

CHAPTER EIGHT

Planning a Trip.

To summarise most of what I have written I shall arrange an imaginary trip across the English Channel.

First set a date. A lengthy trip such as crossing the Channel needs a three day weekend. A day to get there, a day to relax, and a day to return. Having set a date, inform fellow paddlers to ensure you can in fact raise a party. Remember there is safety in numbers. Ensure that each member of the party is able to undertake an extended trip; i.e. he is a strong experienced canoeist who preferably can roll his canoe first time.

Now a trip information sheet must be prepared. I have included one for a trip I have recently arranged. It shows what information is needed. It is self-explanatory, though I will say a little more about the course.

Chart No. 1892 of Dover Strait, Western Part, was obtained, together with a tidal stream atlas of the Dover Strait.

Having set a departure time from Dover, by using a Tide Table, the chart and tidal atlas, it is possible to work out in which direction and with what speed the tide is moving (i.e. the set and drift) for every hour you estimate being on the water. The distance involved is 18 nautical miles, and the estimated speed is 3 knots, the time on the water should be 6 hours.

Knowing what the tide is doing and knowing in what direction you want to be heading you lay off course as previously detailed under the chapter 'Navigation'.

A couple of days before the trip start to assemble all your gear. Your bedroom should look like a Chandlers Store. Refer to my chapter on 'Equipment'. Make out a check list and double check. I remember a trip to Lundy Isle when one fellow canoeist (who shall remain nameless) forgot tent poles, and we slept wrapped in a soggy tent !

The day before the trip check the weather. Note the Forecasts, and be sure as you can that the situation looks like remaining stable. Inform the Coastguard (Refer to chapter on 'Safety').

On the day of the trip be on time. If you have planned to leave by 10.30 a.m. then be ready to go by 10.00 hrs. to allow time for applying anti-sunburn cream, and for a final check of equipment.

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NO:

ENGLISH CHANNEL CROSSING 1974.

Dates: May 25th. 26th. and 27th, 1974

Object. To canoe from Dover to Wissant in France on Saturday 25th.
Spend Sunday 26th in France ; Visit Calais.
Return to Dover on the 27th. THERE WILL BE NO ESCORT
BOAT.

Campsite. Archers Court Site, Whitfield, Dover (there is a Youth Hostel
in Dover).

Starting Point. Dover Harbour.

Times. Meet at the campsite evening of 24th May or at Dover
Harbour 10.00 hrs. on the 25th.

Coastguard.

Coastguard Dover. Telephone: St. Margarets 2515
Coastguard, Shoreham Telephone: Shoreham 2226.

Weather. Met.Off. Thorny Island. Telephone 2355. Would all
members listen for the morning shipping forecast and
weather forecasts on the radio.

Distance involved. Approx. 25 miles each way.

Tides. High water spring at Dover 14.22 B.S.T. on the 25th May
16.11 B.S.T. on the 27th May

Equipment.

A good seaworthy boat plus tight fitting spray deck. If
using a slalom kayak have a skeg fitted.

Must have.

Emergency rations	:	Food
Clothing	:	Flares
Whistle	:	Compass
Sunglasses	:	Sun tan oil
Life Jacket	:	

Should have.

Wet Suit : Tape for repairs
Hat (Crash) : Passport
Fracs : Poly Bag
Spare paddles.

Luxury Items.

Camping equipment, tent etc. Toiletries. Thermos with hot drink. Camera.

General Information.

Crossing the Channel can be a piece of cake or extremely difficult.

Questions.

Are you fit ?

Ever sat a canoe for 8 hrs. ?

Can you roll - every time ?

If you can't answer 'yes' to each question, don't let it stop you, but remember the safety of the whole party could depend on you.

Course.	TIME	HRS.BEFORE/ AFTER HIGH WATER DOVER	SPEED AND DIRECTION OF TIDES.	MAG. COMPASS HEADING
	10.30	4 hrs. before	2.3kn. South	145°
	11.30	3 hrs. "	2.6kn. South	145°
Sat.	12.30	2 hrs. "	1.0kn. South	145°
25th	13.30	1 hr. "	1.0kn. North	145°
May	14.30	High water	3.00kn. North	145°
	15.30	1 hr. after	2.6kn. North	145°
	10.15	6 hrs before	2.0kn. South	12°
	11.15	5 hrs. "	3.3kn. South	12°
Mon.	12.15	4 hrs. "	3.5kn. South	12°
27th	13.15	3 hrs. "	2.1kn. South	12°
May	14.15	2 hrs. "	0.7kn. South	12°
	15.15	1 hr. "	0.9kn. North	12°