the Consumers' Association is out of touch in the matter of buying secondhand canoes. Taking Miss Rudinger's points in reverse order we would make the following comments:

1. Tarred canvas is not a type of skin covering likely to be found on a secondhand canoe, indeed, in the past sixteen years we can only recall seeing one example.
2. The change from folding to rigid canoes has been going on for so long now, that it is simply not true that the folding ones are more likely to be found on the secondhand market.
3. Three simple practical tests will give a fair idea of rigidity, trueness of hull, and straight running:

- a. Rigidity: With a person at either end of the canoe lift the boat slowly from the ground and see if the ends move before the centre portion. When clear of the ground, shake the ends up and down and see if the hull 'flaps'.
- b. Trueness of hull: With the canoe upside down, sight along the hull against the light when any bumps or hollows will be revealed.
- c. Straight running: On wind-free, and still water push the empty canoe out from the bank to see whether it runs straight or veers persistently to one side.

In view of the above and the comments made in our original review, we still feel that our assessment 'not very satisfactory' is a fair one. (Ed.)

Dear Sir,

Better Signposts, Please

I was interested to read of Mr. McKelvies suggestions regarding better sign posts for canoes races in your February issue, but feel that several points need to be clarified.

It has always been the policy of the Chelmsford Boating Club, when organising both the Chelmer L.D. Race and the Chelmer Youth Race to have stewards stationed at each lock or junction of a river so as to direct, if necessary, the competitors. This is felt to be far superior to the erection of signs, as these, however good, can be missed.

Unfortunately on 23rd October, the steward appointed to Cuton Lock is one which Mr. McKelvie himself says need not be signposted, as both lock and weir are clearly visible when approaching and it is, therefore, obvious which should be portaged.

Unfortunately, however, the two competitors referred to were misdirected by a fisherman with the result that they went over the weir, fortunately without being hurt. Whether or not the misdirections were given maliciously is not known but having met many types of fishermen over the years, I can only draw my own conclusions!

Yours faithfully,
J.E. Marriage,
Chelmsford Boating Club.

Dear Sir,

Slalom Paddlers, Ahoy!

I apply to you with the following request. I should want to obtain the address one of the English competitors through the Your magazine, where would want to realize a reciprocal visit in this year.

There is a World Cup in the Czechoslovakia, in this year, and so I invite him on it. I will glad to give something of my experiences to him. (I am one of the very good Czechoslovak competitors in the category canoe - double and canoe - Single).

Many thanks in advance!

Yours faithfully,
Alex Kozelsky
Vohnoutova 10, BRNO-25
Czechoslovakia.

Seal Hunting in Britain

BY KATHLEEN TOTTY

I have been reading with considerable disgust, and disquiet, Mr. Hare's article in the B.C.U. magazine concerning his intention to hunt seals off the British coast from his kayak. Dedicated and enlightened people of many nations all over the world are trying to stop the gross cruelty that occurs when animals are shot indiscriminately; and when maimed animals are left to die a horrible and lingering death by pain and starvation. I have lived in Lakeland for many years, and have seen for myself the horrors that are inflicted by some people in the name of "Sport". Deer, living skeletons, because sportsmen had shot their jaws away, or otherwise maimed and disabled them.

As James Froude says, "Wild animals never kill for sport. Man is the only one to whom the torture and death of his fellow creatures is amusing in itself".

I quite realise that the Greenland hunters kill mainly for food for themselves and their often starving dogs, but that an Englishman should join in with such pleasure, leaves to my mind much to be desired. I suggest that he reads Mrs. Hooke's book, *Seal Summer*, or watches films, such as *Atalanta*; before he again allows himself to butcher so charming and highly intelligent an animal, and what is worse, to encourage others to do likewise. Such conduct makes me, and others like myself, wonder whether future generations will be able to share the wonderful heritage of animal life which we have been privileged to enjoy; and which has been so woefully abused, and whose continued existence for many is in grave doubt. Especially as Mr. Hare goes on to say, with evident relish of pleasure and excitement to come, "There are thousands about". It needs little imagination to realize the untold suffering in wait for the seals around our coasts when a number of canoeists are let loose with their harpoon equipment, these, to my mind, unskilled butchers. Do they never think as Meredith says, that "Observation is the most enduring of the pleasures of life?" Mr. Hare mentions N.E. canoeists in particular, who are apparently organizing this bloody sport for the coming year.

I am surprised that a magazine of any stature and integrity should give advertisement to so horrid a sport, with no qualifying statement of any sort. Surely canoeists could find some better and more rewarding way to spend their spare time, other than organized killings of these charming animals, in the name, to quote Mr. Hare again, of "Seal Hunting Fever".

No doubt the Farne Islands slaughter of seals may make some people think that they are only performing some sort of duty. But there are a great number of people who consider the culling both brutal and unnecessary. But whatever feelings these cullings may give people, who saw that the killings were as swift and as merciful as possible. It is also a known fact that many of the men who carried out this distasteful duty felt sickened by the butchery of these quite defenceless animals.

It is very much more pleasant to think of the way in which the seals were loved in earlier times, as we see in this old Celtic seal call:-

I call you, my brother,
I call you by your home name which you know well.
If you hear me, come without fear.
The tide runs strongly. The water is so cold.
I am waiting and watching.
Come to me.

News Flashes

ANOTHER NEW CANOEING BOOK

We learn that another canoeing book is likely to reach the market this year. The author is Sq.Ldr. Peter Williams, a contributor to this magazine, and we understand the emphasis is on canoeing as a group activity in youth organisations and in the services. The publishers will be Pelham Books, one of whose directors is William Luscombe, himself the author of a canoeing book first published in 1936.

CANOE CAMPING WITHOUT CARS

In an effort to avoid damage to camp sites, the Canoe Camping Club has decided to ban cars from the camp sites at this year's Easter meet on the rivers Lugg and Wye. Cars will be left at the start and a coach is being laid on to facilitate collection. As the organisers put it, "Although past events have forced this on us, it will clearly help us to return to full mobile canoe camping as originally practised by the club. Also the drudgery of shuttling being unnecessary will allow more opportunity for social activity".

CANOE TRAILER FOR HIRE

Since the B.C.U. are not organising any holiday canoe trips this year, it has been decided to make their canoe trailer available for hire. During the winter it has been overhauled and a number of improvements have been made to it. Its carrying capacity is up to eighteen slalom canoes and rather less for touring models. Enquiries for hiring should be made to James Bright, 45 Lammas Park Road, Ealing, London W.5.

CHELMSFORD BOATING CLUB

The Club has now heard that it is to receive a grant from the Ministry of Education, towards its new headquarters at Kings Head Meadow, Chelmsford, and a provisional offer has been made.

In view of this the Club is planning to start building the headquarters, which will consist of canoe racks, social hall, changing accommodation, in the new year. Much of the work will be done by members.

John Marriage, a member of the Club Committee, who has been negotiating with the Ministry says, "We are very pleased with the news which will allow the club to considerably expand its activities and put canoeing right on the map in Chelmsford."

It is hoped that the majority of the work will be completed in time for the Club's main activity of the year - the Chelmer Canoe Race in June.

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SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT

RESIDENT Chief Instructors required of the summer season 1967 (late June to September) for the following activities:-

CANOE CRUISING - RIVER WYE : CANOE TRAINING - CORNWALL Candidates must be above the age of 25, holding approved qualifications, and a knowledge of fibreglass canoe and equipment repair is essential. For full details and application form apply: Peter Hall, Y.H.A., St. Albans, Herts.

EXPERIENCED canoeists required as leaders/instructors. All periods April - September 1967. Young ladies also required as cooks on canoe camping holidays. Details from P.G.L. Holidays, Ross-on-Wye.

MANCHESTER CANOE CLUB
Series of 4 rapid river races on the Dee.

Dec III 15th January 1967

No.	Name	Canoe	Min.	Sec.	Sec.	%	Dec II	Dec I
							89.0	85.2
1.	D. Mitchell	M.B.13 ?	13.03	78.3	86.0		89.0	85.2
2.	C. Skellern	K.W.6	13.28	80.3	88.3		91.5	88.3
3.	K. Langford	K.W.6	13.50	83.0	91.2		91.9	90.0
4.	R. Lees	Gombridge U	13.54	83.4	91.6		170.8	90.0
5.	Roger Marsden	K.W.6	14.03	84.5	92.6		92.0	92.0
6.	P. Fleischhack	Spider	14.10	85.0	93.4		93.5	93.5
7.	B. Palmer	Manchester	14.24	86.4	94.9		95.3*	95.3
8.	J. Goodwin	Newcastle	14.28	86.8	95.4		97.5	93.1
9.	R. Calverley	Manchester	14.41	88.1	96.8		97.7	93.2
10.	R. Williamson	Worcester	14.45	88.5	97.3		97.7	96.7
11.	L. Williams	Carlisle	15.05	90.5	99.5		97.4	101.1
12.	J. Slater	K.W.7	15.06	90.6	99.6		99.6	94.8
13.	T. Young	West Yorks.	15.07	90.7	99.7		97.2	120.6
14.	D. Sedft	K.W.7	15.10	91.0	100.0		104.5	99.9
15.	M. J. Swallow	Chester	15.11	91.1	100.1		99.9	97.8
16.	F. Dookey	Worcester	15.12	91.2	100.2		99.7	94.3
17.	T. Nowtree	Birmingham	15.20	92.0	101.1	(Med.)	DNF	84.3
18.	K. Jenkins	K.W.7	15.25	92.5	101.6		DNF	84.3
19.	D. Oloronshaw	Leamington	15.29	92.9	102.1		99.7	
20.	I. Penleton	Manchester	15.32	93.2	102.4		102.8	98.7
21.	F. Doddington	Leamington	15.32	93.2	102.4		102.2	99.6
22.	T. Smith	K.W.3	15.35	93.5	102.7		102.6	107.3
23.	R. Briggs	Leeds	15.46	94.6	104.0		99.4	99.4
24.	N. Leeming	Worcester	15.50	95.0	104.4		DNF	102.6
25.	D. Pawcett	Manchester	15.50	95.0	104.4		DNF	102.6
26.	D. Pawcett	Manchester	15.55	95.5	104.9		104.8	101.7
27.	T. Nelmes	Leamington	15.59	95.9	105.4		100.5	100.5
28.	P. Hewitt	R.N.K.A.	16.10	97.0	106.6		103.2	DNF
29.	Pauline Squires	Coventry	16.12	97.2	106.8		99.0	105.3
30.	K. Watts	Birmingham	16.46	100.6	110.5		DNF	DNF
31.	Carolyn Gosling	Birmingham	17.02	102.2	112.3		97.2	DNF
32.	J.R. Court	Newcastle	24.59	149.9	164.7		97.5	91.3
33.	R. Smith	Cambridge U	29.51	179.1	196.8		95.0	95.6
	M. Jackson	Manchester	Did not finish				99.0	96.7
	C. Hawkesworth	Leeds	Did not finish				100.4	98.7
	M. Grove	Chalfont	Did not finish				99.0	101.2
	J. MacLeod	Manchester	Average = 954				101.8	103.4
	K. Wickham	Sunderland	Modified average = 910				104.1	DNF
	C. Gregory	Royal					105.3	107.5
	B. Jupp	16 Para 6C					105.3	107.5
	F. Doncaster	Worcester					108.9	108.9
	S. Hatton	Manchester					117.6	134.5
	G. Goldsmith	Brighton						
	J. Sibley	Windsor						
	M. Fowell	Worcester						
	J. Fowler	Worcester						
	R. Goldsmith	Tri-Eton						
	M. Couch	Cambridge U						
	M. Hilliard	Chalfont						
	T. Eastwood	Leeds						
	S. Pamber	Windsor						
	C. Green	Leeds						
	J. Freeman	Chalfont						
	J. Freeman	Spider						
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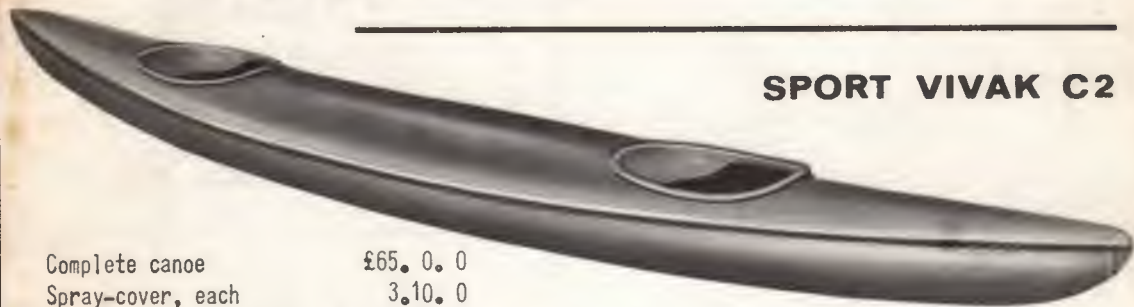
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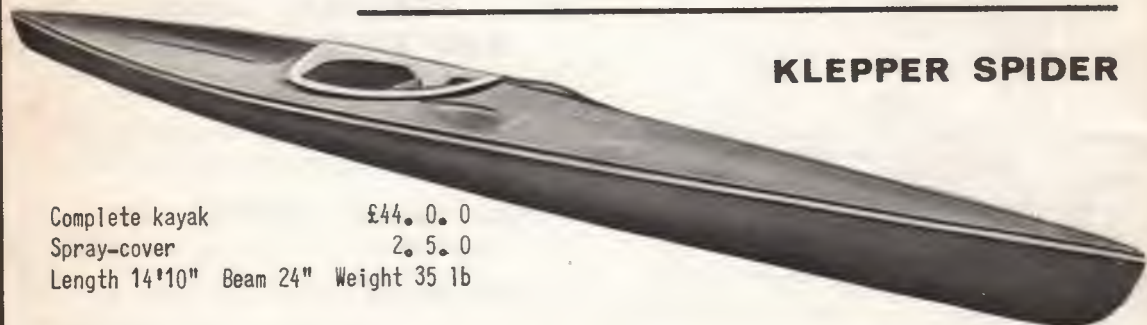
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