

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:
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EDITORIAL

This shortened version of the A.S.K.C. Newsletter is to accompany the 1984 Membership List which is quite impressive by it's numbers. Never before has this Club enjoyed so much support. The more I learn how much it is appreciated the more I enjoy putting it together and sending it off. Do bear in mind, though, that it's readability and general success depends entirely on your contribution, - so keep them coming. I'm still in need of more consumer reports on tents - (who ever heard of anyone consuming a tent!.)

My daily paper said to watch a vintage film on Channel 4 entitled "Nanook of the North", televised the Friday before the Canoe Exhibition. As I would be en route Crystal Palace I arranged to have it videoed. What an amazing film. Made in 1922, it shows the life style of an Eskimo family in North Baffin. The film opens with the head of the family, Nanook, paddling his kayak to the shore. He gets out and helps his lad off the front deck, then he helps his wife out from under the front deck, then his baby and husky pup and finally turns to help his eldest and full grown daughter out from beneath the rear deck! We see Walrus and seal being captured and fish being speared through ice holes and igloos being built, truly an amazing film. I shall try and show it at one of our meets.

The Canoe Exhibition was a success, much interest being shown in our A.S.K.C. stand. It is always a chance for me to meet up with so many members and, in some cases, put faces to the names. To cap the weekend, just as we were dismantling exhibits we had a bomb scare which resulted in us having to vacate the building. It was rumoured that Mike Clark was taking pics. and someone suggested that we should all form up for a group photograph!.

There is a fair amount of interest in the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee A.G.M. scheduled for the 9/10th. June this year. I have been trying to set it up at Atlantic College in Wales but, keen as they are to host this event, they are unable to do so. Should any of you have any ideas of where we may stage this meeting then do please let either myself or Mick O'Connell know about them. More definite details regarding this in the next Newsletter.

I have been trying to get hold of a book by Frank Spencer-Chapman, 'Northern Lights' - anyone able to help?

Our Gatehouse sea canoeing week is attracting interest. Further information from me.

Well, that's all for now. Keep in touch.

Cheers,
Nanuk.

A.S.K.C. SHOP

- Ties @ £2.50
- Stickers @ 30 pence each
- Letterheaded note paper @ 50 pence per ten sheets.
- 4th. National sea Canoeing Symposium Report @ 75 pence each
- 5th. International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ (not yet available - watch this
- T shirts - small/medium/large/X large (yellow or black) @ £3.50 each space)
- Sweat shirts - small/medium/large/X large (yellow or black) @ £6.50 each
- Information Sheet on Tides and Buoyage @ 75 pence each.
- H.M.Coastguards Paper on Safety @ 75 pence each.
- Expedition Report on circum. of Nunivak Island, Alaska @ 75 pence each.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POST AND PACKING.

Oringinally envisaged by John Bowers and Andy Beaumont from the Charlotte Mason College in Ambleside and helped with some advice from Colin Mortlock, herewith a short account of our expedition In Scotland.

A third member was Nick Mortimer from Old Brathey, Ambleside, who provided the transport, and the fourth, myself, from Wray Castle. The trip was undertaken in pairs - Nick and I and John and Andy - as this was better from the camping point of view as well as fitting in with the areas each of us wanted to see.

All the boats used were Anus Acutas in various states of repair, and much resin and fibreglass was used in the few weeks prior to the trip.

Finally, with Nick's car, a small renault, loaded up with the four boats and a whole pile of supplies and canoeing gear and three people - Andy hitched up - we set off for Wemyss Bay on the Firth of Clyde, arriving at 1700; the only casualty being a windscreen wiper. At 1845, Nick and I set off from the ferry terminal into the drizzle on a compass bearing for the fog horn at Toward Point, leaving John to wait for Andy. Deciding that we'd never get to sleep if we camped here, we carried on a few miles to Ardyne Point and set up camp in the two foot high grass.

Up at the cracking hour of 0900 and away at 1200 (it was supposed to be a leisurely trip!) we slogged up the East Kyle of Bute aided by a slight swell and following wind, gradually getting into a paddling rythem and ending up at Burnt Island for lunch. There was a small race through the narrows, which, according to our calculations, should'nt have been there at that time. We went up Loch Riddon as far as possible and then turned back for the West Kyle of Bute; running into a slight squall off Caladle Head which soon abated, leaving us a mirror smooth run to our next campsite at Rubha Duhh on the Isle of Bute.

Next day it was flat calm with clear skies and we had an easy run to Ardlamont Point where we stopped to take photographs of some basking seals on a shoal and then around and up Lower Loch Fyne for Port Aris, passing plenty of seals, black hawks, terns and helicopters! Crossing Otter Spit on the flood, we headed for what we suspected was a beach behind Glas Eilean, only to find it had just been taken for camping purposes by the occupants of a motor launch. Scouting around, we found a magic campsite by an old stone quarry a few miles further north.

A fairly uneventful run into Ardrishaig via the islands of Eilean Mor and Liath Eilean, where we considered going up the Crinan Canal, but decided against it. Running straight down the west shore of Lower Loch Fyne, we came across the other two lads hiding behind a rock off Barmore! Spurred on by their intentions of making Lochranza that day, we paddled down as far as Skipness Point - John encountering an ominous looking fin heading straight for his boat - when we again split up; they going for Claonaig Bay and we for Lochranza. The water was like a millpond, with Arran showing in the haze before us. We arrived at Lochranza Y.H.A. at 2020, giving us a time of 7.5 hours for 29 naut. miles.

Woken at 0800 by some walkers rustling their gear, we stumbled down to breakfast and fought our way through the steam to the spare food box to scavenge supplies. After waiting a couple of hours by the Csstle ruin with no sign of the other two, we took off around the back of Arran, soon overtaking the walkers on the coast path from the Y.H.A., and came across a Survey Boat anchored at the north of Samnore Bay.

Leaving the impressive mountain peaks behind us, we went on to Brodick Bay and camped on the edge of the golf course below Brodick Castle. A submarine drifted into the bay, soon obliterating the opposite side with its diesel fumes; of course we had to paddle out to it, only to return with blackened paddle blades and a definite waterline along the boats from the diesel!

Investigating Brodick we discovered 'Duncan's Bar' and finished the evening off with a pizza and haggis supper.

Still waiting for the other two, we hung around in Brodick until 1625 and then aimed for Whiting Bay via Holy Island.

Being a Saturday night, it was again to be a night out, so we sampled the fare of Whiting Bay Hotel and Nags Night Club before retiring to the Y.H.A. The warden of this hostel deems a mention; he garaged our kayaks for the night, spun dry our clothing, opened the drying room, rummaged for a metal file to file the screw ends off the inside the hatch rims which had a habit of ripping anything put into the hatches - and he made an excellent porter!

Sunday morning an easterly 3 to 4 wind had come up which gave us some nasty chop for a start, but as we followed the coast round it ran behind us and we surfed to Pladda in an hour.

A tractor ride to the lighthouse for coffee and biscuits and then a guided tour of the place made us worry (a little) less about the weather. Surveying the sea from the lighthouse balcony my attention was drawn to two bipeds scuttling below attempting to play golf. It was like watching a silent movie - the grand finale came when one of them took a shot at the hole from about a foot away and missed completely!

Leaving Pladda and passing in front of the fog horn we noticed the three of them standing in a line with grins on their faces - 'hit sus' I thought. Next second we were almost blown from the water with a blast from the fog horn. Well, at least we would'nt run aground! Keeping in the lee of Pladda for as long as possible, we crossed with a beam sea to Bennan Head, the other side being somewhat calmer. Making use of what shelter the numerous reefs afforded us from the chop, we edged our way round to King's Cave.

Eventually, exhausted and hungry, we stopped in front of the 'Annil' teashop in Dirnmill. Attempting to lift my boat from the water I almost crumpled. Opening the rear hatch I discovered it was twothirds full of water. Some of my spare clothing was wet, as was my sleeping bag - the water proof bags having been peirced by the screw ends inside the hatch rims. We dragged the boats up, pitched the tent, cooked some grub and then dined before diving into the tent to avoid the midges.

The spare paddle shock cord was the cause of the leak; having patched this, we left at 1230 for Lochranza and did a celebration roll in the harbour - well, one of us did!

1550 saw us again leaving for Arran where we found a fantastic campesite near Laggan. Another flat calm roasting day presented itself, so we collapsed in the shade of the tent for the day, listening to the 'crump' of the gannets as they hit the water, and aimlessly trying to reduce the midge population. A three course candle-lit dinner was fitting to end this idyllic day followed by a swig of the 'meths' while toasting-me-toes before the driftwood fire.

Our final day and we set off into the chop caused by the easterly force two wind, on a compass heading for Garroch Head, not seeing the other side for 1½ hours. On around the horn on Little Cumbrae Island, and up to Millport Bay on Great Armlinae Island for lunch. The final leg took us along the east coast of Great Cumbrae Island and we made a beeline for Rouenburn and Wemyss Bay.

A note from John and Andy revealed that they had arrived two days before. Their trip took them from Wemyss Bay to Dunoon, Loch Strinnan, East and West Kyle of Bute and then across the Barmore. Then instead of crossing to Arran, they had gone down the Mull of Kintyre across to Ailsa Craig and up the East side of Annan and back via Great Cumbrae. We must have crossed paths at some point in south Arran, but I don't know when!

P.S. I did'nt really drink that meths!

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THE ANGLESEY SCHOOL OF SEA CANOEING

RUN BY NIGEL DENNIS - HE HAS JUST PRODUCED HIS 1984 BROCHURE WITH DETAILS OF COURSES AND FACILITIES AT HIS SCHOOL.

He is running expeditions and sea courses - you could'nt wish for a finer venue CONTACT NIGEL AT: TREARDUR SCHOOL, TREARDUR BAY, ANGLESEY, GWYNEDD (860 201)

The following is taken from the October-December edition of the COASTGUARD BORE RIDERS IN TROUBLE John Duerden, Auxiliary in charge, Arnside.

The estuary of the River Kent in Cumbria is renowned for the tidal bore which, under suitable conditions, sweeps up the narrowing estuary at speeds of up to seven knots with turbulence and breaking water.

It has become a popular sport to ride the bore in canoes, but those attempting it should be experienced canoeists as skill and judgement is required to prevent a capsize in the swiftly running current and the breaking wave.

On the 15th. July the tidal bore was due to pass Arnside shortly after 14.00 hours. Two 18 year old youths on holiday in the area decided to try to ride the bore in their canoes despite being inexperienced in this type of canoeing and not being aware of local conditions.

They launched their canoes in the low water channel and waited for the approaching bore. Almost immediately after the bore struck them they both capsized and were thrown into the water losing their canoes. Fortunately both were wearing life jackets.

Arnside Auxiliary, John Murray, whose home overlooked the estuary, witnessed the incident and immediately hurried to the station where the GP boat is housed. He left a message to call other auxiliaries but a local outdoor activities instructor also witnessed the incident and offered to assist. John Murray and his assistant launched the GP boat and set off through the turbulent flood tide to the casualties.

By this time one canoeist had fortuitously been set towards a rapidly covering sandbank and was near his canoe which had assumed a vertical position with the bow dug into the sand and the stern above water. He was able to cling to this. The crew of the GP boat assured themselves that this person was reasonably safe for the moment and concentrated on the second casualty.

He had been carried by the tidal flow through the railway viaduct which spans the estuary adjacent to Arnside. The flood tide runs through the viaduct with immense power and the casualty suffered a severe buffeting and was frequently rolled under water. It must have been a frightening experience.

The GP boat crew safely negotiated the viaduct, having frequently practised this manoeuvre in training, and were able to pick up the casualty from the water as he was being swept further up the estuary, then return with him under the viaduct against the tide. The other canoeist was then rescued and his canoe retrieved despite the bow being buried deeply in the sand.

Both casualties were landed at Arnside, after a check by the local doctor, resumed their holiday undoubtedly chastened by their experience.

My Murray's prompt action resulted in the rescue of two young men from a very dangerous situation. The casualty who was swept through the viaduct was lucky not to have been injured and was in a shocked state and unable to assist himself when rescued.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Mr. P.Upton (sorry, don't know your christian name)

Dear A.S.K.C.

I would like to know of any trips being planned for next year. I do most of my trips solo and I would like to go on an organised trip for a change.

I would be particularly interested in a trip to Norway or the Channel Isles.

From Tony Ford, S.S.O. Munsterlager, B.F.P.O. 104.

Dear John,

Eric Totty has achieved something we had on the cards these past 20 years.

Should you know of anyone who would like to make a similar trip next year (1984) please let me know. I would plan on taking the ferry to Helsinki from Germany and making a round trip over 3 - 4 weeks.

The following is taken from the October - December edition of the COASTGUARD

RADIO BEACONS IN DISTRESS

by Squadron Leader J.A. Cook, (retd)

By definition EPIRBs, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons, are location devices as used in the present methods of SAR. The three phases of saving life after distress situations are alerting, locating and recovery. Let someone know there is an emergency; have a means by which the position of the situation can be found, preferably quickly; and the qualified SAR personnel will achieve recovery by any available means.

Alerting has been difficult in many marine distress problems, but less so in the majority of aviation emergencies. The reluctance of many mariners to notify routes to be taken or estimated times of arrival, or of regular communications of position when on task or en route, both professional and pleasure vessels, can leave many doubts in the minds of authorities when ships disappear or are overdue or when relatives or owners report them missing.

ALERTING POTENTIAL

Even the USCG AMVER system fails to attract attention of all Atlantic passage ships, even though it costs nothing to participants except a little time and thought for others. The necessity for aircraft to file flight plans and the discipline imposed by aviation communication routine, tends to provide better alerting and overdue facilities in an aircraft distress situation.

Ideally a radio message on the distress or safety frequencies should be sent by the craft. 500 KHz. 2182 KHz or 156.8 MHz in marine bands, or 121.5 MHz (243 MHz military) in the aviation band are monitored continuously by control authorities. But there may not be time for an S.O.S. or May-Day call; the frequency may be jammed by other transmissions; the range may be too great for reception; or the radio may not be working. In such cases other means of alerting, including overdue action will be needed. Such methods today might involve the use of passing aircraft who might hear EPIRB signals.

Plans for the rest of the present decade involve the use of satellites to provide alerting potential. One of those under evaluation utilises a geostationary marine communication satellite, relying on an emergency beacon from a distressed craft to send, on 1.6 GHz, its launched position. This information can be passed to ground stations very quickly for processing to rescue control centres. The other uses polar orbiting satellites (SARSAT), which monitor not only the VHF aviation distress frequencies 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz in current marine and aviation use in more than 250,000 EPIRBs, ELT (emergency locator transmitters), RLBA (radio locator beacons - aircraft), survival radios and personal beacons, but will work to another new special frequency giving even more accurate alerting and location facilities. These distress beacons automatically send a signal on the VHF frequencies but the new frequency passes additional identification and other data, and the SARSAT provides the alert of the distress through local user terminals (LUTs) or ground stations.

In addition the measurement of doppler frequency shift by the moving satellite gives an approximate location of the beacon. Both the present EPIRB beacons using aviation distress frequencies and these same frequencies to be used in the prototype SARSAT beacons allow for SAR aircraft and vessels worldwide to home to beacons and locate the position of the distress within a matter of a few metres. Even if SARSAT can give a position within 2 to 4 kms, this still gives a large area to search for final location by terrestrial SAR craft, and possibly in bad weather, fog or at night.

Today the in-use EPIRBs can be located from considerable distances by special SAR aircraft, and the signal on the civil aviation frequency can be received by any civil aircraft prepared to monitor it. Many airliners do observe the recommendations and guard this frequency, passing any reception of the internationally recognised swept-tone distress signal, a plaintive bleep of an audio tone not unlike a police or fire siren repeated three times a second to the air traffic control authorities.

There are many manufacturers who claim excessive ranges of these VHF AM beacons, and indeed the area supposed to be covered in thousands of square miles. These theoretical ranges can be converted to practical ranges. Justified by years of experience in trials and actual usage; and by the knowledge that such ranges depend upon height of the receiver, the height of the transmitter, usually at sea level, the power output of the beacon (especially the mean power), the attitude and effectiveness of the beacon antenna (vertical and clear of the water; the VSWR and polar diagram of the design); and the sensitivity of the receiver. The normal losses of field strength of VHF signals in free space and the effect of the earth's curvature on line of sight non-reflective signals in these frequency bands should also be studied.

GUARANTEED RECEPTION

Possibly NATO specified emergency beacon standards of reception ranges of 60 naut miles (110 kms) to an aircraft at 10,000 ft is as good and practical standard to consider. This needs a mean or average output power of the beacon in the order of 100 to 200 mW. throughout the duration claimed, even when the battery powering the beacon has reached the claimed end point. Reputable manufacturers usually state a duration at a specified temperature (usually 0°C) to the 3db point of the power achieved initially, even though the battery may continue to give voltage, but not produce such an effective output signal. Claims of peak output powers should be treated with reserve and only be judged in relation to the mean power.

Higher altitudes of receivers will give increased ranges, and a Boeing 747 at 35,000 ft may receive signals at 110 naut. miles (200 kms) or more. A Concorde has been reported as receiving signals from a beacon at 200 miles, but from a search planning point of view it is not practical to consider the maxima which may or may not be achieved. Experience shows that a guaranteed reception and homing can be achieved from many beacons within an area of some 13,000 sq. miles not the 125,000 sq miles theoretically claimed for some products. An alert to a civil or military en-route aircraft is unlikely to be guaranteed much outside of this area due to the less sensitive receivers. SARSET receiver sensitivity will greatly increase the alert and location range, even though it is likely to be some 850 kms high, and this is especially true when the new special data frequency is introduced.

A further anomaly in the claims made for EPIRB, ELT or other emergency beacons is the failure by many national approval authorities actually to test the reception ranges achievable by SAR or other aircraft to these beacons. Often the national specification or technical standard is set out to ensure that radio regulatory requirements are met, with the minimal detail of general mechanical parameters of the required beacon. Hence many false alarms from poor standard equipments. Where approval tests are carried out, they are restricted invariably to laboratory tests with sometimes a ground to ground field strength measurement. The actual measurement of the efficiency of the antenna, or polar diagram or actual flight trials to assess ranges versus heights are rarely, if ever, carried out.

Furthermore, a successful approval test on such a beacon, often a prototype, will give an authoritative blessing for evermore in most cases. Successive production items, periodic in-service checking of the standard of the beacon or re-examination after later modifications are rarely, if ever examined. However some specific aviation equipment standards are maintained by certification of manufacturers quality assurance inspectors; military aviation beacons are thoroughly approval tested with flight trials and production is checked at all times by an electrical qualitative assurance organisation. In addition civil and military aviation approved beacons and ships inspectorates in some countries have yearly or other periodic checks of maintenance standards. No such standards apply to many of the EPIRBs currently available.

Perhaps the axiom, let the buyer beware should be considered in the field of EPIRB/ELT and similar emergency beacons. High prices may not necessarily mean perfection in standards, nor low prices suggest a poor equipment. Rather the potential buyer might ask: Is the manufacturer reputable in the sense of long time specialisation in this field? Does he support approved quality assurance organisation to check his product standards? Is the approval specification to a

reputable standard, or has it been cobbled together to meet a need expressed by a non-technically qualified authority? Does the approval cover all parameters of the beacon, and is it subject to re-testing at any time? Does the buyer really understand what power output claims and endurance mean? What is a lithium or other battery? What type, safety standards, and how accurate or guaranteed is stated 'unused' battery life? How do you test periodically the beacon and battery actually work?

From Chris Bolton, Workington, Cumbria.

Dear John,

While sending my sub. I thought I might as well send you an 'Expedition Report', although I'm afraid the title isn't really warranted, I can't think of a name for it!! Please edit or omit as required.

- June 1983 - in the area around South Skye and Rhum
- Members - Brian Spencer (leader), Paul Spencer (aged 13), Chris Bolton, Ian Massey.
- 30th. May - arrived at Portnalong at 9.00 pm, launched and paddled 2 miles into Fiskavaig Bay, where we camped and made supper - in unaccustomed daylight until 11.30 pm!
- 1st. June - Superb calm day - paddled with interest but uneventfully past huge cliffs (must bring climbing gear!) and covered 18 miles to reach Glen Brittle camp site. Paul went to book us in - "Three adults and one child please". "How many tents?" "Two". "Car?" "No" (dubious warden) "How did you get here?" "By canoe". "Where from?" "Portnalong". "What! Today? I'm going to have to put you down as an adult!"
- 2nd. June - Another fine day - 3 miles out to the headland on the south side of Loch Brittle and then the 9 miles crossing to Canna. Force 2/3 NE, with a gentle 2' sea to push us along. Met 3 people on Canna, of whom two knew my parents and the other knew Brian! Then across to Guidil Bay on Rhum in a freshening beam wind.
- 3rd. June - Woke to a force 5 from ENE; coming round the north end of Rhum. Our plans had been to go over to Skye again, or at least to Soay, but we had time and food to wait for a good day. We decided to set off up the coast and see what the seas were like once we got out of the shelter of the cliffs. After 3 miles, off Kilmory, we found 5' seas - small by comparison with those usually described in this journal - but for young Paul, a 7 mile crossing directly into it was a minimum 4 hour continuous paddle, so we felt it wise to land and wait for moderation. However, no sooner had we got a brew on than the deer reserve warden arrived - a very polite but firm character. We were in a deer reserve, disturbing the deer and would we please go away! The only available landing which was legal was about 8 miles along a fairly cliffy lee shore. We were allowed to wait a bit longer so long as we didn't stir from the beach and after an hour conditions did moderate slightly. We decided to go for the crossing. The only noteworthy event being Paul wearing pogies, trying to eat a Mars bar which Brian stuck in his mouth! Better than a seal with a fish! Four hours saw our landfall on Soay, with a further $\frac{3}{4}$ hour reaching a landing.
- 4th. June - Short day - round into Loch Scavaig, camp by the JMCS hut at Coruisk then portage up the river into the freshwater Loch Coruisk. By this time the weather was typical Skye - drizzle and low cloud, but even then as we paddled up into the heart of the Cuillin, the huge rock slabs were a sight worth seeing.
- 5th. June - Return round the coast to Glen Brittle - very interesting Viking settlement on the point, complete with canal to a small lochan at HW Springs. A superb place to paddle - a spectacular and interesting coast, lots of islands, etc. However-

WE WERE ASKED TO POINT OUT TO OTHERS that Rhum is a deer reserve where research is conducted and landing is prohibited, particularly at the northern end. The only legal landing is at Kinloch (Loch Scresort) on the east coast.

Good paddling.

Chris Bolton.

SEA KAYAK TOUR AROUND THE ISLE OF RÉ

The French association C.K./mer (Association for the propagation of knowledge about sea canoeing) is pleased to inform you that it is organising an INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING WEEK AT THE ISLE OF RE, on the west coast of France, from the 5th to the 13th of May 1984. This sporting event is open to all experienced canoeists who possess a sea canoe.

The principal activity will be the exploration of this beautiful island by a leisurely 4 to 5 day trip around its coastline.

Also on the programme will be surf canoeing, eskimo-rolling, bird watching, as well as free time for lazing in the sun, fishing, swimming or meeting the locals.

A small corner of paradise 20 minutes off LA ROCHELLE, "Ré la Blanche" island enjoys a sunny privileged climate.

Spring comes early here. With its 2600 annual hours of sunshine, the isle of Ré is a favorite haunt of painters who particularly appreciate its light.

The greenery, the colours and general character bring to mind the Mediteranean rather than the majestic Atlantic but the tonic fresh ocean air underlines the sparkling difference.

Canoeists, the Isle of Ré will enchant you !

SEA KAYAK TOUR AROUND THE ISLE OF RÉ

(Cost of participation: 300 F.F. each participant)

For a better organisation, please let us know your interest as soon as possible.

For this purpose please fill in the form hereunder and send it to:

Christian GABARD

10, Rue Simon Létoile

92 260 Fontenay aux Roses FRANCE

Tél. (1) 660 72 12



I intend to participate to the

INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING WEEK AT THE ISLE OF RE

and wish further information on this event.

NAME SURNAME

ADDRESS

..... ZIP CODE

- I possess a sea kayak
- I would like to rent a sea kayak
- I shall be in company of ... persons,
who are not canoeists.