

Canoeing

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VOL 7 NUMBER 5 APRIL 1967



SPECIAL FEATURES

HISTORY OF THE D-W

"PAINTERS", ARE
THEY NECESSARY?

SEA HUNTER'S POINT
OF VIEW

CANOE ON THE RAI,
IN THE SCENIC RESERVE
(New Zealand)

(Photo) John Lawrence



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Journey's End

It is with considerable regret that your Editorial Board have to announce that with issue Number 8, Volume 7, to be published on 20th June, 1967, our magazine 'Canoeing' will cease publication.

After eighty issues published over six and a half years and at a time when our finances and circulation have never been healthier, this decision has not been lightly made but your present Editorial Board, and in particular the Editor and the Circulation Manager, have found it increasingly difficult over the past year to find the time necessary to publish a monthly magazine in their spare time. Indeed, over the last few months there have been occasions when we doubted whether the magazine would come out at all. This being so a decision had to be made; should we try to struggle on and accept the inevitable decline on the standards we had set ourselves, or should we cease publication whilst we were still proud of our magazine. We have chosen the latter, and so after three more issues 'Canoeing' in its present form will cease publication.

We say in its present form, for we nurture the hope that their may be somewhere another group of enthusiasts who will be prepared to carry on where we are leaving off. We feel that we have shown that there is a need for an independent monthly canoeing magazine and that this can be financially self-supporting if run on an amateur basis. It is for this reason that we have chosen to give three months notice in order that another group may be formed and thus benefit from our experience. We would stress, however, that because of the complexity of our financial affairs, any new group would have to be formed as a separate entity and our assistance would be confined to providing a mailing list and technical advice.

It is perhaps worth mentioning at this point that we feel that the strength and the weakness of 'Canoeing' has been the small size of the team who have worked on the magazine. It has been our strength because each person has had a clearly defined duty which the other members have left him or her to get on with, yet it has been our weakness in that when two of the key members feel that they can no longer spare the time to play their part to the best of their ability there is no natural successor to hand. Speaking for myself as Editor, I am sure that the original decision to run the magazine with a small team each member of which had absolute authority within his or her own section has contributed much to the success of the magazine, at the same time I realise that it has been this policy which now forces the closure of our magazine. Perhaps, our successors, if they exist, will choose differently, but whatever their decision we would recommend that the lines of communication between the members of the Editorial Board be kept as short as possible.

Now all that remains is to thank our readers and advertisers for their support and hope that they will continue this support for the final issues. Next month we shall be detailing our arrangements for the repayment of the balance of subscriptions outstanding. These final repayments may take some little time to process, but readers may be assured that all will be dealt with in due course.

Canoeing 'Down-Under' : New Zealand Part II

BY JOHN LAWRENCE

"Kepe? or Maui? Which was it who, first of heroes, came breasting in his canoe the surge of the deep Pacific, riding for many days the dark waves of the ocean - Te Moana nui a Kiwi, the great ocean of Kiwa - till on the horizon, beyond the thin veil of spray, as it drove before the wind, he saw faintly rising the line of Aotearoa, The Long White Cloud, which men today call New Zealand?"

Thus Maori lore has it; the discovery of this copious land by the voyagers of unknown origin, steering their canoes with a mixture of astonishing skill and courage. The Maori canoe is often forgotten in present day canoeing histories. Certainly if contemporary accounts are anything to go by, the Maori chieftain in his dugout, at the height of Maori seamanship, seems the perfect matching of element and man. More than one eighteenth century European explorer recorded his admiration for the pace and handling of Polynesian vessels, and the stamina, and knowledge of astral navigation which enabled them to travel such staggering distances, are legendary.

It is fair to say that New Zealand has a considerable tradition of canoeing. But the slim little yellow fibreglass kayaks that flick down the steep sided rivers are a far cry from the hundred foot outriggers full of barrel-chested, warlike Maoris.

The Cobham Outward Bound School, Anakiwa runs a fleet of thirty kayaks, of which seventeen are in use at any one time. Apart from my own sense of relief to be returning to fibreglass single seaters and white water, it was easy to see the great

advantages in this type of construction. Few instructors need convincing of the superiority of singles over doubles from a teaching point of view, and the school has found that the durability and ease of repair make the glass boats ideal for these conditions. As long as you have a fleet big enough to give you a float, as it were, or a reasonable running margin, you have time to do repairs without stopping training. Admittedly, it is difficult to do on-the-spot repairs in midstream, as you can with canvas, but things are organised so that all boats are only used on day trips, and a temporary moss or rag patch suffices, and the occupant gets a new boat for the next day. An electric sander, an ordinary fibre-glass repair kit, and a heat lamp to accelerate drying make an overnight repair routine. Since the courses here first started in 1962, only six canoes have been written off; there are several still in use that have been broken completely in half.

Basic instruction is carried out in four one-hour periods on Queen Charlotte Sound. There is a sheltered inlet with little tide or wind effect, which is ideal for introductory lessons on still water. The policy is not to tackle too much, since time is extremely limited; merely equip the students with the fundamentals to cope with the white water later. If some show particular aptitude, then they are encouraged, but as it is necessary to have the paddles tied on to the bow painter, to avoid much swimming after them in the rivers, strokes are correspondingly restricted. But concentration on one or two simple stand-by strokes ensure a safe and proficient standard in a very short time. Of course, this form of instruction is not suitable for any course necessarily, but works in this actual environment, and in the context of an Outward Bound course on which there are many other activities.

The nature of the expeditions are such that a lot is asked of the craft, and the paddlers too. The rivers we use most are the Pelorus, and the Rai, both about Grade II-III. When there is enough water, and the weather is fine, we look at each other, nod, and the season is ripe for the Wockamarina River. This river has great character: its linked rapids are a challenge, and we look forward to a trip down it very much, although some falls have to be bypassed with students.

A typical daily run is as follows. The truck and trailer, loaded with approximately equal numbers of Kiwis, twist and turn up the Mungatapu to where the Tinline joins the Pelorus. Here the boats are lowered down through the ferns, and made fast in the stream below the log bridge. All gear is checked, paddles tied onto the bowlines, then stern-painters are slipped, and the trip begins, down the Tinline to where it joins the Pelorus. From this point down, it is two hours exciting paddling to the Old Sawmill, where the lunch boxes were left. Sometimes we stop to examine and explain the rapids, sometimes its a follow-my-leader, bouncing through the haystacks, and turn upstream in the eddy to watch the others. If there are any canouts, they are swiftly helped ashore, emptied out, commiserated with, and helped back in.

As fall succeeds fall, we drop through miles of rock and gorse, and into the sub-tropical belt of rain forest which marks the Scenic Reserve. Amongst rimu pine and giant totara, the silver

sided fern grows up to a height of fifteen feet, spreading its graceful fronds overhead like plumes. Acres of beech forest clothe the hills; and if you pick a clear spur, and climb up through the rock and stumps, up on to the windy tussock grass, you can see over to the South, the snowcapped peaks of the Seaward Kaikouras, and the beginning of the great fault line running up to the ice of the Southern Alps.

At last, the final rapid under the bridge, marking the return to the main road again, and one more corner, to the landing, and the steep muddy pull up the bank to get the canoes into the paddock. All that remains is to have a bite to eat, then run the six miles back up to get the truck. Tomorrow is the Rai, with its five foot waterfall, and its notorious rock gardens.

There are two interesting sidelines to canoeing here. The first is game, the second - gold! New Zealanders ruefully charge the poms with all their wildlife problems. They avow that all their noxious animals were introduced, and they are right. Pigs, goats and deer, brought in by the early settlers, have roamed wild, and now threaten the bush in ever-increasing numbers, despite the national efforts to keep them down. This explains why New Zealand has such magnificent hunting. The government until a short while ago placed a tally on all noxious animals caught, since all of them, and the possum too, cause widespread erosion through ripping up all new growth. The school continues the government's practice, awarding a tally in kind for any such beast. Thus the sight of a pig or a goat up on the bank, from the water, is the signal for a dash ashore, and a mad scramble, generally resulting in several sweaty, disappointed faces, and one faintly amused animal, surveying the scene from two hundred feet up the spur.

Self on the Wockamarina

"No. 13" - well patched and very sturdy



Early one morning, I managed to join a pig-hunt that was in progress on the banks of the Pelorus. Dave Becher, one of the local farmers, was there with his dogs, waiting for the Ranger. We all set out at first light, to where they had heard pigs rooting from across the river. At a quiet signal, the dogs were slipped, and we sat to have a cigarette. Soon enough, the baying, punctuated by the odd squeal, told that the dogs had 'got 'im bailed up.' Five minutes hard traverse through the pungas, over and under fallen trees, and we got to where a boar was backed up against a small bank with the dogs around in a circle. With a word, they were in, and holding on to an ear or shoulder, stopping the pig from wielding his considerable tusks. Out knife, and Dave hovered above, waiting his chance, with an eye on the nearest tree in case the boar should decide to forfeit his bail. Suddenly, one quick step, a thrust, another, and it was all over. We dragged it back, and arrived at the camp covered in blood at breakfast time with a 140lb. pig. We canoed better that day, knowing a feed of wild pork was ours in the evening.

An alluring, equally prolific, so we are told, but infinitely harder to catch, is the gold that undoubtedly exists in them thar h. It exists, because we have seen it. Coming down the Wockamarina, you pass many scrubby little shacks, and if you look closely, you see the deep holes into the banks, crudely boarded up, or fenced round, which give away the old diggings. There is even an old school house. This used to be for the children of the prospectors, though there are now no houses within miles of it, and the sun shines through the roof. In the days of the rush to the Wockamarina and Deep Creek, everybody found gold, but despite desperate efforts to find a strike of some proportions, no-one found enough to warrant a living. Some stories persist that men took thousands of pounds worth out; some - generally just before closing time, aver it is still to be taken out.

One day, we rounded a bend, and saw ahead two men kneedeep in the current, searching. We all stopped, and pulled out, and trooped over to see what was happening. There they were, all set up, with their coursing, ripple board, and shovels, panning like old-timers. With gold still at twelve pounds an ounce, it's nice to give her a ring you've mined yourself, as it were. We watched, fascinated. It was possible to see, as the sand and pebbles washed down the ripple board, the 'colour', that is the tiny flecks, glinting in the sunlight, as they sank into the little traps. One of the men showed us an aspirin bottle he had in his pocket. In it, the dust, and wee nuggets completely covered the bottom to a depth of about a quarter of an inch, the product of three weekends of work, and not an inconsiderable amount. Not exactly a fortune to be made, but as we waded back over the river to our canoes, I don't think there was one of us who had not felt the insidious tickle of 'the Bug'.

History of the D-W

HISTORY OF THE RACE

The origin of the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race dates back to the railway strike of 1925 when a group of friends met in the Greyhound public house at Pewsey, Wiltshire. The conversation that evening happened to turn to discussing the possibility of reaching the coast from Pewsey travelling by boat alone, and before closing time four of the number had taken up the sporting challenge of proving their theory.

Later that year the four men set out from Pewsey and rowing an ordinary pleasure skiff, they followed the course of the River Avon to reach the coast of Christchurch.

Their journey remained largely un-noticed until 1947 when four spirited members of the R.A.F. happened to call in at the Greyhound and met up with some members of the original crew still patronising the same local. The idea of the skiff journey appealed to the airmen so much that they decided to try their hand at doing it in a shorter time.

They set out from Pewsey using a similar boat and following the same course to succeed in bettering the original time by a fair margin.

At this stage a gentleman in Pewsey put up a sum of money for any crew who could further improve on the time set up by the airmen.

Mr. O. Brown the Scout Master of the 1st Devizes Scout Group accepted this challenge on behalf of his Rover Crew, only to be told that the offer was only open to residents of Pewsey.

This came to the ears of several gentlemen in Devizes who promptly started a fund to raise a similar sum to offer the Rovers should they succeed in reaching the coast from Devizes via an entirely new route along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading and River Thames to Westminster in under 100 hours.

The Rovers naturally accepted and over the Easter of 1948 paddling very old double kayaks two crews covered the course with more than 10 hours to spare. The crews were Peter Brown and Larry Jones and Brian Walters and Brian Smith all aged 17 years.

The reward fund rapidly exceeded its original target to reach £80, sufficient to present the Group with a Canadian Canoe and a healthy balance for its maintenance.

Over the Whitson period of the same year two crews of the Chippenham Sea Cadet Unit took up a similar challenge and also using double kayaks and following the same course completed the journey in 76hrs.50mins.

The journeys made by the Scouts and Cadets had been well publicised in the National Press prompting a number of crews to start taking an active interest in the enterprize.

During the summer of 1948 a few of these crews attempted the journey but were all forced to retire by the summer growth of reeds in the canal.

Over the Easter period of 1949 something like 20 crews set out from Devizes all with the same object of bettering the Cadets' time by the greatest margin, they were surprised to find that there were others equally ill-advised to attempt such an enterprise.

There were of course no rules at this stage, only a broad stipulation by the scouts that crews should carry all their food and camping equipment for the journey from the start and receive no assistance en route.

Two crews of the Richmond Canoe Club put up the best time that year with 49hrs.32mins.

The surprisingly wide interest shown at this stage prompted Frank Luzmore and a few other members of the Richmond Canoe Club to form a committee with some of the other previous contestants with the object of organising an annual canoe race over the course.

The members of the original committee were:-

Albert D. Wiebel, donor of the winner's trophy, Frank Luzmore, Secretary; O.Brown, Devizes and Mid-Wiltshire Scouts; Lt.J.R.Smithson R.N.V.R.; Chippenham Sea Cadet Unit; Percy Blandford, Scouts; T.Armstrong, P.L.A. Staff Club; N.P. Davis, I.W.A.; Jack Frampton.

So Easter 1950 saw the first organised Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race.

Frank Luzmore served as secretary to the organising committee until his retirement from the committee in 1963, during which time his tireless efforts contributed in no small measure to the steady build up and the firm establishment of what is now one of the major canoeing events in the world.

The junior class of the race was introduced in 1953 and now attracts as many competitors as the senior class.

Throughout the years the improvement in the winning times has followed roughly the same pattern as the growth in the numbers competing each year. For instance while the annual entries for the senior section remained below 30 the 1951 record of 24hrs. stood unbroken until 1959 when the fiercer competition and the adoption of the K2 kayaks by the faster crews started a steady lowering of the record on almost each successive year.

Entries and times levelled out again in 1965 when the gruelling 125 miles were covered in the excellent record time of 20hrs.27mins. by T.Cook and M.Stimson of the 63 Company R.A.S.C. (parachute Brigade).

The record in the Junior section stands at 18 hrs.15mins. set up in 1961 by P.Lawler & R.Still of the Richmond and Royal Canoe Clubs.

"Painters", Are They Necessary?

BY GEOFF. BLACKFORD

In my work as a Canoeing Instructor dealing mainly with beginners who manage to fall out at quite regular intervals I am convinced of the necessity of painters.

The canoes we use are glass-fibre and have a bow painter going from the bow of the canoe around the cockpit and back to itself tying just in front of the cockpit with a quick release knot. The stern painter goes from the stern of the canoe around the cockpit tying just behind the cockpit again with a quick release knot. Both painters follow the centre line of the deck, and are tight until required to be released, this is done by pulling on the loose end.

The painters should be spliced onto the canoe as young people find endless uses for Nylon or Terylene rope, and then when you need the painter it is missing.

On many occasions I have rolled and so far with the painter fitted in this way I have not got the paddle caught.

A disadvantage is, unless the coaming has a large lip, the spray cover may not fit too well, although in my own canoe which has a large lipped coaming this is alright, and I have had no trouble.

In some cases it may be necessary for a swimmer to hold onto my canoe, for this reason I have fitted a plastic covered loop onto the bow and stern ends of my painters, this makes a more comfortable hold which does not cut into the hands. The loop wants to be fairly large (Fig. 5) it will not otherwise be effective.

1. Lay the rope back,
2. Starting the splice,
3. The first splice,
4. Fit the plastic tube,
5. And splice the other end of the loop into the painter,
do not allow the plastic tube to straighten out too much,
6. Fix the painter to the canoe with an eye-splice,
7. The completed article.





The Quick Release Knot

8. Pass the painter around the cockpit and back to itself passing under and then over,
9. Make a loop,
10. Transfer the loop on the loose end to the other side of the painter and tighten,
11. Pass the loose end over the tightened line, double and pass through its own loop,
12. Tighten up,
13. The knot should have a small loop and a slightly longer tail, and will remain tight until the loose end is pulled.

This is only one method that I have found satisfactory, there must be many others.

Staunton-on-Wye Youth Hostel

BY FRANK NOBLE

We are very pleased to be able to write to inform all those who have helped to promote the Petition against the Closure of Staunton Hostel of the favourable outcome of all the letters, protests and petitions which were sent.

These had already weakened the resolution of Midlands Y.H.A. before the hostel results for the year provided the final vindication for our 'campaign'. Instead of the prophesied continued loss the hostel showed a slight working profit on the year and recorded one of the largest percentage increases in usage in the whole region. We cannot claim this as a result of the 'campaign' - the main increase occurred before the closure was announced. The Regional Council accepted that this proved our point that the hostel was fundamentally a sound proposition and decided to reverse their decision and apply for a renewal of the lease. In consequence our motion at the A.G.M. was changed to one approving and confirming this decision and was passed without a dissentient voice, after the Petition with 700 signatures had been presented.

The A.G.M. also passed two other motions put forward by our group with little opposition; one urging Regional Council to take positive steps to negotiate arrangements with Education Authorities for their use of certain hostels outside the main holiday periods for educational excursions and field studies, and another urging exploration of the possibility of setting up a walking chain of hostels along the Offa's Dyke National Footpath route and taking full responsibility for the development of the stretch between the Wye and the Dee. With the acceptance of these two motions, and indications that members of the Regional Council are taking them seriously, the 'negative attitude' which we opposed seems to have been reversed and we can hope that Midland Region will become one of the more forward-looking parts of the Youth Hostels Association again.

We hope that all those who have helped to bring this about will feel as we do, that their efforts have been well worth while and will accept our thanks for their endeavours. We know that the Warden of Staunton would like to be associated with these thanks. Two successful week-end courses for teachers and youth leaders (one favourably reported in the 'Times Ed', 10th Feb.p.448) give hopes that Staunton will be able to play a pioneering part in both the 'field studies' usage and the development of the 'Offa's Dyke' route.

More than the survival of a single hostel was involved in this 'campaign' and we hope that the favourable outcome will not mean that we shall lose touch with those who have helped us, but that we shall all continue to work towards the best utilisation of the great educational and recreational potential of Herefordshire and the Marches of Wales.

(On behalf of the promoters of the Staunton Petition)

Seal Hunter's Point of View

BY CHRIS HARE

To begin with, let me add to Mrs. Totty's article printed in 'Canoeing'. The copy of a similar article received by 'Canoeing in Britain' has in the fourth paragraph, first sentence "... with no qualifying statement of any sort other than the usual disclaimer." This saves Mrs. Totty of being accused of a silly error.

'Canoeing in Britain' has, under the editorship of Jack Levison, a policy of printing any B.C.U. member's articles or comments. The only restriction is space. In my own opinion to print a further disclaimer than the one on the front page would be to pre-judge the issue and prejudice the reader, which cannot be in the best interests of the readership.

Now to seal hunting. We intend to hunt the grey seal for its meat and skin. Seal meat is palatable and what is wrong with a fur coat? There will be no indiscriminate killing for we have already agreed among ourselves that hunting will be confined to bull seals of under five years which it is thought will actually increase the colonies not decrease them! The heritage which Mrs. Totty is jealous to protect numbered some 36,000 grey seal cows and bulls in 1965, no count taken of pups. Hardly in danger of extinction, in fact present observations seem to show considerable growth.

In the latter half of 1966 I read Mrs. Hook's book and dismissed it as being a romantic account of her association with a seal, written with the well known romantic British public in mind. I suggest that accurate information will be found in the writings of R.M. Lockley or Grace Hickling, naturalists of repute and authorities on seals of Great Britain, who give factual details without sentimental overtones.

I agree that my first attempt at seal hunting was not perhaps as Mrs. Totty would have liked it, as in most truthful recordings of life it did not have the fictional happy ending that would make it acceptable to everybody's pallet. It is not usual to wound the seal, it is usually killed, as I recorded earlier in the article. I have had some constructive correspondence with John P. Kendall on the small bore of the rifle used and his suggestions are that the weapon used should be 12 or 16 bore using Special SG, SSG, or AAA ammunition. I think that for a learner this would be a good idea, then develop his skill to using a .22 then a harpoon alone.

Unskilled butchers we will still be in Mrs. Totty's imagination no matter what we say or do but anybody who hunts with us will have learned by my experience and consequently there will be no wounded seals escaping.

Finally I see seal hunting as another step in the direction of sea touring canoeists around the British Isles going out with the minimum of food and living off the sea. Big game hunting from a kayak in G.B. is a feasible and practical project, and the odds are not all one way when one considers the quarry will weigh between 6 and 8 hundredweight!

Letters

Dear Sir,

Seal Hunting in Britain

Kathleen Totty's letter causes me to write to you. In particular she writes that James Froude has said that "wild animals never kill for sport". In the book "Tarka the Otter", Henry Williamson (who is said to have revised this book in every detail at least seventeen times) writes under the page heading "Branton Pill". "A week before, Jarrk the seal had chased it over the bar, and as it turned past his head, he had taken a bite out of its belly". this about a half dead salmon that Tarka found.

Again, in the section "Junction Pool", he writes, about Tarka, "He shook the fish out of his mouth as soon as he had killed them, for now he was hunting for sport" and two pages further on, "When he had washed his face he went back into the pool, harrying the dace until many score of the silvery fishes floated away on their sides".

I do not know of my own knowledge that wild animals hunt for sport, but I am of the opinion that seal do rip the guts out of salmon, one bite only, and leave it at that. Sport? I do not know.

When in Rome - Chris Hare tried to kill a seal in Greenland. He should be condemned in that situation only as an inexperienced hunter. If he lived his life there he could possibly be very good. "Greenland" Vol.2 published 1928 by the Commission for the Direction of the Geological and Geographical Investigations in Greenland, states that for every 20 seals attacked by Greenland seal hunters, only one is taken.

Should Chris be subject to criticism in this country for relating his experiences and his ambitions with regard to seal hunting? Well he is already being criticised. I would ask critics to ask themselves, (1) When did I last eat meat? (2) When did I last wear leather shoes? (3) When did I last eat margarine? (4) When did I last buy my wife a sealskin coat?

Holier than thou?

I know why the Celts had a seal call. I know another! "Gissie, gissie, gissie, come and be killed!" - for the pigs.

Yours faithfully,
Alan W. Bye,
Albrighton

Dear Sir,

Unwanted canoes

I read with interest your editorial about what to do with unwanted G/F canoes. I know of several paddlers who have abandoned wrecked canoes in flooded rivers, and although they were not subsequently located by anybody, I imagine they are lurking at the bottom of weirs, etc. and will probably remain there for the rest of Eternity. I suggest that canoe clubs have a duty to keep their local rivers free from this kind of litter problem. They put a weekend aside and go out and collect all the battered G/F they can find, smash it up into little pieces and put it in a dustbin.

The problem then becomes one for the rubbish disposal boffins, who have a related problem in what to do with polythene containers, and other thermo-setting plastics which just become a gluey mess adhering to the insides of incinerators. I believe that biologists have come up with a virus, or a culture of some sort which feeds on plastics. You may laugh, but there is a story, not too well authenticated, about an Amazon expedition in plastic boats which began to leak because the rivers in that part of the world contain a micro-organism which regards polyester as a great delicacy.

The next stage is to build these destructive organisms into the plastic containers themselves, so that the plastic degrades after a pre-determined time, e.g. three years. If the Canoe Centre were run by General Motors I suspect they would have by now discovered how to make canoes obsolete.....

Yours faithfully,
Chris McAllister,
Leeds.

Waveology Part I

BY ALAN W. BYDE, SENIOR COACH, BRITISH CANOE UNION.

INTRODUCTION

The following work resulted from a talk at Crystal Palace on December 1966. Several people asked for a written follow-up, and this is it.

It is impossible to condense a study of wind and water into a few words, so this is merely a guide to further study. Certainly any sea canoeist will find conditions identified in here which he may already have met, and may in fact be familiar with. On one occasion early in my canoeing career I met a wave form, complicated by a refraction effect added to a reflection in the place at which I had launched. At the time of launching the water had an uneasy, slightly bumpy 'bobble' on it. Several minutes later the wave forms ceased to interfere, and began to superimpose one on the other, and holes appeared in the water, surrounded by moving heaps of water apparently moving at random. It frightened me. That was at the North end of the South beach at Newquay. Forewarning may have helped me.

BOOKS TO READ

- 'A Short Course in Elementary Meteorology.' W.H. Pick. HMSO.21/-
- 'Know How in the Surf.' John Bloomfield. Prentice Hall Int. 25/-
- 'This Surfing Life.' Midget Farrelly. Rigby, Adelaide. 25/-
- 'Surf and Sea.' John M. Kelly Jr., Barnes, NY. 42/-

These are books which I have read, and find useful, especially the latter in relation to beaches and sea waves. Oliver Cock, BCU National Coach recommends 'Beaches and Coasts,' CAM King, Edward Arnold, 63/-. This is a scientific study of British Beaches.

GENERAL THOUGHTS ON SLOPES

The slope of a hill may at once be seen and an estimate of its steepness made. This estimate is purely subjective, and relates to the state of health, the experience, etc, etc, of the person observing. A walker, a cyclist, a motorist will all make their own assessments.

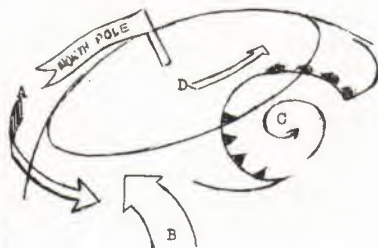
Slopes can be seen in water. These are much more transient and vary according to the cause. Consider the vast heap of water heaving around the world under the influence of moon and sun, that is the slope of the tide. Each wave has its own slope, some steep, some gentle. A tide with a very large change from high to low, as in spring tides, will produce maximum tidal flow in certain areas of shallow, or narrow waters.

The air has different components, some cool and dense, some warm and light. If the density differences are considerable, then the 'slope' of the frontier between the two is steep, and this results in high speed winds.

The man who received the black eye was as much to blame as the man who swung the fist which caused it. In other words, there can be no impact, or collision, unless the force and the object meet. Therefore, a high tide, or rather a spring tide encountered out in deep water far from land will cause no trouble to anyone. Under the Severn Bridge, the effects will be terrifying for the canoeist.

Therefore, the place, and the only place, where slopes in air, water, and land meet, is at the shore. Start thinking from there. Two influences may always be found in apposition, but three only at the shore. Steep slopes lead to troublesome conditions.

ORIGIN OF WEATHER. POLAR FRONT THEORY.



'A' is a stream of cold polar air circulating West to East around the North Pole.

'B' is a mass of warm oceanic air, laden with moisture. The two air masses interfere, and a vast horizontal 'wave' of air is set in motion.

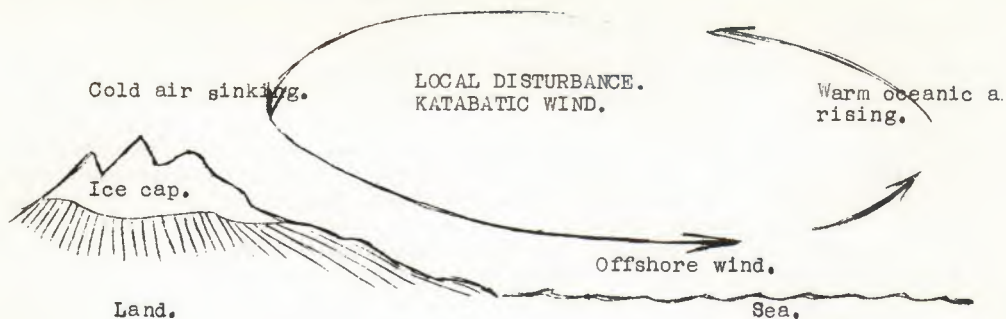
'C' is the resulting plan view of the cyclonic disturbance. At the leading warm air is moving into cold air, and this causes rain. The winds grow stronger. At the trailing edge there is a mass, or wave, of cold air moving into warm air, with rain, etc.

'D' shows the general direction of the cyclonic disturbance, West to East.

Warm front. This means that warm air is advancing, into less warm air. The different temperatures cause condensation of water vapour in the air, leading to rain and snow.

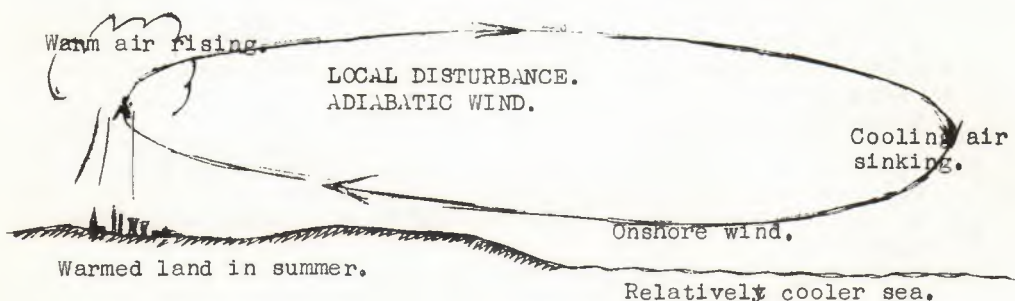
Cold Front. This means that cool air is moving into an area of warmer air. The effects are similar to those of the warm front.

These notes are a great simplification of the theory. If one understands the nature of cyclonic disturbances, then it is possible to predict forthcoming weather. This is a great help when going beyond the 'break line' of surf at sea. Incidentally, if one stands with back to wind, then the high pressure area is to the right.



This type of disturbance is unlikely to affect anyone in the British Isles, but it illustrates very well what happens off Greenland, for example. The cold, dense air over the ice cap sinks down, and flows toward area of less dense air, i.e. over the sea which is warmer than the land. Well, its not frozen, is it? The effect of gravity on the mass of cold, dense air, is to make it to move fast, and sharp local disturbances are felt. This means fast moving air, which means strong wind. Strong enough to blow a man off his feet, and capsize a kayak, or blow a boat out to sea, away from land.

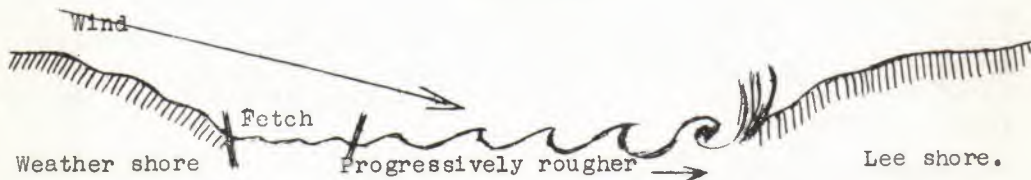
Such clear conditions are seldom met in the British Isles, but similar influences cause vicious squalls on the Lakes, for example, Ullswater should be treated with caution, as strong winds blow up in a matter of two minutes, or so, from a clear calm day. This is more properly to be attributed to turbulence caused by the nearness of the mountains, which affects the general air flow.



This condition is frequently met on calm, settled days in summer, when generally the air is still, and the sun shines from a clear sky. About midday, say early afternoon, local breezes, which may become quite strong, may be set off by the difference in air temperatures out over the sea, and inland.

The purpose of the two foregoing illustrations is to show how movements of air may be set off by differences in density of the various masses, and that these are caused by temperature differences. The main point is that apparently settled conditions, which may be forecast for the area generally, can be violently disturbed locally, and it is the howling blast which hits the kayak which causes the difficulties, not the force 8 storm blowing 800 miles away. Weather reports are very useful, but be aware of your locality, and how it may affect the weather locally.

LEE SHORE.



The wise thing to do is to ask the locals about local weather conditions. They may refer to some shore being a lee shore. That is the shore which will produce the dangerous conditions. Imagine that you are in a boat between the two land areas. The wind and weather will be coming from one side. The land to that side is the weather shore. On the other side is the land towards which the wind and weather is going, and that is the lee shore. Obviously the energy of the wind will pile up smashing waves onto the lee shore. The weather shore will be sheltered by the land. This area of shelter extends to some extent across the water. Some people call this 'fetch'.

Fetch is properly the distance from which the waves have come, or the distance from the source of the disturbance causing the waves to the place where the effects are being experienced.

Fetch, in the sense of wind shelter, is variable, from place to place and time to time. For example, a high cliff will give a wind shelter for a greater distance than a low sand hill. However, it is easy to drift around the side of a high headland, and go from the wind shelter into the gusting turbulent area at the side of the shelter. The edge of the cliff is like a weir in a river, and the wind pours around it, and stirs up the still air behind it. Just as turbulence around weirs is found below them, and not above. Fetch can be a great help, and comfort, or a great danger. It depends on how you use it.

(to be continued)

News Flashes

BAKER, THE INSURANCE

Rodney and Joan Baker have moved to 62 Rupert Road, Sheffield 7, Yorkshire. Joan, of course, handles all the B.C.U. Insurance enquiries.

EXPOSURE AND SURVIVAL

A symposium on accidental hypothermia in climbers, cavers, walkers and campers is being organised by the C.C.P.R. at Loughborough University of Technology on Sunday, 9th April. The topics given in the programme would seem to be very relevant to canoeists. Application forms can be obtained from The C.C.P.R., Bank Chambers, 125 St. Anns Well Road, Nottingham. Deadline for applications is 31st March, and please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

OPERATION OSPREY

Volunteer wardens and cooks are required to assist the RSPB in guarding the Ospreys at Loch Garten from April 1 to August 19; help is especially sought for the period April 15 to June 17. Up to 27 May, male wardens only, but male and female after that date. Write for full particulars to the RSPB Scottish Office, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

YOUTH GROUPS, AHoy!

Nigel Whitehead, 236 St. Margarets Road, Twickenham, and Secretary of the Twickenham Canoe Club tells us they have some spare boat house accommodation and would welcome enquiries particularly young people either as individuals or groups.

A picture showing the place of the World Slalom Championship 67
in L I P N O (photo: A. Kozelsky)



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