

NEWSLETTER

of
the

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.

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ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 33

OCTOBER, 1982

FROM ME (EDITORIAL)

J.J.Ramwell,
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal, Wakefield,
W.Yorkshire.

The good news - the A.S.K.C. subscription remains at £3.00.

The bad news - it's time to pay it'!

I have included a renewal form for you to complete and return.

If you think the ASKC is value for money and you wish to be a member of the world's largest organisation specialising solely in sea canoeing then send off now. If you renew before February your name and address will feature in the 1983 list of Members. (Should you wish to have your name and address excluded from this list for what ever reason do let me know. Those of you who have joined the ASKC since 1st. September need not renew for '83. Those of you who joined since 1st. August need only send £1.50 to renew for the whole of '83. If in doubt send £3.00 - the Club runs on a shoe string as it is.

I have just finished reading Geoff Hunter's book "Angmagssilik Round Britain". I really can recommend it. Geoff describes the challenge of this early epic solo expedition as being fought on two fronts, - on the starboard side, i.e. tackling the sea, wind and waves; and on the port side, i.e. using all his social skills to find food and shelter. I hope to find someone to review Geoff's book for the next edition of the ASKC 'letter, meanwhile it is available from him at 1, Ockley Cottages, Ockley Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent at £2.50. Send for yours now.

Nanuk's team of three have just tackled the unrelenting Firth of Forth - at least it was unrelenting on the day we set 'Forth', Saturday last the 9th. October. Winds NE force 5/6 as we left from North Berwick to go along the coast to round Bass Rock before crossing to the Isle of May. There was a heavy swell running and many wave crests breaking as we forged our way on a compass bearing of 020°. Visibility was down to a couple of miles and kept closing in to less as squalls passed over. What should have taken a few hours took us over four hours. After a brief shelter in the lee of the Isle of May - we could'nt land due to heavy swell - we continued on to the other side to Anstruther where we spent the night. The next day was calmer though the sea was still disturbed. "Into the Valley of Death" gouted Mike as he descended into a deep trough. We arrived North Berwick in good time with the wind blowing us across and made an uneventful landing contrary to our expectations as we had had a job to get through the surf the morning previous. A great weekend and here's to the next time.

Right, now to introduce the Newsletter;

1. Corsica - kayak circumnavigation by Barry Howell
2. Hebridean Saga by David Rushfirth.
3. Ocean kayak racing by J.C.C.
4. Lightweight Food for sea kayakers by Jerry Welch.
5. Report on B.C.U. Sea Touring Comm. Meet by me.
6. Miscellaneous correspondence.
7. Canoeing Channel Isles by Stephen Dorrity.
8. Skye Trek by Chris Pendlebury.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed. Remember, - no contributions - no Newsletter. The quality of this Letter is in your hands. Please let me have any news, views, opinions, any trip or equipment reports. I look forward to hearing from you.

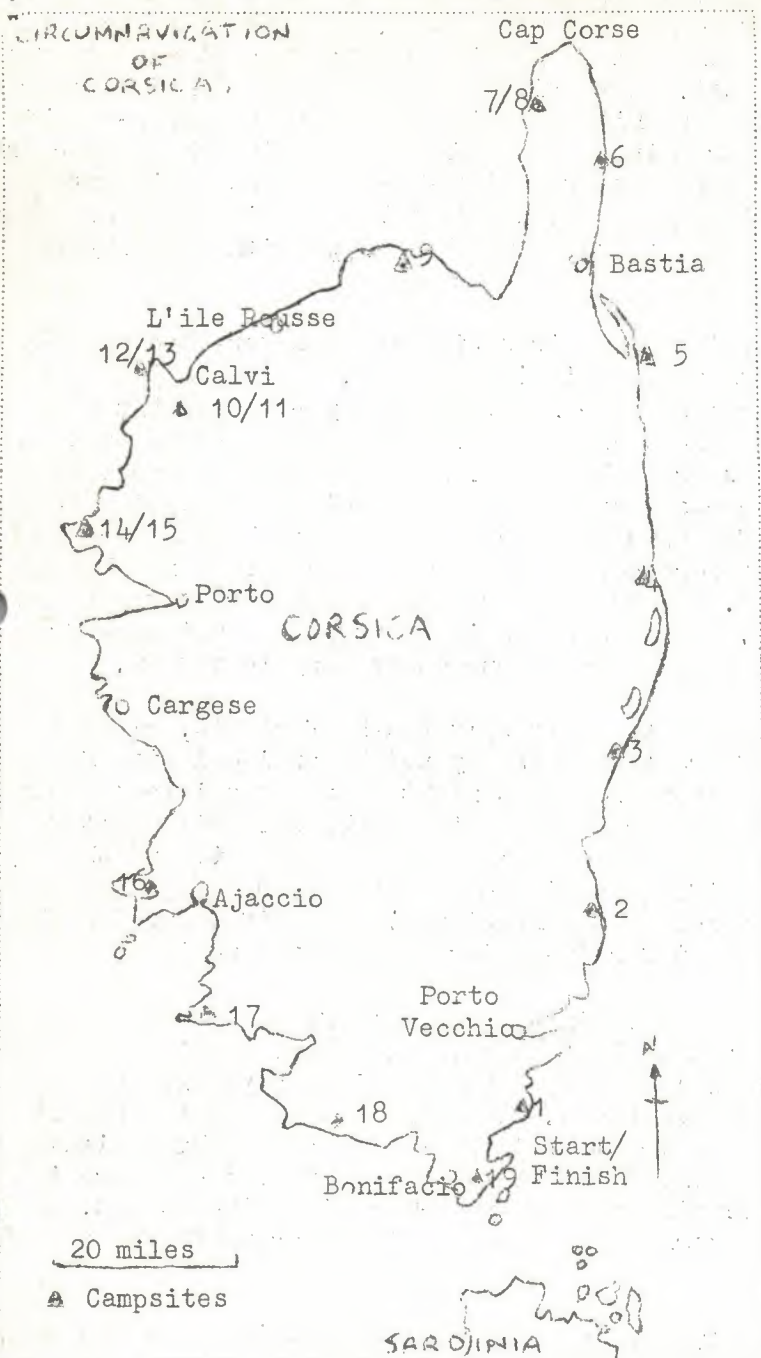
Finally - don't forget to renew to the Club.

Finally, finally - this is the last Letter going out before Christmas- so, though it's early let me be among the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas and, of course, good canoeing in 1983.

Take Care.

J.J.R.

by BARRY HOWELL



Heavy traffic all the way from Ulverstone to Dover meant we arrived at ferry ticket desk with five minutes to spare for the 5 pm boat to Calais. The customs man still wanted to chat - 3 Nordkapps on the Capri roof and all the gear inside did present an unusual sight.

"Going far, Lads?"
 "Down to Marseilles", we replied
 "Then what?"
 "We're going to paddle round Corsica"
 "Watch out for the bandits, won't you!"

The drive through France was uneventful, sticking to Primary Routes to avoid the expensive peage system. Even at this stage we had to count the pennies - £300 each for a month's trip is not exactly a high finance expedition. Geoff summed up the situation after eating a monstrous hot dog bought for 7 francs: "Canoe in France, where the franc goes further!"

The ferry journey across to Ajaccio on Corsica's west coast took 12 hours, and we opted for night crossing. Evening entertainment on the boat consisted of a film show - we had to laugh when the film turned out to be "Deliverance". We slept on deck in sleeping bags, with dreams influenced by raging rapids and hairy mountain men. Approaching the Island at 6 am, we got our first view of what was to come - mile after mile of rugged indented coastline, with the snow-capped Corsican mountains rearing up in the background.

The plan was to drive down to the South of the Island and start our trip by paddling north up the eastern coast. Bonifacio is the main town on the southernmost tip and we stopped there to buy our first supplies, before driving on to our starting point; Gurgazu, in the Gulf of Sant'Amansa.

Arranging to leave the car for three weeks in a deserted camp site, we packed the boats for the first time and set off into a fresh headwind at 4 pm. This was a sign of things to come. Had we known then that we were about to paddle 300 miles into headwinds, we probably wouldn't have started! Choppy waves up to three feet and gusty winds up to force 4 ensured an awkward, wet paddle. Was this really the sun-kissed millpond everyone had predicted? Grey skies overhead threatened rain but it was tremendous to have started and we made good time out of the Gulf and on to our first camp site at the Punta di Sponsaglia. This was on a grassy platform just above the boulder beach overlooked by the first of the Genoese towers we'd seen. These form a chain right round the Island, built by the Genoese in the 14th century as a system of warning beacons in case of threatened invasion. We were to see many more in

.....varying stages of decay

varying stages of decay on our paddle, and could only wonder at their construction in some of the more remote coastal areas.

Rain during the night covered everything with a red dust but had settled the sea. Flat calm conditions for the morning helped our progress to the Punta di a Chiappa, where we pulled in to what turned out to be a nudist colony. We went in search of water. This early in the year there were only maintenance staff about and all fully clothed at that, much to Geoff's disgust. Muttering something about 'fair weather nudists' we paddled on. The wind blew up while crossing the Golfe de Porto-Vecchio, funnelling out of the gulf producing breaking waves. From this point the east coast took on its distinctive nature - long and straight with dumpers pounding in onto steep sandy beaches. With some difficulty we found a suitable landing spot on a small headland at Favone and pitched one of the tents, tired but happy with a twentyfive mile day behind us.

The next day was slog, eighteen miles into headwinds with the monotony broken only by a detour around the marker buoys of a coastal firing range. Quiet as it appeared, we were taking no chances! The following day - April Fools Day - we were'nt so particular. Another firing range was marked on the map, but it was hard to make out any boundary fences or warning notices from the water, so we paddled on close to the shore. A line of bright orange crosses on the beach caught our attention as we wondered what purpose they served. Two hundred metres or so past the last cross we found out as a Mirage jet appeared at zero height above the sand dunes and blasted a line of cannon fire across the sand, through the crosses and on across the patch sea where we had sat a minute before. Spray shot up in great plumes not only from the bullets, but also from our paddles as we raced our boats away to safety.

Another day of headwinds saw us camped on the long spit south of Bastia, right in the middle of a nature reserve. Our fears that this may not be an ideal site from the point of view of the locals were underlined that night when a suspicious looking character carrying a Winchester rifle appeared out of the darkness. His excited comments in the Corsican dialect when he saw the Union Jack on my boat, and the way he was waving his rifle about was a trifle worrying - but it turned out he was trying to tell us about the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands! The rifle was for shooting stray dogs worrying his sheep and not for disposing of errant canoeists!

After restocking our food in Bastia the following day we set off up Cap Corse with boats that suddenly felt like low volume slalom canoes. The flat, straight coastline was behind us and from here it was dramatic cliffs and beautiful bays all the way with long stretches where landing was impossible. Rounding the top of the Cap we were visited by a school of porpoises, moving together in pairs and approaching within 20 metres of our canoes. Robert said he liked this kind of canoeing, "More porpoise to it!" Trying out our spinnaker sail in the one and only following wind we had, we were impressed with the results, and would have welcomed the opportunity to have given it a more thorough testing.

Our rest day at Port de Centuri was very welcome after seven paddling days and 130 miles, and we spent the time taking it easy - eating, doing small repairs and reading. An eighteen mile open crossing in incredibly hot, still conditions the next day, took us straight across the Gulf of St. Florent to land on the northern coast of the Desert des Agriates, an idyllic sandy bay backed by low maquis covered hills. Loafing about on the beach, the tranquility was shattered when a huge crocodile of German teenagers with massive rucsacs appeared over the headland and marched along the beach. We could'nt believe the size of their rucsacs. Geoff reckoned they must be moving house for someone locally!

Paddling on along the northern coast, the headwind gradually increased to force 6 with waves up to four feet breaking over our boats. We were determined to reach the Bay of Calvi that night and hugged the shore in a vain attempt to find more shelter from the wind. Just approaching the eastern tip of the bay I was creamed twice in succession by breaking waves and felt thoroughly misereable. Was this the Med of not? Calvi Bay looked distinctly uninviting - three miles of howling wind and breaking waves, but we ploughed across to the Citadel, our interest taken by a military plane dropping parachutists over the bay, 40 at a time. We were surprised that

.....they were jumping in such

they were jumping in such strong winds, but learned later from a Legionaire that they had had all sorts of problems. One unfortunately ending up crashing through the barracks roof in the army camp and breaking a leg. As we paddled across to the beach from the Citadel, the late sunlight was turning the snow on the high peaks to pink and oranges - quite breathtaking. Perhaps this sea canoeing lark was'nt so bad after all.

A deserted beach hut with a wooden balcony was our base for the next two days, as the wind increased even more. Anxious to move on again, we loaded the canoes and set off, only to discover our mistake as we rounded the Citadel headland into the teeth of a force 7. Two miles and an hour and a half later, we called it a day and landed on a shingly beach on LaRevelata headland. A curiously offensive smell pervaded the area, but we put the tent up anyway and had a much needed brew. It was only on gathering driftwood for the fire that we discovered a dead whale of all things, half buried in the shingle and emitting an almighty stink, only yards from our tent. It's a sign of how shattered we were that the tent stayed where it was!

How long could the wind keep on blowing like this was the main topic of conversation that night. It had now been blowing non-stop for three days. The next day it was blowing again, and we were forced to loaf around once more. The next day, however, it was calm and we were away early, steaming round La Revelata into a big swell. Magnificent cliffs reflected the swell as it surged in against the base and we kept well out from any clapotis effects. Landings were few and far between but by 4.30 pm we pulled into the Marine d'Elbo, a superb natural harbour and apparantly quite deserted. It was far and away the most impressive campsite - red sandstone outcrops everywhere, towering cliffs on all sides and fantastic sculptering effects produced caves and weird ridges. and who else but the big rucsacked Germans should be camping there!

We made tentative plans for an early start the next morning as we had the first of the west coast gulfs to cross. I felt a little apprehensive as we packed the canoes - the horizon still looked lumpy and overhead the clouds were flying along. As we rounded the headland and out into the open sea it became apparant we'd made a mistake in setting out. A narrow channel between the head and a large stack was funnelling the wind and waves and producing a desperately confused area of water. We paddled through it to try and get a view of the conditions round the corner. there was no chance so it was back to Elbo with the wind behind us for a change. The next morning we tried again. Without the wind it was marvellous - we were paddling so quickly that Robert reckoned we looked as though we owed money to someone! We made good time to Cargese and restocked on food, then set off again across the Gulf of Sagone.

A quartering sea made the boats broach slightly, and there was poor visibility for most of the afternoon, but by 7.30 pm we'd covered 30 miles and pulled into Capo di Fena feeling pleased to have got a full day in after so many days spent hanging around. Studying the map that night, we felt confident about our chances of finishing the trip. I pointed out a lighthouse we should pass on the next day, marked as a star on the map. "Is it a star of David?" Robert asked, "then it must be an Israelite!"

It rained all night, rattling on the nylon fly sheet of the tent and Geoff had periodic battles with giant toads trying to get at the food. Not the best preperation for crossing the Gulf of Ajaccio. As we paddled through the Iles de Sanguinaires, the wind started to freshen and we lost sight of the headland 15 miles away on the other side of the Gulf. The compasses came out for the first time to check the direction. We might have known - straight into the wind! It was a long hard crossing, with a big swell running into the Gulf, and periodic drenchings from breaking waves. We decided against trying to round Cap de Muni headland - huge breakers were booming in off the point and the whole area looked intimidating. We surfed in with the swell and found a camp site above a boulder beach after a tricky landing. A shortage of water was our only problem as we had planned to go further that day and had not had the chance to fill our containers.

With no water left the next morning, we had to make do with an orange each for breakfast before setting off to cross the next Gulf. It had rained all night again and still looked black and threatening, but the weather cleared during the crossing
.....and it turned out into a

beautiful day, with blue skies and no wind. We stopped for a much needed drink at the Capu di Senetose lighthouse at 4 pm. after 17 miles. This stretch of coast was marvellous with alternate rocky headlands and secluded sandy bays. After another five miles we pulled into the beach in the Gulf de Murtoli and camped in a hollow in the dunes. The sight of our wet gear hanging from the mast arrangement on Robert's canoe caused some amusement from French kids passing by.

The next morning, on what was to be the penultimate day, we were faced with a stretch of coastline I'd been looking forward to all of the trip. The South end of the Island is made up of white limestone and the cliffs that this produces around the Bonifacio area are quite remarkable. We came upon them suddenly as we rounded a headland to see them stretching away into the distant point marking the southern tip of Corsica. Away to our right Sardinia was clearly visible through the heat haze in the Straits of Bonifacio. It was a memorable moment as we realised that the trip was almost over. The massive caverns that are etched into the cliffs were clearly visible from a couple of miles away as we made our way quickly towards them. We paddled into the main cavern which goes back into the cliffs for a hundred yards or so to the point where the roof has collapsed, affording a view out to the sky hundreds of feet above. While inside, a boat full of tourists motored in, loud-speakers blaring - they seemed surprised to see three canoeists perched on a rock watching them. After a short paddle into Bonifacio, we pressed on around the southernmost point, through a jumble of incredible rock formations in a dramatic sunset, to camp looking out across the sea to Sardinia, and the islands scattered about in the Straits. It had been a marvellous day, rounded off by large bottles of French beer bought in Bonifacio.

It felt strange the next morning to think we were packing the boats for the last time. This was the 20th. day of the trip and we had only ten miles to the finish point at Gurgazu. True to form, as we turned the corner into the Gulf the wind was in our faces!

CANOEISTS : BARRY HOWELL - ULVERSTON, CUMBRIA
GEOFF COX - LANCASTER, LANCs
ROBERT LIVINGSTONE - NEWRY, N. IRELAND

NB If you are interested in seeing the slides (and hearing the full story!) then contact Barry Howell at 3, Stonydale, Croftlands, Ulverston, Cumbria.
Tel 0229 54700

CANOEISTS COMPENDIUM OF MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS - BRIEF DETAILS OF 1st EDITION

Over the last ten years there has been a terrific upsurge in canoeing in all forms, be it major expeditions or just a paddle on the local stream. New waters around the world are being paddled all the time from Greenland down to Cape Horn from Papua New Guinea to the jungles of South America.

Records are also being broken all the time, be it for distance or altitude or open sea crossings, what would have only a few years ago be deemed impossible is now being done on almost a routine basis!

This book includes details of not just expeditions or mammoth distances but details of rivers and seas that the average paddler may wish to undertake, a section of the book deals with the new designs now on the market, also with the host of new equipment that can compliment the paddler, another section deals with the history of the canoe, the earliest known expeditions, and an intriguing chapter on the use of canoes in warfare in the 19th. century

Obviously not all claims for inclusion will be published when set against claims already received or will be received but we do want to hear from paddlers none the less. The editors are looking for claims in the following categories

1. Major expeditions (descents/record attempts)
2. Sea Canoeing.
3. Surfing/tidal bores.
4. Exploratory/transcontinental journeys.

If YOU would like to be included write with your claim to: Editor (U.K.)
238, Birmingham Road, Redditch, Worcs., B97 6EL, England.

Tayvallich to Oban and return.
June 20th to June 26th, 1982.

It was Doctor Johnson who said that anyone who would go to sea for pleasure would go to hell for a pastime. When donning wet gear not much after seven on a chilly morning, one is only too ready to agree with him. Let me, however, assure anyone who may wish to emulate the exploits I am about to recount that it was'nt all hellish.

The party which started from CARSAIG BAY near TAYVALLICH about noon on Saturday June 20th, 1982 consisted of Allison Pendleton, (Huntsman), Ian Pendleton, (Umnak Icefloe), Anne Marie Booth, (Atlantic), Eric Totty, (Nordkapp), Zoe Gardiner, (General purpose touring kayak), David Rushfirth, (Huntsman).

Needless to say our arrival at that time at Garsaig was not the result of a sudden impulse but had come about only after dreaming and reading and planning over the years. In more recent times these thoughts had turned into practical preparation, most of which had been completed before coming on holiday. All that remained at Carsaig was to get the boats off the transport and to load them in the manner pre-arranged. The goodies and equipment wanted on voyage had been packed in the cars in boxes so that in the last minute rush nothing would be forgotten.

Each one of us had food in the boat to last a week with water for two days. We planned to be back at Carsaig Bay by the following Saturday. On the water at last the heavily laden kayak felt little different from her more usual day trip trim but she was quite a bit lower in the water. Later I would come to appreciate her increased stability in the loaded canoe state.

We passed between Carsaig Island and the mainland and were making good and happy progress when, much to our surprise and disappointment Anne Marie said that in fairness to the party she should return to Carsaig. She had noticed the warning signs of a recurrence of recent serious back trouble and could not risk further complications. Reluctantly we had to agree that her decision was sensible and Ian accompanied her back to Carsaig Bay. The rest of the party continued along the coast to CRINAN HARBOUR wher we had a relaxed interlude while waiting for Ian to rejoin.

Paddling again we looked at the entrance to the canal sea locks before crossing Loch Crinan and entering LOCH CRAIGHISH. ISLAND MACASKIN gave promise of an attractive camp site and after some reconnaissance I landed and climbing a low bank was surprised to see before me a small bay which offered a perfect site. To reach it we had only to paddle a few more yards around a small rocky promontory. Zoe, who had elected not to take a tent, bivouacked in a partially ruined house some distance wway.

Next morning after an early start we arrived, according to plan, at the DORUS MOR at low water slack. Our passage of this well known spot was uneventful with the sea like a calm lake. Some of our number said they doubted if the Dorus Mor EVER did anything and suggested that the hazards of the spot existed only in the minds of imaginative canoeists. This impression was to be corrected later in the week.

Throughout the week it was my responsibility to work out matters concerning the tides. We were working from Liverpool tide table and first one had to correct this to Dover and B.S.T. and then apply the appropriate correction for the place where you happened to be. The tide races such as the Dorus Mor do not, however, change direction at high and low water but at some time before or after. This additional factor may be as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Even after you have got all that right, wind and barometric pressure may further alter the timing. In consequence, experience has taught me that if one is approaching a spot where timing is vital such as an eight knot tide race, it is best to get there half an hour early even if this may involve waiting around a bit. My nautical library, as it was soon

nicknamed

nicknamed, including the rather bulky Clyde Cruising Club Sailing Directions, travelled throughout the trip in Ians Umnak Iceflow and finished in perfect condition absolutely unmarked as the saying goes. This spoke highly of the efficiency of the craft and her skipper.

Having passed the Dorus Mor at low water we were now favoured with the north going flood. After keeping inside REISA HHIC PHAIDEAN ISLAND we set course direct for SHUNA COTTAGE a mile north of SHUNA POINT. This trudge of nearly five miles over open water did not please Zoe who said if we were going to go straight up the middle and miss the scenery she might as well have come on a big yacht.

Sunshine encouraged an extended stop on the West coast of Shuna for lunch. Soon after getting started again we sighted two canoes approaching us from the direction of TOBORONCHY across the sound. These two, out on a day trip, were the only canoes we came across during the whole week. With the tide in our favour we were soon past TORSÁ and into SEIL SOUND.

Water containers were filled by kind permission of the proprietors of the pub at CLACHEN BRIDGE. As the tap water was in the gents toilet Zoe had to forego a little of her valued independence and let male members of the party replenish her water stock. Predictably this incident was not allowed to pass without the usual remarks about sex discrimination!

The party managed to drag itself away from Clachan Bridge and out of the Sound before the tide turned against it and we then turned south and camped at the end of the PUILLADUBHRAIN yacht anchorage with the Clachen Bridge pub less than a mile away by publick footpath over the hill.

Next morning the wind was strong from the north east and Zoe and Ian had a somewhat hectic paddle out to INSH ISLAND and after lunch we all got away heading north. We were into the teeth of the wind and the crossing of the mouth of LOCH FEOCHAN did'nt please everybody. In a little rocky bay on MINARD POINT we stopped for a break. The calm and the warm sun sapped resolution and suggestions of immediate camping began to pass around. After a reconnaissance as far as the narrows of the Loch we finally came back to a smooth lawn like site at AN DUNAN.

Next morning it was decided that we should circumnavigate the ISLAND OF KERRERA and come back to the same camp site. Allison had decided that she would not canoe that day and would stay on the site and sunbathe. From Minard Point the rest of us set course direct to RUBHA NA FOUNDAIN at the south west corner of Kerrera. The wind was still fairly fresh and from the north and as we came on to the west coast of the island we found ourselves plugging into a moderate chop which came on us at first dead ahead and later on the port bow after we had rounded NUBHA NA LICE. We stopped for lunch on the Dutchmans Cap type island of EILEAN NAN GAMHNA which some of us thoroughly explored to the intense annoyance of the resident bird population.

In the skerries further east seals bestirred themselves and flopped into the water as we approached. Soon we rounded the north end of the island and, crossing Oban Bay, landed in the harbour. We took it in turns to watch the kayaks while other members of the party disappeared into the town. The fish and chip shop opened at four o'clock just in time for a sampling of this luxury before paddling south west down the SOUND OF KERRERA. At our camp site a beautiful quiet evening was brought to a fitting close by the sight of a spectacular sunset over Mull. Just previously we had enjoyed a conversation with two people who were regular visitors to a farm near our camp site and who had come out for an evening stroll.

The morning was fine with a slight wind and our plan was to pass to the west of Seil Island. We rounded the RUBHA GARBH AIRDE and paddled towards EASDALE enthralled by the strange contorted rock formations. These, we were told, were the result of volcanic action and the subsequent erosion of softer rock. INCH ISLAND passed to starboard and not long after we were in Easdale Harbour. There

we stopped

we stopped and topped up our water supplies. This little place was once well known for its slate quarries but has now been turned into a tourist centre. After a quick look round we gravitated to a cafe. Mild remarks on my part about tide times and associated matters were brushed aside and when finally we paddled out of Easdale Sound we were a little behind schedule.

Our course now was straight for CUAN SOUND and as we came abreast of CUAN POINT I began to see signs on the water that told me that the slack water period was already ending and that the current was about to turn against us. At this early stage in the flood, however, we made good progress and at only one place while rounding the RUBHA BREAC did we have to paddle hard.

Passing the north point of TORSA close in we went straight across the Sound and stopped for a second lunch and coffee in PORT NA MOR/CHID BAY. On rounding DEGNISH POINT we became exposed to an increasing east wind and after crossing KILCHOAN BAY we stopped at the south end of EILEAN COLTAIR for a conference. The decision which emerged was to paddle upwind and across LOCH MELFORT to the RUBH AN AIRD FHADA and there camp.

The next morning the wind was stronger and we rode on the waves down the Loch to the RUBH A CHNAIP which we rounded to face the wind into ASKNISH BAY. The obvious strategy was now to keep in fairly close to the shore and thus get shelter from the increasing easterly wind. As we went south towards CRAIGNISH POINT I noticed that those yachts which were not sheltering were running under small foresails only.

Having arrived at Craignish Point and rounded RUBH NA TRAIKHE in good time to get through the Dorus Mor at slack water some perverse collective will in the party made us stop in the little bay and indulge ourselves in an extended coffee break. On the water again we attempted to round the RUBH AN LIONAIDH. The east wind was bringing big waves across Loch Craignish but even so I did not realise that things were going wrong until, paddling hard, I suddenly noticed that I was actually receding from it in the direction of the middle of the Dorus Mor. We had cut things too fine with our coffee break plus the fact that the wind had probably made the current direction change sooner than normal. There was nothing we could do but paddle into the slack and camp for the night on Craignish Point. This, however, was not all loss as we were able to study the Dorus Mor at close quarters and observe what happened at various stages of the tide.

Following an early morning start we rounded RUBH AN LIONAIDH on the first of the ebb stream and went by LIATH SGEIR BHEAG and EILEAN NAN COINEAN to cross the mouth of LOCH CRINAN to ARDNOE POINT. Further south a landing was made for coffee but to the discomfort of some and the amusement of others this idea was hastily abandoned when clouds of midges attempted to profit by the occasion. Most of the party paddled round CARS/IG ISLAND and there collected an assortment of flotsam but I decided that after a week in the boat enough was enough and paddled straight for Carsaig.

We were back, and on time, it was only mid-day. There was still a week of the holiday left which for me was spent sightseeing with a little mountaineering mixed in. I will leave it to others to describe the canoeing during this period.

OCEAN KAYAK RACING - A MODEST PROPOSAL

Marathon or Long Distance Kayak Racing, which has been popular in many countries for decades, has recently gained the official recognition of the International Canoe Federation. In addition to this move from within the regular racing community, there is also recently held 'round Isle of Wight race, prompted more by sea tourers than by L.D. types. The ICF marathon rules permit the course, which must be at least 20 km for an international event, to consist of open sea paddling as well as rivers and lakes.

The ICF boat dimensions are the same as for sprint racing: 520 X 51 cm for singles, 650 X 55 cm for doubles. The K2 specifications seem to be adequate, as few sea touring doubles exceed 21 feet, but there are many commonly used singles that are over 17 feet and at least one that is under 20 inches in beam. A maximum length and minimum beam that would include all the longer boats I can think of right now would be 580 X 48 cm, or about 19 feet by 19 inches. I doubt if many folks would want to slice through a short steep chop in a hull any longer or narrower than that! To avoid the development of boats with radically asymmetric hulls or minimal initial stability one might want to have a requirement that the minimum beam measuring point be within 50 cm of amidships and that the beam at the 10 cm waterline be at least 38 cm. A minimum weight requirement of about 15 kg (about 33 lbs) would discourage the building of boats that were too costly (kevlar, S-glass, epoxy and so on) or too flimsy. Since a high cruising speed is a sought-after quality in a sea touring kayak and an offshore racing kayak would have to be strong and seaworthy, the current crop of expedition boats would be the first generation of ocean racers and subsequent racing designs should still be well within the capabilities of skilled recreational paddlers. The USCA 18' 6" competition cruiser type (32" at the 4" WL) can be paddled by just about any good pair of canoeists despite bearing the stigma of being a "racing canoe". Similarly, some of the more docile wild water racing kayaks would make pretty good sea boats of their high decks didn't give them so much windage. Fast boats are fun.

No doubt some of you are dismayed by competition having reared its ugly head in these pageswell. it would have happened sooner or later, human nature being what it is. At least we can try to have boat specifications that result in high performance touring kayaks rather than full bore racing machines that are too high strung for casual cruising. One can obtain some very fine touring boats built to ICF specs. and they aren't that much slower than the gold medal winning racers that have evolved to suit the millpond conditions found at international sprint regattas.

Written by JCC and poached from ANorAK No.5

From John Powell, Woodford Green, Essex.

Dear John,

.....Have often thought a good little article would be one which describes the various types of spray decks - shapes and materials - and which is the most effective as a "sea keeper out". All canoeists I speak to seem to be looking for an improvement on the one they use.

I feel unable to write this article myself, having insufficient knowledge. Perhaps if you put a note in the newsletter asking members to let you know which they found the best - then publish the result.

John Powell.

Ed's note. This is, indeed, a good idea. If any of you out there are prepared to write in with any observations on spray decks I will publish.

LIGHTWEIGHT FOODS FOR THE SEA KAYAKER.

On many tours and expeditions a good lightweight and versatile nutrient source would be welcome to any sea kayaker. Such foods should be lightweight, digestible, none-spoiling, high in essential ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ vitamins, and provide a complete source of protein (supply all essential amino acids). It would also be helpful if they tasted good and were easy to use.

Since becoming a vegetarian several years ago I've found several types of food that might meet fellow kayakers needs.

1. NUTRITIONAL YEAST.

This yeast is a virtual powerhouse of nutrients - it is different from other types of yeast - brewers, tortula and the variety used in baking. It is grown in a molasses solution, quickly heated and transformed into a golden elixir that is partially flaked and powdered. It is an excellent source of the B vitamins and is between 40 to 50 percent complete protein by weight. It has a nutty, cheesy flavour that goes well sprinkled over vegetables and salads, into soups and gravies, or just eaten plain. Yeast is quite obviously a highly concentrated food, so start out with small quantities to allow your body to adjust to it.

2. SPIRULINA

This is a type of plankton or algae that is commercially produced in pollution free ponds and lakes (mostly in Mexico). It has been recently touted as the most perfect and valuable food on earth but has been around (unknown to us) for quite some time. It contains an astronomical 70% protein and contains all types of much needed enzymes and amino acids essential to life. It is also reportedly gives one a subtle 'energy boost' but I have'nt really noticed this effect myself when I have used spirulina. It is most commonly used in tablet form but it is also available in powder. It has a high chlorophyll content with the characteristic 'green' look and smell. Spirulina can sustain life by itself for remarkable periods of time, making it an excellent 'survival food' to have aboard for those longer tours. It can be used pretty much like yeast, as additions to other foods or consumed by itself.

3. FALOFEL

This typically Middle Eastern staple is quite tasty but not too common here - it is usually seen as Falofel balls - I buy mine in powder form and mix with water to make patties or balls which are great fried in butter or oil. High in protein and calories, it would be great to have on hand to liven up canned or dried chow.

4. TVP (TEXTURED VEGETABLE PROTEIN)

This is made from the venerable soybean and comes in small chunk or granular form. It has to be hydrated (soaked in water) before use and can be substituted effectively anywhere hamburger is used (i.e. spaghetti sauce, chilli, burgers, etc.). Very versatile and easy to work with.

I can get all these items at local food co-operative that I'm a member of - You should be able to get them at most good health food stores or co-ops in your area.

Check them out - they could become good freinds when you take your next kayak trip.

Jerry Welch, Akron, Ohio, U.S.A.

REPORT ON THE B.C.U. SEA TOURING COMMITTEE MEETING - 18th. SEPTEMBER, 1982
AT THE ANGLESEY SCHOOL OF SEA CANOEING, N. WALES.

It's been a great weekend and I am now recovering back at work. I thought you might like to hear all about it so here is a short report.

When the Committee last met at Calshot, Southampton, in order to 'pass motions' it was determined to coincide our meetings with some attraction in order to motivate members to show up. We scheduled our next meeting for the 18th. September on Anglesey from where, as you know, there is some exciting canoeing to be had.

Our host for the weekend was Nigel Dennis who kindly put his School of Sea Canoeing at our disposal. Facilities here are ideal and this allowed us to enjoy a relaxed and successful weekend. Nigel and his School are situated at Trearrdur Bay only yards away from the sea. There is a swimming pool among the range of facilities and though it was not put to use as part of this weekend, one or two found a few minutes for a quick dip.

Some time ago I wrote to all the Committee members and Regional Representatives to the Sea Touring Committee and invited them to the weekend and explained we would be doing some sea canoeing as well as 'passing motions' (in fact I almost did both simultaneously as we played in the overfalls not far from South Stack).

I suggested that each member bring up two or three fellow paddlers with them and several took this offer up. Consequently by 10.00 am on the Saturday morning eighteen of us were assembled at the school. After consulting the tide tables we decided to paddle from Cemaes Bay to Holyhead via the Skerries.

First we needed to drop everyone and their canoes off at Cemaes Bay and then ferry transport about so that it was left at the Coastguard Station at Holyhead. Eventually we left Cemaes Bay shortly after High Water and as the tides were on springs we were swept along at a rate of knots towards the Skerries. First we heard the booming of the fog horn; visibility was down to about a mile as a thick murky mist shrouded everything. Soon the Island and the light house came into view. It seemed a short time indeed before we were caught in the tide rips around the Island and it was evident we weren't going to make a landing. This only went for two of us as the other sixteen paddled strong and hard going well north of the Skerries to be swept down to the seaward side to effect a landing.

The two of us set our compasses on 160° and allowed the tide to bounce us through some overfalls and eventually into Holyhead.

No sooner had we landed than the main party came into view and by 5.30 pm we were all safely gathered in. So was a dinghy missing for over twentyfour hours with it's four occupants. We had been asked to look out for them. In fact as we landed the Coastguards asked three of the party to effect a search from canoes for two missing divers who were later rescued several miles from their point of dive. It appears there are few dull moments off the Anglesey coast even though the holiday season is virtually over.

After our meal (catering courtesy of Jenny, my wife and Margerat, Dick Richards wife - for which we are very grateful) we got down to the business of our meeting. Chaired by 'yours truly' we got through a full and interesting agenda including plans to lay on sea canoeing meets of varying levels at different venues through out next year - so watch for the B.C.U. Calendar and for general press releases.

Naturally we all adjourned to the Beach Hotel after the meeting and during this time I was enthralled to hear first hand of Duncan Richards solo voyage from Sitka in Alaska. I am looking forward to receiving Duncans report for inclusion in the ASKC newsletter.

Derek Hutchinson had also spent some of his summer canoeing Alaska (in fact he met up with Duncan out there) and he amused us by his stories of the American

sea canoeists who occasionally use sophisticated kites to propel them along at a great rate. It seems once the kite leads are strapped to your forearms you have a total committment as only when you're dragged up the cliff side with bits of kayak flying in all directions is it remotely possible to cut a lead free and hopefully come to a painful and grinding halt before the wind changes direction to blow you back over the cliff again. Hey Ho!!

Once back from the pub Nigel Foster made with his incredible sea canoeing stories all backed up with movie film, slides and music. A great show Nigel and thanks. This went on till the early hours of the morning.

By 9.30 the next morning we were all ready for some more sea canoeing. As you can see, very little time was wasted. Off we went to Portdafarch from where it was only a short distance to the tide race and overfalls. Being spring conditions they were running well and there were many eddies, whirls, stoppers and standing waves all mixed up with confused water. After almost an hour playing among this lot some of us decided to take in the Stacks and this we duly did. This part of the coast line never fails to fascinate me and the run through the gap between South Stack and Holy Island, though calm today, can be quite exciting. The rock formation along the cliffs, a play ground for climbers as a rule, is quite exciting.

We returned to Portdafarch through calmer water and proceeded on the first stages of our respective journeys home by changing and lashing kayaks on to cars. It was at this time that some one commented on the two instructors about to take a 'bevvy' of youngsters on the sea. Here they were, all in the right gear, all raring to go, perhaps getting their first taste of being master of their own craft on the ocean. Tomorrows sea canoeists perhaps. We salute the two in charge - unsung heroes, the back bone of the coaching scheme who, unlike myself who seems to spend too much time writing about it, actually get out there and do it. Good luck to them.

In summary a great weekend in good company. At last it seems there is some real gain from being a B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee member. Instead of simply allowing you to attend 'another committee meeting' it also allows you the special attraction of being able to canoe with others who have had a long and interesting history of sea canoeing and from whom there is a lot of pleasure to be gleaned.

So why not get on to your S.T.C. Regional Representative and persuade him to take you along to the next meeting. You will enjoy it. The committee meeting itself is usually open to you to attend - basically as an observer, though as long as I am Chairman, any valid contribution will always be well received. This way I hope to attract 'new blood' to our committee - so watch this space for the date and venue of our next A.G.M.

Finally, before I list those who were present, on behalf of us all I wish to thank Nigel Dennis for allowing us the uninhibited use of his school of Sea Canoeing - a great venue Nigel, and we'll be knocking on your door again soon, you can be sure.

Thanks to all of you who turned up and helped to make it a fantastic weekend, especially to you Nigel Foster for the entertainment Saturday night/Sunday morning.

As I am writing this Monday afternoon immediately after the weekend the wind is blowing strong, - we got our trips in just in time. It must be true that the sun does indeed shine on the righteous!

Present: Dick, Duncan and Adam Richards - Nigel Foster - Derek Hairon - Derek Hutchinson - Keith Maslen - Chris Childs - Eric Totty - Sam Cook - Alan Rees - Dave Evans - Colin Tee - Pete Towner - Dave Hill - Nigel Dennis - Tim Jadwat - Kath - Sharon.

Derek Hutchinson returned recently from the United States and Canada where he has been doing some lectures and running some coaching sessions. He has also brought back an interesting tip which I am sure will be of interest to ASKC members.

"While I was in Victoria I had the pleasure of meeting and paddling with quite a few of the Ocean Kayaking Association Of British Columbia. When we were launching one day I noticed a lady using what I thought was a screwdriver to tighten up a VCP hatch. It was only when I looked closer that I realised it was a screwdriver with a socket head and that the hatch's original spring band had been replaced by a large jubilee clip. This was tightened by a small hexagonal nut instead of the usual notched screw. The idea was the brainchild of Fred Potter who is President of the O.K.A.B.C. I only wish I'd thought of it - I'd have sold the idea to Frank Goodman!! The width of the securing band of the jubilee clip fits nicely into the recess round the hatch lid. The socket screwdriver - on a string is held by shock cords under the deck and behind the seat.

I personally think that this modification gives Frank's hatches the edge on the Henderson Screw Hatch.

Thinks : 'only wish somebody would manufacture the old aluminium cam lever hatch again! ".

D.C.H.

From Bernd Chilian, Falkensteiner Ufer 32, Hamburg.

Dear John,

I refer to the information of John Powell in the last newsletter and wish to inform you that the German made sea kayak as described is a well known type. The boat's type is called "HABEL" (after one of the smallest North Frisian Hulligans) and made by a private company run by Mr. Juergen Pietsch, 2251 Buetjebuell, W. Germany. The boat's rudder arrangement is indeed unique. But it ~~is~~ also has its disadvantages which should not be hidden away. One of these is that the rudder will be completely blocked in landing over muddy grounds which can be ~~xxxxxx~~ in certain situations perilous. Nevertheless, if you are only in rocky areas it can be well recommended. The price for a brand new boat is expensive, but do not forget there is also a great second hand market for sea kayaks in Germany which can be utilized.

As to the workmanship I wish to communicate that the German sea kayaks materials represent the state of the art at present. The excellent polyester materials composites as well as the production facilities have been derived from our aircraft industry with which most of the German manufacturers established a firm relationship in order to get always the latest know-how. This means for us sea canoeists that we always get the best materials together with high stability (safety aspects of the aircraft production) long life and light weight. To give you an idea of what the difference is between English and German sea kayaks in design weight read as follows:

GERMAN
Lettmann

Type	Beam width cms	Length cms	Weight kgs	Design weight per cm in grs.
Atlantik I	60	500	19	38
Atlantik II (2 seater)	80	550	28	50
Nordstern	57	550	20	36
Asiak	55	515	19	37

Type	Beam width cms	Length cms	Weight kgs	Design weight per cm in gr s.
<u>TM CANOESPORTS</u>				
Loisach	60	450	12	27
Clipper	60	470	16	34
Express	56	500	18	36
<u>UNITED KINGDOM</u>				
McNulty Huntsman	58	487	19	39
Valley Nordkapp	54	545	24	44
Anas Acuta	55	523	18	34
P & H Umnak	60	469	23	49
Iceflow	60	508	25	49

This schedule is not complete but I think it covers the most important types and manufacturers. For the German type I only mentioned the normal gel-coated materials used and not the much lighter and stronger like epoxide or kevlar fabricated which is also much more expensive. Moreover the research by our technicians brought out that the additional weight for your kayaks did not give the boats more stability but less capacity for stowage. This statement is only valid for sea kayaks because I am not familiar with any other type and so far have had no experience with other types.

Our materials are much more flexible while the stiffness of English sea kayaks very often lead to severe damage if you ground on rock.

On the other hand I wish also to state that the design of the English sea kayaks is really superior and our design against yours looks poor. So we should try to get a combination of the English design and the German material and production know-how. I think that really would give advantage to every sea canoeist.

By the way, if anybody is interested in Hamburg we will have again the greatest boat fair in Europe - "International Boat Show" - from 23rd. to 31st. October, 1982. Nearly every German kayak manufacturer will have a stand there. The ferry connection Harwich-Hamburg will have special offers for it, as I was informed. (Naturally most stands feature other types of boats like sailing craft, motor boats, but also for surfers and equipment sellers of all types of equipment). So who is interested to get the know-how of latest development in equipment, e.g. flares, life jackets, radio beacons, sea worthy clothes, ect. Come and see the manufacturers to prove my statements wrong. In any case I will help anybody who is interested in coming over. A lot of English equipment and boats manufacturers will be here also - Henderson, the manufacturer of the famous waterproof hatches with covers. You should have heard their statement about their products being used on sea kayaks).

Let me also make the statement that I personally buy my equipment from all over Europe, but take very much care that I only get the best equipment at reasonable prices. For you German equipment is damned expensive but interested persons I can also recommend the second hand market.

Kind regards,
Bernd Chilian.

From Stephen Dorrity, Guernsey, Channel Islands.

Dear John,

Just a few lines to inform you of my change of address and to let you know about a small trip I completed on August Bank Holiday with some friends.

The trip was from Guernsey via Sark to the Ecrehou's, a group of rocks six miles NE of Jersey, and back via the same route.

There were three reasons for doing this trip; first and most important - why not!, secondly to meet up with some Jersey paddlers and thirdly, the Jersey Canoe Club had not done it first - not an easy thing to find round here.

Four of us paddled from Guernsey: myself, John Kreckler, Gary Hicks, and Paul Wiggins.

We left from Bordeaux Harbour on Friday evening of the August Bank Holiday weekend and paddled down to Sark, on the wrong compass bearing!, but it must have been a good one 'cos we arrived alright!!

After a bivvy on the beach overnight we set off for Les Ecrehou's. It was calm and sunny and John was sick, - he doesn't like it unless its at least force five. The crossing was uneventful and we spent the time counting jelly fish (62) and taking pictures of each other standing up in Nordkapps'.

The accommodation at Les Ecrehou's is the customs hut and it is quite civilised with bunks, and although small is dry. In any event we met up with the Jersey contingent and got to know each other with the help of about eight gallons of wine which appeared from nowhere.

The following day meetings were held at various intervals to discuss the weather which, although idyllic at the time, was deteriorating slowly.

When the time came to leave we decided to try for Sark but planned two escape routes to Jersey just in case. As it happened we crossed without any mishaps until 7.00pm when still about two miles from Sark it blew up a force 6 gusting 7 plus and became very dark. It took a good hour to paddle the last stretch going flat out and we had to negotiate a hasty stretch of water off Creux Harbour in the dark - it goes through there at about four knots.

So it was that four tired but jubilant canoeists crept up on an astonished boat owner in Creux Harbour. He thought we were totally mad but he very kindly invited us in for a coffee to warm us up.

Unfortunately the following day was worse with high gusting winds and we decided to catch the ferry home. The following Saturday we travelled back to Sark to pick up the canoes and complete the circle. The total distance incidentally was approximately 56 naut. miles.

The kayaks we used were: Nordkapps and one Iceflow.

Incidentally if anyone is interested in canoeing around these Islands I would be pleased to help in any way I can. The conditions around the Islands provide everything from simple through to advanced trips.

Thats all for now. All the best and keep up the good work,
Steve Dorrity.

We arrived at Arisaig, a few miles to the south of Mallaig, shortly before 9.00 am after the long overnight haul up from Essex. The journey was familiar to both of us as we had done it several times over the past few years on canoeing and climbing trips. This was the first time, however, that either Martin or I had tried to combine the two activities in one expedition.

We hoped to traverse the two Coolin ridges of the Hebrides, those of Rhum and Skye, connecting them by paddle power. Martin had been to neither island before while I had visited both by more conventional transport. I knew the Rhum Coolins were a straightforward proposition, largely a long walk, and we both anticipated that the real mountain challenge would come on Skye. Before getting to grips with any mountains though, we had to get to the islands which they dominated

It took over an hour to load Eric and Huey, our two Nordkapps, buy last minute provisions and check that the car was'n't going to be in anybody's way where we had left it. By 10.30 we were paddling across the sheltered waters of Loch nan Ceall, through the archipelago which guards it's entrance and out into the sound which separates Eigg from the mainland. The wind was a southerly force 4 and as this was the first time Eric had cruised the open sea - or I had paddled a Nordkapp - we both found it needed a fair amount of concentration to maintain a course for the north east tip of Eigg. I made a mental note to redistribute the weight before the next days paddling. About three hours steady strokework saw us off the north east coastline of Eigg, down which we worked as far as a small sandy bay to the south west of Kildonan. Here we found the perfect bivvy shelter in the shape of the football changing room, otherwise known as the 'Eigg Hilton'. The lack of a door and windows was quickly solved by Martin's expert scavenging of scrap plastic and fishboxes. After a brew and general sorting out we set off for one of our subsiderary objectives, the Sgurr of Eigg, an impressive beaky bit of basalt 393 metres in height. We arrived at the summit without difficulty and by 7.00 pm we were brewing up in the 'Hilton' feeling pleased with our first days achievements.

Martin listened to the 6.15 weather forecast the next morning while I dozed. Not too promising - southerly 5 to 6. We decided to have a minor lie in before making for Rhum via Muck. In the event we paddled direct to Rhum as it would have meant hard work against the wind. The south coast of Eigg is an inhospitable shoreline of outlying rocks and basalt cliffs, dominated by the Sgurr. With an onshore wind Eric and I felt that this was the challenge enough, though Martin and Huey took it in their stroke. Fortunately, as we headed north and across the Sound of Rhum, the wind eased and with it now behind us we made good time to Rhum, accompanied by flights of fulmars curious as to who and what we were.

The cliffs of our second island were impressive, rising sheer from the water, Martin and Huey appearing dwarfed at their base. The wind and sea conditions continued to die away as we happily pottered along, entering Loch Scresort and a bivvy site at Kinloch with the gentlest of swells and not a breath of wind.

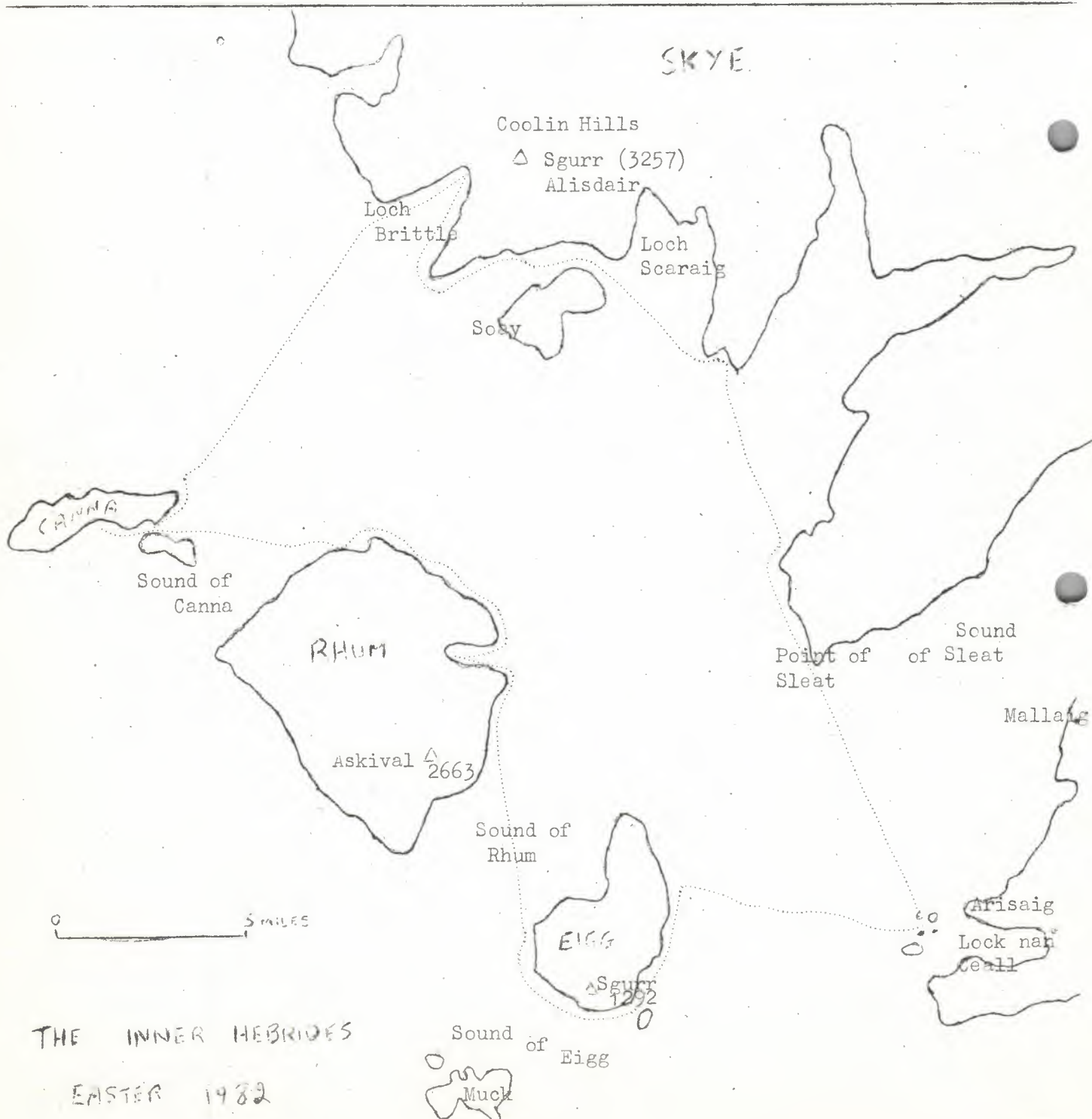
The following day was fine - hazy and no wind - and the traverse of the Rhum Coolins was achieved without difficulty. The six peaks took us six hours of pleasant walking interspersed with mild scrambling. We dropped down to the bothy at Dibidil from Sgurr nan Gillean in the mid afternoon. The sun was warm so after the inevitable brew we read and sunbathed. Martin's liking for this occupation was considerably diminished by the sheep ticks roaming hungrily over his karrimat in search of a meal.

Tuesday morning dawned calm and an 8.00 am start from the bothy saw us back at Kinloch just before midday. After making a few purchases at the local shop we set out at 1.30 pm for Canna in a flat calm. Patches of mist between Rhum and Skye prevented us from seeing our next mountain objective but the coastline of Rhum was interesting enough. We had a photographic session with a seal colony and spotted red deer on the hill slopes. We pulled in at Kilmory on a beautiful sandy beach for a break and found a herd of red deer grazing only a few metres from the beach itself. After a short break we carried on across the Sound of Canna in which I managed to catch a couple of pollock, one of them on a swivel without a hook.

"It must be Irish", said Martin.

We ate well that night. - fresh winckles for starters, poached pollock with fresh veg. washed down with a bottle of white wine. We could'nt manage the sweet. The moon was full and the sea a flat calm when we finally retired to bed. We did consider a night crossing to Skye as conditions were so good but full stomachs promoted a delightful feeling of idleness.

The 6.15 weather forecast dispelled any feeling of lethargy - a northerly gale 7 to 8 expected 'later' meant we had to get a move on if we were to get across to Skye. We set off shortly after eight with mild westerly breeze and low swell. The sky was grey. The wind soon died away, however, and the two mile crossing accomplished without incident. By 1.00pm our bivvy was erected at Glenbrittle. The forecast was accurate and that afternoon we endured a battering from a good force 7 gusting 8 with the occasional shower thrown in. Most people on the camp site had their tents facing northwards up the valley, which caused some to suffer badly that night. One brand new tent was demolished completely.



The bivvy sheet impressively held it's own despite the onslaught, though Martin's confidence in it was bolstered by the Goretex bivvy bag he claimed to be 'testing'.

The Coolins emerged from their cloud the following morning draped in a thin coating of fresh snow. The wind was still strong and the forecast unpromising so we decided on a rest day and resolved to find the nearest pub.

We had little time to spare for haning around and thought the Coolins deserved 'a go' even if the weather conditions were poor. On Thursday night we packed our gear, taking enough for an overnight bivvy should it be necessary. We also had a 9 ml rope and a few slings. I had assured Martin that Easter in Scotland was always fine and so we had'nt brought along any ice gear, nor would it have been of any use on thin fresh snow.

Getting up at 4.30 am was an effort but once on our way, with the Coolins clear of cloud under a bright starlit predawn sky, lethargy fell away. Unfortunately, by the time we were halfway up Garsbheinn we were back in the clag and not long after the snow showers returned. We plodded along the ridge with the occasional breaks in the cloud as far as the T.D. gap. This particular notch in the ridge was the crux. We peered in vain for the allegedly easy chimney on the far side - it all looked cold, wet and slippery with its plastering of fresh snow. Discretion dictated retreat and after a dull trudge we arrived back at the campsite at about 2.30. A few drinks in the pub that night rendered us more philosophical about our lack of success.

The tide persuaded us to make a late start the following day and after an initial horrendous hours paddling out of Loch Brittle itself, with a strong northerly breeze and south-west swell creating waves, we had a fair passage to the Point of Sleat - 23 miles in six hours paddling. The scenery along this stretch of coastline was superb with fantastic views to the north of the Red and Black Coolins looking Artic in their wintery coats.

Towards the end of the afternoon we found a sheltered bivvy site almost on the Point of Sleat itself, equipped with plenty of driftwood for a cooking fire and after dinner amusement. Our evening meal was followed by a picture postcard Hebridean sunset.

The last day provided an exhilarating crossing of the Sound of Sleat, the northerly winds again assisting us. Sky, sea and land were a cold grey, but occasionally the sun broke out and the mainland hills turned green and brown. Martin, with his surfing experience, was soon gaining on me but charitably hung back when mid-crossing nervousness struck me as it sometimes does when equidistant from all points of land! Eventually we reached the islets guarding the entrance to Loch nan Ceall and we had a flat water paddle to Arisaig, only to arrive at low tide and have to wade through thick glutinous mud.

We had'nt achieved all our objectives, but who cares! The sea and mountains are always there. We did have a worth while expedition and learnt a lot about the area, our boats and ourselves for the next time.

From John Hicks, South Australia.

Dear John,

.....David Nicolson and I did the Bathurst- Melville Island trip in the May holidays but ran out of time. We plan to go back next May and finish it off. Very interesting country up there. The tides in the springs run from over 27 feet to 8 inches in five and half hours and the reefs at low tide dry out over a mile so it makes planning very interesting. The place is full of crocodiles which you are not allowed to shoot except in self defence so sleeping is a fairly exciting business. Our trip was described as shotgun canoeing and that is a fair description. Pump action shot gun out on the deck ready to grab, loaded powerhead to hand - all the fun of the fair. I will try and find time to write it all up for the ASKC some time. But the 30 C, clear skies, beautiful coral and great

fishing have their attractions. We both paddled new Icefloes - superb boats.

John Hicks.

HELP!

BRIDLED GUILLEMOT SURVEY.

There have been three previous surveys of bridled guillemots organised by Dr. H.N. Southern. The first was in 1939, the second in 1948 and the third in 1959. The fourth survey is being conducted in 1983. Last year a large number of guillemot colonies were visited throughout the north Atlantic to record the proportion of bridled birds. The main objective was to obtain data from as many colonies as possible in order to make comparisons with previous surveys. We were particularly keen to have counts from these colonies which had been counted in survey 3, and in this respect, due to the efforts of a large number of people we have been most successful. However, to complete the survey we need data in 1983 from the following colonies:

WALES - Puffin Island, Caernarvonshire.

OUTER HEBRIDES, Scotland - St. Kilda, Sula Sgeir.

ICELAND - Westmann Islands.

SOUTHERN BALTIC - Bornholm

ARTIC RUSSIA- Any Colonies.

The Seabird Group is prepared to provide some financial support for parties prepared to visit any of these colonies to count bridled guillemots. In addition we would be most grateful for counts at any other guillemot colonies, especially in Eire.

If you are interesting in participating in the survey and are likely to be visiting any of the above areas, please contact the survey organiser:

Dr. T.R. Birkhead, Zoology Dept. The University, Sheffield, S10 2TN, England.

SEYCHELLES The following is an extract from a Seychelles local paper about Verney Cresswell's crossing by kayak - Mahe to Praslin.

Possibly the first ever crossing of the sea between Mahe and Praslin by an Eskimo designed kayak was completed in six hours.

Setting out from North East Point into one of the most colourful wonders of creation, the sunrise, the sea glass smooth except for occasional slight ripples. Verney Cresswell was provided with racing conditions.

He was able to punch his way non stop through the smooth waters until he reached Praslin. Only the lazy antics of a school of porpoises gorging themselves on mackerel, undisturbed by the kayak passing through their midst, brought any distractions from an otherwise perfect crossing.

The journey was completed so quickly that only the Baie Ste. Anne police and a handful of people were there to greet the sleek fibre glass kayak as it glided to a halt at the police jetty in the harbour.

From Praslin, Verney Cresswell visited La Digue and other neighbouring islands though by this time quite rough sea as the south east winds began to blow.

With the winds increasing the return journey to Mahe took eight hours of gruelling paddling as the kayak was pushed in a wide arc by the wind and waves towards Silhouette, entering Mahe at some 90° difference from the original compass setting

An interesting discovery was that porpoises allowed the kayak to pass through their ranks without changing their pattern of behaviour, and that when some four miles from Mamelles rock, sharks swam unconcerned beneath the canoe without attempting to make any form of contact with it.

Taken from the 'Nation' - Samedi 1er mai.
