

Advanced Sea Kayak Club

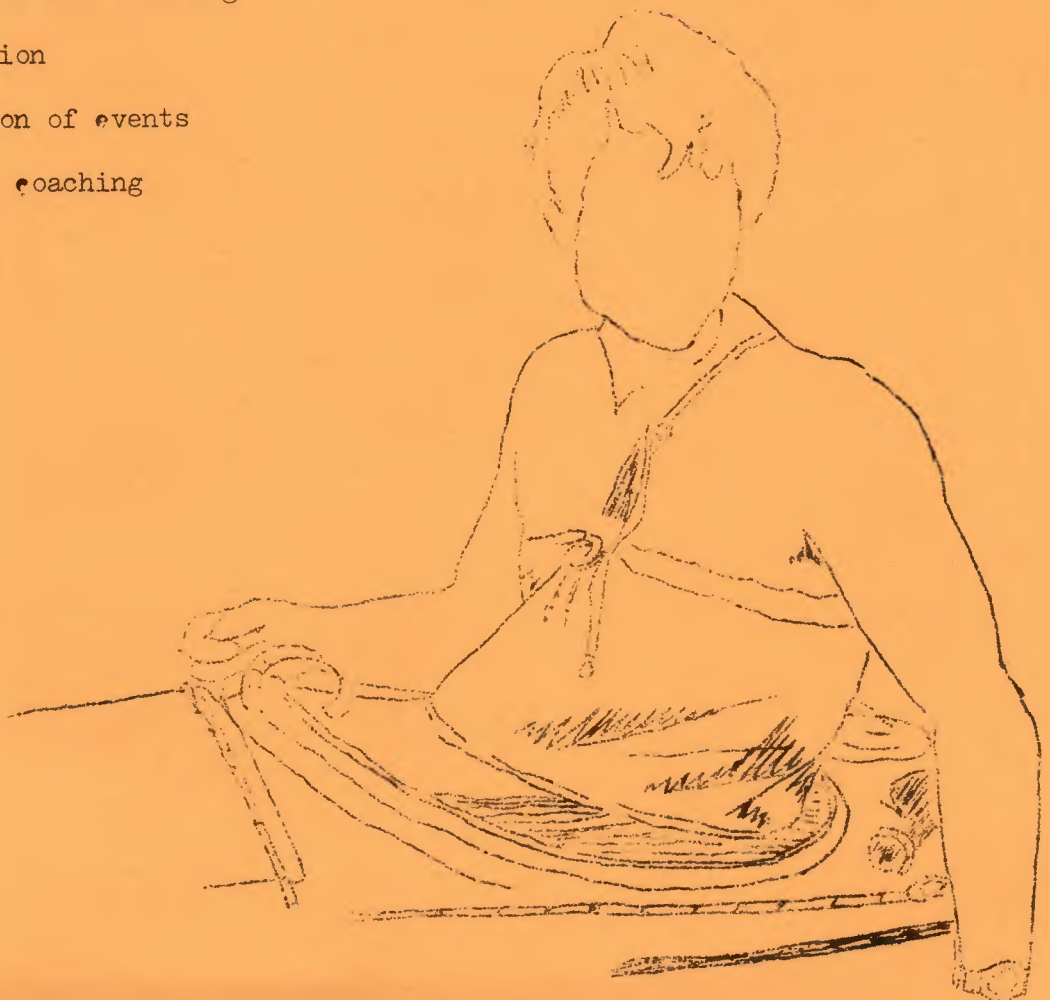
NEWSLETTER



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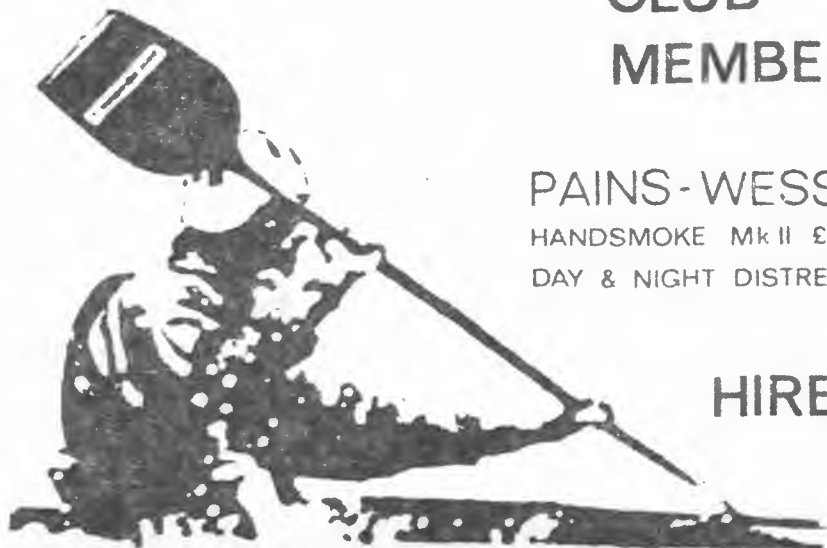
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THE HIGH WIRE HEROES.

Late last August, just as the great Fastnet storm which had claimed the lives of 17 was wearing to an end, Mrs. Tripp of Kynance Farm on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall had her own small emergency. Like Fastnet this required the help of the rescue helicopters from HMS Seahawk, the Royal Navy base at Culdrose. "One of my heifers has fallen over the cliff at Soapy Cove, Predannack. Can you help?" she asked.

"Helo 520 arrived datum 0737Z," says the flight debrief report. "Did a dummy run into the narrow Soapy Bay Cove, experienced serious down draught. The pilot (Lt. Jerry Grayson) opted to jettison 300lbs of fuel before making pick up. Lizard Coastguard and vet were on scene. The diver was winched down, a cargo net prepared with 30ft strop. The vet sedated the heifer, which was subsequently rolled on to the cargo net and flown to Kynance Farm, none the worse for its mishap."

In recognition of the work of the helicopters from Culdrose Mrs. Tripp renamed the heifer Jerry Grayson.

The story of the cow called Jerry gives a rather more accurate picture of the Search and Rescue work done out of Culdrose than the reams of print and rolls of film which followed Fastnet. Most rescue missions are flown over a short distance during day-light by short range Wessex 5 helicopters rather than by the heavier long-distance night flying Sea Kings which were used for the Fastnet operation. Most 'scrambles', too, are for cows and dogs and people in trouble on or near the shore, rather than for out at sea in the eye of a storm.

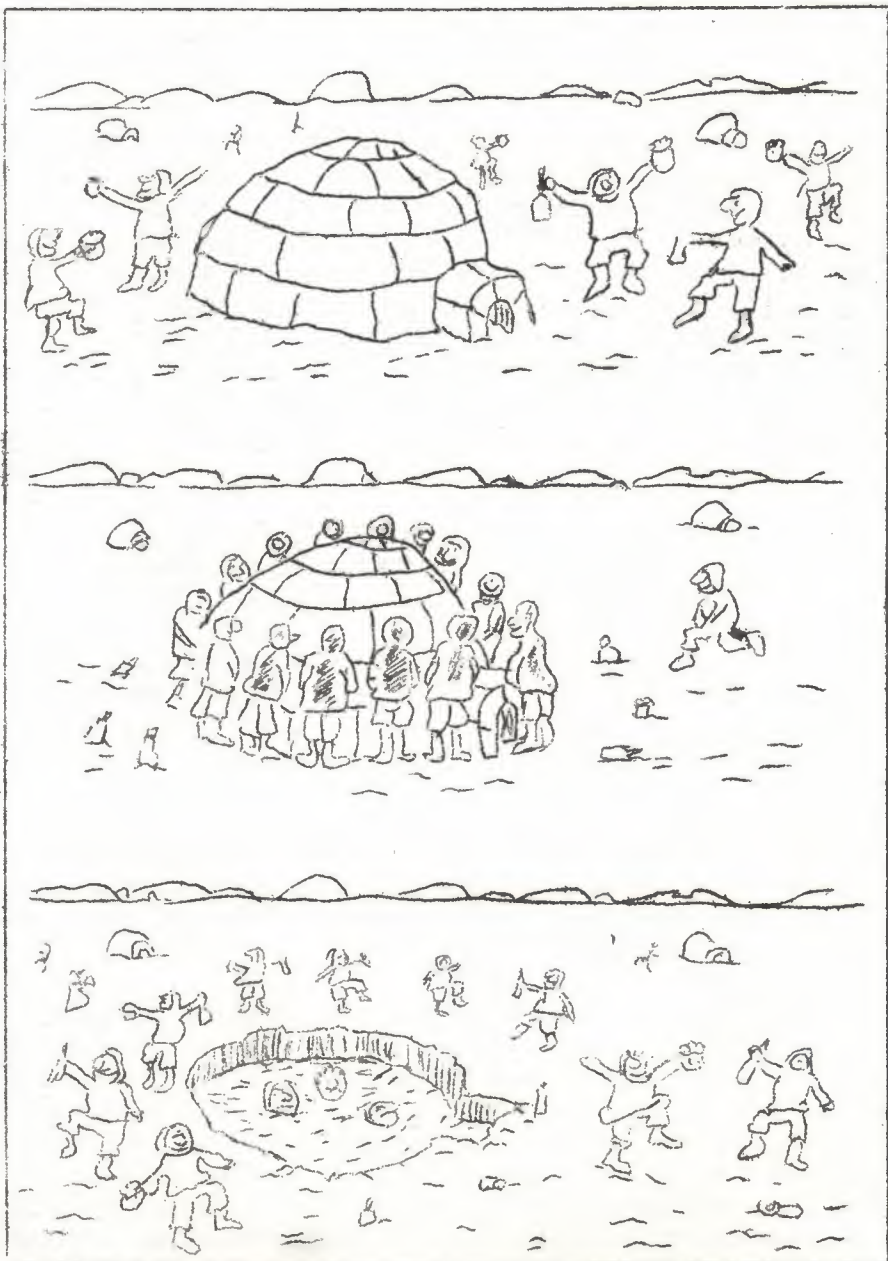
The 'modest' Wessex 5 missions are the responsibility of the ten men of 771 Squadron's S.A.R. Flight. Their motto is 'Non Nobis Solum', Not for ourselves alone. These ten men (three crews of three, - pilot, diver and aircrewman - plus a flight commander) work a dawn-to-dusk rota of shifts. Two crews are always on duty, one on search and rescue and the other, a back up crew, carrying out water tests and flying on training missions. They are the masters of helicopter rescues. They do it all the time.

One of the ten, Petty Officer Derek (Flipper) Olkes, a cheerful Londoner at 37 is one of their most experienced search and rescue men. Flipper, it seems, was fully kitted up in his diving gear looking for an R.A.F. pilot who had ejected after an engine failure. "The first message we got," he says, "was that the pilot had gone down over the sea. So we coasted out in the helicopter and I was getting ready to jump in the water. We

went around in circles for a couple of minutes making a search. I couldn't tell what was going on because I was'n't able to listen to the intercom - I had a rubber diving hood on. The first thing I knew was that the crewman was giving me the O.K. to leave the helicopter. So out I went - straight into a ploughed field on the cliff tops. There I was on dry land, with a diving set, a pair of fins, a face mask and a weight belt. I looked around and the pilot was hanging from his parachute in a tree. I ditched all my gear, got the pilot out of his tree and then spent the next hour looking for all my diving gear. All I found was my flipper!"

All naval helicopter personnel are trained in rescue work. But men like Flipper, with a special aptitude, may end up on one of the Navy's nine standby SAR squadrons (the R.A.F. also operates five, the U.S. Air Force in Britain one, and British Airways another in the Shetlands).

"We have a silly season from May to September," says one of the other crewman, ready for action in orange wet suit white plimsolls and a divers



knife and a smoke flare strapped to his leg. "When people go on holiday they seem to forget safety. As soon as it's warm enough, for them to dip their toes in the water then it's time for them to get into some sort of trouble. You get picnickers cut off by the tide; you get people stuck on cliffs - they can't go up and they won't come down; you get climbers who've fallen, broken an ankle and can't move at all; you get swimmers swept out to sea. Anything that floats can cause a problem," adds Flipper. "I've seen kids on lilos being blown across the water like leaves across the road."

Pilot, diver and aircrewman constitute a tight, intermeshed unit of expertise; but each man in a Search & Rescue crew is master of specific responsibilities and tasks. Lt. Stephenson and his crew are as matter-of-fact about their duties as porters or plumber. There are no tales of heroism at sea or gallantry in the air. A rescue once completed is filed and forgotten. The most they will admit, when pressed, is: "Of course, there are dangers - but they are dangers which the professional Search & Rescue practitioner can keep at bay with skills."

Imagine, then, an emergency scramble. A woman has been washed off the Bedruthan Steps, near Newquay, by a large rogue wave (it often happens - the Steps are notorious). Her husband dials 999 in Cornwall that gets you Police, Fire, Ambulance AND Coastguard. The distress call goes through to the Maritime Co-ordination Centre which is manned by the R.A.F. at Plymouth (which is why there are occasional reports of an R.A.F. helicopter from Culdrose; "The CO gets very annoyed"). Plymouth assess the problem and hands it over to the Operations Room at Culdrose as Newquay is in its area.

When the alarm sounds in the SAR crewroom, the duty crew (fully kitted up in 'goon suits' and diving gear) is, perhaps, playing 'Niggly', an obsessive card game, with either of the two civilian Coastguard liaison officers. Within 15 seconds of the scramble the rescue crew is aboard its Wessex 5.

As the helicopter becomes airborne first details of the rescue come over the radio. It is the Bedruthan Steps yet again. But it could have been a premature labour on the Scillies, a seaman on a tanker requiring "medevac" (medical evacuation), a capsized dinghy off Lands End, the emergency transfer of a diver with 'the bends' to the recompression chambers at Plymouth or Falmouth, inland 'snow relief' to a stranded farm house, the evacuation of a flooded caravan site - or, possibly, a major disaster like the Fastnet.

Whatever the problem, the Wessex 5 from Culdrose (speed up to 90 knots) can often be there before the local lifeboats (top speed 15 knots) from Falmouth, St. Ives or the Lizard can be launched.

The crewman and diver check their rescue procedures and their equipment - the light weight stretcher with winch harness, the five man life raft, the heaving lines, the lifting strops, the ocean markers, the portable radios, the diving 'bottles' the oxygen resuscitators, the first aid kits, the 'Mae West' - and the standard SAR gear".

Conditions at the Steps are bad. There is a strong wind and a big sea. It is raining. Visibility is limited. The pilot circles while the aircrewman and the diver scour the sea for signs of life - but spotting a body in the water is very difficult. Even a large yacht can disappear between the swells of a heavy sea. The pilot wants to fly closer to the surface, but he must take great care that the undercarriage of the aircraft does not touch sea water. The Wessex 5 carries flotation bags (in case of a splash-down) on each of the main wheels. The cartridge of compressed air which inflates the bags is activated by salt water.

"There are a number of difficulties," says Pilot Geoff Stephenson. "A high wind isn't a great problem - but the turbulence it can cause is! Then I also have to keep an eye open for birds. Just one seagull getting in the way of the rotor-head unit will cut out the engine. There's no radar in a Wessex 5. We use pure DR - dead reckoning - navigation. Basically I'm just the driver. My vision from the pilot's seat is limited. I can't see anything from my 3 o'clock outwards. I can't see below the helicopter and I can't see the tips of the blades above. I have to rely on my aircrewman to give me all the navigational information."

A Wessex 5 can "land" and balance on one wheel on a cliff side if need be (that includes the tiny tail wheel), but any pilot who does so is, in effect, landing "blind". His eyes are the aircrewman who very often, lying on the cab floor with his head out of the starboard door, will instruct, "Whoops! Easy, easy, Overhanging rocks at your 4 o'clock. Two feet to touch down, One foot, steady at that. Six inches.....one inch.contact."

The woman off the Bedruthan Steps is spotted at last. She has managed to struggle ashore and is lying exhausted on the shingle of an inaccessible beach. The tide is coming in, but the helicopter cannot touch down. A 50 ft. cliff is blocking descent. The diver will have to be winched down with a stretcher while the helicopter holds steady above the sea and cliffs. The aircrewman plays out the winch wire, which can extend to 300 ft. The diver on the wet and windy end (descending with a single lift strop dangling below his feet to discharge the static electricity which builds up in the wire during winching, so avoiding 'touch down shock') concentrates on preventing spinning. "Once you've got

in a spin with a stretcher, you're a goner. You just black out." And there for a few heady moments you have the essence of a Search and Rescue operation; a helicopter pilot hovering in wind and rain ("It's like ballancing a ballbearing on a razor blade") is connected to his diver and to an injured holiday maker (both out of his vision on the beach 50 ft. below) by a length of winch wire and by the co-ordination of his aircrewman over the 'intercom'. The three man SAR crew is like an equilateral triangle, each of its 'sides' unable to function effectively without the other two. The woman who ventured too close to the bottom of Bedruthan Steps will within minutes be receiving medical attention at the Culdrose sick bay, or, if she is more seriously injured, at Trelliske Hospital, Truro, which has a helicopter landing pad.

Not everyone is that lucky of course, as the grim annual statistics of Search & Rescue at Culdrose show. The figures for 1978 were: Skin Divers - scrambles eight, people assisted nine, recovered dead three; cliff incidents - scrambles 23, people assisted 27, recovered dead three; swimmers - scrambles 13, people assisted nine, missing two, recovered dead five; hang gliders - scrambles one, people assisted none, recovered dead one. On one successful occasion an SAR helicopter went to the assistance of a total of 13 people in four separate incidents during one non-stop sortie - man-over-cliff with broken ankle at Pedn-Mean-Dhu; four children cut off by tide at the Bedruthan Steps; five life-boatmen from Newquay lifted from their swamped boat; three youths cut off by the tide on Watergate Beach.

"Most people in trouble are glad to see us" says the pilot, but his crew does not take public gratitude for granted. "We had a case where we winched a woman off a cliff and her husband sent us a bill for £2 for a rip in his wife's dress. So the Commander sent him a bill for the use of one helicopter" - and a Wessex 5 sortie costs over £800 an hour! "We've had people writing in and complaining that we've picked them up and left their lilos in the water. To be fair, though, most are grateful. We got sackfuls of thankyou letters after the Fastnet thing." This is spoken proudly - he and the other nine members of 771 Squadron's SAR Flight are not looking forward to the day when their rescue missions come to an end.

"There's no way I'm going to get another flying job in the Navy with the same satisfaction" says Lt. Geoff Stephenson. "O.K., you take risks - but they are calculated risks. There's so much adrenalin flowing that you don't have time to be scared."

U.K. SURF SKIS From Gareth Lucas, Lower House Farm, Flanders Road, Llantwit Major, South Glamorgan, CF6 9XZ

How can we describe craft fitted with the "Tree" cockpit - a sit on surf board, a sit on water ski, or an unsinkable canoe or kayak? The U.K. range of surf skis in fact is all of these.

Kayaks and skis in their basic form have been with us for thousands of years. They are normally small one or two seater craft propelled by paddling usually with a double bladed paddle. In their traditional forms however they have strong advantages and disadvantages over one another:-

The kayak or canoe has the rider sitting actually inside the craft, entry is through a hole in the deck and this is sealed from the water by a fabric cover (spray deck). because the rider is able to brace himself using his knees on the inside of the boat he has great control over the craft. This is very useful in rough water and also enables "Eskimo Rolls" to be performed. However this tight fitting of the body inside the boat can be quite frightening and even dangerous to the beginner who feels trapped in the craft when it turns over. Also when the spray deck comes off in rough water, as happens all too often with the novice, the boat takes in water. This makes it necessary to empty it and it can also be a very heavy dangerous object in breaking waves or fast moving water. A ski on the other hand is completely sealed unit with the rider sitting in a shaped recess in the deck. This obviously eliminates the problem of the craft filling with water after a capsize, they can be remounted immediately once righted.

In the past however the problem with skis was that the rider had no way of bracing himself to the craft. This has been solved with the introduction of the "Tree" cockpit (so called because of the shape of the thigh brace). The riders knees fit under the tree and when required he can lock onto the craft tightly to stay with the ski, if however he feels he should part with the craft he can do so in seconds by just releasing his grip on the tree and floating free. Beginners find this a great advantage because they can remount the craft quickly and do not have to spend a great deal of time returning to shore to empty their craft of water.

The positive control given to the craft by the tree cockpit makes them ideal for use in waves or rough fast moving water or even when being towed behind a speed boat. We have many hull designs fitted with tree cockpits - rescue, racing, surfing, touring and general 'fun craft' which are particularly suitable for youth centres, etc. We also supply cockpits for fitting into existing craft of most designs.

2nd - 19th. August, 1980



FAEROE ISLANDS



"It's not the twenty footers from behind that I mind, just the fifteen footers from the side!" It's not often that I agree with someOne's estimation of wave height if its put at above four feet, but for once I agreed with Len's "fifteen footers". There was'nt a lot to be seen from the kayaks because most of our time was spent somewhere in the valleys beneath the crests, and during the brief moments on the top one could really see the valley as far as the next crest. This was the 'break in' day for the seven paddlers accompanying me to the Faeroe Islands, and we were on the east side of the island Nolsoy amidst a good swell complicated by cliff rebound and considerable tidal stream. The following day by popular demand we climbed the highest peak on the Faeroes, Slaettaratindier, at 2,894 ft. to "see if we could see over the crests".

The expedition was part of a progressive programme of training for teachers in East Sussex carried out by Burwash Place Outdoor Centre, and was intended to advance the skills and widen the experience of senior instructors in the area. Linked with the kayaking would be enviromental studies, so important a factor in the enjoyment of sea expeditions. Transport was by minibus and trailer to Scrabster in Scotland, a two day journey which was broken by a night at Phil May's house in Cumbria where we collected yet another red and yellow Vyneck, bringing the total on the trailer up to five.

From Scrabster the ferry Smiril took us to Thorshavn, the tiny capital of the Faeroes, from which we stretched our travel tired bodies by paddling over to the island Nolsoy, well known for the swirling tidal currents around its northern point, Having investigated the islands turbulent east coast via it's northern point, we crept back to the shelter of it's west coast by a breathe catching route which took as close as possible to heavy waves breaking over a submerged ledge in order to reach the eddies close under the cliffs. A few yards further out, as one person discovered, the tide was running at more than five knots, necessitating a frantic paddle to get back again!:

Having 'warmed' up to the paddling and stretched our legs in the hills, we crossed the island and then departed from the charming village of Kirkjubour. We had a gentle and short paddle to Koltur with tidal assistance. Kirkjubour has an unfinished cathedral started some 800 years ago. Apparantly this proved so costly the inhabitants killed the Bishop, and nobody has taken on the job since then!

From Koltur, on the next day.....

From Koltur, on the next day, we crossed the tide race to Hestur to look at some impressive stacks on its S.W. facing coast. Crossing the race once more we paddled the length of Koltur against a tidal eddy that logically should have been going in the opposite direction, as far as the island's northern tip where we explored two long caves. One of these followed a weakness in the rock for well over 100 yards before turning sharp left. From the sound of crashing waves and the breeze blowing out of the cave it was evident that there must be a route right through, but nobody braved the total darkness of the narrow passage.

From the cave we headed out into Vagafjordur on a route that kept us out from land until we were well past a southward tide stream that followed the land. Closing on land we picked up our northerly stream and were rapidly pushed to Kvivik with very little effort on our part to complete our 16 mile journey.

Our campsite at Kvivik was directly alongside the archaeological remains of a Viking farm by the shore. Here we met up with our walking group, Frank and Bernie. Frank, a retired teacher and a leading authority on wind and water mills, was hoping to see some of the remaining direct drive watermills on the islands. One of the most primitive in design, and recently restored, is situated at Kvivik and Frank explained to us how it worked.

It was also from Kvivik that Andy, one of the paddlers, unfortunately had to head for home due to business commitments. He left his kayak and equipment in storage space under the Kvivik Post Office to await collection at the end of our trip, and then caught a bus back to Thorshavn. The bus service is something new to the islands. When I visited the islands on my way to Iceland in 1977, there were no buses at all. Changes present on the Faeroes are rapid.

Midvagur on the island of Vagur was our next destination. Although we were rain-drenched from loading the kayaks the paddle was exciting and we didn't notice when the rain eased off. We headed into the main tide stream going S.W. out of Vestmannasund, which in places reached 10 knots in speed. Lacking any detailed information of the tide rates, we had to keep in sight of land for long enough to gain some idea of our speed before heading out into the mist. Wave height increased dramatically as we encountered a wind over tide situation and then a meeting of two tide streams. After a series of compass courses designed to keep us in a position to make best advantage of the tide, land loomed out of the mist ahead in the shape of solid cliff, just north of Trólkenufingur, roughly translated as the witches finger. We felt the name was particularly pertinent as the overfalls on this point were dramatic, with kayaks occasionally vanishing under broken crests, to surface rather like submarines through the other side. The wave height was enormous, and one had a long steady downhill paddle before a change in angle and the long uphill paddle to the next crest. It was hard work keeping in sight of everyone even though we were close together.

The conditions off the headland didn't last for long as the powerful tide rushed us past and we had more controlled conditions beneath the cliffs from here into Midvagur. Accompanied by the booming of the seas into the caves were long sighs of relief and occasional outbursts of tension-relieving laughter from certain paddlers.

Midvagur, where we picked up a tame shag which seemed to enjoy taking a ride on the backs of the kayaks, we decided was not the most attractive place on the Faeroes, and we left the next day for Bøur. Just as we were leaving with a weather forecast and tide conditions that I considered just about ideal (a light S.E. wind and a N.W. travelling tide stream, both with us) a local man told two of the party that if we set out for Bøur, we'd never come back because the seas today would be too rough for small boats. They said that many boats had been lost along that section of the coast.

Whereas I appreciated his concern and opinion, I felt he didn't have our experience of kayaks and their capabilities and that although we may not return, we at least would reach our destination of Bøur instead. However, there were a couple of apprehensive faces in the party as we reached Presttangi, where two tide streams meet, and the sea is thrown into considerable confusion. Once round the corner I reasoned that the sea should become simpler and the strong tide stream should carry us quickly along the remaining 13 miles to the next landing place. Return once round the corner would be out of the question. We would be totally committed.

We carried on. True, the seas were big, but not breaking, and the party relaxed more as they got used to the size of the swell again. Len, our ornithologist, pointed out shearwaters, gannets, kittiwakes, puffins, fulmars, and black guillemots, and jokes started flying. The cliffs reached higher and higher, topping 1,500 feet before we reached the islands stringing out towards Mykines. Mykines, famous for its bird colonies, is protected by notorious tide races and usually hidden by fog. Today was no exception. Tindhólmur

and Gasholmur however stood clear and impressive. Tindholmur, with its towering pinnacles. Races between these islands are locally notorious, but there is apparently a deepish channel between Vagar and an off-lying stack and archway in the gap between Vagar and Tindholmur. Leading the way I could see waves breaking right across the gap between the stack and Tindholmur, and only at the last minute could our routes be seen. I shot through the gap breaking out into a large eddy on the right to see the rest of the group through. The peaky and broken water swirled round in the enormous eddy and also for a mile or so straight across the fjord. The centre of the eddy was a small area, glassy calm. We headed across the fjord using the tide then along the shore to land at Bøur, probably the most picturesque village we had stopped at. We had taken $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to cover 14 miles, and the paddling had been by no means fast.

Bøur was to be our base for the next couple of days, during which I planned to take the more advanced paddlers over to Mykines by kayak. The rest planned to visit the island by ferry. The kayak trip however was aborted due to a combination of fog and the unavailability of accurate information on the tide races in Mykinesfjord. However, the journey as far as we went was eventful, with me capsizing whilst taking a photograph on a calm sea, much to the delight of my two companions.



We had calculated the tide to have a northerly drift through the islands. In fact as we paddled out from Gasholmur we were taken south! The wind was also blowing gently from the north, not as forecast from the south. There had been no sign of the ferry which does not run if there are signs of bad weather approaching. However, the crossing between Gasholmur and Mykines is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, $6\frac{1}{2}$ to its only possible landing spot, so we were not particularly anxious until the sky above Mykines turned a sickly yellow colour, and low cloud started pouring over its mountains, and thick fog banks started rolling across the sea towards us from the North. We had the choice of continuing and chancing having to wait for hours until the next period of slack water in order to use a compass bearing with some confidence on our return journey, or to turn back now.

The Pilot says of Mykinesfjordur, "Because of its relative shallowness the tide streams in Mykinesfjordur are very strong, causing tremendous tide races and violent turbulence." "During the strength of both streams there are also very violent but irregular eddies in mid channel in Mykinesfjordur." The only place that the Pilot states actual tide rates is when it describes another sound, Sundelaget where "tidal streams run very strongly...attaining a rate of about 12 knots in both directions at springs." The inference was that once the tide started running it would be quite rapid. We were at spring tides at the moment. To return during a running tide on a compass bearing in fog would undoubtedly be more 'miss' than 'hit'.

We decided to return straightaway. As we headed back we used transit marks, lining up two peaks on Mykines in order to ensure a straight course for Gasholmur. The tide rapidly increased in strength, accompanied by increasingly large waves on which we surfed whilst heading only a few degrees east of north in order to ferry glide in a direction slightly south of east. Eventually we reached the eddy behind Gasholmur and stopped for a while to watch the waves rumbling past both sides of the island. We were able to regain Sorvagsfjordur by working our way up behind rocks on the edge of the eastern shore of Gasholmur, then sprinting up the edge of the race, to the initial curve of water, which resembled the glassy slopes of a weir sill. Once on the calm fjord we were tempted to turn around and shoot the race and work our way up the eastern side of Tindholmur in a similar way, but concerned that if the ferry had not set out, the others would be anxiously waiting, we left this pleasure for another day.

After a day of walking, birdwatching and fishing we were ready to leave Bøur for the northern shores of Vagar when strong winds and driving rain forestalled our plans. Forced to be landbound, Val and I hitched and ferried to collect the minibus and trailer from Kirkjubøur and in the face of a weather forecast of still stronger winds we drove to Bøur and planned a late morning play in the tide races when the southerly stream picked up. This was an unfortunate decision as the Faeroes 'fickle' weather gave us a shining

calm day, and we had missed our on-going tide. The loss was no disaster as we enjoyed a day of playing in the tide races and fishing, everybody circumnavigated Tindhölmur through the tide races striking camp and heading back to Kviðvík by minibus to collect Andy's kayak and our two land based members.

Frank, enterprising as ever, had drawn on local craftsmen to fashion a wooden key to open the lock on the ancient watermill at Kviðvík, and he had actually got the water wheel working.

Returning to Thorshavn we heard that there had been a whale kill near Hvalvík, a town whose very name means 'whale bay'. In haste we drove back to the scene of the slaughter, at the narrows between two islands at a place called Nesvík. Here pulled up onto the beach were some 230 dead pilot whales each neatly killed by a deep knife wound at the back of the head which severed the spinal cord. Each whale had also been disemboweled. There was little sign of activity except for a few boats zigzagging against the tidal stream in the search for dead and sunken whales, and a few locals who were thrusting hands into the bellies of the whales to rip out the kidneys, which by ancient law belong to anyone who cares to take them.

Drew, anxious to observe the distribution of the whale meat before early the next morning to hitch to the scene, but found only bones. The carve up had started early and had been efficiently completed and the meat transported away long before we arrived on the scene. The traditions of centuries remained.

Two weeks on the Faeroes Islands had been exciting and eventful, adventurous and formative. I now have a group of paddlers eagerly awaiting the next Faeroes expedition, prepared for more moments of anxiety with the confidence inspired by their own wider experience and greater skill.

Nigel Foster.
October, 1980

Expedition Members.

- Nigel Foster.....Leader/organiser. Deputy Warden, Burwash Place B.C.U. Coach.
Val Harrison.....Teacher from Cavendish School, Eastbourne. B.C.U S.I. The only female member of the group (paddled Vyneck)
Mike Watson.....Teacher (ex. Brighton College of Ed.) now living on the Isle of Wight B.C.U. S.I. (paddled Lindisfarne Voyager) Guitarest and photographer.
Drew Delaney.....Teacher, now living on Isle of Wight B.C.U. S.I. (paddles Nordkapp)
Chas Couldrick....Craft Teacher in Bexhill, handy at making hatch openers. B.C.U. trainee instructor. (paddled Umnak)
Andy Sutherland...Teacher from Burwash. B.C.U. Trainee Inst. Collected new Vyneck on the way to the Faeroes. Unfortunately had to return after one week.
Len Thompson.....Trainee Instr. Used to live and teach in Hastings Our resident ornithologist and interpreter (paddled Vyneck)
Peter Sinclair....Trainee Inst. Member Burwash Exped. to Skye 1978 and Norway 1979 Overheard to say, when asked if he was O.K.,...."Yes thanks Val, I'm fine" whilst swimming in a confused 15 ft. swell off the cliffs of Nolsoy (He was rescued quickly by Drew and Mike) (paddled Vyneck)

Land based team.

- Frank Gregory.....Retired teacher from Brighton and a molenologist...which means, apart being an expert at getting offers for a cup of tea and a bite to eat, that he's a mill expert.
Jonathan Burnard..from Burwash Place. Locally known as a gannet by ornithologist like Len, Decided not to dye his hair pink before leaving for the Faeroes.

From the Sunday Telegraph 23rd. November, 1980

COASTGUARDS ESCAPE CUTS.

By Our Shipping Correspondent.

The Government is to exempt marine safety services, such as coastguards, from spending cuts, Mr. Nott, Trade Secretary said yesterday. An efficiency drive would cut about 50 of the 1,200 posts in the Department's marine division.

"The role played by the Department's marine services in protecting life at sea is essential and generally represents good value for money," Mr. Nott said. Fears that the coastguard service would be reduced were unfounded. The service was being reorganised to improve it.

To all A.S.K.C. members.

The success of this newsletter depends very largely on your contributions. Please send in any item of news that you come across. Your own views and opinions are always gratefully received, as are reports on your expeditions. Please feel free to use this newsletter for your own ends. If you have any sea canoeing item for sale or wish to advertise your sea canoeing courses..its your letter.

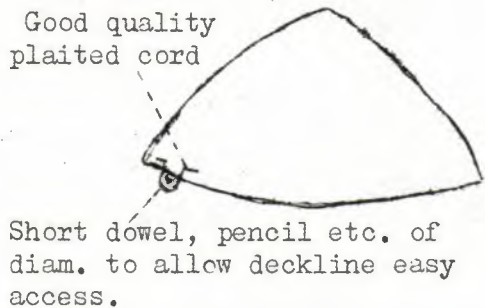
DECK LINES & TOW ROPES.

Most of us agree that an efficient, easy, cheap way of fitting your sea kayak is as follows:- Fit bow and stern loops in the conventional way but only make a loop of 5 to 8 cm diameter. Around your deck at convenient intervals (depending on sheerline, etc.) mark out where you wish to fasten the decklines, e.g. probably about every 60 cms, and about 2 to 4 cm in from the side. Drill holes as indicated to take a good quality plaited nylon cord with high breaking strain. Cut off enough short lengths (10 to 12 cm) for the number of points and insert into the holes as shown.



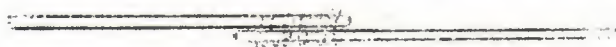
Hang the kayak upside down and use 5 min araldite (or similar) and bricks or bits of wood etc. to hold ends of cord flat till glue sets. Then use resin and csm to glass over cord ends completely to make water tight. When all is completed (this is a lot easier before the deck is joined to the hull, but is still easy after joining) tie the deckline in a bowline through the bow loop. Run the deckline through all the rope loops down one side, through the stern loop and back up the other side to the bow loop again. Tie with a round turn and two half hitches, leaving a tail of about 60 cm, and

tie this tail back along the deckline with a clove hitch. The reason for this is explained under towing. Make sure there is a deck loop each side just to the rear of the cockpit; and the next one in front of this probably wants to be up towards your toes, so that the paddle doesn't catch it (very annoying). Use a good quality soft plaited synthetic rope for the deckline (6mm is adequate) and pull it pretty tight when tying on. It has a negligible shrink or stretch properties.



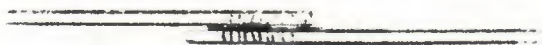
You now have a deckline that is extremely handy when seal landing into a difficult rocky area to give others already ashore something to grab and hold on to. Long heavy slippery kayaks are not the easiest things to deal with in big swells and these lines make a world of difference. Two other uses are to give a towing point, and for use in rescues.

Tow ropes need to be the same length when two or more are towing and we have adopted the following standard :- Buy 7 metres of 4 mm 'float rope', splice a loop in each end. Buy about 1.5 of 6 mm shock cord and tie the ends together as shown.

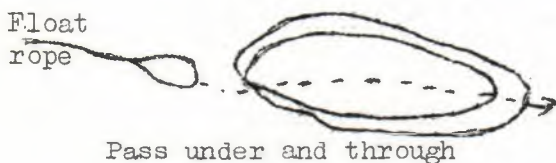


Good quality rot proof string, twine, etc.

Use a thumb knot (half a reek knot) every time you tie it round. Do this about 10 or 15 times and then finish off with a couple of turns at right angles to this.



Make a double loop of this endless shockcord and pass one of the eye splices in the float rope through the centre and back over the end.



Pass under and through



Pass loop over end of shock cord & pull shock cord through. The two are now firmly attached to each other.

Buy two brass clips (No. 2, made in Italy) and pass other eye splice through the eye in the clip and back over itself (similar to attaching the rope to the shock cord). Do the same with the shock cord. Allowing for the splices, etc. you now have a tow

Shock cord

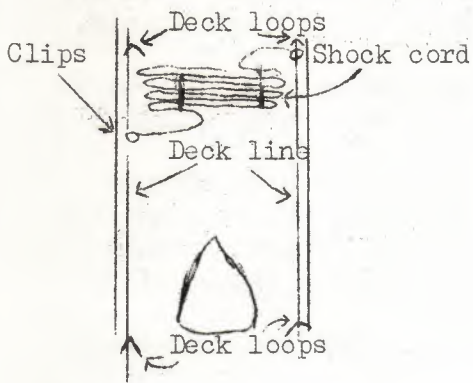
No. 2 spring clip



rope approx 7 metres long (also useful as a clothes line when camping). How to stow this item and still have it ready for immediate use?

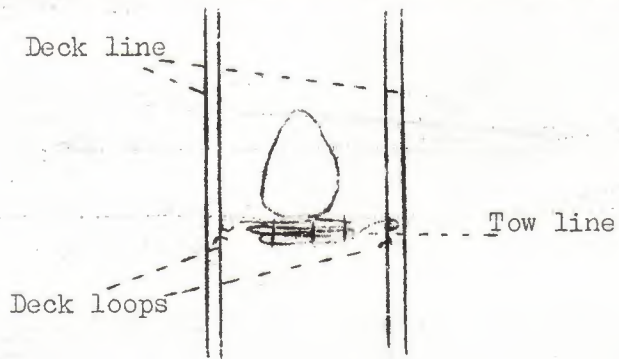
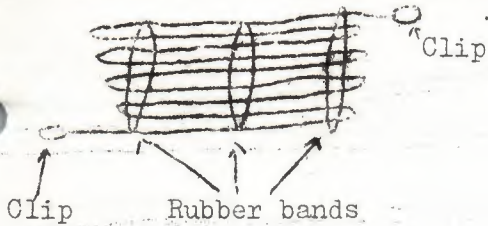
Two really different methods are:-

1. Fit foredeck of kayak with two pieces of shock cord as shown (knot the ends under the deck and glass over). Make sure they are tight but still just allow the tow rope to be fed under it as shown. Pull it just clear of the map area. It will also



act as a small wave break, and is ready for instant use. If the boat to be towed is on your left, unclip the right clip and clip it on to the boat to be towed. Start paddling. The tow rope will pull out and the left clip will slide back along the deck line to the loop at the rear of the cockpit. This has been found to be an ideal towing point and does not interfere with any gear you may have on the rear deck, this method has been used time and again for single and double towing, with and without rudders.

2. Just as good and easier. Bundle your tow rope up as shown and put three thick rubber bands round it (double). Hook it onto the deckline each side of the rear of the



cockpit. Same procedure to tow. If other boat is on the left, unclip right clip and clip it on to other boat. Start paddling. Tow rope pulls out and leave rubber bands on rope (if they don't break).

This whole deck line and tow rope system is not beyond even the most ham fisted person to fit to their kayak, and yet is beautifully simple and yet extremely efficient. In the case of extreme sea sickness of a paddler, they are no longer capable of holding onto their paddle and supporting themselves. In this case another paddler has to raft up and physically hold the sick paddler upright. You then have two boats to tow. To ease the strain on the supporting canoeist the two bows need to be tied together - this is done with the 60 cm tail of his deck line at the bow. A clove hitch makes it easy for cold wet hands to untie and use.

Rescues The deck line is fairly essential for rescues, whether X rescues on a day trip with a lightly loaded kayak, or an HI rescue with a heavily loaded kayak. When you start to pull the bow of the kayak over your own you will find it almost impossible without decklines to grab hold of.

Another less essential use of the deck line is to carry the kayak up the beach. At the bow and stern the two sides come together conveniently and are handy carrying points.

NOTE In the case of a North Sea Tourer (and maybe other boats) the bow and stern loops are unnecessary, the deck line can be fed through a 10 cm hole in the end block at bow and stern.

The Secretary, Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club. G.F.O. Box 599F Hobart 7001.

ORDER FORM FOR A.S.K.C.WOOLLEN SWEATERS

Send to Sharon Rowe, Siabod Cottage, Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, N.Wales LL24 0ET

MEASUREMENTS

Name.....

Chest.....

Address.....

Arm-pit to wrist.....

.....

Arm-pit to hips.....

.....

I enclose cheque to value of £.....(£11 each) forsweaters

CORRESPONDENCE

From Mr. Ane Starrenburg, Oostkapelle, Netherlands

Dear Mr. Ramwell.

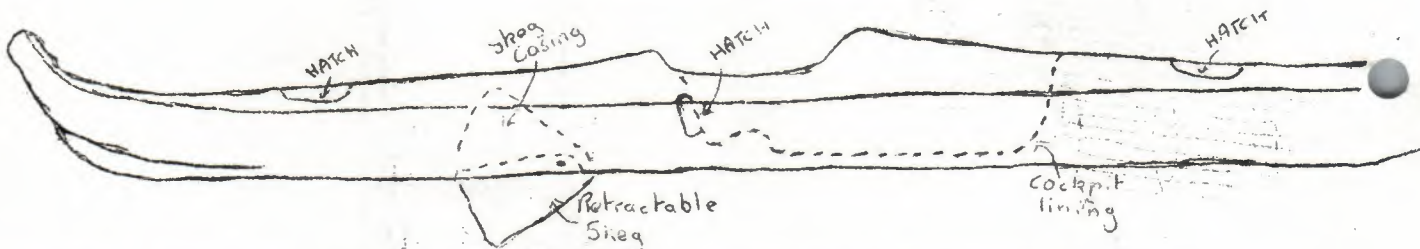
Last year I mounted Alan Byde's cockpit liner in my self built kayak. As an extra I managed to build into this liner a water-proof hatch cover, of course counter-sunk for sitting comfort. This way my kayak now has three water-proof compartments, improving safety, storing space and access of same.

I must say that the kayak's stability remains very good when rolling without spray cover as I have tested this several times. This seems to be a large increase in safety especially for someone touring at sea alone.

Furthermore I installed a retractable skeg (I do not know if this is correct English, however you will know what I mean by the included drawings) This is an item as well which seems to be very necessary on a sea kayak, as we have found out that it is sometimes impossible to go through the wind, due to sideways resistance of fixed skegs (combined with wind-resistance on flaring bows)

The retractable skeg gives you the opportunity to turn into the wind whenever you want, and take a rest if necessary.

Hoping this gives you some nice new information for the newsletter. I remain
Yours faithfully,
Ane Starrenburg.



MY NEWLY DEVELOPED CANOE. LINES BASED ON A COMBINATION OF SEVERAL GREENLAND KAYAKS TAKEN FROM A PUBLICATION OF SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE (U.S.)

A SMALL PERMANENT SKEG HAS BEEN ADDED FOR DIRECTIONAL PURPOSE WHEN SAILING IN SURF.

Editors note. Ane sent me two other drawings which lack of space precludes. Should anyone want copies of these please send stamped addressed envelope. J.R.

From Oliver Cock, British Canoe Union.

Dear John,

I was recently at Plas y Brenin and ran into two gentlemen from the Met. Office when we had a discussion about the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force. They gave me photo-copies from the Observers Handbook and I enclose copies of them.

I think the readers of your newsletter may be interested to see that the highest end of the scale is Force 17. In fact it might be useful for the Advanced Sea Test also.

Yours sincerely,
O.J.Cock.

Eds. note. Again space prevents me from including the extracts from the Observers Handbook. A stamped addressed envelope will secure you copies if you wish to have your own copies.

From Ian Whithead, Gillingham, Kent.

Dear John,

Just a few thoughts from someone who has been a 'sleeper' in his A.S.K.C. membership over the last couple of years. Most of my recent kayaking has been done solo so my observations are those of a loner. I have used a Baidarka Explorer during this period and have found it a very suitable sea boat.

Recently I returned from 5½ months kayaking Greece and the Aegean Islands. Basically tideless, these waters have the great advantage that any destination is possible at any time, a favourite taverna can be visited whatever the moon is doing!

The sun is cast in the role of both hero and villain, roasting pale northern skins but warming the water so that the wave that washes over one is most welcome. Complete suncreams are 'nt available in Greece so anybody who is thinking of travelling that way should take thier own with them. My personal experience involved sunburnt face and hands before my skin toughened up. Paddlers with darker skins might not have such a problem, those with very fair complexions may never be able to acclimatise.

Mine was the only 'sea' kayak I encountered and I heard no reports of any others from yachtsmen or fishermen. I met and paddled with a German lad with a slalom boat (no skeg) and also came across several Klepper folding canoes with sails (all rather beamy to my eyes)

While I was in Greece I liked to get away from the image of the spartan paddler battling against impossible conditions; trying to make my paddling fit into a leisurely celebration of Greece, not an expedition to cover the maximum distance in the minimum time.

I paddled around.....

I paddled around 1,000 nautical miles mostly using Admiralty Charts, once or twice using only tourist maps (not to be recommended) I had no capsizes, which was a good thing as my rolling leaves a bit to be desired! However, I believe that the importance of actually staying upright and in the boat can't be overstressed. A sea that is awkward enough to capsize me is going to make life extremely uncomfortable even if I do manage to roll.

I found the Baidarka Explorer easy to handle under most conditions, it is a good load carrier and a sea kindly craft which gives a distinct impression of looking after its owner.

Weather is very local and needs some watching; however there is an English forecast on 412 metre at 0635 each morning; don't rely on it though! The summer wind, the Meltemi, blows from the north and can either be a help or a hindrance depending on which way you are going. If it really picks up the wise kayaker retires to the cafe and provides dismal predictions as to the duration of this particular Meltemi to holidaying yachtsmen! Much of the Country is mountainous and down-gusts can be particularly fierce, the wind may also funnel between islands, but hold on tight to your paddle and you're OK, its easier than reefing!

With reference to the sectional canoes - I met a German with two of these boats, the join had a rubber seal on it and the connections were made with wing nuts. He said he had no leakage problems. These two canoes could also be bolted together to make a catamaran for sailing or motoring with an outboard. The outboard could also be used with the canoes singly...nothing is not versatile, Eh!

I enclose my subscription for 1981.

Good (and warm) paddling
Ian Whitehead.

From Bob Edmonds, Plymstock, Plymouth.

Dear John,

Re: Sectional Kayaks by Guy Ogez.

Things go in cycles don't they. I saw a superb sectional kayak being used in a demonstration of eskimo rolling on Patshull Lake during the summer of 1953.

The kayak belonged to Len Leach of the Canoe Camping Club. It was about 18 to 20 ft. long, narrow beam and made up of three sections. The ends were watertight and bolted onto the cockpit giving the smallest flooded area. It was made up of a very light wood frame and covered with a thin material skin, possibly oilskin because it became transparent when wet on the inside.

It was the first time I'd seen rolling and was fascinated by the hat trick, (he used a top hat) and also the inverted self rescue. Only here the canoeist rolled over, left his kayak without being seen, breathed inside his boat and then just as panic set in amid the crowd, slid back in, rolled up and paddled ashore, amid a roar of applause. No doubt if he'd had the technical advantage of a foot pump he could have pumped out and continued. As it was I was interested to see his kayak floated well up even with the cockpit area partly flooded.

So with sectional kayaks and deep water inverted self rescue, is there anything new in the world!

All the best,
Bob Edmonds.

From Paul Airey, Plas Newydd, Anglesey, N.Wales.

Dear John,

Please note my change of address from Shrewsbury, Salop to the above Centre where I am i/c canoeing. I enclose for interest the courses I am organising for 1981 for Cheshire Education. Also for interest Martin Hughes and Franco Ferrero paddled round Anglesey non-stop in 14½ hrs exactly. The trip was done in a clockwise direction to and from Llandonna, Red Wharf Bay on the 23rd. September. Martin and Frnco are both students at Crewe and Alsager College and are frequent instructors at this Centre, where they were based for the trip.

Re: Dennis Philpotts letter about camping in N/West Scotland; if people want good paddling further north I can recommend two 'official' campsites I used this summer.

1. Brae of Achnahaird. 1:50000 sheet 15 016 136
W Cs cold water (no showers) 50pence
2. Scourie 1:50000 sheet 9 153 447
W Cs showers H & C water £1.

1. is a good base for the Summer Isles
2. Handa Island, well worth an afternoon trip.

If you are up this area do drop in.

Cheers,
Paul Airey

Eds. note. If you wish a copy of the Nelson Centre's 1981 sea canoeing programme (and it's worth having) then send me a stamped addressed envelope

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

JANUARY 1981

NEWSLETTER No. 23

John J. Ramwell.
Secretary A.S.K.C.
32, Glebe Road,
West Perry,
Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE18 ODG

FROM THE EDITOR.

A Happy New Year to you all; here's wishing you a year of interesting expeditions and adventurous canoeing. Like a lot of you I am using this winter to plan an expedition for 1981, and I hope to be able to tell you about it in due course. When drawing up your critical path analysis don't forget to make your final note- 'Submit report to the A.S.K.C.and don't worry if your plans don't always work out as expected. A failed expedition is sometimes more interesting to hear about than a successful one.....like my second attempt to cross the North Sea in 1978. This is a story I have not related as I wrongly thought that only successful expeds. should be reported, but when telling the story to D.C.H. recently he said, "you should report on it." So having perhaps whetted your appetite I am in fact going to tell the tale in the next Newsletter

From the complimentary remarks accompanying renewal subs this newsletter is generally well received,- so come on, don't be bashfull, let me have your contribution, let's make it even better.

Please note that this is the last newsletter going out to those who have not yet renewed for 1981

The next big date on the canoeing calendar is the B.C.U. Exhibition at Crystal Palace over the weekend of 21/22 nd. February, 1981. I have arranged to have our own stand there. We shall be down in the cricket school, so be sure to look us up. Should you have any photographs or display material please do let me have it for the stand.

With this letter comes an advertising notice from Wye Kayaks. In return for me distributing this notice with the Club Newsletter Wye Kayaks are offering 5% discount to Club members.

Also in this Newsletter...!The High Wire Heroes, 'the story of the helicopter rescue crews; 'They Said the Faeroes Were In Egypt' by Nigel Foster, an account of his expedition to the Faeroes; and the correspondence section.

I will be featuring the report on the B.C.U. Sea Touring Exhibition at Calshot, held over the weekend of the 6/7th. December, 1980 in the next edition of the newsletter.

John Ramwell.

A.S.K.C. SHOP.

- ASKC Ties @ £2.50 each inc. p & p.
- ASKC Stickers @ 30 pence each inc. p & p.
- ASKC Letter headed paper @ 5p per sheet (orders in multiples of 10 only)
- Sea Canoeing Symposium Reports @ 75 pence each inc. p & p.
- A.S.K.C. 'T' skirts, small, medium or large @ £2.80 inc. p & p.
- A.S.K.C. sweat shirts, small, medium, large or extra large @ £5.80 inc. p & p.
- A.S.K.C. woollen sweaters (see body of the newsletter for the order form)
- Neoprene spray deck/ vests (mention cockpit size and chest-size when ordering) @ £25.

Except for the woollen sweaters....all available from me at the above address

***** Please tear off *****
1981 subscription to the Advanced Sea Kayak Club is now overdue...£2.00. Cheques made out to the A.S.K.C. Send to J.J.Ramwell, 32, Glebe Road, West Perry, Huntingdon, Cambs.

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