

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.

Editor and secretary:
John J. Ramwell.
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal,
Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire,
United Kingdom.

From Me (Editorial)

I realise that you are due to receive this Newsletter in April, but as I have it ready and as there some dates you ought to have now re: courses - well, here it is! We had a successful Stand at the recent Canoe Exhibition - thanks to my many helpers, in particular Jenny, my wife. Our membership list is the longest one yet, I hope you find it useful for making contacts.

On the back of this page you will find details re: the 5th. Internat. Sea Kayaking Symposium scheduled for next November. Already I have arranged for two excellent speakers from the Royal Geographical Society to address us, so, BE THERE!

Space precludes me from writing an introduction to this Newsletter, let it speak for itself. If you don't see your contribution included - don't worry, I will get round to it. Thanks are due to all of you who have sent in articles, etc. After all, NO NEWS-NO NEWSLETTER. 'Till June. Good paddling. Nanook.

Correspondence. From Oliver Cock.

DearvJohn,

Thank you very much for the February edition of the A.S.K.C. Newsletter, of which I have read every word. (I may say that this is about the only Newsletter/magazine which I do read thoroughly as this!)

I was particularly intrigued by Alan Bye's article on spray decks, together with the two illustrations. Knowing how very keen on matters of safety that Alan I was very surprised to see him fall into the trap concerning the 'panic strap'. He illustrates it as being held to the stiff board, entirely on top of the deck. This method of attaching the strap is extremely dangerous, as it in no way ensures that the 'elasticated cuff' as he calls it unwraps itself from under the cockpit coaming. It is absolutely essential that the strap is stuck on (how 'stuck on' is secondary to the argument) underneath the deck and then taken round underneath the cuff to lie across the spray cover. This ensures that as the canoeist pulls the strap it unrolls the cuff from the coaming.

Two interesting points arise from this:

1. Years ago I tried this idea of a stiff spray cover. I made it as Alan suggests, except that I used a sheet of marine ply - 16 gauge I think it was. It worked all right as I sat in my canoe, but when I went swimming (either deliberately or accidentally) it was such a damn nuisance I gave it up quickly as being potentially very dangerous.
2. Years ago also, David Hirschfield produced an eleven foot folding canoe which has as its cockpit coaming a bicycle inner tube. This was sewn into a canvass tube which was sewn onto the canvass deck in the usual way. The valve by which one pumped up the bicycle tube stuck into the cockpit exactly at its forward point. The spray cover fitted over the tube as any spray cover does over any other coaming. I can not at this length of time remember whether the spray cover was elasticated or not. It would appear on the face of it not to be necessary, since the inflated coaming would give way when the cover had to be taken off. What happened if one got a puncture I don't know. I never heard of such happening.

It was a great pity that this arrangement was not very pretty to look at and never caught on. What I do know is that it did'nt matter what sort of sea landed on the deck, the spray cover never caved in, but should the canoeist want to get out there was no need for him to pull any release strap, the cover came off the moment he lifted it up; it was the best arrangement I have ever come across.

Yours sincerely, Oliver.

From Chris Bolton, Workington, Cumbria.

Dear Mr. R.

I was interested to read the copy letter dated 1927 concerning early exploits around the West of Scotland. I expect the boats used must have been similar to those sailed by the members of the Clyde Canoe Club, which was founded in 1873. These were clinker built, with heavy iron centre plates for use when under sail, and must have been hard work to paddle. A history of the club is being written at present, and if you are interested I shall try to get a copy to send to you when it is complete. In recent years the club has moved almost entirely from sailing canoes to more conventional sailing boats, and in fact has made a name for itself in some circles.

Good paddling, Sincerely, Chris.

B.C.U. ADVANCED SEA PROFICIENCY AND COACH-TRAINING Saturday 22nd to Sunday
30th. May, 1982

Course Director: Ian Bourn
Venue: S.W. Scotland/Inner Hebrides.
Kintyre Peninsula, Islay, Jura and Colonsay.
Group: Geoff Hunter, Robin Catchlove, Dave Richardson,
Mick Wybrew, Paul Newman, Bill Taylor.

INTRODUCTION

All members of the group had paddled together on previous occasions and were personally known to the Course Director. The whole enterprise was based on the concept of "learning by doing" and so was to take the form of an extended, self sufficient sea expedition in a stimulating and demanding situation. Our plan was to cover a number of options which would be dependant upon the weather, but ideally we would circumnavigate the Hebridean Islands of Islay and Jura, perhaps taking in the outlying island of Colonsay.

Because of the extended nature of the expedition envisaged, it was decided that our arrangements should be given a thorough test before the expedition took place. This resulted in a preliminary expedition on the Thames Estuary over the weekend of 8th and 9th May. Meanwhile, all lists of equipment and food were carefully worked out over a series of informal meetings. Everyone was to carry the same personal gear (see attached list) and all other equipment (including 3 tents, 4 primus stoves, 2 gallons paraffin, 4 sets of billies, 1 B.D.H. container of fibre glass repair materials, 8 days food for 7 men) should be packed as a communal venture as best suited the load carrying characteristics of the individual sea boats.

We all assembled at Gillingham pier on the evening of Friday, 7th May to organise the packing of our kayaks. This seemingly simple task took nearly 2 hours of 'trial and error' packing, but the time was well spent for we were now well acquainted with the nature of our loads and snags involved, and on all future occasions the loads could be stowed in a few minutes.

THE THAMES ESTUARY WEEKEND 8th and 9th MAY

Sheerness - Havengore Creek - Sheerness - Gillingham.

We met at Gillingham pier at 9.00 am on Saturday to collect our boats and transport them to Sheerness. All timing was worked back from high water in Havengore Creek on the Essex coast, where even in our sea canoes we would need the maximum water level to enter the Creek and establish our camp on Rushley Island. At mid-day, on a fine, sunny day with a force 2 NE wind when we set off from the beach near Sheerness Yacht Club to ferry-glide the last two hours of the spring tide flooding the estuary. We had estimated our paddling rate to be 4 knots, and as we crossed the shipping lanes to Shoebury Ness we found we could comfortably maintain this rate of progress.

We completed our crossing of the estuary to Shoebury Ness, followed the Essex Coast eastwards over Maplin Sands and nosed round Haven Point into Havengore Creek about 1430 to find the tide ebbing swiftly at about 3 knots. Our camp on the S.E. corner of Rushley Island was quickly established on a narrow strip of grass between the sea wall to the east and a dyke draining the one large arable field which covered the island. Driftwood was collected and a roaring fire was soon drying our wet clothing, for the weather had deteriorated to give a drizzle and gentle rain which lasted until the late afternoon when the weather improved once more to give a fine evening.

We had simulated paddling fully-loaded boats by carrying cans of beer, and this we now drank until turning into our sleeping bags around 2130. In order to leave the creek for our return journey to Sheerness and Gillingham, we had to catch the top of the next high tide. We should therefore need to be up at 0100 to have our boats loaded and in the water for 0200.

When we got up at 0100 it was a beautiful, clear, still and frosty night. A full moon shone down on the oily calm waters of the creek and the estuary. A slight frost had begun to glaze our boats and equipment, but it was so still that the cold was unnoticeable. We were afloat on the creek saltings at exactly 0200 and slipped quietly out of the creek on the top of the tide before paddling east toward Shoebury Ness and Southend. Once at Shoebury Ness, we began an extended ferry-glide across the shipping lanes on the maximum flow of the ebbing spring tide. It was a magnificent paddle by moonlight, the only disturbance to the oily swell being caused by the wakes of passing shipping.

We reached the Sheerness beach a hundred metres to the east of Garrison Point. The pre-dawn light was already growing fast and a driftwood fire was blazing and crackling to warm us and dry our wet clothing by the time the sun was climbing from the estuary, treating us to a magnificent dawn on a clear summer morning. We cooked a breakfast and dozed in the warmth of the fire as we waited for the tide to turn so that we could paddle up the Medway Estuary to Gillingham with a flooding tide beneath us.

We finally left the beach just after 0900, by which time it was already getting hot. By 1100 we were back at Gillingham Pier, and by the time the "Prince of Wales" had opened its doors at 1200 we had dried and packed away all our gear.

The many hours of planning and talking had not been in vain. All our equipment had functioned well and the schedule had run smoothly to the minute. We now eagerly anticipated our journey to Scotland and the 'real thing'.

CHART: Stanford's Chart of the Thames Estuary.

O.S. Map: 1 : 50,000 Sheet 178 The Thames Estuary.

Campsite : O.S. ref 968886

Distance: 27 sea miles.

THE EXPEDITION

1. Saturday, 22nd. May.

We assembled at Lochgilphead at 1300 on Saturday after driving all night from Kent, and then moved on up to Skipness for the evening. Here we sorted out our loads, tucked into an enormous roast dinner and finally turned in for our last 'civilized' sleep (sleeping bags on a carpeted floor) before our trip began on the morrow.

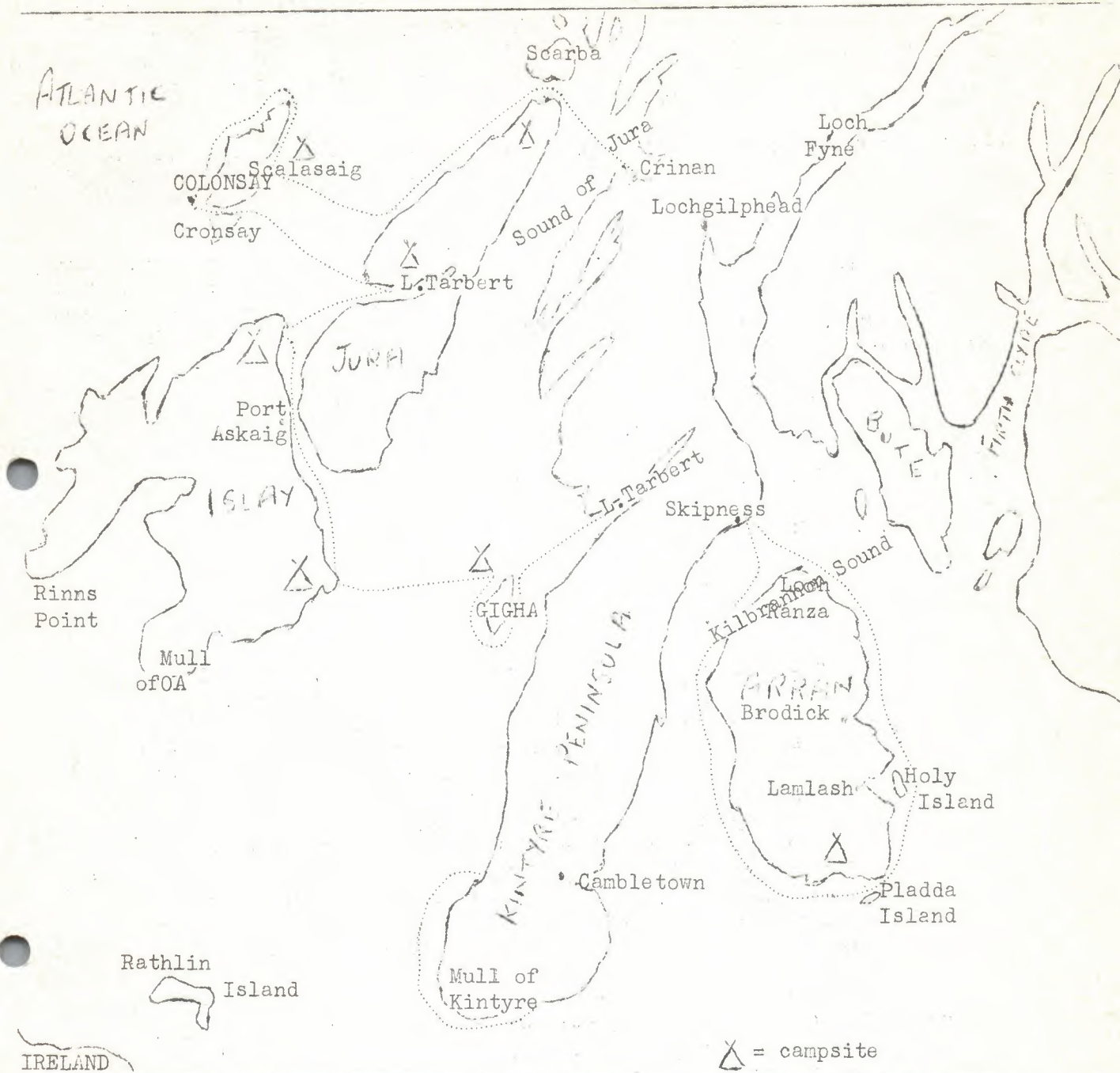
2. Sunday, 23rd. May.

We packed our boats at the Islay ferry jetty at Eilean Ceann na Creige on West Lock Tarbert at lunchtime. At 1400 we set off along the loch in fine sunshine and a force 3 NW wind. The showers that had attempted to wet all our gear as it was being packed had now died away.

There was no tide of any consequence and it was not long before we pulled clear of the entrance to the lock at Ardpatrik Point to make our first open crossing of about 5 naut. miles to the northern tip of Gigha Island where we were to make our first camp.

The crossing was soon behind us, and we had seen our first seals and we beached our kayaks on the silver sand of the isthmus connecting Eilean

Garbh to the main body of Gigha. We dragged our boats across the isthmus and set up our camp in the shelter of the cliffs overlooking West Tarbert (off Gigha) Bay.



A driftwood fire was soon blazing to cook our evening meal, for our plans anticipated open-fire cooking to save fuel and to give a focal point of interest to the long Hebridean twilight.

ADMIRALTY CHART 2724 The North Channel

O.S. Map : 1 : 50,000 Sheet 62 North Kintyre

Campsite O.S. Ref: 6535391

Distance paddled: 11 naut. miles.

3. Monday 24th. May.

After a fine start to the morning it was soon clear that the vigorous N W air-stream was going to cause us some trouble. An inspection of our proposed passage from Gigha to Islay, with an open crossing of over 10 naut. miles to Ardmore Point on S E Islay, showed squally showers

developing while the wind was blowing a steady 4 to 5. We had climbed to the top of Eilean Garbh to make this inspection and after a short debate on the problems involved we decided to set off.

When about 5 miles off shore a particularly violent squall closed visibility down to a few hundred yards in the lashing rain, and the wind increased to a force 6, backed to south west, and so blew directly into our faces as we pushed through a confused sea made turbulent by the tide racing northwards from Ardmore Point into the Sound of Jura.

After over three hours paddling it was a pleasant relief to pull into the lee of Islay to camp just to the south of Claggin Bay in a cove we named 'Lifebuoy Cove' because of a lifebuoy hanging in the bushes near the rocks.

That evening was gloomy and damp. We walked inland to look at the 8th. century Kildalton Celtic Cross - reputed to be the finest in all Scotland. Nine feet high, hewn and carved from local blue stone by a craftsman from Iona but now very weathered, it was well worth visiting and in the splendid setting of a ruined pre-reformation chapel, with several medieval grave slabs.

We completed our walk by replenishing our water supplies at the local estate lodge and saw several red deer.

O.S. MAP 1 : 50,000 Sheet 60 Islay

Campsite O.S. Ref: 672514

Distance: 11 Naut miles.

4. Tuesday, 25th. May.

Another fine morning preceded a squally and showery day. Our radio had given a poor forecast which required us to modify our expedition plan. Strong westerly winds over the Atlantic swells of S.W. Islay where big tides would be running on the Mull of Oa and the Rinns Point meant that our western traverse of Islay was now out of the question. We would now have to run north into the Sound of Islay where we would be protected from the worst of the weather. We were soon being swept north on the accelerating flood tide and enjoying the rugged coastal scenery. Torrential rain showers did nothing to dampen our spirits as they were interspersed with warm spells of sunshine which added dramatic, golden lighting to the scene. As we passed inshore below the light house of McArthur's Head, the Paps of Jura on the far side of the Sound were brightly lit against the dark skies of the storm clouds that had just soaked us.

The sun remained with us as we were swept up to the narrowest part of the Sound to Port Askaig at an estimated over-the-ground speed of over 8 knots. The sea's surface was disturbed by large, oily boils as the restricted tide was forced into the narrowing gap between Islay and Jura. We speculated on what the sea state might have been should we have encountered conditions of wind over tide.

Lunch was eaten in the beautiful little Port Askaig - a few buildings around a ferry terminal and home of the Islay lifeboat. We were somewhat dismayed to find that our sole visit to civilization coincided with early closing day for Port Askaig's one and only store.

We left Port Askaig to catch the last of the flood tide, paddling past the whisky distilleries before camping at the N.W. extremity of the Sound, a few hundred metres from the light house of Rubha a Mhail.

O.S. MAP 1 : 50,000 Sheet 60

Campsite O.S. Ref: 426784

Distance 15 nait miles

5. Wednesday, 26th. May

A grey threatening sky greeted our awakening. The vigorous westerly air stream promised further heavy showers as we climbed to the light house to re-fill our water bottles. Red deer watched us cautiously before their natural discretion forced them to trot away.

From the light house (which was in the process of being mechanized) we had a clear view of the strait towards the islands of Oronsay and Colonsay, which we now hoped to include in our itinerary. However, it was decided to await an improvement in the weather and settle for a shorter crossing to Loch Tarbert of Jura.

We broke camp in pouring rain, but by the time we were half way to Jura the weather was at last making a proper clearance from the west to give a beautiful clear afternoon. The coast of Jura changes in character at Loch Tarbert to give a wild and rugged coastline of raised beaches, sea-abandoned cliff lines, stacks, arches and caves. It was such a coastline we were now paddling along, looking for a suitable spot for a lunch break.

After eating and basking in the warm sunshine we left the southern shore of Loch Tarbert and headed for the northern shore. A small swell was pushing in from the Atlantic in spite of the shelter afforded by Islay, and whilst surfing over a reef in the islets known as Eileanan Gleann Rìgh, Paul damaged the bow of his Icefloe kayak. The damage was superficial, however, and no other equipment damage was to be sustained in the entire trip.

We landed on the northern shore to find a good campsite and to explore a spectacular raised beach, well over 100 feet above present sea level. There were numerous red deer to be seen all over the moorland which swept from the barren hill tops to the sea shore.

We finally camped near an abandoned settlement and fresh water loch at the N.W. extremity of Loch Tarbert. It was a beautiful spot with extensive views up Glen Batrick to the Paps of Jura and across to our last campsite of Islay.

The small lochan gave the welcome opportunity to remove the salt crust in a fresh water bath. However, it also revealed that in our travels we had picked up some unwelcome guests in the form of sheep ticks. These irritating, crab-like parasites would burrow head-first into the skin and could be difficult to remove - sometimes with a small explosion of one's own blood!

During the evening we explored some raised sea caves that bore evidence of recent habitation. Driftwood had been used to give a dry floor and to build improvised bunks and a table. In the clear, golden light of a beautiful evening we wandered over the moors in search of antler specimens which were to adorn our rear decks for the rest of the trip. There was plentiful driftwood for a raging fire that burned late into the evening.

O.S. MAP: 1 : 50,000 Sheet 61, Jura and Colonsay

Campsite O.S. Ref: 506831

Distance: 7 naut miles

6. Thursday, 27th. May

The beautiful weather continued. This was clearly the day to make the 9 mile sea mile passage over the Tarbert Bank to Oronsay and Colonsay. Within 2½ hours of breaking our camp we had made the crossing and were beaching our boats on Oronsay, overlooking the beautiful, narrow strait known as The Strand which separates Oronsay from the southern tip of its larger neighbour, Colonsay. The silver-sand sea bed and crystal clear water rendered the sea that shade of turquoise more usually associated with Caribbean waters.

After a prolonged lunch break in the sun we decided to investigate the medieval priory ruins of Oronsay before proceeding with our passage up the exposed waters of the western sea board of Colonsay. However, the weather took a rapid turn for the worse and a heavy shower was imminent as we paddled along the north shore of Oronsay, accompanied by a large group of inquisitive seals

Leaving our boats we climbed over Beinn Oronsay in pouring rain to look down on the priory ruins. They were a disappointment for they had been "absorbed" into the outbuildings of Oronsay Farm. However, we did have an extensive view to the south and west, and we were looking at a reef-strewn, rocky coast on which large, Atlantic swells were breaking themselves in white foam. Our passage north along western Colonsay was sure to be an interesting one.

Again regaining our boats we left the protection of the reefs and paddled out into the swells - some in excess of 10 feet and with a very big wave length carrying minor waves. Great colonies of auks bred along these wild cliffs, and we were continually disturbing bird rafts made up of white guillimots and razor-bills. There were no opportunities for landings on this stretch of coast which was made up of rocky headlands or exposed surf beaches. It was a relief to relax on rounding Eilean Dubh (on the northern tip of Colonsay) to get into the sheltered lee of the island.

When we eventually pitched camp below the ruins of the crofts at Risag Buidhe, we found that our sense of balance was slow to re-atune to land conditions, and we continued to "ride the swells" well into the evening.

A wet, grey evening now set in and we decided to walk over the moor to the settlement at Scalassaig. Here we were hospitably treated by the local doctor who filled our water bottles and ferried us in his landrover to the local hotel to wet our insides.

O.S. MAP 1 : 50,000. Sheet 61 Jura and Colonsay

Campsite Ref: 408953

Distance: 24 naut miles

7. Friday, 28th. May

We broke camp in improving weather and set off for Jura once more, aiming to make a land-fall around Shian Bay, about 3 miles to the north of Loch Tarbert. Assisted by the wind and swell, we quickly put the 8 n.m. crossing behind us and ate our lunch by a beach side waterfall in a cliff enclosed amphitheatre.

This was a spectacular coastline with numerous raised beaches, arches, stacks and caves, and it made our paddle northwards towards the distant hump of the Isle of Scarba a most enjoyable one.

Scarba marked the northern shore of the narrow Gulf of Corryvreckan, famous for its violent tide race and whirlpool, and through which we would have to paddle the next day to get back to the Scottish mainland.

We camped that night on the northern shore of Jura, in a sheltered, north facing inlet marked as Bagh Gleann nam Muc. From our campsite we could observe the broken turbulence of the race on the flooding tide which spilled westwards from the Gulf. In less than one mile, the flooding tide which had been forced into the narrowing Sound of Jura's eastern side, was attempting to spill back out into the Atlantic in the narrow Gulf between Jura and Scarba. The sea level in the Sound of Jura can be up to 5 feet higher than in the open sea, hence a steep gradient is created which gives the violent tide race. As we now watched the race at work, we estimated the breaking waves of the race to be in excess of 10 feet and anticipated a demanding last day, for the westerly wind which had been with us all day was now increasing to gale force.

O.S. MAP 1 : 50,000 Sheet 61 Jura and Colonsay

O.S. Campsite Ref: 687001

Distance: 20 naut miles.

8. Saturday, 29th. May

We awoke to a grey over-cast day. The gale of the previous night had slackened, but it was still blowing a good force 6. We had made our decision to go through the Gulf on the ebb tide about mid-day, when the race would be rushing across the entrance to our cove from west to east.

During the morning we climbed to the bleak hill-top which directly overlooked the Gulf of Corryvreckan. From this excellent vantage point we could see the tides at work in detail. The site of "The Hag" - the great whirlpool - tucked in beneath the crags of Scarba, was clearly visible, and the race on the tide which was still flooding during our observations could be seen extending several miles seaward. The tides within the Sound of Jura were also going to be troublesome, for clear "cushions" and back-eddies could be seen streaming off the small islands in the Sound.

We had all mentally prepared ourselves for this part of the trip and expected our main problem to be the maintenance of group contact as we crossed the races and boils. Large, breaking waves on the race were sweeping right across the entrance to our cove, which we now left by hugging the north coast-line of Jura on a great back eddy. The confused and broken sea-state that we anticipated did not materialise, in spite of the force 6 wind. So confused were the swirls and boils that they simply would not allow the waves to build up. However, the boils were on a huge scale and frequently attempted to scatter our small fleet of kayaks in several directions. We eventually escaped the area of boils and began an extended ferry glide across the northern Sound of Jura, punching into a strong, south-flowing tide. As we neared the islets of Reissa an t-sruith we were pointing as high as possible into the tide and paddling flat out in order to avoid getting swept past the break-out at the southern end of the islet. The tide must have been flowing at about 6 knots. We paddled on and re-grouped once more in the gap in the islets at Garbh Reisa, from where we had no tidal difficulties as we approached our final destination of Crinan.

In bright sunshine we ended our expedition at the western terminus of the Crinan Canal, but found that the British Waterways Boards would not allow us to camp on the excellent sites available. However, the weather at last appeared to look settled, so we paddled round into Crinan's sheltered harbour and compromised by setting up a bivouac in the car park! We could now spend the late afternoon drying out all our damp gear, and spend the evening in the Crinan Hotel celebrating the completion of a highly successful expedition

O.S. Map 1 : 50,000 Sheet 55 Lochgilphead

Distance: 8 naut miles.

Total distance of Expedition: 97 nautical miles (113 statute miles)

BRITTANY CANOEING HOLIDAY EASTER 1983

This will be a holiday for anyone interested in sea and river touring and will cater for all level of skills.

We will be based at Paimpol where we will have hostel accommodation at the Auberge de Jeunesse, a lovely old French Chataeu. From here it is only a few minutes drive to the coast where we will be using sea kayaks to tour the spectacular waters around Ile Brehat. A few days will also be spent on interesting rivers, with a bit of white water, paddling open canadian canoes. Instruction will be available as all trips will be led by a qualified instructor; the emphasis will be on fun as we are not out to break any records, but to have an enjoyable holiday.

We expect people to be travelling from Jersey, Portsmouth and Plymouth. Where

ever you arrive you will be met and driven to Paimpol.

<u>Dates</u>	Thurs. 31st. March.	Dep. Jersey 1630 for St. Malo
	" " "	Dep. Portsmouth 2130 for St. Malo
	Fri. 1st. April	Dep. Plymouth 1200 for Roscoff
	Sat. 9th. April	Dep. Roscoff 2330 for Plymouth
	Sun. 10th. April	Dep. St. Malo 0800 for Jersey
	" " "	Dep. St. Malo 1100 for Portsmouth

Cost The cost of the holiday will include all transport in France, accommodation, breakfasts and dinner (most lunches will be snacks as we will be afloat), the use of various types of canoes and all the equipment needed. I cannot give a definite price until I know for sure how many people are interested. If we get about 10 or 12, the cost will be about £90 each, excluding the ferry. It's important that I have some idea about numbers soon so that I can book the right size mini-bus, so please get in touch if you are interested or want further information. Last date for booking is 20th. March. Hope to see you in Brittany

Contact Tony Watton, Canoeing School, Jersey, at 23a, Beresford Street, St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Isles. Tel. 0534 34920

Correspondence

From Winston Shaw, Sea/Venture Kayak Tours, Bar Harbor, Maine, U.S.A.

Dear John,

Having greatly enjoyed the excellent ASKC Newsletter over the past 12 months I'm sending along another years membership fee.

In the wake of the island's first major snowstorm of the year I find myself sitting back a bit and giving some thought to this last years sea kayaking. Had a busy and enjoyable summer at Sea/Venture, though the island weather was a bit on the cool and wet side. As always, I greatly enjoyed introducing my countrymen to the enjoyable pastime of sea kayaking! Most are pleasantly surprised at how much there is to do and see and almost all take to the sport like ducks to water. Had a call from one of my customers in late November and he told me sea kayaking is just the thing for both he and his wife! Along with many of my other customers, the fellow had purchased sea kayaks for both he and his wife and was full to bursting with tales of his travels.

On other fronts Canoe Magazine, along with L.L.Bean & Co. and AnorAk put on a sea kayak symposium back in August. The event was well attended by both interested paddlers and boat manufacturers, and the boost given to the sport in this country was considerable.

I had the pleasure of meeting Frank Goodman and his wife at this event and was delighted to have the chance to view footage of Frank's most ambitious rounding of Cape Horn! Frank's lecture was a big hit with everyone and I can't say how much I personally enjoyed meeting him. I used one of Frank's boats - the Weekender HR - in my tours and having the greatest respect for the boats design and construction features, was delighted to have the chance to offer my congratulations to it's builder. Frank very much put me in mind of an uncle of mine - my mother moved to the U.S. from England in the 30's - and once again I got to enjoy the famous British dry humour!

Also had the opportunity to meet another of your countrymen at the symposium as Mike Bridgewood was in attendance and took part in the demonstration of self rescue techniques. Mike is currently living in South Carolina and is marketing a sea kayak of his own design and manufacture here in the U.S.

We had a most enjoyable conversation, the upshot of which was that Mike

left one of his Keeowees with me for testing. Roughly 20' in length with a clipper type bow, the boat has proven most useful to Sea/venture and I look forward to getting together with Mike to give him my impressions of her performance.

Recently had a most interesting letter from fellow club member, Grant Gawthorne of Port Lincoln, Australia. Grant gave me a run down on the sea canoeing scene in Australia and he made mention of his new boat, the 'Greenlander'. He seemed most pleased with this boats performance and it would seem that the folks 'down under' are making their contribution to the advancement of sea kayak design Grant's boat even comes with an electric bilge pump!

Grant also mentioned that he'd put up Paul Caffyn a few weeks back. He said that Paul had only about 400 miles to go in his magnificent circumnavigation of Australia, so by now I have no doubt that Paul's journey has been successfully completed! Having read Paul's excellent book, "Obscured by Waves" in order that I might write the review you ran a few issues back, I look forward with great anticipation to his account of his latest travels.

Also recently had a most interesting letter from a fellow by the name of Steve Gropp of Deer Harbor, Washington. He and his wife are planning an extensive tour of Newfoundland and Labrador this coming summer and he wrote in hopes that I'd be able to, lend a hand in the planning stages. Though my knowledge of the area is limited to second hand reports and bits and pieces I've picked up over the years, I envy Steve his voyage. (Ed's note ...tell him to write to Nigel Foster at Plas y Deri National Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, North Wales, United Kingdom)

Speaking of voyages, I managed to find the time for a solo journey southward along the Maine Coast shortly after closing Sea/Venture down in Sept. Problems with a tooth and the inevitable trouble with my car put off my departure for a week but I eventually got under way and had an enjoyable paddle. After a summer spent coaching beginners it was great to just hop in the boat and head off.

I've also managed to do a great deal of paddling as of late as Maine's winter has been unusually mild. Went off on a 20 miles jaunt last weekend and aside from a slightly frost-nipped cheek, had a great time. On the way back home I noticed that my boat seemed to be a bit down at the stern and upon landing I discovered that the entire rear deck was encrusted with ice! Perhaps some clever designer will come up with a de-icing mechanism for sea kayaks similar to that used in aircraft, ha, ha!!

Well, that's all for now. My best to fellow members in the ASKC. I look forward to another year's membership.

Sincerely,
Winston.

From Eric Totty, Kendal, Cumbria.

Dear John,

I was very interested to read, in the August 1982 Newsletter No. 32, John Nightingale's contribution in the form of a letter written by Lord Balfour to Lord Runciman about a far away adventure in the shape of a canoe trip in about 1867 to Skye, Rhum and Raasay. The three canoeists were Reginald MacLeod, Arthur Kinnaid and Lord Balfour.

By a strange coincidence, as I was reading this item only an hour or so after it had been delivered by the postman, in my study, my wife was in the next room reading a book she had acquired the previous day, entitled "Dame Flora", the biography of Dame Flora MacLeod of Macleod by Anne Wolridge Gordon. She called out to me saying, "Here's something about canoeing that will interest you". It turned out to be an account of the same canoe trip that Lord Balfour described but with the additional information that it was on this trip whilst on the

island of Eigg that Reginald MacLeod spent the night in a cave with the bones of the unfortunate MacDonalds, suffocated by his ancestor, Alasdair Crotaek, the 8th. Chief, in the sixteenth century.

How about that for a coincidence? Hearing about this far away canoe trip from two quite different sources, at exactly the same time. One in a billion would you say?

Yours sincerely,
Eric Totty.

THE RICHO A-2 /AD MARINE (Underwater/Water-sports) Camera

User Report by Mick O'Connell July, 1982

If you thought that you could not afford a fully waterproof camera don't be put off by high cost, semi-professional diver's cameras but take a good look instead at this very modest but clever machine

Out of its perspex housing and at first glance the RICHO A-2 looks similar to many other fully automatic 35 mm (full-frame) bright-line view finder cameras. A closer inspection reveals that it is motorised with a strong and reliable spring system. It is possible to make about 14 exposures, on a single or continuous mode, with just one winding of the ratchet knob, conveniently located at the base of the camera. (You must wind the knob twice more to run through a 36 exposure film).

The optics are surprisingly good in a camera so reasonably priced. Whilst on my expedition the four element f2.8 lens produced some 360 excellent transparencies and no failures even when shooting against the light, in the rain or on white sandy beaches. Focusing was easy with the pre-set click positions at 1m, 1.2m and 2.5m and infinity. The focal length at 35mm gives an extensive depth of field.

The camera's price includes a neat 'zip-quick' leatherette case. In dry land use the A-2 is very compact at 113 X 77 X 52 mm, which is small enough to be quite snug inside your coat or anorak pocket.

Having first loaded a film, set the ASA and the single/continuous mode, the camera can be put into the MARINE AD housing. There are one or two simple but important checks to do concerning the cleanliness and lubrication of the rubber 'O' ring seal, which is the sure sign that this is a fully waterproof unit. The housing will protect the camera to a depth of 30 metres but most water sports enthusiasts will be happy just to know that the unit can be dropped into the sea with no adverse effects.

All the essential camera controls are duplicated on the outside of the housing and there is also a screw on open frame view finder included, although with practice the camera's own finder can be utilised.

In the harsh northern latitude of Shetland I used the RICHO A-2 /AD MARINE for three weeks in very trying conditions; from my sea canoe, on the beach, around the campsites and on inland treks. I was really pleased to have the use of this RICHO on my expedition because it is a light weight no-fuss camera which can even be used one handed but above all I value it because unlike the more expensive alternatives, it floats!

What about the disadvantages? Well, there are not many. It does not have a built in flash unit. That is an optional extra and quite expensive as it is a proper underwater model. (Although any hot shoe flash unit will fit for dry land use). However, for expeditions, holidays afloat or on land, you can't match it for value and quality at a little over £100.

The following is an extract from the 'Harrogate Advertiser' sent to me by Dave Stanley.

CANOE WOMEN, FRIDEL; DIES.

A Harrogate woman, who 50 years ago, canoed around the coastline of Britain, with only her pet dog for company, has died aged 74. Mrs Fridel Dalling-Hay, then Miss Fridel Meyer, first came to England in 1932. As Germany's champion girl canoeist, she canoed from her home in Kitzingen am Main in Bavaria, Germany to London. This she achieved by canoeing down the River Main, down the River Rhine to the Hook of Holland, along the Dutch coast to France and then across the Channel to the English coast.

Miss Meyer lived in London tutoring in the German and French language in which she was skilled, until 1933. Then Germany's record for long distance canoeing was threatened by Mr Jack Nolan of America, who planned to canoe around the British Isles. Miss Meyer took up the challenge.

She sold her violin and bought a collapsible rubber canoe for £12. Then on June 2, 1933, she set off, waved by the crowds from Westminster Pier, with her dog Wu Pei Fu, and a rucksack containing a sleeping bag and a comb; her route was down the Thames and then up along the east coast.

On her voyage around the coast, she stopped off at almost every port and seaside town. Local people gave her food and a bed for the night before encouraging her on her way. Fishermen and local sea-faring folk would guide her around cliffs and dangerous stretches of coastline.

Many adventures befell her: on one occasion she rescued the man who was later to become her first husband, from the sea off Lowestoft. She pulled him out of the water after his boat had capsized and balanced him over her canoe until help arrived two hours later.

On another occasion she was arrested on suspicion of being a spy, although she had been doing her best to promote good relations between the people of Germany and England on her trip. At the time, Miss Meyer had been canoeing past an Army shooting practice at Shoeburyness in Essex. The local police detained her while her German papers were checked.

Before her voyage was completed three months later, Miss Meyer had suffered concussion twice, once after a car crash, and once after a bad aeroplane landing at Hornsea. Despite this, she beat Mr. Nolan and retained the title for Germany. In 1940 she finally settled in Harrogate because she thought that Yorkshire people were the friendliest in the world.

The following is an extract from the 'Melbourne News' sent to me by Helen McPherson

A WEARY PADDLER NEARS THE END OF HIS STRUGGLE.

An Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land closed the local school and went to the beach to greet Paul Caffyn, 35, at the halfway mark of his attempt to circumnavigate Australia alone by kayak.

There was no such welcome when he paddled into Warrnambool at the weekend, within days of completing the journey he started in Melbourne on 28th. December last year.

Salt water and rip tides have torn at his skin, a giant turtle which he mistook for a crocodile has invaded his tent, he has been threatened by sharks and guided by abalone and cray fishermen.

In a voyage covering more than 15,000 kilometres of some of the world's most isolated and treacherous waters, he has averaged more than 50 kilometres a day. In one stretch down the south-west coast of Western Australia, Mr Caffyn paddled for 34 hours with out a break.

Yesterday in Warrnambool, he said he had spent a lot of time singing, learning poetry and squaring numbers in his head to keep his mind alert.

"When the sea is cutting you up like it was yesterday it requires intensive concentration on what the sea and wind are doing", he said. "But on the good days I need things to keep my mind occupied."

Mr. Caffyn, an experienced geologist teacher, mountaineer and photographer, plans to return to Runanga, New Zealand, to work on his home and two books about this and previous expeditions when he finishes in Melbourne this week. He completed the first circumnavigation of New Zealand's South Island in 1978 and Great Britain

In 1980. The journey around Australia would be his last big trip, he said. Only once had he considered backing out of the expedition. When he saw the Zuytdorp cliffs between Shark Bay and Kalbarri north of Geraldton on Australia's west coast he wanted to go home. "It's the worst bit of sea anywhere around Australia. I saw 15 metre cray boats at times hauled out of the water by the waves. In that area seas break as high as 20 metres up the cliff face." He said he has three options at the time. "I could pack up and go home because I felt sick in the stomach - I could go down to Kalbarri and paddle the stretch north with the winds in my favour, or just keep going. I had to go out and have a go." There was land fog and it was 34 hours with the compass before I limped into Kalbarri. I was a bit unsteady on my feet but quite relieved it was over."

When he paddled out of Kalbarri two days later a Scotsman stood on the cliffs and piped him out to sea.

A back up party of Lesley Hadley and Andy Woods, both New Zealanders, cook and navigate and drive a support vehicle and take photographs for a book they hope to publish. They are all deeply tanned and wiry.

Paul Caffyn said he spent four months on his own this year negotiating Australia's far north where vehicle access was impossible. "One night I was asleep in my two man tent near the water line up in the top. It was 1.00 am and I felt the tent shaking and a jolt in my hips. A big set of tracks led to the tent and I thought it was a crocodile. I leapt clear of the tent and it turned out it was a huge turtle."

Mr Woods explained they all thought later that the incident was provoked by an amorous turtle who was attracted to the dome shaped tent!

Paul Caffyn was probably more frightened by the whale that swam within 15 metres off Canal Rocks near Cape Naturaliste, W.A. Lesley was standing on the rocks waving and shouting and I thought she was just invigorated by the morning air. It turns out she was trying to attract my attention to the huge whale in the water."

Paul has financed the trip with only one sponsor, a New Zealand sleeping bag manufacturer. He said he was disappointed that television focused on record breaking and blood sports. "Most Aussies knock the trip and say I'm deft." he said. "Usually it's the older people who have more respect for physical challenge, They know what it is to strive for something."

Film makers in Australia and New Zealand were not interested in recording the expedition. One U.S. company made an offer but said if Paul had not seen a crocodile by the time he reached Darwin they would rent one. Paul was not interested in any fake adventure - real life was bad enough.

COURSES EVENTS

Outward Bound Loch Eil, Fort William, Invernesshire are running:

General Course Sea & Inland

April 2nd - 9th. and April 9th - 16th.

Sea Touring Expeditions

June 4th - 11th and June 11th. - 18th. July 2nd - 9th. and July 23rd - 30th.

Sea Canoeing (Short course)

May 27th - 31st.

For further details contact Alan Kimber, Outward Bound Loch Eil. Phone 03977 320

SEA TOURING MEET South east coast, near Eastbourne. 7th and 8th May.

For further details contact: Derek Hairon, Wimbledon Sailing Centre, Home Park Rd., Wimbledon SW19 7HX. Phone 01 947 4894

or Chris Childs on 0273 690976

This Meet hopes to offer a number of trips over the weekend with the chance for sea canoeists to meet and exchange experiences.

EXPEDITION TO THE WEST COAST OF IRELAND

In May 1983, the Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing intends to run an expedition from Galway to Killala Bay, approx. 180 miles of the west coast incorporating some of the most barren areas in Europe.

The price of the above expedition is £195.00 to include equipment, food and transportation from Anglesey to Ireland and return.

The expedition members will meet on Monday 8th. May at the School. Monday will be spent in preparation and a full brief and plan of the trip will be given; 9th May travelling to Galway and the following nine days canoeing. It is hoped that an average of twenty miles per day will be covered.

Suitable expedition members will need to be B.C.U. sea proficiency standard, obviously all members should be physically fit.

If there are any members of the A.S.K.C. who would like further details, contact Nigel Dennis at the Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Trearddur House School Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd - or telephone (0407) 860 201.

LATE EXTRA - I've just heard that this event is to be also used as a B.C.U. TRAINING COURSE.

From Alan Byde, Middleton in Teesdale, Co. Durham.

Dear Editor,

The onset of wisdom is slow and repetitive. Once I had thought that the quality of wisdom would find itself flooding upon me when I reached eighteen. Then possibly thirty; one now contemplates 54 years and wonders! Will it never end? To be blessed/cursed with a designers mind it to become arrogant. In brief, the feeling that "I can do better than that" is one which frequently bothers me.

... Some time ago it occurred to me, as I watched the receding stern of a slalom kayak go away from my reasonably swift sea kayak, that I simply didn't have the necessary thrust any more. Stronger younger men would go further and faster than I. It was therefore necessary to acquire power from my surroundings given I could not generate it within. Motor power did occur to me. I once sat in a canvas 'barge' and washthrust along at a respectable five knots or so by a 'Peter Pan' outboard with straight shaft and about 35 cc capacity. My son has a power saw with a 65 cc motor. Maybe that could be adapted to propel a sea kayak at close to planing speed. Another suggested that a Black and Decker petrol driven 'Strimmer' could be fitted with a propeller at the end of its flexible shaft(!) and this draped over the gunwale. Purists may safely continue. I simply mention it as an example of the width of thinking. Solar cells and electronics have also been suggested.

Sail, now there is a possibility. On the sea the wind always blows. Why not fit up a small sail onto a paddling kayak and rely upon that to waft one to exciting cliff faces and caves and rocks; the open water plod to be done by the wind? So, upon my 15 ft by 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch beam sea kayak I fitted a 15 sq ft sail. That's about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ sq. metres. It took ten days of constant effort, doing nothing else. I launched it on a nearby reservoir. It sailed not at all, rather it drifted a touch downwind. The rudder, a mere hand reach behind the cockpit was quite inadequate. I did not dare to try to 'sail' it, for as I tightened in the main shaft (there was no other) it laid over and died. Braced into my thigh braces, held by tight spraydeck, I could not move to balance the wind's force. It was Beaufort force 3 approx. It was too much and not enough. I unshipped the rudder and used my paddle. It was necessary to balance on something. Even then I could feel the turning effect needed to keep it heading the way I wanted.

Back to the drawing board. Also, it was time to look up my very useful library of books. These are as follows.

- 'Sailing Theory and Practice' CA Marchaj. Adlard Coles. 1964
- 'Skenes Elements of Yacht Design' Kinney. A&C BLACK 1927-1962

'A Thousand Miles in a Rob Roy Canoe' -reprinted by B.C.U., 1962
'Tackle Canoeing This Way' Percy Blandford. Stanley Paul 1963
'Canoes and Canoeing' Percy Blandford. 1962
'Rushton and His Times in American Canoeing' Adirondack Press. 1968.
'Sea Kayaking' John Dowd.

On page 100 of 'Tackle Canoeing This Way', Percy Blandford writes "...and a slim single seater of any length will not be able to support a mast of sufficient height for the rig to be efficient". He wrote that twenty years ago. I could have saved myself a whole lot of grief had I read his book first. After two days of hard work one hopes for the thing to sail. But it didn't, and Percy knew why, and he had told me. Further the book about Rushton is a gold mine of relevant information. Page 84 reports, "...For the canoeist of medium weight, for the inland cruising, where the paddle is used as much as the sail, and where supplies may be procured easily and often, a canoe 14ft X 26 inch or 27 inch is the best all-round canoe. For a canoeist of heavy weight, one 14ft X 30 inches would be better for the same purpose. For lakes many miles in extent or the sea board, a canoe 14 ft X 30 inch is thought small enough, and many would prefer 15ft X 31 inch or even larger. If compelled to adopt one size for all men, all places and all purposes, there is no question but that the 14 ft X 30 inch or 31 inch would be the best all-round canoe I may say in conclusion that I build more canoes either 14ft X 27 inch, or under, than all others. Probably because there are so many more miles of inland waters that seaboard"

That was written for the magazine "Forest and Stream" March 27th. 1884. I reflect, ruefully, that water and men change very little. I am, I think, in the forefront of a great march backwards into the knowledge of the past.

Several people over the last two or three years have corresponded with me on the question of extended ocean crossings, either solo or in pairs. The last few weeks, not only have I concluded that I have been guilty once again of stupidity and arrogance (Chairman Mao had something going with his self denunciation - it removes the sting of any external criticism - at least one has to come to terms with oneself) but I have also received more letters from more people on the same theme deep water crossings. The North Sea is one, and the Atlantic must be another. The Klepper Aerius is available, one was advertised recently in the magazine, and it has been used for crossing oceans. There is an influence at work here and I seem to be in touch with it. Anyone wishing to correspond with me on this question is very welcome.

The various problems chiefly associated with long journeys are:

1. Staying afloat.
2. Navigating
3. Propulsion
4. Maintenance of bodily functions (respiration, warmth, sleep, ingestion, defaecation, urination, boredom, sorebum)

There are many aspects of each problem. There are many ways in which one can approach each one. The problems of 'politics' comes into it. One of the problems is to overcome the inbred 'machismo' of handling a narrow kayak (the hunters boat). Almost all our U.K. development of kayaking in the last 20 years has been based on narrow fast moving kayaks, which are rarely if ever afloat for more than four hours at a time. Many good reasons for using a narrow kayak are advanced. They tend to support a thesis already held. It isn't a case of ultimate truth but of multiplicity of choice. All the development has gone into the competitors kayak; very little into the touring kayak.

John MacGregor paddled and sailed his 'Rob Roy' in many parts of the world. He lectured widely on his journey. He was not a competitor but he was a traveller. Derek Hutchinson, Frank Goodman and others have started off on the long trek for the ordinary man. Extra-ordinary journeys being commonplace in time, given the right equipment.

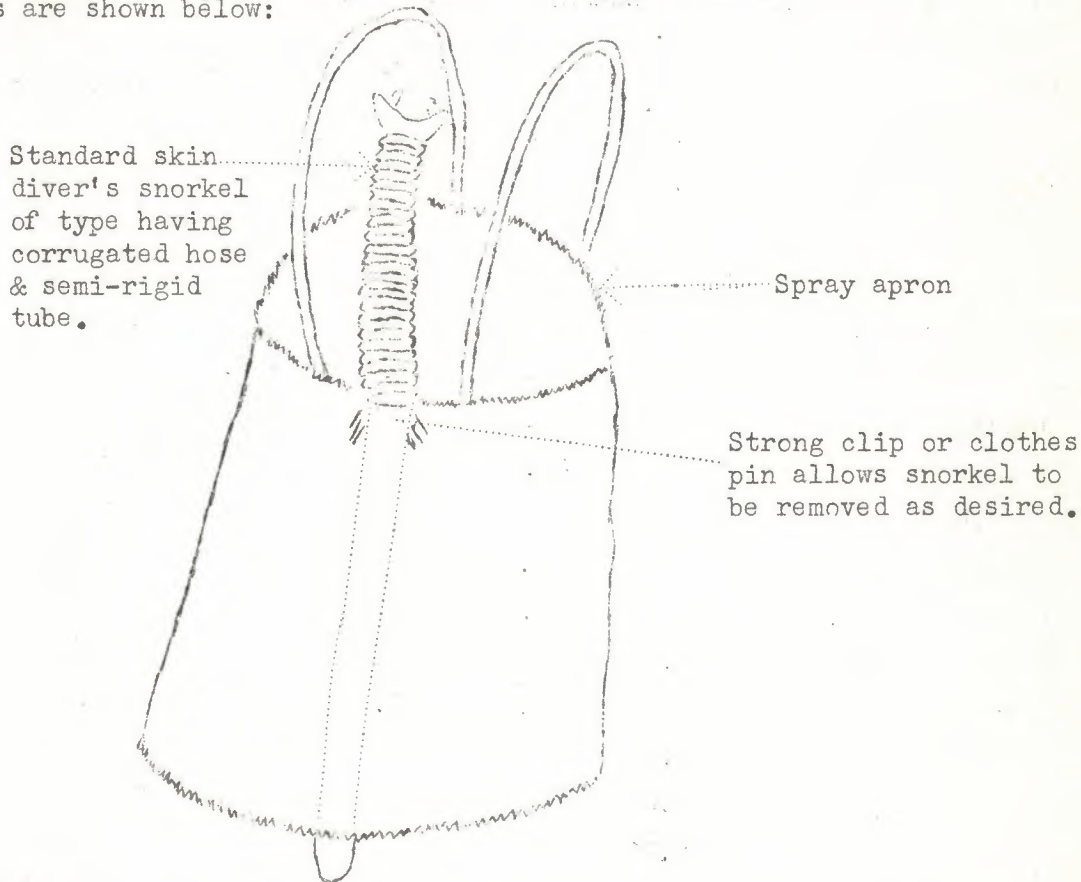
How about this? In 1883, Rushton built the 'Sairey Gamp' for a woodsman called 'Nessmuk'. The canoe was 9ft by 26 inches and weighed 9 pounds 14 ounces. It was made of cedar planking, with bent oak frames. It was called 'Sairey Gamp' after

Dicken's character, Sara Gamp, the nurse who 'took no water'. She preferred gin!

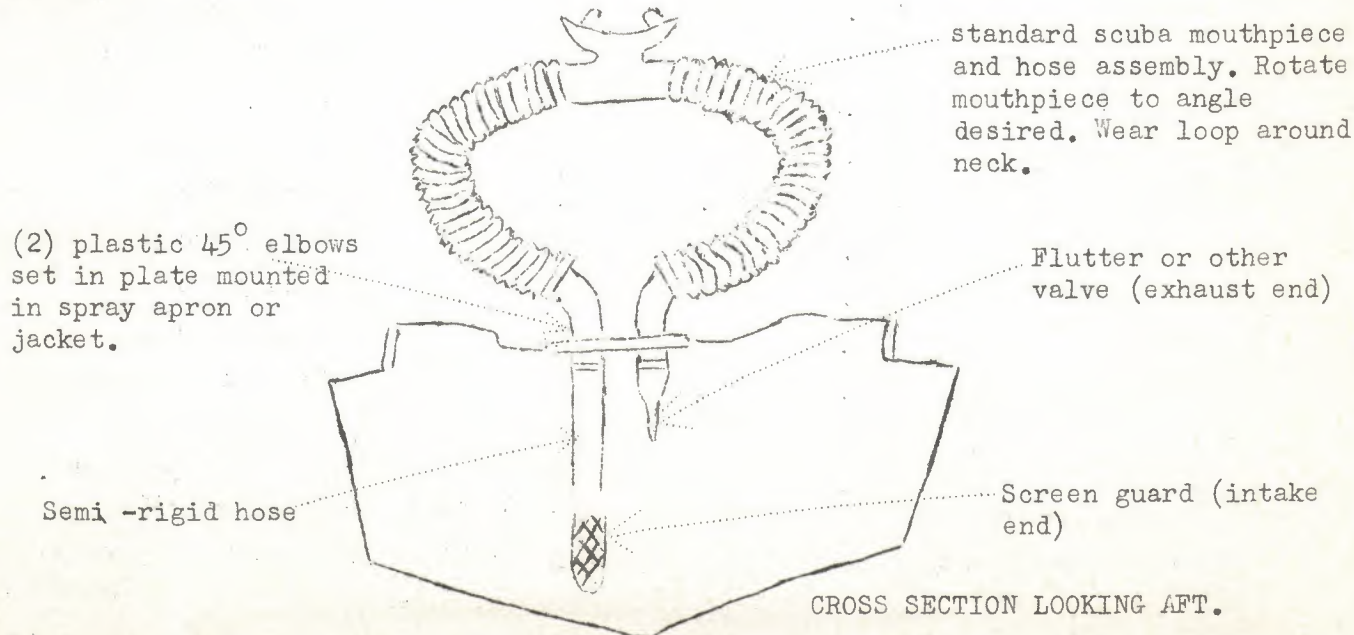
The Rob Roy made history. It went to America where Rushton made his copy of it and called that the Rob Roy. Later it was called 'The American Traveller'. Now I think it is time to bring the traveller back home.

HULL BREATHING DEVICES by John and David Heath.

A kayak snorkel for breathing hull air after a capsize was described in the Autumn, 1962 issue of A.W.W. by George Siposs. We developed a similar concept in 1958. Two versions are shown below:



Place snorkel inside spray apron as shown. Gather top edge (only) of apron around tube and fasten with a clip. Tuck mouthpiece under a shoulder strap when not in use. We prefer to attach hull breathing devices to the spray apron rather than the kayak.



Breathing procedure

1. Keep trunk of body near the surface
2. Blow to clear mouthpiece of water
3. Inhale and exhale through tube (this keeps hull air volume constant; hence minimises leakage around spray apron)
4. Caution: watch for symptoms of excess carbon dioxide, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, etc. (hull air should be refreshed occasionally during use)

The U.S. Navy Diving Manual is an excellent reference for the problems involved

KAYAK BUYING GUIDE- SEA KAYAKS ONLY

	G.R.P.	DIO	KEV	SAN	MANUFACTURER
Seahawk	155.65	164.36			Arrowcraft Marine
Banook	195.00				Avoncraft
Meridian	192.06				Canoe Centre
Lindisfarne	113.00				D & S Marine
Lindesfarne Exped.	213.47				D. & S Marine
Vyneck		161.00	280.00	200.00	Gaybo
Atlantic		160.00			Gaybo
Ozean		300.00			Gaybo
Sea King	185.00				Marsport
Huntsman		166.00			McNulty Seaglass
Huntsman Exped.		256.00			McNulty Seaglass
Falklander	130.00				Nomad Canoes
Shore Line		147.83	230.43		North Shore
Umnak	172.80				P & H Fibreglass
Umnak Exped.	291.00				P & H Fibreglass
Iceflow	194.00				P & H Fibreglass
Iceflow Exped.	310.00				P & H Fibreglass
Baidarka	194.00				P & H Fibreglass
Baidarka Exped.	310.00				P & H Fibreglass
Dawn Treader	194.00				P & H Fibreglass
Dawn Treader Exped.	310.00				P & H Fibreglass
Weekender	173.48	180.01			Valley Canoe
Weekender H.	226.09	232.62			Valley Canoe
Anas Acuta	201.74	208.27	419.14		Valley Canoe
Anas Acuta H.	254.35	260.88	471.75		Valley Canoe
Nordkap	208.27	214.80	425.67		Valley Canoe
13 models to:	330.00	336.53	547.40		Valley Canoe
Falcon Tutor	156.00	165.00			Tim Ward
Islander	177.00				Whitewater Sports
Lindisfarne	120.00				Whitewater Sports.

A SEA KAYAKING COURSE is run by Plas y Brenin on the west coast of Scotland.

It is aimed at the Sea Paddler who wants to gain more experience in remote areas and challenging waters. The course lasts for one week, i.e. 28th. May to 4th. June. Transport FROM Plas y Brenin, food and ALL equipment is provided. The Course is called 'SEA EXPLORATION'. Telephone: Capel Curig for more details.