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. 39

NOVEMBER, 1983

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EDITORIAL

As chairman of the Sea Touring Committee I attended the B.C.U. Coaching Conference over the weekend of 8/9th October which I thoroughly enjoyed. For me the highlight was being entertained after our dinner on Saturday by Dave Helliwell, Derek Hutchinson and Ron Moore. Next time you run into Derek - ask him about the rent collector calling!!

I have recently received a copy of the 1984 Plas y Brenin brouchure. If nothing else it contains some good pictures. In fact, it also contains details on excellent courses and if you've never experienced P y B - then you've missed out. (This plug will cost you a pint John Barry!) I will only draw your attention to one weekend at Plas y Brenin, that of the 14/15th. January when the B.C.U. are staging a Safety Conference there.

Next weekend sees our Sea Kayaking Symposium at Ullswater. We have a full house and excellent speakers, so the potential is good. As always I shall be producing a full report which will be for sale - cost determined by production expenses. I shall advertise it in the January Newsletter.

Your renewals to the A.S.K.C. are coming in thick and fast but for those of you who have yet to renew I have enclosed an appropriate form.

My wife and children took the A.S.K.C. to 'Expo '83' - a canoeing bonanza held over the weekend I was at the Coaching Conference. This incredibly well organised event was staged by the East Midlands Region and the man totally responsible was Chairman of the Inland Touring Committee, Bryan Ward. The advertising was more than adequate, all those involved duly turned up; the manufacturers, the exhibitors, the demonstrators, the competitors - all that was missing was YOU - O.K., maybe you, like me, was genuinly tied up - but where was everyone else?

Expedition reports will continue to be the mainstay of this Newsletter - so keep them coming. For those of you hesitant to put pen to paper - don't worry about how it reads, I'll make sure it reads O.K. in the Newsletter. (For those of you now saying, "he's being b..... patronising", I'm aiming my comments at our younger members who are inexperienced at writing factual reports of any length.)

Despite the importance of trips reports I am wanting to branch out on to more equipment reports. O.K., so I publish a fair amount about kayaks, pumps, rudders, etc. I would also like to include camping equipment and I mean to start off with TENTS. I've recently invested in a new Fjallraven dome tent which I am preparing a report on. How about you letting me have a full but short report on your tent. When I have sufficient reports I'll make one of our Newsletter a special 'tent' edition. When we've finished with tents we can go on to sleeping bags, stoves, clothing and so on. For the time being let me have information on your tent - and don't think, 'why bother, everyone else will be reporting on the tent I use', I want a variety of opinions - so come on, pen to paper, NOW.

Now to introduce this Newsletter. "yes, it could happen to you" a tale of a B.C.U. sea course at the Isle of Wight. An article on electirc pumps and an excellent account by Laurie Ford on what sea canoeing means to him. Derek Hairon's "Cornish Delight" reminds us of the canoeing to be had around Cornwall. There's something on Expedition Medicine and Jon. Iles' report on his Scottish Exped. this summer. I have published our account of our experiences in East Greenland during July and August and there is the story of the Anglesey to Isle of Man trip which I know you will, as sea canoeists yourselves, very much appreciate, and finally there is a little on sea kayak rudders. I hope you agree it's not such a bad old newsletter - and many thanks to the contributors.

As this is the final 1983 Newsletter, it remains for me to wish you all a 'MERRY CHRISTMAS' and a SPECIAL KIND OF FREEDOM during 1984. Nanuk.

Taken from ANorAK No. 8, February, 1983

Michael Bridgewood, currently of Clemson, SC, passed along this account of one of his paddling friend's experiences during a British Canoe Union course:

"You have to be more polite to me now because I passed my Advanced Sea Proficiency last weekend. I went to the National Sailing Centre at Cowes, where Roger Irwin runs the courses. Keith Maslen was the examiner. There were only three of us for the advanced course, so Roger combined it with a TI/SI course, which pushed the numbers up to about nine. The weather was appalling with force 6 - 8 predicted from the SE. We all went on an expedition on the Saturday, starting at Freshwater Bay and heading for Compton. I was in charge and said that normally I would'nt take this group out in such conditions. We launched and paddled out about 3/4 miles. One guy was caught by a wave and surfed off out of control. We retrieved him only to have him do it again in front of me. This time he harpooned Keith Maslen's boat, a Nordkapp, and there was a spectacular sight of this guy almost looping his boat over Keith's. When the wave moved on I rescued Dave (the one who had surfed), while the others sorted Keith out. He was OK but his boat was badly holed. Whilst we were trying to plug the holes with Sylglass and sheets of polythene, his back hatch came off and he quickly sank! Not bad; sink the assessor!! By now things were getting serious so we towed them ashore with Keith holding the submerged cockpit of the Nordkapp whilst he sat astride Roger's Baidarka! Once ashore he told us to repair his boat so he could continue. There was a 2" diameterhole in the side of the canoe and cracks covering the width of the canoe which went through the full thickness of the hull. Several plastic bags and one full roll of tape later and he was afloat again.

Then it was my turn..... there was I, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from shore, when a huge wave broke on top of me. I paddle-braced but could'nt hold it and the wave pushed me over and sucked me partly out of the boat so I was unable to roll. My deck was wiped clean of the chart and compass. Spare paddle had come adrift and my flares were ripped out of the pockets. Luckily they were all tied to me with string. After an X rescue I was back in the boat, feeling a little more humble. We managed to make it to Compton Bay without any more disasters. The next day just the three of us went out with Roger and Keith to a lumpy part of the sea off Norris Castle. There they had us rolling, capsizing, towing and paddling backwards in a force 6, wind-over-tide situation! During one exercise we sank Roger when we had to drain his back hatch. The sea was so rough that we shipped 3 gallons of water through the open hatch for every three spurts through the pump! We had some satisfaction throwing Roger into the drink so we could do an X rescue on his canoe! All in all it was quite a weekend with many good lessons learnt, but what a difference to the training weekend we attended two years ago! This weekend Jane and I are off to France so that I can soothe my tattered nerves!!.

Dave Rawlinson, Eastleigh, Hampshire, England.

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YES! IT COULD HAPEN TO YOU

How many of us can truthfully say we are competent in the Eskimo Roll and group or self-rescue technique? If you have any doubts, you are simply asking for trouble when sea kayaking.

I consider myself an experienced sea kayaker having paddled various sections of the British Columbian coast, including Glacier Bay, for the past ten summers. But a recent incident dramatically brought home to me the absolute need for instictive and decisive action when an accident does occur.

A friend, who I had introduced to sea kayaking, wanted me to accompany him on a trip from Sausalito (Calafornia) to Angel Island, a distance of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. A simple paddle. The only concern would be Raccoon Strait which seperated Richardson Bay, our starting point, from Angel Island. The Strait was subject to strong tidal flow but we planned to cross at high slack for minimum current.

So no problem.

We set off and everything went well. Our unladen boats responded to every small wave. I found it necessary to shift my weight more often than I normally did with a load of camping gear aboard. My Tyee II was slightly weathercocking and acting a bit squirrely. Consequently, I had to be more aware of balance. My friend was following me so I checked his progress by glancing over my shoulder.

Things went smoothly as we began our crossing of Raccoon Strait. Upon reaching mid-strait, the wind blew a little stronger since it was funnelled by the land on either side. Nothing to be concerned about. Not yet anyway. My friend remarked it was the roughest water he'd been on and exuded a sense of pride in negotiating it. I assured him that he was making good progress.

Nearing Angel Island, I noticed a distant patch of white-capped water created by wind flowing over the island and striking the water surface vertically - a mild williwaw. My friend saw it and was intimidated by its appearance. Since we were away from it and almost to Angel Island, I told him not to worry. I sensed by his reaction that he was overly tuned to every variation in water conditions. It was typical of any beginner in the process of building up his confidence. By continually monitoring his progress, I tried to ameliorate any apprehensions he was experiencing.

Ahead of us lay calm water as we came into the lee of a point. Shore was three minutes away and my friend asked me where we should land. I turned my head and upper body left rearward to respond - a move I'd made many times in a laden kayak - and felt a sudden change in equilibrium. My turning coincided with a small wave. This shifted the centre of gravity to the right side of the kayak. In less time than it takes to relate I was in the water.. The actual tip-over seemed to occur in slow motion and I could'nt believe it was happening. In fact, I think I tried to will myself upright.

The first mistake was turning rearward to such a degree in an unladen kayak. The second mistake was not hitting a brace as soon as I sensed a change in equilibrium. Quite simply, my reflexes were not conditioned to the event.

At first my friend thought I had turned over on purpose. However, it did'nt take him long to realise the truth. Suddenly his confidence disappeared and he felt extremely vulnerable.

Meanwhile, buoyed up by my lifejacket, I tried to re-enter the cockpit directly instead of from the stern. That was my third mistake. I only succeeded in getting water into the kayak. My friend kept asking me if I was OK. When I asked him to paddle next to me he said he was afraid he might turn over himself. That was some thing I absolutely did'nt want to happen so I did'nt press the issue.

By this time we had drifted into Raccoon Strait where the water was choppy. Moreover, the front half of my kayak had completely filled with water and some gear began to float away. Fortunately, I had a rear bulkhead which kept the kayak afloat. For the moment I was more concerned about retrieving my gear; particularly a small camera in a waterproof bag and a jacket that had my wallet in it. But, when I could finally get my friend to paddle close enough, they had drifted away. I only managed to recover some lesser items.

I thought I might be able to make it to the shore by having my friend tow me while I hung on to my kayak and swam on my back. Two problems: 1. the rope he had was attached to his bow which meant he had to paddle backwards and 2. my water filled kayak acted like a sea anchor. Toss in the fact we were bucking a current and you had an unworkable solution (the tide had not stopped flowing in).

My kayak resembled a Nun Buoy since it was vertical in the water. I was amused in spite of the situation. With my jacket, wallet and camera gone, I concentrated on getting the water out. Even with my full weight on the overturned stern, I could'nt raise the bow.

Twenty minutes had elapsed since tipping over and now, instead of a detached view, I was becoming increasingly concerned. My friend stayed nearby not knowing exactly what to do. I avoided involving him unnecessarily. One of us in the water was quite enough.

Our predicament was resolved when my friend waved his paddle at a passing fishing boat, the first to come by. Within five minutes I climbed aboard. It was only then that I became cold. The fisherman emptied my kayak with a small electric pump and we hauled it aboard. My friend was able to paddle back with no further problems.

Both of us came out much wiser from the experience. We have resolved to become proficient in the Eskimo Roll and group and self rescue techniques. Theory and sea kayaking alone are simply not enough. When a tip-over occurs, rescue action should be immediate. It's that basic, that mandatory.

Yours for safe kayaking,
Will Nordby, San Anselmo, CA, U.S.A.

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BOAT NOTES

Nautiraid of France are bringing out a new Greenland-style folding kayak at the Crystal Palace Exhibition here in London. John Dowd says he is ordering some for the Canadian market

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ELECTRIC PUMPS From the December Edition of "The Sea Canoeist"

I had one fitted in 1979, and have been experimenting with different pumps and batteries ever since, and only last year came across the ideal combination. The best pump currently available is the RULE 400, manufactured as a proper submersible bilge pump. The battery I have is a YUASA NP6-12, completely sealed and rechargable. Marshall Batteries also have a 12N5 motor-bike battery which is a lot cheaper, but it has a rubber cap over a small vent and this needs to be kept in good condition or salt water will get into the battery - or worse - acid will leak out. The switch is a C & K 7201, both halves of the switch connected together to give twice the current carrying capacity and twice the reliabilty. A rubber cover is available for these. Care should be taken when fitting these switches as the rubber is too fragile to use pliers or a spanner on. It is better to hold the cover by hand and screw the switch up tight before any wires are connected. The solder the wires on, then cover the bottom of the switch and the wires with a big dollop of gel, making sure you work it all over the switch. You now have a completely water-proof switch. Make sure the top of the switch on deck can not be damaged - mine is alongside my sail holder, so can't be knocked when X rescueing, etc. If you don't have a sail holder fitted, cut a round hold in some convenient place on a sloping part of your foredeck (making sure it's not where your knees are going to be) and then tape an old light-globe into the hole (use release agent on globe first). Gel globe and then lay up over it and you have a neat little recess for your switch. The globe will probably break when you try to pull it out but the small pieces left will come out easily.

The wire on the pump may not be long enough to reach the switch and the battery so you will need to solder another length on. Cover any of these joints with araldite to prevent water seeping back up under the plastic insulation and eventually corroding the wire through. Soldor the wire to the battery terminals and smear with vasaline etc. to prevent corrosion, but still be able to clip a battery charger on. Make sure the pump is connected to the correct terminal, the pump wires are marked when you buy it.

The batteries will run the pump for at least 3 hours continuously (over 1200 galls), but normally with the small amount of water getting in through a spray deck you may only use it for less than a minute every time you go out. This means 1800

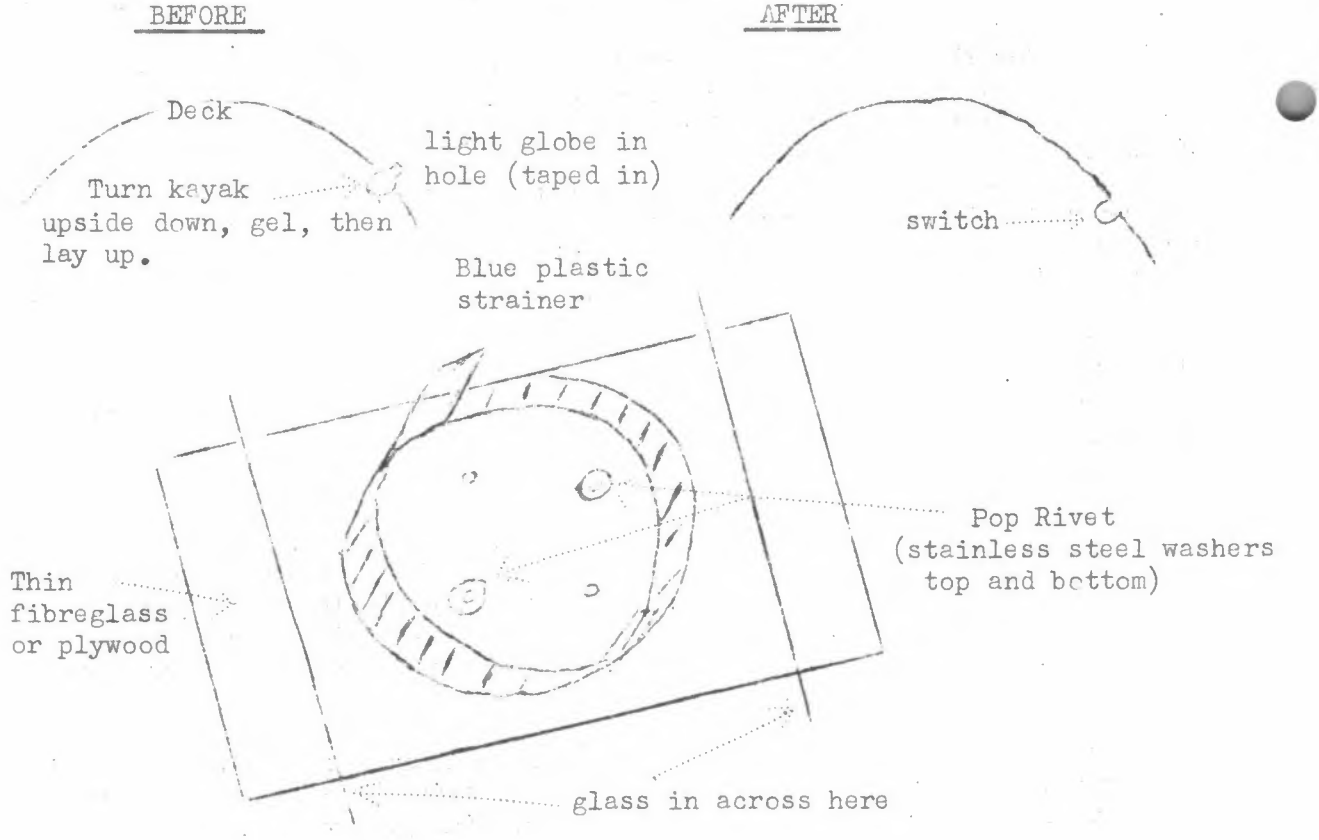
trips before the need to recharge (theoretically). Actually I charge mine about every 6 months, but I have never ever had it go flat, despite heavy continuous use when I go out surfing without a spray-deck on. Charge these batteries over night at less than one amp. The pump will completely empty a full cockpit in about 2 minutes (depending on cockpit size) and what's more important, will do so while you have both hands on the paddle.

My current pump arrangement has been constantly immersed in salt water, used for long periods and never washed with fresh water; i.e. used under the worst possible conditions. I have had no trouble of any kind in twelve months. I would however recommend that the top of the battery be washed with fresh water reasonably often.

I know of at least a dozen sea kayaks in Tasmania using this system (and one slalom kayak). When solar cells become cheaper they will be the next addition.

Although there are many places the batteries and pump can be mounted, behind the seat on the rear bulkhead seems to be the best place. I used heavy shockcord to hold the first battery in, but we are now using aluminium straps bolted to the bulkhead. The bottom part of the pump can be unclipped and pop-rivetted onto a thin piece of fibreglass (or plywood), using stainless steal washers on each side. The fibreglass can then be glassed into the bottom just in front of the battery, or just behind the seat. Make sure the outlet is pointing where your outlet hole is going to be before glassing it in. The outlet hole is a clear flexible plastic pipe that is a tight push fit, no clamps are necessary. Cut a hole in the deck for the outlet pipe, rasp all round the pipe so it is good and rough, push it in the hole and then glass it in with a few small pieces of C.S.M. This outlet preferably needs to be in front of the cockpit so you can see when it has stopped pumping, or that it has actually started. With the kayak rocking around, the pump will suck air when the water level gets down and it needs to be switched off and then back on again to get as much out as possible. The wires to the switch can be held in place with a big blob of gel every three or four inches.

With a little bit of care you will have a very water-proof electrical pump, which is not all that easy considering it is going to be constantly immersed in salt water - the curse of any electrical system.



WHAT IS Sea Canoeing ?

by Laurie Ford, Tasmania.

Who is classed as a SPRINT paddler, or a MARATHON paddler, or a SLALOMIST? Is he your general club touring paddler who now and again has a go at all of these, or is he the dedicated person who trains two hours a day, seven days a week. Not for the marathon paddler the delights of splashing around in a pool playing polo or travelling many miles each weekend to practice nose-stands in a good grade three. At club meetings or other gatherings it's "Oh, he's a marathon paddler." He/she is striving to reach the top of the field, developing better techniques, taking advantage of better boat design as sson as it becomes available, and above all, waking, working and dreaming about marathon paddling.

The same, and more so, applies to Sea Canoeing. It is a way of life and requires a whole new mental outlook. A sea canoeist lives and breathes cea canoeing, constantly working on ideas to improve his lot. Just as a slalom kayak or a W.W. racer or a sprint kayak are all designed with particular criteria in mind, so is the sea kayak - it is long and fast, comfortable, can carry a large load and do so in extremes of bad weather at sea. It is fitted out with and carries more gear and gadgets than any other type of kayak - and it is mainly this area that is constantly changing as new ideas come along to make the sea canoeists life easier and more enjoyable. There is little likely-hood of a breakthrough in hull design and it would serve little purpose anyway. Sea canoeing is normally done in groups, by people of all shapes and sizes. It is not a race but done at a speed acceptable to the slowest member of the group. The possesser of a super fast lightweight craft would still be obliged to travel at the group's speed.

Your normal club paddler does not fit into any category, but is handy to fill in a polo team, make up numbers at a slalom or down river race and is generally the backbone of the club when work needs doing. They canoe for the sheer enjoyment, happy to drift along in company with their friends, proficient enough at most aspects of canoeing. Just as river canoeing can vary from placid touring in open canadians on the Murray, to raging streams like the Franklin where only high buoyancy slalom boats in the hands of experts are suitable, so does sea canoeing also vary. Long passages in 40 knot winds demand a totally different type of kayak that may be used for day trips on an estuary or along a sheltered coast line.

Derek Hutchinson says in the introduction to his book 'Sea Canoeing', "The kayak man challenges the sea in what probably appears to be the most diminutive and delicate of craft, even more fragile in appearance than the smallest sailing dinghy. Nevertheless, the man who paddles the kayak well is master of one of the finest, most sea worthy crafts in the world. It can lay beam on to a breaking sea, many times its own height. The fastest and most dangerous of waters which are treacherous terrors for even the largest sailing boat or motor craft can be conquered by the shallow drafted kayak. It can hop from bay to bay seeking shelter and finding passages where no other boat can or dare go, and it can avoid the roughest water by hugging the shore. It can capsize and be righted by the canoeist through the dextrous use of the paddle, without the man's ever having to leave the security of the kayak."
AND
"The strength of the wind and the height of the waves and swell are sometimes such that a rescue, other than an Eskimo roll, would be impossible. You are then aware of the presence of others only when they appear on a wave crest coinciding with your own upward rise. Communication is therefore almost non-existent; each man paddles his own lonely trip with his own thoughts, hopes and fears. He pushes himself to his limit, facing a personal test far above anything that could be devised on paper. That is why, when people say that sea canoeing is non-competitive, I feel obliged to point out that it is competitive in the broadest sense of the word. The dedicated sea canoeist seeks to improve his last performance or, taking up the challenge of some difficult crossing or trip, seeks new ways to prove his own capabilities, skills, endurance and courage."

Stirring words indeed, and enough to frighten off many would be sea canoeists. This is the ultimate experience, challenging the sea on her own terms. Yet this level is only achieved by very few, and only after years of experience on lesser trips. Most sea canoeists do not go out week after week seeking out gale force conditions, but rather the opposite - to just get away from the 'rat-race' for a day or so, and paddle new areas, looking at the enviroment from a different angle. They are never far from safety, rarely being more than a mile or two offshore, a mere thirty minute paddle should conditions start to deteriorate. Nevertheless, even on an apparantly simple trip things can go wrong, and sea condions, equipment or personel can turn to form reversals. Sea canoeists should always be prepared. You may well end up miles away from your intended destination due to wind, current, sea sickness, leaky boats and many other factors. Tow ropes, tent, fly, sleeping bag, chocolate, matches are among the items I consider essential for even a day trip. They weigh very little and take up a very small part of your space, but may save a life.

Alan Byde says, "The questions which present themselves at sea are really quite involved and decisions must be made which take into account the resources of the party. This is why it is necessary to stress that sea canoeing is for experienced canoeists, or at least, able canoeists with proper equipment and a full working knowledge of rescue techniques and under the control of an experienced leader. The subjective feelings of satisfaction is, I find, very strong after nearly every sea canoeing trip I make. One supposes that decision making is as necessary for the mind as exercise is for the body."

THE MINIMUM NUMBER IN A PARTY AT SEA IS FOUR, not three as recommended by most books. Three are recommended soley for the purpose of rescueing each other, and does not take into account a case of sea sickness. I well remeber a case a few years ago in a force 8 off the south coast of Tasmania when a paddler became incapacitated by sea sickness and could not even sit upright. Another paddler had to raft up and support him (the two bows were tied together) and another two boats started to tow both of them. We were side on to huge ocean swells, and towed for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to get to the nearest landing spot, bracing into every wave as it broke over us. We were fortunate in having a fifth paddler to change with one of the towers now and then - a party of only three would have been in serious trouble. (Four is also the recommended number for bushwalking - one to remain with the casualty, the other two to walk out for assistance). When towing it is best to have the tow ropes of equal length - a standard tow rope is described elsewhere.

On the subject of fatigue at sea, Alan Byde has this to say: "A rudder is very useful on the sea for turning, especially with the longer kayak type of hull which is better for efficient trvel over long distances. Slalom canoes may be improved in the sea by strapping skegs under the rear of the hull or even by devising end caps complete with pintles and stock for hanging a rudder. In a cross wind on open water the slalom type of canoe will swing and twist about the sea in a most frustrating way. Usually the waves will be running with the crests at right angles to the wind and to paddle across this requires constant powerful draw strokes to pull the bows through each advancing wave; the bows tending to dig deeper than the stern, allow the stern to drift away downwind, or to catch the crest current and pay off downwave. One never knows whether the little fiend is going to run surfing downwind or wallow, weathercock fashion, upwind. One usually ends up using great sweep strokes on the upwind side which become very tiring. An offset paddle grip, long lever to windward is a useful aid. Alternatively, when the sea is very tumbled and confused, the slalom canoe properly handled is very responsive and stable and great fun if covering distances is not important. Short choppy waves are quite normal on open lakes as well as on the open sea."

AND

"One should never come off the sea feeling anything more than a pleasant muscular tiredness and a feeling that it would have been possible to do it all over again straight away. If your group crawls up the beach shattered, then check your planning. The sea is very demanding and the penalties for simple errors of judgement or lack of care may be very serious.

Never be tied to a time-table - to hurry at sea is to ask for trouble. It may be necessary to run for cover and land in a totally unexpected place so that the land based party misses you altogether. The tides turn every 6¼ hours and the impossible headcurrent may turn into a free ride home a few hours later. Nevertheless, you will become exhausted because it is only when one is tried beyond the previously known limits of endurance that one learns what can be done. 'Be prepared' is the best advice."

Now although he only specifically mentions slalom kayaks as being tiring to paddle in winds, so are a lot of so called sea kayaks, and rudders are a definite safety aid; but they must be a type that should a wire break, then the rudder swings free and does not affect normal paddling. They should also be of a type that can run up on a beach backwards, or seal launch off rocks without being damaged.

A sea kayak is a personal thing, fitted out to suit the individual, and should not be chosen in a hurry. A properly fitted sea kayak is a thing of joy, something you can sit in for hours at a time, and take on all kinds of weather, Paddle as many different types as you can in as many different conditions before making up your mind. The mere fact that a slalom kayak has circumnavigated Tasmania (including King and Flinders Island) does not necessarily prove that this is the ultimate sea kayak. Had the trip been done by a variety of other sea kayaks as well, the slalom kayak would have been a poor last in all areas of handling. Similar trips done by one type of kayak prove just as little. Only when many types paddle together can assumptions be made about which boat is more suitable for what conditions. Your kayak manufacturer is no different to your vacuum cleaner salesman- he is trying to sell his product at all costs.

I always make a point of telling sea canoeists in my club that it is their responsibility to be within talking distance of the last paddler at least every 15 minutes - it is not good enough to look back and see them still upright and paddling. They may be dead tired, pulled a muscle, be sea sick, etc. and require immediate assistance. I would think it obvious that if two paddlers find themselves miles away from the main group then it is their job to close with the main party and find out if they have missed out on some direction - it is not the leaders job to chase off in all directions after errant paddlers. Sea canoeing in a group is not a personal thing - I have been on many trips where decisions have been made to return to base, or head for the nearest landing spot for a variety of reasons. In these situations the paddler out on a limb suddenly finds there is not another kayak in sight, and should he then get into trouble he is in <u>real trouble</u>. This has happened - a paddler found himself capsized and out of his boat at the foot of a 200 ft cliff in high winds and big seas, and nobody in sight. He was extremely lucky to survive. Had he kept within talking distance of the group he would have heard the decision to land because it was thought conditions around the point would be too bad - they were!

Safe sea canoeing demands a knowledge of weather patterns - again this is covered in many publications. There should be no cause ever to be caught unawares by conditions you can't handle. To use a recent quotable quote; 'There are risks, but they're not great if you use your commonsense'.

I wish you all as much pleasure from sea canoeing as I have had over the years.

Good canoeing,
Laurie Ford.

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5th. NATIONAL SEA CANOEING SYMPOSIUM 12/13th. NOVEMBER, 1983

ARE YOU COMING? SEE THIS NEWSLETTER AND CANOEING PRESS FOR DETAILS

SEE YOU THERE. WHERE? ULLSWATER OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

5.30 in the morning, and two cold bodies sat huddled in a car overflowing with canoeing gear awaiting the arrival of Loic Bourdon off the Roscoff-Plymouth ferry. A loud thump on the car roof woke us up with a start and a grinning face peered through the misty window. Loic had arrived.

After a dash round to the chandlers to obtain last minute items, two Norkapps and Loic's sea kayak slipped out of Plymouth Sound - the bright April morning sunlight and the calm sea having stirred us into beginning our ten day trip along the Cornish Coast.

Leaving Plymouth, Loic produced his new paddle design and both Franco Ferrero and myself moved further away. Long and thin like Eskimo paddles, Loic's design ended at a sharp point which made the paddles look like ancient spears. With these paddles, Franco remarked, Loic would never get into any bother with windsurfers. A quick flick of the wrist and windsurfers would be collected like lumps of meat on a kebab!

Soon we left Plymouth Sound. To the west the rocky coastline stretched into the distance offering few suitable landfalls. Though early April was a chilly month to travel, the advantages of travelling outside the tourist season were soon apparent. Often we were to camp at spots where camping was usually prohibited. Our success was also due to our method of gaining permission to camp. The wettest and coldest member of the team would be sent to ask permission while the two remaining stood some distance away looking cold and misereable. This required little acting ability and always worked.

Five days after leaving Plymouth, a cold easterly force 4 greeted us as we set off to round Lizard Head. Our planned landing was at Kynance Cove but having negotiated the 3 to 4 foot surf, none of us was keen on the idea of having to leave from such an exposed spot the next day. Instead we decided to paddle another four miles to Polurrian Cove where a hasty camp was made behind the toilet while we waited for the rain to stop.

That evening we headed off on what was to become a regular excursion; the 'Cornish coast path night walk' - in search of a pub. As time went on these walks become longer and more ridiculous, with 3 canoeists stumbling their way across brambles, streams, marsh and walls in search of a pint, or in Loic's case, a cup of coffee. Coffee, we were to discover, was a substance unheard of outside of the "Grockle" season in Cornish pubs.

Sitting in the snug and warm bar with its fire blazing; we made phone calls to advise on our position. Walking back into the pub my legs suddenly felt strange - as if walking on air, my vision went blurred. "Hell .....what was in that pint", I mumbled as my hands groped for the door handle. "Franco.....", my voice trailed away and I fell forward to be caught by Franco who dragged me outside to recover from my faintness. This marked the start of 3 days of the dreaded 'canoeists stomach'!

Leaving the shelter of the cove the next morning, the east wind had freshened and soon we were being blown across Mounts Bay towards our landfall at Lamorna Cove. Whereas Franco had felt tired the previous day, it was now my turn. Moreover, the sea was on my stern and the kayak refused to stay on course in my tired state.

Loic's kayak, having been designed by himself to handle the difficult waters off North Brittany, performed well and surfed along. Every hundred metres Loic would stop and wait for us as I continued on my erratic course westwards.

Landfall at Lamorna Cove proved to be unsuitable. Instead we paddled on along the coast to the boulder strewn 'beach' at St. Loy upon which a swell smashed into the boulders. Landing loaded kayaks called for careful timing. Both Franco and Loic landed reasonably well and only got soaked up to their waists, but my landing was terrible. Nearing the shore on the back of a wave, a second wave suddenly caught up with my stern so increasing my speed. The kayak surged forward

and moved down the face of the wave. Despite frantic back paddling, the Nordkapp surged onwards to thud and bang onto the boulders. Leaping out to avoid being sucked into the 'washing machine', we dragged the kayak onto higher ground to inspect the damage. To our relief only 1½ inches of the modified hull had been lost along with a chunk of gel coat at the bow.

The next day was deemed a rest day and while Loic and I explored the countryside, Franco disappeared up the nearby headland with his climbing gear. Despite the added weight of this gear, Franco's boat still remained lighter than mine. "Perhaps he slipped his gear into your boat" remarked Loic!

Later Loic was introduced to climbing by Franco and soon a thin trail of blood on the rocks marked Loic's route.

Wednesday, April 8th. was one of those days canoeists detest. We awoke to the steady sound of water dripping into the tent. We had breakfast in the rain, packed launched and paddled in the rain. Worse still, I succeeded in getting soaked at the start while trying to launch from the boulders. Everytime I got into the kayak a wave would sweep me broadsides and more blood red gel was left on the rocks. In desperation I leaped in and shouted to Loic and Franco to push me out backwards into the wall of green water and foam. There was no time to fit the spraydeck as the next wave hit me. The only solution was to try to move out beyond the break. Once clear of the shore I was able to fit the spraydeck and start to pump out.

Loic and Franco had slightly more luck and soon Franco was alongside me helping to pump out the flooded cockpit while enduring my curses.

From St. Loy we headed towards Lands End. Everything was enveloped in a fine mist. Loic amused us by singing songs about the wonders of being a frog who lived in a very wet swamp!

"Real sea canoeing weather" we joked as the water trickled off Franco's nose and beard.

Finally we slid onto the beach at Sennen. It was low tide and we had a 100 metre march up the beach with our loaded kayaks - the toggles biting into our cold, water sodden fingers. Hatches hissed open and the tent was erected. Without changing out of our fibre pile suits we bundled into the tent for a brew up. The heat of the stove and moisture from our bodies soon created a warm and 'fuggy' atmosphere.

That night 3 wet canoeists on another coastal walk, stumbled their way towards a warm bar.

A warm red glow awoke us the next morning and a transparent film of plastic seemed to have been stretched over the sea. After thoroughly drying our gear, we dragged our bodies off the sand and slid into the kayaks.

"Hmm .....P.I.* weather" grinned Franco.

We were now travelling through tin mining country and the remains of the mines were constantly visible. As we rounded Carn Du we stopped with surprise. The sea was bright red. The foam cascading onto the rocks was red. Everything we looked at was red! We had paddled into a huge bowl of tomato soup! Later we spotted the cause of this strange effect. A large outfall was pumping in long artery-like spurts the red sea water in order to keep a mine drained.

Passing beneath the Great Zawn, Franco began muttering strange climbing codes while ant-like figures moved about the rock face. Nearby the swell would slide up the rock face to recede with a loud 'whosh' exposing the sharp rock edges.

Camp was made at Zennor at the foot of a steep bramble covered slope and our search for the coast path took us through them. Having found the path we soon lost it again and blundered about for the next half hour through bog, bramble, stream

and field until we reached the small bar. The long march was forgotten over a pint until the time came to head back. For variety our route took us through brambles and over rocks!

Next morning was dull and wet, but conditions looked suitable for paddling. Away from the shelter of the cove our paddling speed rapidly decreased to a slow crawl against an easterly force 6/7. The wind screamed past our ears as we stugggled onwards.

Cold water constantly hit my face, the tiny particles of salt acting like sand paper on my skin. Occasionally my face would have a short rest from the abrasions of the sanding disc until another mass of salt was flung at me. The salt which had dried around my eyebrows now trickled into my eyes as a concentrated brine.

The Coastguard station at St. Ives drew closer inch by inch as we dragged our boats forward. Nearing the headland we spotted a sheltered gulley where we could munch our baggin and have a brief rest. After lunch we set about gathering some of the mussels which hung limply on the rocks. As the kayaks rose we would grab a mussel and as the swell fell the mussel would be pulled off. At the end of the 'harvest' three pot-bellied canoeists sat in their kayaks, the mussels having been stuffed into our canoe cags. Then it was back to the wind.

Up the face of the wave crawled the kayak until it reached its pivotal point and fell back towards the green surface of the water. A hollow thud and gallons of water would be thrown sideways as the kayak ploughed onwards.

Occasionally a steeper wave would march towards me, the laden bow would disappear into the green wall. Water would pour around me - the cold waves green fingers searching for every weak spot, intent on trying to wrench equipment from the deck as it tumbled past. Franco began to lag behind and when we rejoined him beyond the roughest water, one of his split paddles had been torn from the deck and lost.

There was no way we could reach our planned landfall before the tide turned. Instead we headed into the bay towards the railway line where, between squalls, a camp spot could be seen. Being near the Hayle Estuary we hoped that we might be able to find calmer waters and avoid a long walk up the beach. The entrance to the estuary was dry and there was nothing for it but to tackle the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile up the beach. Our spirits sank as the weight of the kayaks sapped every last ounce of strength and the moist sand curled around our toes sucking our feet into the sand with every step.

Franco's day was completed by the discovery of a wet sleeping bag and no-one dared speak seeing that we were all in such a bad mood. It had been a bad day. Each remained in our private worlds.....until the mussels began to cook. Two mouth watering litres of mussels each and cooked in onions. With each mouthful our spirits and humour returned. We had covered just 8 miles that day.

April 11th. was the last day that Franco and Loic were able to paddle; time having finally caught up with us. As we headed into Portreeth, now swathed in bright sunlight, our paddling at first was slow as our aching muscles slipped back into gear. Nearing Godvery Point our speed dropped to a crawl as we investigated the coastline with its large rocks and gulleys and caves waiting to be explored.

Finally we slipped into Portreech Harbour with its stange chambers where ships had once docked to load with rocks from the quarry. Inland the old route of the railway from the quarry was still visible.

That evening we headed down the coast path to the bar.

This time there were no brambles!

Derek Hairon
Franco Ferrero
Loic Bourdon.

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*P.I. = positively idyllic

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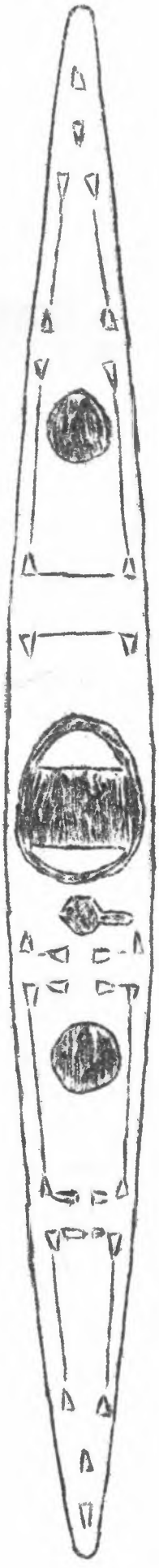
THE KEOWEE ADVANCED EXPEDITION SEA KAYAK

by Mike Bridgewood (Designer) UNITED STATES AMERICA



I deliberately refer to the Keowee as an advanced expedition boat because this was a fundamental design aim which emerged as the result of expedition kayaking in England over about ten years. As the longest and probably the heaviest single seat kayak on the market, the Keowee is not a boat which will suit everybody; but then not everybody is interested in advanced paddling with its associated committment and stress.

The Keowee is just under 20 feet in length and weighs in empty at about 70 lbs. It was built for toughness in the wilds, not primarily for carrying about. I once suffered the misfortune of seeing my loaded Anas Acuta sliding out of control down a grassy cliff, miles from anywhere. Thanks to Valley Canoe Products workmanship, it survived to get me home. The Keowee is built with this experience in mind.

As far as handling in the water is concerned, with its length, two aspects of the design are immediately apparent. Firstly, it is stable in comparison with other narrow boats, and secondly, it is a devil of a job to turn. For an experienced whitewater enthusiast, this latter feature takes some getting used to, but it is quite intentional. I've been in deteriorating conditions at sea with several miles to go on one or two occasions and would have given anything at the time for a straight tracking performance. One particularly memorable solo epic was in a slalom boat when, in addition to bad conditions, I'd got the tide wrong! I was so exhausted at the end of the trip, I just sat in my boat and cried. I was only just about able to crawl up the beach. I sometimes wonder why I still do this crazy sport - my wife claims I'm obsessed. Anyway, hence the Keowee tracks pretty straight and I now keep the moon very much in mind when paddling.

The Keowee is designed to give plenty of lift when either punching out through surf, running in to the beach whilst being pursued by it, or just plain getting through waves out beyond the break. It looks like a naval warship bow, and that's exactly what prompted its design - I once spent many hours on the bridge of a guided missile destroyer in terrible weather off Lands End (U.K.) fascinated by the way the bow shed 25 foot waves. The scale was different but I just knew I wanted a kayak to do exactly the same.

I've been in several supposed sea kayaks which plough into waves rather than lift over them and it is an extremely exhausting (and wet) business.

Valley Canoe Products hatches and bulkheads are standard fitting providing watertight compartments both fore and aft, with most of the storage space aft.

I feel a deck pump is an absolute must and we, therefore, incorporate one as standard. Safety features include all round decklines. These aid in rafting up at sea as well as rescues if this unfortunately becomes necessary.

When empty and used as a general purpose sea kayak, the Keowee behaves very well, although it does show a tendency to broach into the wind in flat water conditions. This is quite deliberate since the Keowee's real raison d'etre is the loaded expedition trip. Loading for specific conditions does require some practice but is not too critical provided most of the weight is stowed aft.

Finally, I should say what has perhaps become obvious. The Keowee design has resulted from thought with hindsight on the sum total of my nasty experiences whilst sea kayaking. To date, it has proved itself to be all I hoped it would be and I would'nt wish to change any design feature.

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EXPEDITION MEDICINE by Dr. Robin Illingworth

(Dr. Illingworth is to be one of our speakers at the 1983 Sea Kayaking Symposium)

INTRODUCTION

One of the attractions of an expedition is travelling to a remote area. Inevitably this means remoteness from medical care of the standard one is used to. Most expeditions avoid all accidents and illnesses by and large, but they certainly do occur. If anyone is ill or injured on an expedition it is more serious the further one is from proper medical care.

Many diseases and injuries can occur anywhere, but some are special hazards of an expedition's area or activities. Many conditions can be treated adequately on the expedition with simple drugs and equipment, but some require facilities which are only available in hospitals.

However, much medical equipment one takes on an expedition one cannot hope to deal with every possible illness or injury which might happen: one can only try to cover the more common and minor conditions, and just hope that serious problems do not occur. One can, however, reduce the risks and the difficulties of an expedition by proper planning before departure, by observing standard health and safety precautions while in the field, and by taking the right medical equipment and knowing how to use it.

COMMON MEDICAL PROBLEMS

The commonest injuries on expeditions are blisters, minor cuts and grazes. If badly treated these may become infected and cause considerable problems, especially if the person is unable to walk. One must be able to clean and dress small wounds properly and thus allow them to heal.

Most lacerations and minor burns, and simple sprains and fractures of fingers, toes and clavicles can be treated quite adequately on an expedition without outside help.

Serious injuries are fortunately uncommon; they require first aid treatment before evacuation to hospital.

The common ailments are aches and pains, sunburn and insect bites, and bowl disturbances These usually get better without treatment, but simple drugs provide symptomatic relief. More serious diseases may need special drugs such as antibiotics, and a few patients need treatment in hospital.

OTHER MEDICAL HAZARDS

Some expeditions are liable to particular medical problems depending on where the party is going and what they will be doing there. Special knowledge and extra drugs and equipment may be necessary. The references listed may give adequate information, but advice about local conditions may also be necessary.

In any cold or mountainous area hypothermia (exposure) may occur. In many parts of the world insects are a nuisance and often spread disease while snakes and other animals may be dangerous. There are special hazards in underwater swimming and climbing. At high altitude, snow-blindness, pulmonary oedema and cerebral oedema may be encountered and in the tropics infectious diseases are common and heatstroke may occur.

MEDICAL PLANNING

PERSONAL FITNESS

Every member of the expedition must be asked about recent and chronic illnesses, and allergies to drugs, especially to penicillin, sulphonamides, aspirin and zinc oxide sticking plaster. Conditions such as blindness, asthma, diabetes and pregnancy should not necceassarily prevent people going on expedions as long as the implications have been fully considered, and the insurance company has been informed. If anyone needs regular drug treatment for any reason, adequate supplies must be taken, with spare in case the main supply is lost. Likewise anyone who relies on spectacles or false teeth should take spare.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

The people who apply for expeditions are likely to be fairly fit, so there is usually

no need for a special medical examination. However if one is going to a remote area for a long time one should have the blood pressure and haemoglobin measured, the blood group determined, the urine tested for glucose, protein and blood, and a chest X-ray taken. Piles can be a problem on expeditions and should be treated before departure People who suffer from wax in the ears should have them syringed.

The teeth should be checked a few weeks before the expedition, and any potential problem corrected. Most of the dental emergencies which occur on expeditions could have been avoided by proper treatment before departure.

EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Most expeditions have no serious medical problems and require no outside help. However, if an accident or illness does require advice and/or treatment urgently, it is useful to know in advance what medical facilities are available, how to contact them, and how evacuation might be arranged. Sometimes advice may be obtained by radio or telephone and evacuation may not be necessary, but there may be considerable language difficulties.

INSURANCE

Medical treatment abroad can be extremely expensive, and adequate insurance is essential. £2,000 per person is the minimum suggested. Insurance companies must know in advance of any pre-existing medical conditions or potentially dangerous activities which might result in a claim. If they are not informed they may refuse to pay, for example if a known epileptic injured himself in a fit.

On some expeditions the cost of transport in an emergency could be very high. For example, if one has to hire a helicopter the cost may be £500 per hour, and if someone needs to be flown home on a stretcher, accompanied by a nurse or doctor, this will take up at least 4 seats and possible as many as 9 seats on a plane. The expedition insurance should cover these possibilities. The St. John Ambulance Air Attendant Service may be able to provide a nurse or doctor to accompany a patient by air, and can also help with the necessary travel arrangements. (St. John Ambulance Aeromedical Services, 1, Grosvenor Crescent, London, SW1X 7EF, phone 01 235 5231)

In some European countries medical care is available to British people either free or at reduced cost. Information is available in Leaflet SA28 "Medical Treatment for Visitors to E.E.C. countries" and Leaflet SA30 "Medical Treatment Overseas" available from the Department of Health and Social Security, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6BY.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE.

Every member of an expedition should know simple first aid and how to treat minor injuries and ailments. The best book on basic first aid is "New Essential First Aid" but more detailed first aid knowledge may also be useful. For use in the field on mountaineering and other expeditions, Peter Steeles book, "Medical Care for Mountain Climbers" is recommended.

Practical experience of dealing with mecical problems is more useful than theoretical knowledge. It may be possible to visit a local casualty department to be shown how to treat minor wounds and how to recognise more serious conditions. A General Practioner may be able to help in arranging such instruction.

Some expeditions have a doctor or a nurse in the party. Medical skills can be useful both in diagnosis and treatment on the expedition and in deciding whether evacuation is necessary. However, the doctor may be at a different camp and unavailable when he is needed, or may himself be injured and need help, so the other members of the party should also have some knowledge.

The Young Explorers Trust keeps a list of doctors who are interested in going on expeditions and may be able to find a suitable doctor for an expedition which needs one. (Young Explorers Trust, Royal Geographical Society, 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR)

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A TASTE OF SCOTLAND by Jonathan Iles.

Being a keen yet relatively inexperienced sea canoeist I determined to complete a crash course by paddling round Scotland where a wide variety of paddling may be found. Eventually a route materialised, meandering its way around more than 700 miles of coastline including crossings to the Outer Hebrides and the Orkneys.

No Armed Services canoeist was able to get the time off to join me so after ASKC help at Crystal Palace I was joined by an experienced German paddler, Jochen Leppert and an Engineering graduate, David Taylor. Getting Dave on the trip was a real stroke of luck. He had been ready to circumnavigate England and Wales this summer, but when his partner was injured and his sponsors backed out, Dave decided to join me in Scotland instead.

With maps and charts supplied by M.O.D. and a selection of other sponsored items to help us on our journey, we set off from Fort William on June 29th. 1983. Throughout the poor weather in May and June I was convinced that the summer was saving itself for our trip. Sure enough, no sooner had we reached Skye than the sun came out with a vengeance, frying us furiously. What tremendous weather to explore the west coast of Skye! Even the midges found it too hot, we were hardly bitten.

During a flat calm crossing to the Outer Hebrides we were startled by an exciting encounter with killer whales. Our short journey in the Hebrides was quite delightful, though we must bear in mind that we had what must have been the calmert days of the year - hardly representative of Scotiish waters!

Our first advanced trip came when we crossed back to Skye from Lingarabay (South Harris) to Kilmaluag Bay, Point of Aird (Skye). Although it was only 26 miles, the tidal streams were not particularly favourable and a careful plot gave us an estimated 9½ hour paddle with the streams at a good 2/3 knots near Skye. With full bellies after a huge breakfast from Mairi Morrison (who happened to be the top sportwoman in the Hebrides), we set off on another scorching day and excellentvisibility. With an hour thick fog had come down and we could see no more than 50 m. We carefully followed our compass bearing of 098° Mag. and after a brief discussion four hours later, changed our bearing to compensate for what we reckoned was a faster speed than planned. Thank Heaven for that decision. Without it we would have missed Skye altogether. With visibility down to 30 m we were very aware that we could pass between the small islands north of Skye (Fladda Chuainne) and Skye itself without realising it. After some 8½ hours, as the waves started to tumble with a strengthening wind and still no sight of land, the fog suddenly cleared to about 200 m and we were virtually on top of Fladda Chuuainne. Phew! When the black crags of Skye eventually loomed out of the fog like the rocks of Morolor, we hugged the coast religiously, despite some vicious eddies, and spent the next hour pinpointing our position (one black cliff looks like any other, especially when you can't see the top).The weather had deteriorated somewhat so it was three tired, wet but happy canoeists who crawled up the beach after ten hours in the worst visibilty any of us had experienced.

It was s straightforward paddle to Cape Wrath, where Jochen Leppert had to leave us to return to work, though a couple of days are perhaps worth noting. We stayed the night of the 19th. July at Handa Island, a wild and dramatic bird sanctuary just north of Scourie. We had obtained permission from the R.S.P.B. previously, of course, as it was a protected nature reserve. At Handa we saw a colossal clapotis which we carefully and conservatively estimated at 90 feet high. A large swell was hitting the sheer northern face with spectacular results. Handa was also the scene of some celebration an hour after our arrival when a lone paddler with a funny stroke landed on the same beach, By a remarkable coincidence we had met up with Robert McLaughlin, about whom we had heard so much, on his circumnavgation of Britain!

The swell we met at Handa was still hammering in when we arrived at Sandwood Bay, just south of Cape Wrath, and we had some fun in landing. Dave and I strapped on

our helmets (Robbie had stopped carrying his after he reckoned there was no more surf beaches) and were dumped heavily onto the steep beach. The undertow was vigerous enough to pull my laden boat with myself dangling from a toggle, back into the frothy waters a couple of times before a landing could be effected. After Robbie had also landed, Jochen provided us with a neat example of a capsize and exit in the middle of the largest set that he could possibly have chosen!! .... and he was still laughing fifteen minutes later when he emerged out of the soup, towed behind a bouncing Nordkapp.

We made two attempts on Cape Wrath, the first turning into a hard battle in 15 to 20 ft breaking waves and a force 6/7 head wind. We ran for shelter eight miles back to the haven of Kinlochbervie. The second and successful attempt on Cape Wrath was made the following day. With little swell, sunglasses and no shirts. Such is Scottish weather!

Jochen and Robbie left us at Durness whilst Dave and I sorted out our supply drop. We crossed the Pentland Firth and were soon in the Orkneys where many an hour was spent in exciting tidal races, tumbling overfalls and lumpy seas. We had some truly Orcadian winds, blowing force 9 for a while. We were both immensley impressed by the Orkneys - not only for the excellent canoeing but also for the rich history that may be discovered on every island. With neolithic settlements, a long Norse period of seafaring legends and the remains of extensive British war defences (including blockships to paddle round) the Orkneys must surely be a sea canoeist's dream.

Whilst in Kirkwall we had an interesting chat with Pentland Coastguards who showed us their brand new and sophisticated communications equipment. We were carrying both a CALLBUOY 18 (loaned by Valley Canoe Products) and a LOCAT in addition to the standard gear. In north Scotland where powerful receivers are used and there is a fair amount of air traffic this dual combination would probably be our best chance in an emergency. Fortunately, however, we used neither in anger.

We soon arrived at Ackergill Towers (just north of Wick) as the somewhat grimy guests of Lady Dunbar and Mr. Blake. After another day of cultural absorbtion we managed to tear ourselves away from this magnificent castle and our kind hosts to make the last 100 miles to Inverness. The last day was an interesting departure from normal sea canoeing techniques, whilst paddling the Caledonian Canal. To prevent that empty feeling of anti-climax when the end of a long journey has been reached we paddled the Great Glen in a day. It was 'nt the 50 odd miles that tired us but the locks, 29 of them with steep banks and long tow paths. It was exhausting work lifting and carrying our boats weighing 200 lbs. up and down those wretched locks. A trolley would have been useful. However, all (or most) of the pains were forgotten in a superb paddle from 4.15 am to 11.45 pm watching the sunrise over Loch Ness and th sunset over Fort William. Despite the lack of salt water our last day was certainly a memorable one, adding just one more flavour to our taste of Scotland.

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CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF IRLLAND

From Martin Rickard and Martin Eccles.

20th. July, 1983

Dear John,

Just thought I would let you know that we have just finished a circumnavigation of Ireland.

It was a great challenge and took us a total of 65 days.

Although it is now a popular trip, being done most years, it is rare to see another paddler as there are few sea canoeists in Ireland.

We started in Galway, Cashla Bay, on the 12th. May, 1983

If anyone wants a report they can write to me at The Anglesea School Of Sea Canoeing, Trearrddur Bay, Anglesea, Gyynedd.

You may be interested to know that the Irish Rail will let you take Nordkapps on the trains, often free of charge or for quarter fare.

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EAST GREENLAND,. 1983 by John Ramwell.

A chance to kayak on the fjords of East Greenland, to visit the Iniut settlements, to see (and in some cases, climb) the fantastic mountains, to gaze in wonder at the glaciers, the icebergs and the ice-cap itself, came my way when I was asked to lead the kayaking phase of the British Schools Exploring Society Expedition to Greenland this summer.
Geoff McGladdery and Mike Twiggs volunteered to join me in t is task and so it was that on the 20th. July we left Heathrow for Iceland and on the 23rd. July we eventually reached the expedition base camp on TASLILAQ FJORD, having made the journey from Iceland by small plane into KULUSUK, helicopter to QERNERIVARTI-VIT and fast speed boat to the base camp.

This expedition was in three parts. The first two weeks were for training the young expeditioners, the second two weeks was a science phase during which time the activity leaders were to plan and recce. for the final two weeks with the young people during the final adventure phase.

My final report to the B.S.E.S. is in three parts, each covering the three parts mentioned above. Lack of space in this newsletter precludes me from including the full report and so I am confining myself to the account of our own mini-expedition which we completed between the recce. and the final adventure phase. There were therefore just the tree of us, Geoff. Mike and myself.

A VISIT TO KNUDRASMUSSEN GLACIER AND RETURN BY THE 'UP AND OVER METHOD'.

Thursday 11th. August dawned bright, in contrast to the reent dull and wet weather and it was'nt long before Geoff, Mike and I were heading south down TASI-LAQ FJORD with our kayaks packed with gear and food for four days.

Beyond KUNGMIUT we turned NE to start up IKASAK FJORD and we made camp on one of the FUGLEHOLMENE ISLANDS. Our approach to our camp site was, to say the least, memorable. It was a still evening bathed in warm sunshine. The light and shadows on the ice floes and surrounding mountains was magical. The only sound was the 'plop' of our paddles in the water and the ocassional 'crunch' as the ice floes collided. Our chosen camp site was interesting. We found an Eskimo grave in excellent condition. The skeleton was well preserved and perfectly visible through its' covering of rocks that formed this final resting place of, perhaps, some great hunter.

It was from this low lying island that we were to catch our only glimpse of whale. During breakfast next morning we identified a noise only a little differ-ent from that caused by the moving ice floes - a 'whooshing' noise caused by a whale blowing off. We rushed for camaras and followed the signs of the moving whale round to the far side of the island. Though we saw him (or was it her?) blowing off and ocassionally surfacing, we were unable to get any photographs.

We continued NE along IKASAK Fjord to join IKATEQ Fjord. The ice floes thinned out and we came across huge and fantastically sculptured ice bergs, no doubt carved from the glaciers at the head of SERMILIGAQ FJORD which we were to later visit. We came across the rusty remains of the war time U.S.A.F. base situated on the north side of IKATEQ Fjord and our minds conjured up pictures of activity and aircraft that must have surrounded this remote area in the war years.

Once out into SERMILIGAQ Fjord we headed north to visit KNUDRASMUSSEN Glacier. By this time it was evening and the sun cast light and shadow on the bergs, the mountains, the water and the great, massive glaciers that 'spilled' down from the heights to the sea. In the distance we could see KARALE Glacier to our left with its granite like structure - all originating from the mountains north of our Expedition Base Camp at TASILAQ. There must be very few people who would not be moved by such an insight into the vastness and majesty of nature as displayed before us that evening. We were certainly moved on one ocassion - very rapidly moved in fact. We came across a huge ice berg with a cave set deep into it,

ideal for a few photographs. Geoff paddled into the cave and I followed, camara at the ready. "This roof does'nt look very safe," says Geoff, and with that the berg gave an ominous creak that sent us paddling out of the way like startled rabbits!

As we approached KNUDRASMUSSEN Glacier we heard an explosion loud enough to startle us. This was followed by a series of waves. It was our glacier giving birth to, or calving an ice berg. We hoped this would'nt occur whilst we were examining the glacier at closer quarters. In fact we were only able to get within half a mile of it due to concentrated ice, but still well worth the effort as we carefully picked our way through the ever decreasing leads or paths through the pack ice.

We camped close to the head of SERMILIGAQ FJORD on the west side within sight of SERMILIGAQ settlement some ten miles south on the opposite side of the fjord. We had kayaked over 35 miles this day.

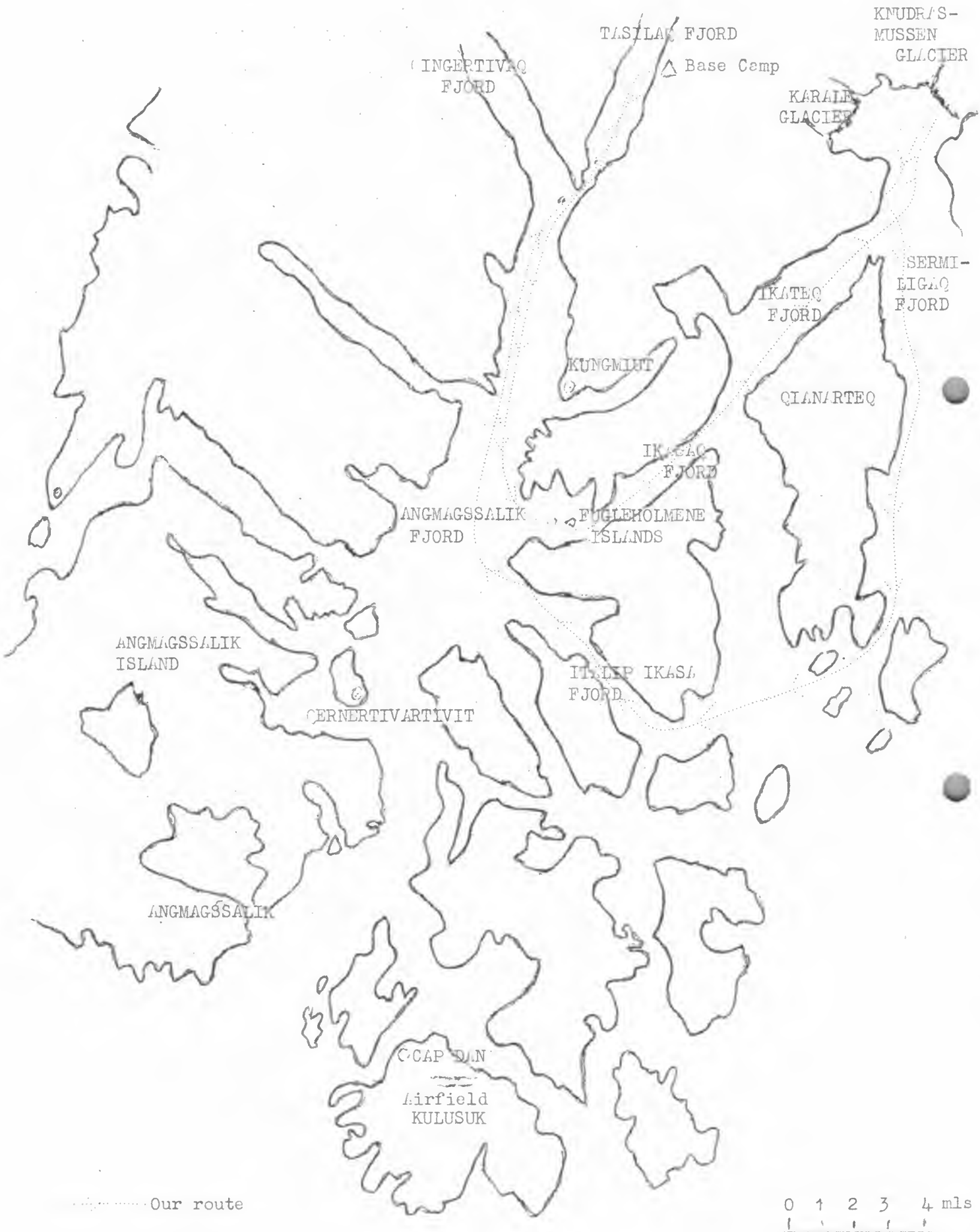
Next day we paddled the whole length of SERMILIGAQ Fjord, following close to the east side of QIANARTEQ ISLAND. As we moved south so the ice floes thickened and we had to pick our way with care as we paddled by the islands at the southern end of this fjord and QIANARTEQ Island. Navigation was becoming increasingly difficutt and we were pleased to find open water at the entrance to ITALIP IKASA FJORD. This Fjord headed NW and would let us out into Angmagssalik Fjord not far south of KUNGMIUT. We would soon find a camp site and tomorrow we would paddle the final leg back to TASILAQ and base camp.

"The ice ahead looks thick", remarked one of us. But then it usually did from a distance but we had always found a way through. Not this time! Our way was well and truly blocked. We scrambled onto the rocks at the side of the fjord and gave the matter some thought. Turn back. We did'nt relish this idea - it was a long way. Portage. We'd give it a try. This soon proved to be a non-starter. Our kayaks are very heavy and the terrain was virtually impassible to us even without this burden. We scratched our heads. Even camping and waiting for the tide and wind to clear us a passage was'nt on - there was nowhere to camp and the pack ice looked set to remain firmly fixed. We scouted ahead. There looked to be a lead through about 50 metres ahead - but how to reach it. We could'nt go round, how about over the top! Most of the floes were low lying and flat topped. It was worth a try. Matters were distinctly not helped when the first floe I scrambled over, dragging my kayak behind me, suddenly dropped several feet with a splash into the sea. It had been lodged on some rocks and my weight was sufficient to dislodge it.

Reaching the lead we had seen from the land was not to be our hoped for salvation, and we spent the next two hours scambling and paddling this mile long ice field. The floes were in constant slow motion and each seal launch off a floe into the sea became more fraught. Mike was nudged by overhanging ice into the water. Unable to support with his paddles which were jammed between rocks and ice, he had no alternative but to slowly and painfully capsize. I gathered from his choice of expletives that he was annoyed and that the water was particularly cold!!

We pressed on and eventually we were congratulating ourselves on having reached relatively clear water. Our satisfaction was short lived when we realised that the sea was in constant, confused and fairly rapid motion. We compared this area

THE ANGMAGSSALIK AREA OF EAST GREENLAND



to the Coryvrekan with ice bergs! Ice floes were moving in various directions and whilst trying to work out a safe passage we looked up to see a massive berg the size of a big house (I do not exagerate) bearing down on us at great speed. Adrenalin flowed faster that the water around us in the fjord and we paddled hard to extracate ourselves from the danger

Still our problems were'nt over. As the sun started to drop in the sky taking with it its' warmth and casting long shadows down the fjord, we came across more impassible ice, and so once more over the tops! By now we were getting a little braver and even enjoying it. It was'nt 'till the bows of my kayak became jammed beneath a floe whilst seal launching from another floe and having to support like mad that I realised complacancy had its' price. Fortunately Mike was right behind me and lifted me out of my precarious position.

Finally we came in sight of Angmagssalik Fjord and a decent length of clear water which led us to a low lying head land suitable for camping on. We agreed that we had had an epic day!!

Sunday, the 14th. August, and after negotiating more heavy pack ice in Angmagss-alik Fjord we had a clear run in to base camp where we set about washing clothes and bodies and reliving our adventures before preparing for the expedition phase with the young expeditioners.

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ANGLESEY TO ISLE OF MAN SEA CROSSING

by Andy Hawkesford of Lichfield, Staffs.

We arrived at Cemlyn Bay on Anglesey at 10.00 pm on Friday 17th. June. The weather conditions were perfect, no wind, a calm sea and a bright moon. It took us the best part of an hour to gear up, pack the canoes and carry them down to the sea. Here, with the aid of a flash gun, the team photo was taken, which consisted of Andy Hawkesford, Nick Parks and Arthur Collins.

A final'good luck'echoed across the water as we paddled into the darkness. The compasses had been set on land to the correct heading so it was an easy task to follow the bearing out to sea, just off north. The sea was incredibly calm, not even a swell. Yet the weekend prior to this all hopes of completing the trip had been dashed by strong winds and large waves which were predicted to continue up until this weekend.

It was only during this first hour that we truly appreciated the nature of our trip. The route entailed paddling up the middle of the Irish Sea at its widest point; should things go wrong near to the half way point we faced at the very least a 20 mile paddle to regain land. For this reason we carried a PYE radio locator beacon kindly loaned to us by R.A.F. Valley.

Across to the east we could see the flashes from the Skerries Rock Light and behind the lights of Anglesey twinkled in the clear night air. We did not expect to encounter any other craft, in fact we saw only two boats - a fishing boat which past close astern and a tanker in the distance - however the throbbing of its engines could be heard quite clearly.

By 2.00 am the lights of Anglesey had slipped below the horizon and no evidence of land was to be seen. On average a rest was taken for ten minutes every 2 hours when we attacked our food and used the 'pee bottles'. To,reduce boredom whilst paddling we each had a walkman personal stereo. The fist indication of the Isle of Man came at 3.00 am when we picked out from the darkness the flashing sequence of the Calf of Man Light.

At 5.00 am we were treated to a spectacular sunrise made even more dramatic by the music of Dire Straits on the Walkman. The new day brought a feeling of fatigue amongst us. It became harder and harder to stay awake. For short periods we sometimes paddled with our eyes shut. But the day light revealed the feint

outline of the Isle of Man in the early morning mist. There was a tremendous amount of wildlife out at sea. Various gulls which swooped down close to the canoes, shoals of jellyfish that drifted with the currents and the ever friendly curious seals which surfaced at a safe distance and followed us for miles.

The last part of the trip was the hardest in canoeing terms, a seven mile ferry glide against an ebbing tide allowed us to land at Port Soderick, very aptly named, a short distance down the coast from Douglas. It had taken $13\frac{3}{4}$ hours to cover approximately 50 miles. Here we slept for a while and then paddled round to Douglas harbour to a greeting from the harbour master and an interview with Radio Manx.

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Poached from CoDe, Summer '83.

Dear CoDe,

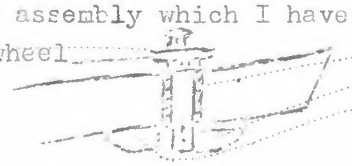
The question has often been raised, 'Why is there a purist attitude of so many canoeists over rudders on sea kayaks?' For many years I resisted the fitting of a rudder, my reasons were:
1. I did not know any better
2. The 'experts' claimed they were unnecessary
3. A rudder on a sea boat is vulnerable.

It took six years experience before I realised that the first two point were complete junk. This period ended in three of us fighting for control in a particularly vicious sea, and ending up exhausted while the fourth member of the party- with a rudder- paddled serenely on as if he was canoeing a lake in a park. The three of us fitted rudders in our boats directly we got home and we have been wondering ever since why it was we spent so many years doing it the hard way.

The third point is however valid. The standard overstern rudder used on marathon boats hinges back when it strikes something in front of it. Its blade will be bent if it receives a knock from behind or from the side - as frequently happens when launching or landing on a beach. The inboard rudder used on sprint boats is even more vulnerable. A seaboat rudder is therefore needed in which the rudder is stronger and better protected than the usual designs. We designed such a rudder and fitted them initially to four Nanuks and a Baidarka.

Over the past six years these boats have been in constant use and the rudders have been completely trouble free. On our first trip - in a wild sea off the north coast of Scotland - all three of us were dumped on a beach, sideways, in heavy surf, with the boats loaded with camping gear. No damage was detected in any of the rudder assemblies. The only time my rudder mechanism has been in need of attention was a month ago when the cable snapped. This was a result of unforgivavle neglect which itself arose through there being almost no need for maintenance.

The rudder we use is shown in the sketch. An aluminium alloy tube is fitted right through the boat and glassed in. The tube has a $\frac{1}{2}$" diameter bore and its outside is about $\frac{3}{4}$" diameter. In front of this a small skeg is fixed to the hull. The skeg must not project below the lowest part of the hull but it must project below the rudder blade. Two inches or more of rocker on the hull is sufficient to satisfy these conditions - if there is less rocker the boat design is suspect. The brass rudder shaft $\frac{1}{2}$" diameter is shouldered at the top and a thread is out on its end. At the shoulder a hole is drilled through the shaft to take a split pin which locates in a slot at the bottom of the yoke. A knarled nut clamps yoke to the shaft. This is a strong and well protected design which can easily be dismantled, even at sea, by unscrewing the nut and taking off the yoke, then extracting the split pin and withdrawing the rudder from below. The only tool required is a pair of pliers to extract the split pin. I generally carry a spare blade and shaft assembly which I have not yet needed to use.



John Eastgate, Berkhamstead.