

Advanced Sea Kayak Club

AN INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING CLUB
OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THIS ASPECT OF CANOEING



AIMS

1. Promotion of sea canoeing
2. Communication
3. Organisation of events and conferences
4. Safety and coaching

NEWSLETTER



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SEPTEMBER 1980

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 21

John J. Ramwell.
Secretary A.S.K.C.
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Huntingdon,
Cams. PE18 ODG

FROM THE EDITOR

September, - 98 shopping days to Christmas!! Or so I heard on the radio yesterday as I have'nt had chance to check it out. Perhaps like me you are wondering what has happened to this year already. The lousy weather has done little to slow its progress. Our sea canoeing holiday in Scotland on the Kirkcudbright coast the week before last was rained on and rained on and rained on!! We managed our expedition along the coast for two days, camping overnight at the mouth of the Dee Estuary. In fact the weather held out for that and everyone enjoyed the trip...at least that's what they told me later. Several of us spent the final full day on the River Cree which had swollen by the rains giving grade 111 and 1V water. The high-light of the week was the Wednesday evening when over 200 of the local villagers joined us at Gatehouse school hall for films and slides presented first by the local Coastguard Officer and then by Paul Caffyn, the New Zealander who recently completed a circumnavigation of Great Britain with Nigel Dennis. Geoff Good asked me to submit a written interview with Paul Caffyn for inclusion in Canoe Focus. Having done so I have poached it for this newsletter, could'nt resist a 'scoop'. I must pass on our congratulations to Paul and Nigel on their recent marathon voyage. I hope to publish their report in the next Club Newsletter.

Most of you will remember my 'Sea Canoeing Symposiums' (Incidentely I still have reports of the last one available for sale at 75pence) These symposiums have now been taken on board by the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee and their first venture is to be over the week-end of the 5/6/7 December, 1980. I have enclosed details and I hope that you are all able to make this event....see you there!

And now for the big news. A.S.K.C. 'T' shirts and sweat shirts are now available. They come in three sizes, small, medium and large. They are yellow with the A.S.K.C. motif in black on the front. The cost of the T shirt is £2.80 and for the sweat shirt £5.30, both inclusive of postage and packing. Order yours now.

Dare I give a small 'plug' for my own book on sea canoeing, 'Sea Touring'. The fourth edition is just coming available. It has been enlarged and improved and now costs £3.30.

I have included a list of A.S.K.C. members with addresses. I have often been asked for this in order that members can contact one another, so here it is, I hope that you find it useful

Before closing this editorial, a short note about our contacts with H.M.Coastguards. I am hoping that the BCU Sea Touring Committee will organise an official Coastguard liason scheme, and so more of that later. What I am suggesting at this stage is a closer link between sea canoeists and officers of H.M.Coastguards. For example, if you live near the coast you can always offer your services as an auxilliary coastguard. When next you run a sea canoeing course why not invite the local coastguard officer to contribute, show a film or give a talk. I would be grateful for any information or feed-back on my suggestion. We now have some good friends and allies in the Coastguard Service, and we as canoeists on the sea are now a lot better understood.

And now for the 'body' of the Newsletter which is as good as you make it. Do please keep the contributions, no matter how small, coming in.

Till next time.

GOOD CANOEING.

John J. Ramwell

A.S.K.C. SHOP.

For sale

A.S.K.C. Ties @ £2.00 each inc. p&p.

A.S.K.C. stickers @ 30 pence inc. p&p.

A.S.K.C letter headed note paper @ 5p per sheet (orders in multiples of ten only)

Sea Canoeing Symposium reports, still a few left @ 75 pence inc. p&p.

A.S.K.C. T shirts, small, medium or large (state which when ordering) @ £2.80 inc p&p.

A.S.K.C. sweat shirts - ditto - @ £5.30 inc. p&p.

All available from me at the address as above.

BRITISH CANOE UNION SEA TOURING COMMITTEE

1980 SEA CANOEING EXHIBITION

December 5th. 6th. and 7th. 1980.

Calshot Activities Centre, Calshot Spit, Southampton.

A weekend of Sea Canoeing including an Exhibition of equipment and kayaks. Expeditions in the Solent, the A.G.M. of the Sea Touring Committee and opportunities to try out different sea kayaks.

Friday evening will be informal from 7.30 pm with talks/films.

Saturday is planned as the day for static exhibitions and demonstrations on the Spit with the A.G.M. at 7.30 pm in Lawrence House at the Centre.

Those wishing to undertake an expedition on the Sunday will have a 'warm-up' session on Saturday afternoon.

Sunday will include expedition/s at beginner or advanced level as appropriate.

Full accomodation is available by booking in advance with the Centre or self catering camping will be possible on the spit. Kayaks and equipment will be available to hire by booking in advance.

Calshot Activities Centre is ideally placed for this event, being located adjacent to Southampton Water and the Solent with potential for expeditions to the Isle of Wight.

Administration fee....Weekend £2.00

,,, Saturday £1.00

Application form for this weekend is at the foot of the page.

TELL ME

Tell me of reliability and trust that's spelt FRIENDSHIP.

Tell me of deep concern for your friends when you're one or two miles out and it's blowing more than you had thought it would and you're the one they are looking to!!

Tell me of phone calls from odd people at odd hours seeking re-assurance and advice that, "Good God, yes, this is a great trip," and, "Yes, things will go just fine."

Tell me of the hand on your arm and the quiet word that just maybe you should do your alternative, but if you go ahead and get stuck, just give me a phone call.

Tell me of the trips, some of which I've done, where the wave height gets bigger by the wine glass full!!

Tell me of bitterly cold winter days and long summer nights; tell me of the pub at the end of this trip, and the half a Mars bar and the "you finish the coffee - I've had enough."

Tell me of the quick glance between friends when the going is really tough that speaks volumes.

Tell me of all this and so much more, so very much more and I will tell you of

SEA CANOEING AND SEA CANOEISTS.

by Ken Snape.
NOMAD KAYAK CLUB, WATFORD.

*****Please tear off *****

B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee Sea Kayak Weekend 5th., 6th. and 7th. December, 1980

Application form for residential accomodation at Calshot or camping facilities or equipment hire.

Send to:- Calshot Activities Centre
Calshot Road,
Calshot, Southampton, SO4 1BR

Name.....

Address.....

Administration charge £2.00

Requirements (Please tick)

Weekends full accomodation (£13.00)

Camping pitch (£0.80)

Kayak and protective clothing & emergency equipment (£1.00)

Chris Childs from Brighton has submitted the following report.

BEACHY HEAD MEET

Organised on behalf of the Sea Touring Committee of the B.C.U and The Weald and Downland Canoeing Association by Nigel Foster & Chris Childs.

This was our first attempt at organising a sea meet and, as such, we had little idea beforehand how the weekend would go. By picking a weekend in 'Flaming June' we at least hoped that the fine weather would attract all the fair-weather paddlers. What we didn't realise of course was that the epithet 'Flaming' is used as a polite expletive to describe the appalling climatic conditions to be found in a British midsummer; rather than as any reference to glorious sunshine.

Despite the ominous weather forecast people began to assemble in Milton Street on Friday evening and to erect their tents in the back garden of the 'Sussex Ox'. Our intended camp site had fallen through (literally - into the mud - as it turned out) and we owed the new one to a piece of quick thinking and prompt action on Val's part. It certainly proved a very suitable site and the fact that you could almost fall out of your tent and into the pub contributed greatly to the social side of things and probably proved a big attraction for one or two people.

After making camp, people gradually filtered across to the 'Ox' and made or renewed acquaintances. Some new sea kayaking stories and plans were aired and a lot of old ones brought out again. The teachers amongst the group launched enthusiastically into celebrating the end of their term.

However, high spirits were dampened during the night by high winds and persistent rain. This didn't encourage anyone to surface early the next morning, but when people finally emerged from their tents it was to be greeted by an overcast sky, a strong blow and a continuing deluge. The weather report gave S.W 6-7 round most of the Sussex coast, together with 'large wavelets with crests breaking'. It quickly became apparent that our plans for a coastal trip around Beachy Head were a non-starter and our disappointment began to match the weather.

However, all was not lost. One of the advantages of such sea meets is the chance they provide to see and try out other peoples gear. The conditions provided an ideal opportunity for John and Jinny to try out their new Calshot staff expedition tent. This exhibits the unusual feature of combined sleeping and showering facilities which certainly impressed everyone.

It was decided to cut our losses and go surfing in the afternoon at around high tide, (4.00pm). Meanwhile people disappeared off to pick up some boats from Newhaven and to go back and look at/take pictures of the sea. The remainder retired to the pub and from there the Wendy House in the children's playground in the garden. The latter building had two floors and was very soundly constructed. It proved a very popular meeting place and coffee club during the inclement conditions. The only problem was in constantly having to turn away parties of disappointed and aggrieved children!

After lunch we drove over to Camber with the mini-bus and trailer. Although it was a return journey of 90 miles it proved to be worthwhile as there were some large waves rolling onto the beach. Ten hardy souls spent up to 2½ hours battling through the surf and back again, although at times the wind and waves were so strong it was as much as paddlers in slalom boats and surf shoes could do to maintain station whilst paddling for all their worth.

A couple of people had just purchased waterproof cameras which gave birth to a new sport. This involved wading out into the 'soup' up to one's neck to take 'action' photos. The catch lay in the fact that the wave that provided the perfect loop for the album also tended to catch the photographer round the ear simultaneously. No doubt some interesting pictures resulted.

The drive back to the 'Ox' involved a quick detour round Hastings Carnival and we returned to find several new arrivals plus a number of 'visitors'. A quick meal and we were firmly ensconced in the pub once more. With more stories to tell and plans to make. When people eventually retired to their tents and/or Wendy house the weather had improved somewhat and it looked like we might be in for a fine night. In fact, Sunday morning started off fairly bright but it soon clouded over and the showers set in. However, from Cuckmere Haven via Beachy Head to Eastbourne was undertaken in view of the abating winds

Thirteen people set off along the oxbows of the Seven Sisters Country Park and joined five others at the mouth of the Cuckmere River. Unfortunately two people were forced to retire fairly quickly. One of them found that the boat she had borrowed leaked seriously

and the other one's Nordkapp had an argument in the surf with an Anus Acuta and came off worst.

The group paddled on past the Seven Sisters to Beachy Head and, although the winds were generally light s.w., they encountered some extremely strong headwinds under the cliff and heavy rain. It was at about this point that two french youngsters were noticed trying to climb down the chalk cliffs. They were obviously in trouble but no-one could see them from above and so it was up to the gallant party of canoeists to perform the rescue. A couple of people went across to knock on the door of Beachy Head Light House to raise the alarm, and Drew scaled the cliff to mark the spot above the youngsters. Meanwhile half the group were developing frostbite on the beach and so decided to paddle on. The rest stayed on the beach (and when that disappeared, moved onto the sea.) beneath the cliff until the rescue team had winched up the first disallusioned decender.

It proved to be a trip full of incident and in view of the poor weather, one which many of the group found quite demanding. Afterwards, all that remained was to ferry people back to the camp site in the minibus; pack up the tents; say our goodbyes and make our way home.

Despite the atrocious weather the weekend was successful. People did get on the water both days and there was quite a variety of boats on display including the Vynecks, Anas Acuta, Nordkapps, Umnaks, a Voyager, a Seafarer, an Esky and an Aleut.

The meet proved to be a highly sociable occasion and we were extremely pleased by the turnout (about 30 people including non-paddlers and pub-paddlers!). The minibus and trailer, plus the availability of some link drivers proved a great asset but the beauty of the weekend was that it was so simple to organise. All we had to do virtually was to arrange a camp site, supply some local knowledge and transport and invite people to come. It was also cheap, costing individuals at the most £1.50 for camping and transport.

We have learnt a lot from our first meet and have several improvements in mind for the future. The fact that we are encouraged to hold future meets in the area is due entirely to the tremendous support that we received over the weekend. The success of such events depends entirely on the support that they receive; and we would like to thank everyone most sincerely for coming along, braving the elements and contributing towards an enjoyable and successful weekend.

Chris Child. July, 1980

Lindsay Fairweather of GILLERCOMBE, KIRKHEAD ROAD, KENT'S BANK, GRANGE OVER SANDS, CUMBRIA has asked me to promote the Cumbria Coaching Panel sea canoeing programme for 1980/81. This I do with pleasure and here is their notice. Dounds a great idea, give it a try. We could do with more of this sort of thing

SEA CANOEING 1980/81

The Cumbria Canoe Coaching Panel are putting on a Sea Canoeing weekend for:-

- a) anyone with Sea Proficiency wishing to log experience.
- b) anyone up to Sea Proficiency standard wishing to log more experience
- c) anyone above this standard who would like to take advantage of a group paddle in a new area.

If the event is well subscribed and the demand is there, a series of events could be laid on during the rest of the year and during 1981.

For this first weekend the following information may be of interest:-

Area...South Lakeland.

Venue...Dowdales School, Dalton-in-Furness

Dates..Friday pm. 24th. October to Sunday pm. 26th. October

Accommodation...Camping/self catering

Possible trips...1/ Walney Island 2/ Duddon-Ulverston-Kent Estuaries (will paddle somewhere regardless of weather conditions)

Sat pm. Using a lecture room on site, an informal evening involving slides, interchange of ideas on gear, planning, details for next meet, handouts, chat on local conditions

Staff...although this is primarily a 'get-together', 2 or 3 local S.I.s will be involved

Cost....to cover publication/hire of school site and lecture room/travel expenses...£3.50.

Directions...From Levens Bridge traffic lights take A590 for Barrow. Pass thru Newby Bridge, Greenodd, Ulverston and on to Dalton-in-Furness

If you would like to take part please return the slip with fee (payable to C.C.C.P) a.s.a

-*****please tear off *****

Name..... Address.....

Three Point Bearing

A single position line does not give a good indication of the canoe's position and we need a second position line taken from a different object which can be used to intersect, - preferably at 90 degrees. It is even better if we are able to find two further bearings because they will confirm the canoe's position beyond doubt and she will obviously lie at the point where the three position lines meet! This is known as a 'three point bearing' but is more commonly called a 'cocked hat'. It is so called because in practice the three lines rarely meet in a neat intersection but more often describe a large triangle looking similar to a cocked hat. Naturally it suggests an error which may not be very serious if the triangle is small - say a quarter mile wide - but in extreme cases can be a matter for concern, and not least because of the bewildering uncertainty it creates. A good DR is more reassuring than a large cocked hat!

The most likely chance of error lies in the operation of the hand bearing compass. The card is small and frequently gyrates and the compass can be difficult to hold steady and sight with properly, especially against the canoe's movement. Most navigators meet the problem by taking three bearings in quick succession and from these he takes an average or mean - unless of course he has a preference for one or the other.

The second most likely error is compass deviation. The compass may have disturbing influences. The navigator himself for example; his digital watch, his knife, his steel-rimmed glasses, his hearing aid. A hand-bearing compass is very difficult to check for deviation and one must usually resort to trial and error.

If the cocked hat is very large, try first adding and then subtracting 5 degrees to each bearing and replotting the three position lines. If the first or second exercise improves accuracy then you have a good hint as to what the deviation might be on that particular heading. With a little patience and time you could build up a reasonable deviation card for the hand-bearing compass.

However, if this hasn't improved things and a large cocked hat persists, then, assuming your plotting is accurate, it must be the selection of objects which lies at fault. The first and last of the three bearings should intersect ideally at an angle of 90 degrees, although a larger cut is permissible. Trouble often comes when a boat is paddling close to a long straight stretch of coast and takes bearings from fine on the bow to broad on the quarter. In other words, when the position lines are drawn on the chart they appear as a dog-leg rather than a neat right angle cut. The same thing can happen between two points of land; objects are chosen on either side which, when drawn, lie practically in line with each other. It is impossible to get accurate results with angles so abnormally wide.

Selected objects should naturally be distinct and correctly identified on the chart, wrong identification is a common error. Second-rate features can be used - objects such as buoys, hill peaks, or the end of the land - so long as it is remembered that they are second rate and no great emphasis is placed on their accuracy.

Speed in taking the bearings contributes to accuracy just as hesitation increases error. A navigator who dithers may well find his canoe has travelled half a mile between the time taking his first and last bearing. To minimise the 'passage effect' it is a good idea to take the bow and quarter bearings first and leave the beam until last. As the canoe moves past it is the beam bearing which changes most rapidly, hence the need for immediacy. If the cocked hat refuses to shrink despite all your efforts then you have no alternative but to accept it. However, be circumspect and rather than assume the canoe is safely in the middle, place her on that edge of the triangle which lies closest to danger - be it land, offshore bank or whatever. In other words assume the worst and be ready to act accordingly. Incidentally, position fixes are always marked with a point ringed by a circle.

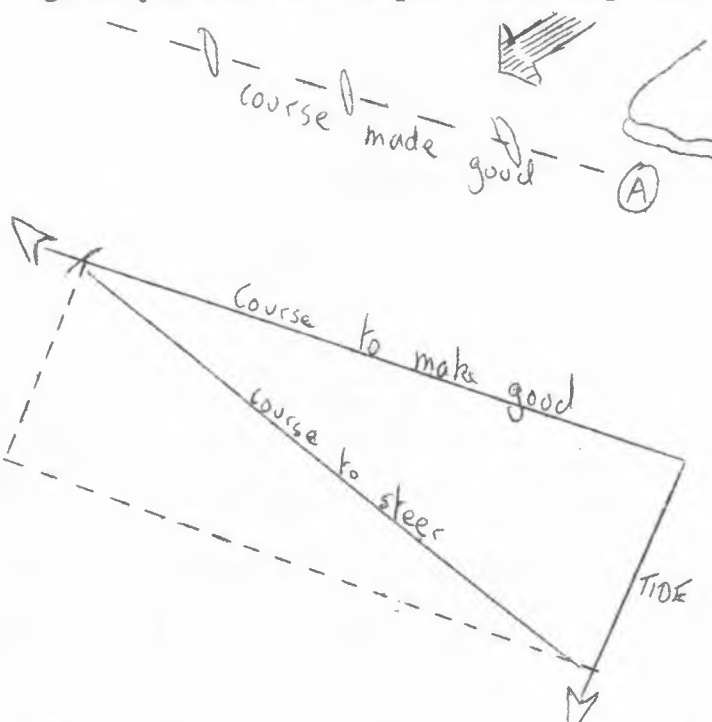
Running Fixes

There is a tendency for some navigation students to 'compartmentalize' the examples they learn and perhaps not appreciate that a single compass bearing can be used in conjunction with many other kinds of observations. It is perfectly sound practice to 'cross' a compass bearing with a radio bearing, a good depth sounding, a vertical sextant angle, extreme range calculation and, of course, transit bearings especially. On the other hand it can happen that a single compass bearing is ALL you can get and there is absolutely nothing else visible or audible. All is not lost because you may still be able to fix the canoe's position with a single bearing, albeit with a little precision. The method is called the 'running fix' or transferred position line. We have seen that a single compass bearing results in a position line upon which the canoe must lie; she may be close inshore, or she may well be out to sea but she is still somewhere on that line. Now if with parallel rules you redraw, or transfer, that line a mile further on, her position relative to the original line has remained unchanged. If her course is the same she cannot be any further out or closer in than she was before; the only difference is that she has travelled a mile further along. She is still on the same position line even though it has been transferred. This is the principle of the running fix. You can take a single bearing, paddle on for a couple of miles, transfer that bearing along the chart by an equivalent amount and then take a second bearing of the object. The second bearing gives you a new position line

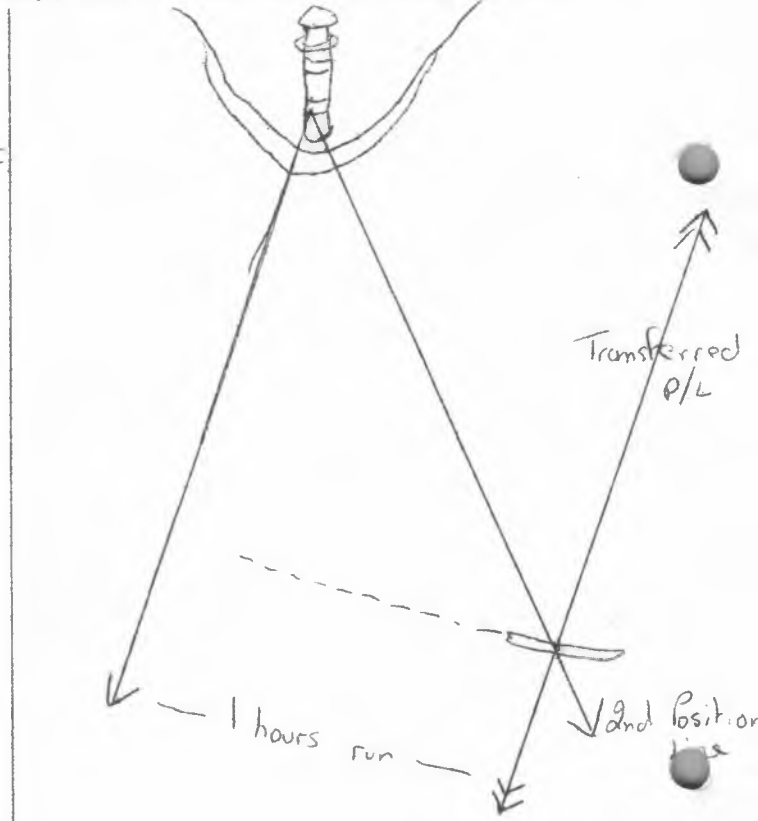
NAVIGATION (CONTINUED)

TO intersect the up-dated original. The accuracy of the running fix depends on a steady course and also knowing the the distance you have covered between the first and second bearing. It means knowing your speed and making allowance for tide.

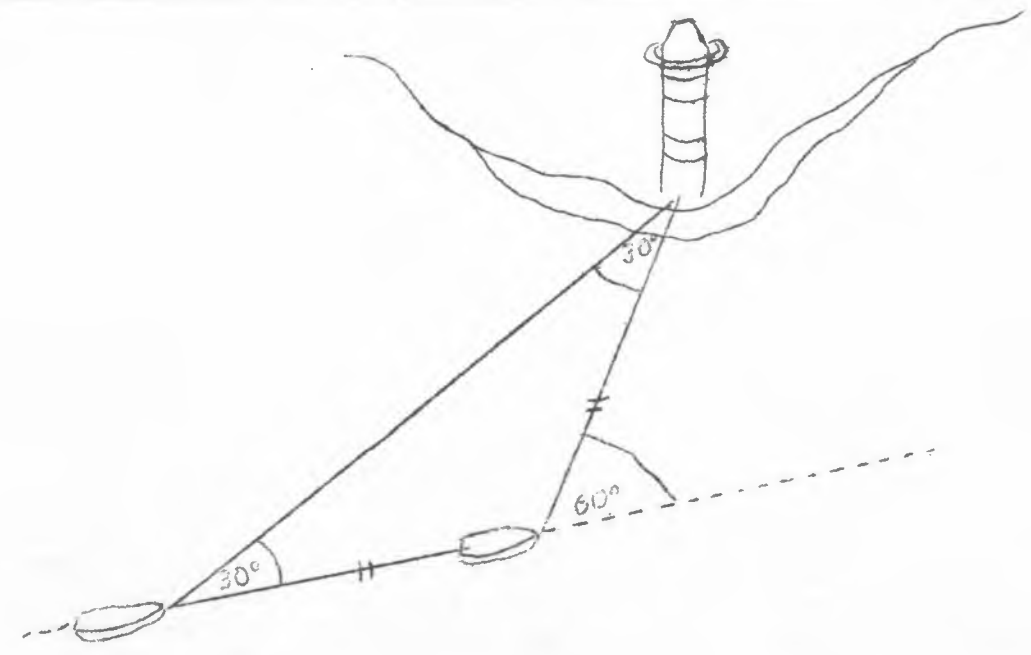
But let's round off the exercises with something very simple, the yachtsmans old favourite, 'Doubling the angle on the bow' This is similar to the running fix in that you find the canoe's position by taking two bearings of the same object. Although again it depends on an accurately known course and distance. The principle is that of the isosceles triangle which has base angles the same and upper sides equal in length. The system is to take a bearing of an object you are approaching while it is at a fairly shallow angle on the bow - somewhere between 20 and 45 degrees. The time and distance are recorded. Now watch the angle broaden and when it is exactly DOUBLE the value of the first angle take the time and distance again. The distance you have covered between the first and second bearing is equal to the distance you are from the object! So the distance, together with the bearing, gives you the canoe's position. Rough and ready, but better than nothing at all.



To find a course to steer to counteract a current a 'parallelogram of forces' is constructed. (In practice abbreviated into a triangle)



The running fix - see text



Doubling the angle on the bow

To be continued

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL CAFFYN

J.R. Paul, What brought you into canoeing in the first place?

P.C. Oh! I've been in it since I was about knee high to a grasshopper. Whilst on the Gold on South Queensland, I was only about 3 or 4 then, and I used to go by this little canoe hire place, I used to go out for a bit of a paddle, it only cost 6 pence then. And then when I was big enough to wield a paddle I bought a 17ft. Peterborough Canadian, and then paddled that for about ten years, and then started getting into kayaks, and I've never really been away from the sea or the white water.

J.R. Can you tell us something about canoeing in New Zealand, like how does it differ from canoeing as you've seen it in this Country?

P.C. The sea canoeing is not nearly so strong as in this Country. There is probably ten Nordkapps or so in the South Island, and 2 or 3 people seriously sea canoeing.

J.R. What about inland canoeing?

P.C. Slalom canoeing is very strong, and the water that's there is fantastic. There is some incredible water.

J.R. Is there water there all the year round?

P.C. Oh yes, and depending on where the rain is, you can vary from place to place, you can just pick your place depending on how much water you want.

J.R. You've seen the water that's going through our rivers here in Scotland now after some fairly heavy rain. How do they compare with the rivers in New Zealand?

P.C. Well, they're much bigger.

J.R. How do you grade? Do you grade from 0 to 6?

P.C. Yes, we still have one stretch of river that has'nt been done. It goes through a gorge, it's tigerous, with very big stoppers.

J.R. Are there white water races and other events organised?

P.C. There are a few slaloms in North and South Island, but there is no serious down water racing, I think partly because there is so much white water to play around in. There is no need to go racing because there is so much pleasure to be derived from just playing in the white water.

J.R. Are there slaloms organised on a similar basis to ours, with divisions, etc.?

P.C. Yes, very much the same.

J.R. Who is the 'ace' back home currently?

P.C. Oh! I'm not sure. I've never been through a slalom gate in my life. I'm not at all competitive, which is why I like sea canoeing, it's just you and the elements.

J.R. What about the organisation of canoeing in New Zealand, I mean we've got the B.C.U. over here, how does it compare?

P.C. Well, we've got the New Zealand Canoeing Association, the N.Z.C.A., which is roughly the equivalent. Graham Eggar edits the very nice little magazine which comes out quarterly. It carries the slalom results and trips, etc.

J.R. What about a coaching scheme, is there an organised coaching scheme?

P.C. Not to the extent you have over here.

J.R. What about schools and youth groups, how do they get involved?

P.C. Well, through the Canoe Clubs. The Clubs run training programmes. At places like Nelson they have a boat show with canoe demonstrations in the pool, with rolling competitions. It's all done through the Clubs. There is no coaching scheme as such.

J.R. Do you see the need for one or are you coping well enough through the clubs?

P.C. Yes, it works well as it is. Maybe in years to come as the population increases. I mean your system works well and has a lot of merit. I think it is a good idea.

J.R. What about yourself. You were describing your life style to me last night. You said you are a geologist. Can you say something about what you do in New Zealand?

P.C. Sure, with the upsurge in the price of gold I've gone back to my old trade of looking for gold and staking out claims and evaluating claims for people. That's what I do when there has been this sort of work available on the coast. In the summers I teach climbing with Outdoor Recreation at Wanaka (S.I.). We run courses for 7 or 8 days when we take Aussies and Canadians into the hill and teach them how to survive in the snow and ice. On the days inbetween courses I take people canoeing on the Clutha River; and I'm getting a little bit of income from my South Island Book, and I play in a band and I get a little bit of income from that too. Hopefully my North Island book will be out this year and then I'll settle down and write about my recent trip with Nigel Dennis canoeing round Great Britain.

J.R. Tell me about this book, How are you going to tackle it?

P.C. Because there is so much history involved and so many threads, like ship-wrecks and light-houses that come into the story I really cannot write it in diary form. The patches where little happened will have to come together fairly tightly. The exciting bits like Cape Wrath and the Pentland Firth will be in diary form and there will be plenty of photographs and colour plates, perhaps a photo per page, with maps and line drawings.

J.R. Well, right! Now you're telling me you are on your way back to New Zealand in a few days time. What plans for the future?

2. P.C. Yes, I've totted up the miles..

P.C. Yes, I've totted up the miles around Australia and I think they add up to 8,000 miles which I think is too much! I think that the Great Australian Bight would be the crux of this trip. This is 7 or 800 miles of cliff with no escape routes. The East coast and the West Coast are both fantastic and well worth paddling along, but I think 8,000 miles is a bit long, don't you? New Guinea, - well I've thought of that but I haven't totted up the miles. This leaves Tasmania. I'd love to have a crack at rounding Tassie. I was all set to have a go when Earle Bloomfield and John Brewster got there before me.

J.R. Yes, I heard about that.

P.C. So I'm going to have a crack at it solo now. I think it would be worth while. The scenery is beautiful.

J.R. So you're leaving us now. Any plans for coming back?

P.C. Not really. I'm a bit home sick right now.

J.R. Do you have any comments on the comparison between canoeing, the canoeists and the gear you've seen here and that back home?

P.C. Condition. If I can compare conditions. There is a lot more to offer when coastal cruising round Gt. Britain than there is round New Zealand. There are so many interesting open sea crossings here when you're out of sight of land for 3 or 4 hours needing so much more reliance on the compass and on navigation. Like the Thames Estuary was a 29 miler. The Solway Firth and the First of Forth, they're all about 26 miles. And the Bristol Channel. You've got that patch in the middle when you're out of sight of land, mainly because you have a haze here which limits visibility. We only really got good swell once, and that was on the north coast of Scotland for two days, but swell is always present on the west coast of New Zealand. You really are lucky to find a day when there isn't a heavy swell running. This meant we had no wild surf landings which was the rule along the west coast of New Zealand, and so I found I had't the mental strain with this trip, worrying about surf landings.

J.R. Canoeing the Cook Straits and other long open sea crossings, you have mainly done solo

P.C. Well, yes, though Cook Strait only took me 3 hours. I was keyed up, but there are very strong tides, up to 11 knots, and there is always a good roll, and the weather changes so rapidly. The Tamaki Straits (N.I.) are even worse as the seas are shallower and the weather whips them up quickly. Max and I did this trip in August which is a late winter one. When we started off there was frost on the canoes and the decks were white, - but fortunatley we had a good day and we sprinted across.

J.R. How does our climate differ from yours?

P.C. Very much on a par. I expected it to be much colder, especially round Scotland way. I get trouble with my fingers in the cold, but I had no worries.

J.R. Can you say something about solo paddling. You do a fair amount of solo paddling.

P.C. I prefer paddling on my own. I get a greater satisfaction from paddling on my own particularly after my last trip. If there are two of you and things go wrong, you can blame the other person, but if you're on your own the only person you can blame is yourself; and I find that once I get in tune with the sea my instincts about weather changes and tidal drift work out well. I mean Max and I used to know what the other was thinking without discussion.

J.R. What about loneliness. Does it ever effect you?

P.C. Oh no! Not really. I revel in being on my own.

J.R. Do you think that it takes a particular sort of personality?

P.C. Yes, I think so. It's pretty fortunate in a way or the sea might get rather crowded with solo paddlers, and then we wouldn't be solo paddling any more! I was talking to you earlier about the coastguards. There seems to be an over awareness of safety here. When solo paddling I like to be completely self contained so that if I get into trouble I can get myself out of it, in New Zealand I don't carry flares or radio. I have a life-jacket and I am confident I can roll and even enter the canoe when I get flushed out which I have had to do on several occasions. The fishermen in New Zealand would say, "You are going off on the sea and as soon as you get into trouble you'll expect us to come out and get you". And that is not what I wanted and so I stopped carrying flares. I was determined that if I got into trouble I was going to get myself out of it.

J.R. Yes, we make an issue of safety here. Well of course we have such a good back up system here with the coastguards, I guess we would be silly not to make use of it. There are possibly two ways of looking at it. You can be out with friends when responsibility is limited. On the other hand you can be out with a group you are coaching when you have every responsibility to take every proper precaution.

P.C. Well, yes. I agree entirely.

J.R. We have a maxim, 'what are you going to say to an enquiry if things do go wrong and you haven't covered all the safety angles.

P.C. Sure, I totally agree with that. When I'm out coaching I carry every safety aid like flares and radio. Though there is a problem in New Zealand. If you did fire off a flare there would be no-one around to see it, and I doubt the radio would be very effective for the same reason.

J.R. Yes, even in our over-crowded waters, flares are often of little use.

P.C. One other thing that's different here from New Zealand is the danger areas you have around your coast line. Some days we would go through sometimes two firing ranges. Initially we would try to work in with ranges by telephoning or radioing in first. Some of them are open 8.00am to 10.30 pm and if you have a good tide and wind and want to go through we expected to be told we could not go through, but in fact we were told that as 'bone-fide' travellers we had a right of passage and they could'nt stop us, and so in the end with some of the areas we would paddle on to the range, they would spot us, stop firing, lowering their flags and we would shoot through. Off Tynemouth the lookout must have fallen asleep and it was the closest show we had. You could hear the 6.2. mm, it was like a helicopter flying overhead, and the bullets would ricochet off the rocks into the sea.

J.R. This doesn't sound like a good idea!

P.C. No, but if we wanted to finish the trip.....! And Luce Bay, just round the corner from here, the Coastguard phoned and warned the firers but as we paddled by one of their island targets we realised they were still firing at it...and these are not marked on the charts, they keep them too secret. To me this is a restriction on canoeing. Fortunately we don't have this problem in New Zealand.

J.R. Yes, we're a very over crowded island.

P.C. Indeed. We saw so much evidence of litter round the coast. Plastic must be one of the worst pollutants there is. The sewerage being discharged from the out falls was bad. Even Blackpool, which I understand is a major holiday resort, and Margate and Aberdeen was effected.

J.R. How did you find the wild-life ?

P.C. The bird life is fantastic, colonies of Gullimots and Razor Bills. What amused us was seeing the Gullies and the Gannets teeming and wheeling around Ailsa Craig in their thousands. It was sights like this that really made this trip worth while. We saw porpoises and dolphin off the North Coast.

J.R. Did you stop off at the Farne Islands?

P.C. No, we shot straight past. Tides are stronger here than in New Zealand. You have a bigger tidal range and tides move more. At Cape Wrath there were two nasty tide rips mixed with a big swell and this was pretty lumpy. Pentland Firth was pretty straight forward. We waited at Donats Head for the ebb tide race to ease and we raced through despite the fact we had been warned about this area. Fortunately we struck it lucky as there was a calm sea and no wind. There was no nasty bits along the East Coast, though the weather was very changeable. We had storms and lightening, everything but locusts and pestilence! We had a good day to go round Lands End, though I found the tides quite fast at the approaches to the Bristol Channel. Trevors Point was nasty. Jack Sound we went through on the last of the tide. The Coastguards were very good for the forecasts, but most of the time they were most interested in where we were and where we were going. All in all they were very good, though they did warn us not to go out when in fact we could have done so.

J.R. Yes, we are getting the Coastguards to accept us. We have some very good friends and allies in the Service and more often than not we do get their understanding.

Well, thanks a lot for talking to us Paul. It has been interesting. On behalf of sea canoeists here let me wish you a safe journey home, and of course we look forward to keeping in touch and hearing more about you and what goes on in New Zealand.

THE END

CORRESPONDENCE.

From Ron Denton

Dear John,

I have made the tow-line as described in the April Newsletter.."A Towline System" We have tested on several occasions at sea and came to the following conclusions

FOR 1/ Worked very well; much more comfortable than body as a towing bollard.
2/ With towing line under boat did not interfere with deck equipment (already stated in the article)

3/ Did not interfere with skeg on one canoe so equiped, but it might possibly catch and flip it out.

AGAINST 1/ Slow to assemble especially because of any or all of the following reasons:

- a) tiredness
- b) Pin locking device
- c) Need on some occasions for towing canoeist to assemble by passing part of towing eye under the canoe

MODIFICATIONS

I am replacing pin and nylon ring by another stainless stell snaplink - the best is the simplest WITHOUT any seperate small springs

.....Example.....

Example.



I may also put a small float on it also at the towed end. The snaplink will engage with soft rope eye

RADIOS

I am gradually moving back into amateur radio. I ran a small signals unit in the R.A.F. in Aden during National Service days. I have had a look at available equipment at R.S.G.B show at Alexander Palace earlier this year - all unsuitable as not waterproof. The "International" range of marine radios made in the U.K. are good but bulky. The alternatives are distress only "MAYDAY" and "CALLBUOY" radios which would be useless because of shielding in some coastal conditions (cliffs) and would not give boat to boat, boat to shore operation. On EHF "LOCAT"- these seem to be selling well to yacht owners although in my estimation, greater knowledge and practical commonsense would be of more use - in other words, good planning and listening to shipping forecasts rather than relying on a mass of safety gear and the life-boat service. We may see a big price drop if C.B. comes in. British made marine radios have come down in price because of competition from abroad. The marine environment is about the worst you can subject most things to - let alone electronic equipment.

CANOES

Because of the high cost, except for canoes built at the local outdoor pursuits centre in G.R.P., I am thinking of building in plywood either an early AVONCRAFT, Cold moulding with internal G.R.P. reinforcement to hull or sheats sewn and taped i.e. MIRROR dinghy and Granta Boats. I have seen some examples of self build, self design - not impressed!! I have built a variety of boats/canoes in wood and G.R.P. - all I lack is a good design which I will work on this winter. Looking forward to the next letter.

Regards
Ron Denton.

From Fred Potter, Brentwood Bay, British Columbia, Canada.

Dear John Ramwell,

Hello from Vancouver Island. I was happy to find the notice of the A.S.K.C. in the March 80 edition of the Canoeing Mag. and I look forward to being a member. The area that I live in is a few miles from Victoria which is on the south end of Vancouver Isle. The coast of British Columbia is a sea kayakists paradise, and can be done year round, with exposed or sheltered water. Sea kayaking here has been slow to develop, as to canoeing as we know it, but since the promotion of kayaks such as Nordkapp, Baidarka, etc. and the availability of these boats, it is fast catching on. Since I am involved in instruction of canoeing and beginning to instruct ocean kayaking, your organisation will be of help to me. I've read your book and other very good books and have recommended them to my classes. Hope to hear from you

Yours truly,

Fred Potter.

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