

NEWSLETTER

OF
THE

Advanced Sea Kayak Club



AIMS:

1. PROMOTION OF SEA KAYAKING
2. COMMUNICATION
3. ORGANISATION OF EVENTS
4. SAFETY & COACHING

Editor & Secretary
John J. Ramwell
4, Wavell Garth,
Sandal, Wakefield,
W. Yorkshire, WF2 6JP

OBITUARY

It is with great sorrow that I open this newsletter with the sad news of the death of one of our most enthusiastic members, John Drew from Southampton. I have my own memories of John as joined several sea expeditions organised by me several years ago including an English Channel crossing and one of our 'Gatehouse holidays'. We have since kept in touch through the offices of the ASKC and I am grateful for the opportunity of having known and paddled with him. John never made much of a fuss about what he did and consequently he is perhaps not that well known nationally in the canoeing world - but I do know that his reputation and contribution in his own local area were such that his absence will be felt by many for a long time to come. To Carol, his wife, and to Harriet and Danial, his two children, we extend our heartfelt sympathy at this time.

"JOHN DREW MEMORIAL TRUST"

A memorial trust fund has been set up to promote and further the aims of canoeing. Details will be announced in due course.

The trustees appointed are:

- Mrs. Carol Drew
- Roger Irwin
- Declan Dempster

Cheques or postal orders only made out to "The John Drew Memorial Fund" please to: Roger Irwin, B.C.U. H.Q. Flexel House High Str. Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.

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EDITORIAL

Our 'Gatehouse holiday' was a huge success - that's my opinion and I'm sticking to it! This year was marked by the obvious enthusiasm of all who took part and I felt quite satisfied in the knowledge that not a single moment was allowed to waste; I was glad to get back to work for a rest! The next one is scheduled for 1986, so I've time to recover.

Next year, 1985, sees us organising another SYMPOSIUM. Having done it five times now over the last ten years, I'm running out of inspiration/ideas. Write to me with yours. I'm thinking of introducing some actual paddling over the symposium weekend. Previously I've determined that there is a clear distinction between a paddling event and a symposium, the latter being a 'learning situation' - what do you think? A mass social paddle on the Saturday, a barbeque Saturday evening and guest speakers on the Sunday seems like a good plan.

October 1st was the closing date for the ASKC raffle for the new sea kayak and with this newsletter comes your tickets. Geof Good, B.C.U. Director of Coaching, has kindly agreed to allow us to make use of the B.C.U. Coaching Conference over the weekend of the 13/14 October for making the draw. Geoff and members of the coaching scheme will supervise it for me. I shall notify the winner immediately and announce his/her name in the December issue of the newsletter.

RENEWALS

How time flies; here we are again at renewal time. I have enclosed a form for this purpose (to those of you who joined or renewed on or after July of this year, please only remit HALF of the total sub to cover the cost of 1985's renewal). Once the B.C.U. Canoe Exhibition is over I produce the 1985 ASKC Directory of Members, so renewal before the end of February '85 ensures your name and address is featured. Remember to let me know if you do NOT want your name/address to appear in this directory.

ASKC LETTER HEADED PAPER. I've run out of stock and so must replenish. I wish to do so with larger paper (A4) and a new letter head. I'm no artist and so this is to ask you for your help in designing a suitable sea kayaking scene to decorate our letter headed paper. It should allow space for the ASKC logo, the words ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB and also "please reply to".

It was drizzling and windy with white horses covering the sea, even in this sheltered northern end of Loch Linnhe. Fortunately we weren't yet in canoes but only on the ferry across to Corran. A grey, misty kind of day, with strong westerly winds gusting up the sea roads into the western Highlands. We stopped in Strontian and picked up a five star breakfast at the Loch Sunart Hotel which fortified us ready for the final 80 minutes driving to the end of Ardnarnathan Peninsula. Our destination was Kilchoan where it was still drizzling when we arrived at 11 am. The sea looked inviting as we unloaded the canoes - two Seakings and 3 Nordkapps, and the rain died away as we completed our packing, leaving a windy but bright day ahead.

Our intention was to paddle out to Tiree and Coll via West Mull, Staffa and the Treshnish Isles. In the event a strong westerly wind ensured moderation of the plan from the beginning. After a pint in the local we fled eastwards before the wind to a sheltered bivvy site in Loch na Droma Buidha. I felt very wobbly as it was the first time I had paddled 'Eric' for nearly a year and I was grateful to make the 10 km crossing without mishap. We erected our bivvies - two pair with myself as the odd man out. A short walk before the evening meal and then it was early to bed, tired by the long drive.

The wind stayed in the west overnight, bringing with it fresh snow for the tops and several hail showers for us. The morning dawned with a westerly Force 3. We headed for Tobermoray and after a brief stop pushed off and on to a bivvy site west of Dervaig. Progress was slow into the wind but we covered 28 km in 5 hours of paddling and were pleased with our efforts. Our stopping place was selected with a view to paddling to Coll if the weather justified it; or around to the west side of Mull where more shelter was available if the weather remained windy.

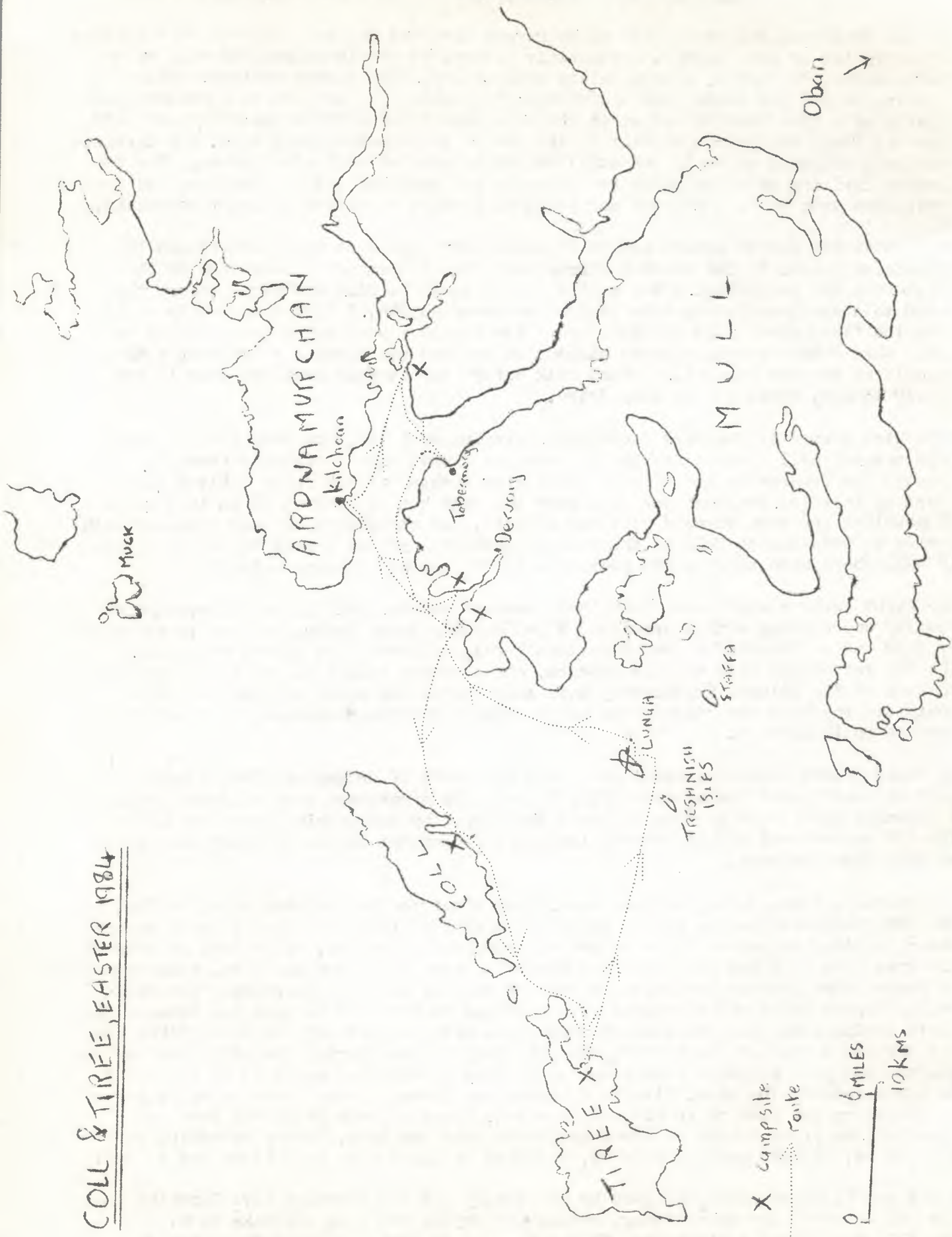
The night again brought some heavy hail showers and the 0625 shipping forecast was equally unpromising with a predicted W 5-7 backing south later. We were on the water by 9.30 and as the wind seemed a settled W 2-3, decided to go direct for Coll. The day was bright with squally showers, one of which caught us two miles from the shelter of the Island. Fortunately this only lasted for about 20 minutes and we could see the blue sky beyond even as we struggled through stinging hail and a gusty wind of up to Force 6.

We found a good site in a small sheltered bay south of Arinagour, Coll's main port and settlement (population 70!). Despite its diminutive size we found Arinagour a friendly place, our opinion no doubt influenced by the opening hours of the hotel bar (11 am to 1 am) and its genial landlord. A pleasant couple of hours were spent at this establishment.

Tuesday, 17th. April, we woke at 6.00 am after the best nights sleep so far. The 0625 forecast was not good - SE gale, veering SW later. We were quickly on the water, wanting to get to Tiree before the wind should arrive. As it was, we paddled directly into a SE 2-3 but made good time with some help from the tide. Some overfalls in Gunna Sound created interest, especially when my map went overboard, but Phil boldly turned round and retrieved it. We landed on Tiree at 12 noon and found a snug north facing site near the pier at Scaranish. After a sort out, we hired bikes and set off for a tour of the island. The gale duly arrived during the afternoon and what started out as a pleasant bike ride turned into a gruelling epic as we attempted to cycle against the wind. Tiree's flatness has caused living there to be likened to living on the deck of an aircraft carrier. Crews of such ships now have our sympathy. We arrived back at the campsite in ones and twos, Trevor returning last at 8.30 pm. We were getting worried, thinking he might have been blown out to sea!

A wet and blustery night followed by an equally wet and blustery day. Canoeing was out and we spent our time reading, eating and drying out from our bike ride. The 1750 forecast was promising, SW-W 4-5 ... just what we needed for a speedy passage to our next objective - the Treshnish Isles. If the weather remained poor we had the option of taking the midday ferry to Oban and paddling to our start point along the sheltered waters of the Sound of Mull.

COLL & TIREE, EASTER 1984



Thursday morning's early forecast was not optimistic so we packed but delayed a decision to depart until the arrival of the midday ferry. At this time we got the latest forecast from the airfield on Tiree (W4, rain later). With this forecast we felt we could go for the Treshnish and left the island at 12.15. We headed initially for Dutchman's Cap, the southernmost of the Treshnish. The curious name comes from the island's resemblance to a piece of headwear, though we thought it looked more like a huge aircraft carrier. As we closed the distance between us and the island, a long SW swell developed, creating heavy breakers on the east end of the island and to the north. We therefore headed for the northern end of Lunga along its sheltered east coast. Lunga is the largest of the Treshnish group, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ km X $\frac{1}{2}$ km and rising to 103 metres in height. Like all the Treshnish, it is uninhabited. It has a cliffed coastline, broken only in the north by a boulder strewn beach, at the back of which water is available from a tiny rock lined well. Here we established our bivvy, after a 28 km, $4\frac{1}{2}$ hour passage.

We went for a walk in the evening, being immediately impressed by the amount and variety of bird life on the island - puffins, shags, cormorants, guillemots and razerbills; all were numerous.

The following morning brought a poor weather report - a severe gale 9 working somewhere in the east. Due to this and also because the island offered opportunity for bird photography, we decided to spend the day on Lunga. We circumnavigated the island on foot and shot off a lot of film. The puffins were especially appealing and incredibly tame, with slow movements one could get within arms length as they stood sentry duty outside their burrows. The coastal scenery was also photogenic, not so much due to its height but more to the great rollers moving in from the west and bursting in spray on the basalt rock.

Day eight of the trip began wet but with a favourable forecast for the afternoon. We prepared to depart but not without regret. Lunga can be strongly recommended for a visit by the canoeist seeking 'atmosphere'. We finally left at 2.30 pm in sunshine near Dervaig four hours later. After a bite to eat we walked 3 miles to the local pub. The walk back was rather slower due to the fact the place did not shut until 2.00 am. Fortunately it was a glorious day followed by a clear starlit night and we were too content to worry about the distance.

Our final day saw us waking in rather a lethargic mood. At last the sky was a deep blue and the sun was warm in the still air. By mutual consent we lazed and aired our gear, not wanting to make the effort to move. Flocks of Oyster Catchers amused us with their chatter, while on the adjacent hillside the measured call of a cuckoo added to the somnulance of the atmosphere.

We left in the early afternoon for the last 12 km to Kilchoan, ferry gliding across the ebb tide flowing from the Sound of Mull. We unpacked at Kilchoan in warm sunshine before heading for the syboretic delights of an evening meal, bed and breakfast at the Loch Sunart Hotel and then the long drive home.

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The group consisted of:

Steve Briggs	paddling a	Sea King
Trevor Brown	..	Nordkapp
Phil Drayton	..	Sea King
Martin Fowles	..	Nordkapp
Chris Pendlebury	..	Nordkapp

* * * * *

WANTED WANTED WANTED

SEA BOAT - WHAT HAVE YOU? NORDKAPP, ANAS OR PREFERABLY ISLANDER

PHONE NORTH WALES - NICK CHETWOOD ON 069 04 214 AND LEAVE MESSAGE

TESTING THE WATER

PURE DRINKING WATER IS LITERALLY A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. BUT WHICH PURIFICATION DEVICE TO USE IS OFTEN FAR FROM CRYSTAL CLEAR.

Drinking impure water must be the most common cause of illness to the traveller. Whether it is a '24 hour bug' caught from the unfamiliar water of a foreign hotel or hepatitis from the untreated water of a Himalayan stream, illness caused by bad water is not only extremely unpleasant to the victim but it may well mean the ruination of an expedition. In a survival situation illness, by reducing physical ability and mental willpower, endangers your life. As good water is such a vital daily necessity, it is worth making sure you know how to obtain it. If you are in doubt about the water; it is better to be safe than sorry. It is worth saying that no purification method can be guaranteed 100% effective, but if it is only 95% effective, it is a lot better than nothing.

Purifying water involves both clarification and sterilisation. Clarification means removing foreign bodies, e.g. dirt; whilst sterilisation means killing bacteria. Some devices will carry out just one of these functions while others will do both.

A traditional method of clarifying water is pouring it through a MILLBANK BAG, a closely woven canvas bag which lets water pass through but retains particles of sand and grit. The clarified water is then either boiled for at least two minutes and preferably ten minutes to kill bacteria, or it can be sterilised by using tablets such as PURITABS or POTABLE AQUA.

PURITABS contain chlorine, the same substance that is used to kill germs in swimming pools. It is cheap, but it leaves the water tasting rather like a swimming pool. One tablet will purify one litre of water in ten minutes. They come individually wrapped, 48 to a packet. POTABLE AQUA is based on iodine which also kill bacteria. It is more expensive partly because it is imported from America but it is more effective against a wider range of bacteria and it leaves the water tasting better than Puritabs. There are 50 tablets in a small glass bottle and again each tablet sterilises one litre of water in ten minutes.

Among the devices which both clarify and sterilise are the SURVIVAL STRAW and the H2OK in the Traveller and Standard versions. The SURVIVAL STRAW measures 8" long, $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and weighs $\frac{1}{2}$ OZ. Inside its plastic case is a mixture of iodine and activated carbon. The iodine kills the bacteria and the carbon removes dirt and unpleasant tastes. It has a capacity of up to 40 litres and is particularly useful when water needs to be drunk from a crevice or hole as often happens in desert conditions. Any water except salt water can be drunk directly. It takes no space and works effectively in emergencies.

The H2OK is more versatile in that the water need not be drunk directly but can be stored after purification for use in cooking or hot drinks. The smaller Traveller version has a large capacity of up to 4,000 litres, whilst the larger Standard can do up to 8,000 litres; enough for a whole family of four for two years. The carbon filter clogs before the bacterial silver is exhausted, thus preventing unsterilised water being imbibed. Untreated water is poured into the top of the device and the treated water falls into a cup underneath. It is advisable to pre-treat the water with tablets before filtering. The Traveller is suitable for an individual while the Standard is better for a group because of its larger capacity and faster performance. In the near future the Traveller will probably be replaced by a British made version, the AQUAFILTA.

Desalinating sea water is a separate and more difficult problem to which there is as yet no entirely satisfactory solution although some are in sight. Apart from carrying canned fresh water, the traditional method for desalinating small quantities is the AIRCREW DESALTER which uses cubes of silver compound. It produces small amount of water at a very high price. Another method is the SOLAR STILL, which looks like a small inflatable cone shaped life-raft. Vapour from salt water heated by the sun condenses on the inside of the plastic cone and can be sucked out. Only small quantities of fresh water are obtained especially in temperate or cool climates. So several would be needed by a group of people. A new method involves the principle of osmosis whereby water is forced through fine membranes which filter out the salt. Hitherto, the physical pumping effort has been too great to make the principle practical but new developments with 'energy

recovery pumps' could soon change that. Another possibility is the use of Gore-Tex whereby the vapour from warm salt water passes through a Gore-Tex membrane and condenses on a cooler backing plate. Low cost solar energy could be used to warm the salt water. This idea has been successfully developed but is not yet commercialised. It holds the promise of large and cheap supplies of fresh water for the third world desert countries, a development that could 'make the desert bloom'.

Fresh water is a much more important priority than food. It is essential that you have the right purification equipment in advance and know how to use it.

The above was taken from SURVIVAL NEWS.
July 1984

REPORT ON THE B.C.U. SEA TOURING COMMITTEE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
9/10TH JUNE 1984 by John Ramwell

This year we based our A.G.M. at Machynlleth, Powys by the Dovey Estuary. For those of you who do not know this area I can only suggest that you 'hot-foot' it over there and see for yourself. Rolling hills and meadows and unspoilt villages.

A local sea paddler, Brod Beech, set the arrangements up for us. Using his influence and local contacts, he contracted special terms with the Llugwy Hotel and it was here we all met on Saturday morning. What the residents must have thought when the hotel car-park filled up with cars all carrying those long tube like contraptions that we know as sea kayaks, and bodies rushing around, some in canoeing gear, greeting each other like long lost buddies, I don't know!

The hotel and it's setting was out of this world. An old mansion set among lawns by the River Dovey. We were made most welcome and much effort was made to make us comfortable. As I said at the time, "if this is sea canoeing, then I might well take to it yet!"

Soon we were all heading the few miles down the road to Aberdovey where we put in for a paddle along the coast to Aberystwyth. The weather was beautiful, the shore line equally so with a back drop of hills and high moor land. After a lunch break and further application of sun-cream, we continued along the cliffs. Nick Padwick thought he saw a chuff and I thought he was referring to a young man clambering up the cliffs - well, you live and learn!

By late afternoon we made Aberystwyth harbour where we were met by my wife, Jenny, who had brought the trailer over from Aberdovey (kindly loaned by an old friend of mine, Andy Coghill). This trailer was to be the cause of much grief. Built to take empty slalom boats, it heaved and groaned beneath the weight of ten partially laden sea kayaks. We got no further than the outskirts of the town when it became quite obvious that we were not going to make it - the trailer was beginning to dissolve. We moved two kayaks on to the top of the two already on top of the car (only two weeks old - as my wife was at pains to keep reminding me!!) and proceeded only to have to stop again a little further on when the trailer again displayed signs of terminal exhaustion. We dumped two more kayaks on the road side for the others to pick up as they drove past later in the mini-bus and we then made an uneventful but nail-biting journey back to the hotel.

Our evening meal was sumptuous and we had quite a party. It was then down to the serious business of the weekend - the A.G.M. of the Sea Touring Committee. To give you the gist of the meeting I give the account of the Chairman's Report:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE SEA TOURING COMMITTEE

Last year I stated in my report that the S.T.C. had lacked effectiveness due to the lack of a working secretary. At the time I shared this duty as Chairman with another and we just about ticked over. Things, I am delighted to say, have changed dramatically and we now enjoy the enthusiasm and services of Mick O'Connell. The difference to the committee has been most encouraging. Finance ties the whole committee together and I would like to thank Neil Shave for his efficient services as Treasurer. I suggest that you have two excellent and well motivated officers here at the helm in both Mick and Neil. You also have an excellent working team of committee members and it is to people like Dave Evans, Derek Hutchinson, Keith Maslen, Dick Richards, Nigel Foster, John Kuyser, Eric Totty and Malcolm Clough

who attend our meetings and do much work behind the scenes, that I am particularly grateful. We would very much appreciate some new blood on the Committee with fresh ideas and input. To our Regional Representatives I say, at least give the occasional meeting a try and don't hesitate to send a substitute when you can't attend. On now to business undertaken by the Sea Touring Committee. Here are a few random items we are currently dealing with.

MARINE ACCESS

The French Authorities have now relented and will give special permission to paddle outside the one mile (nautical) limit. Advice on this should be sought from the French local or marine authorities.

INTRODUCTION OF MARINE NATURE RESERVES

In addition to keeping our National Access Officer informed, the S.T.C. is monitoring the activities of Nature Conservancy Council wardens. Nigel Dennis and Paul Airey, who live and work on Anglesey (see minutes of the full meeting) have been co-opted to report to the S.T.C. on this particularly precious and now threatened area.

The S.T.C. are working closely with the B.C.U. Access Committee, who in turn work with the R.Y.A. to monitor any restrictions proposed by the Nature Conservancy Council. Information has been promulgated by the A.S.K.C. which has also invited members to write to the Nature Conservancy Council, stating their opinion.

THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM

This was held at Ullswater last November. The theme was expeditions and I invited officers of the Royal Geographical Society to address us together with contributions from our own ranks. We enjoyed an informative weekend. The report of the Symposium is, as you know, available for the interest and benefit of others which means the effect of this event is spread much further afield.

By inviting the R.G.S. to address us, we were able to show them that sea canoeists are well 'into' expeditions already and have an activity that is firmly established. They were impressed and the liaison between the S.T.C. and the R.G.S. is a link that has been forged to our mutual benefit.

We are encouraging all those who embark on serious expeditions to at least inform the R.G.S., and at best to use their services which are first rate and extensive, and afterwards to provide them with a report for their library.

INFORMATION

The S.T.C. is still concerned with the preparation of Information Papers.

H.M. Coastguards have kindly provided an excellent paper which is available from the Committee and we are in the throes of publishing another definitive paper on Flares with the help of Drew Delancy.

The A.S.K.C. Newsletter disseminates a great deal of information on the sea canoeing scene, not only in this country but around the globe. The British canoeing press all feature sea canoeing pages and the number of sea canoeing newsletters being published is the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and Europe has increased rapidly over the last few years. If there is half as much done as is written about, then we are indeed a busy lot. Long may it continue.

Any committee that fails to communicate soon loses touch with what members want and it falls into a vacuum. Certainly since the advent of our secretary, Mick, this has not been the case, and all Regional Representatives, A.C.R.M.C. and the B.C.U. itself are fully informed of all our deliberations on receipt of our minutes.

EVENTS/MEETS

The S.T.C. does not (as a committee function) exist to stage events as such. However, we will provide a reservoir of information/experience for any B.C.U. group or individual who wants help in this direction; but we do not prepare our own calendar - like you, we all do our own thing and introduce paddlers and novices to the freedom and adventure of the sea. This does not mean to say that we will not promote an event that anyone is prepared to organise given that it meets the obvious criteria - any member of the committee will advise.

CRYSTAL PALACE

This 'shop window' of canoeing is under exploited as far as the sea canoeing stand is concerned and we are keen to elect a sub-committee to put on a really good show at the Exhibition.

EXPEDITIONS

I have already mentioned the involvement of the R.G.S. on the sea canoeing scene.

For many people, sea expeditions are what sea canoeing is all about and I am pleased to see such a number of expeditions occurring world wide. The British Schools Exploring Society has recently taken to sea canoeing as part of their expedition programme. Many clubs, schools, organisations and individuals are planning and embarking on some really interesting expeditions as a matter of course, so you can see how new horizons are being broadened in terms of expeditions/survival skills as well as in distances travelled. There is much information on the market now to advise us on technique, equipment, etc. and sea kayaking has, over the 20 years or so, grown to be a recognised activity alongside mountaineering, skiing, etc. The S.T.C. is represented on the B.C.U. Expeditions Committee by Derek Hutchinson. This Expedition Committee exists to monitor, sponsor and assist canoeing expeditions. Sea kayaking features well up on their list of priorities, we being the most demanding group.

SAFETY

Our relationship with H.M. Coastguards is excellent and we can thank many individuals who, in the early days, did much to dispel the myth that sea canoeists are reckless and think nothing of putting rescue services at risk. If I may select one person who has done so much in this direction it has to be Dick Richards, Controller of Swansea Region. He has helped to establish the B.C.U./S.T.C. Coastguard Liaison Scheme whereby all sea canoeing incidents are logged and reports are sent to Liaison Officers, B.C.U. and S.T.C. Members. This relationship and co-operation has done much towards achieving our professional and safety conscious image.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

I am pleased to report that at Crystal Palace this year, a Presidential Letter of Commendation was presented to:

Dave Evans
Frank Goodman
David Patrick

This was in recognition of their assistance in an unfortunate incident in France.

APPROVAL OF CENTRES

Draft proposals have been drawn up by the National Coaching Committee for Council regarding the approval of Outdoor Pursuit Centres who meet established criteria in terms of equipment, safety and instructional standards. These proposals have been agreed by A.C.R.M.C. and Council and I am assured that the matter is now on the extremely urgent list for implementation. Certainly this is a matter which the S.T.C., in conjunction with the N.C.C. must pursue in the near future.

SEA TOURING MAP

We are keen to provide much information for the touring sea kayaker and we have come up with a plan to produce a map of the coastline of direct interest to the sea paddler. For example, type of coast/beach/access/campsites/amenities/etc. Having started this project, we have handed it over to the Access Committee for them to complete. This is a project we are keen to see through to fruition and we shall pursue it's outcome.

end of chairmans report - back to the account of the weekend:

A lot of time was spent discussing marine access and the limitations that are intended to be imposed by such autonomous bodies like the Nature Conservancy Council the R.S.P.B. and the S.S.I. (Sites of Scientific Interest). At this stage I can assure you that the Sea Touring Committee intends to monitor and negotiate over this problem and of course we shall be working closely with the National Access Officer.

On completion of the meeting we viewed the marvellous documentary film, 'Nanook of the North'. Made by Frank Hurley in 1922, it depicts the life style of an Eskimo family in North Baffin. It shows them kayaking, fishing, hunting walrus, building igloos and generally surviving the Arctic and obviously enjoying it at the same time. Perhaps we can learn a lot from them, even today, more so today!

Next day, Sunday, after a hearty breakfast, we split into two groups - one group going off to the coast north of the Dovey estuary for a paddle and the rest of us putting in by the hotel itself for a paddle down the Dovey on the last of the ebb tide to Aberdovey. It was superb, matched only by the weather and the surrounding scenery

Certainly this has to be the way to stage our meetings; indeed, for some time now we have been encouraging full attendance at our committee meetings by laying on such weekend events, The idea being that each committee member is allowed to bring along a couple of fellow paddlers to enjoy the opportunity of an organised event in company with other members of the committee thus giving some attraction to the role of committee member. It seems to work. So, if you are interested contact your Regional Representative to the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee, or any member of the committee as listed below:

Chairman	John J. Ramwell	4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, Yorkshire
Vice Chairman	Eric Totty	9, Undercliffe Rd., Kendal, Cumbria
Secretary	Michael O'Connell	9, The Green, Kirksanton, Millom, Cumbria
Meets Sec.	Dave Evans	77, Studley Ave., Holbury, Southampton, Hants
P.R.O.	Nigel Foster	5, Tan y Bwlch, Mynydd, Llandegai, Bethesda, Wales
Treasurer	Neil Shave	16, Maynard Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts
Committee	Derek Hutchinson,	18, Marina Dr. South Shields, Tyne & Wear.
	John Kuyser	2, Walkers Lane North, Blackfield, Southampton.
	Keith Maslen	The Hall Bungalow, White Edge Dr. Baslow, Derbysh.
Co-opted	Mike Fennessey	66, Lulworth Dr. Roborough, Plymouth
	Nigel Dennis	The Mill, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, Wales.
	Paul Airey,	Nelson O.E.C. Plas Newydd, Llanfair P.G. Anglesey.

Regional

Representatives

London

South East	Chris Childs	8A, Holland Str., Brighton, Sussex
South	Dave Evans	as above

Wessex

South West	Martin Northcott	21, Waterloo Str., Northill, Plymouth
Yorks & Humb	Sam Cook	Bewerley Park Centre, Bewerley, Harrogate, N. Yorks.
West Midlands	Malcolm Clough	46, Main Str., Normanton, Loughborough, Leics.

West Midlands

North West	Laurie Wood,	257, Oxford Rd., Macclesfield, Cheshire.
North	Derek Hutchinson	as above
Cumbria	Barry Howell	Y.M.C.A. National Centre, Lakeside, Ulverston, Cumbria.

SCOTLAND

Touring Sec.	Alan Law,	41, Dalavich Loch Awe, Taynuilt, Argyll
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S.C.A.	The Administrator	18, Ainslie Place, Edinburgh.
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N. IRELAND	G. McNicoll	37, Moygashell Pk., Dungannon, Co. Tyrone
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WALES	Brod Beech	Cartrf Dyfi, Machynlleth, Powys.
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CHANNEL ISLES	Derek Hairon	Wimbledon Pk Boating Centre, London, SW19
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H.M. Coastguards	Dick Richards	12, Fulmer Close, Swansea, Wales.
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C o C.L.G.	Alan Rees,	29, Wallasea Gdns., Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex
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Camping Club	Keith Holmes	39, Napier Rd., Crowthorne, Berks.
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A.S.K.C.	John Ramwell.	as above
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FRANCE	Guy Ogez,	10, Paicdela, Berengere, St. Cloud, Paris.
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B.A.O.R.	W.O. Tony Ford.	SSO Munsterlager, B.F.P.O. 104
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R.A.F.	Flt Lt R.N. Davis	R.A.F. Rheindahlen, B.F.P.O. 40.
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BOOK REVIEW

THE ADVENTURE ALTERNATIVE by COLIN MORTLOCK. Cicerone Press, £8.95

Any treatise on the value of adventurous activities deserves attention, not least because literature on the subject is so scarce. This book deserves particular attention because it is written by a man who has not only made his mark in the field of adventure education, but also as an adventurer.

It is an interesting and unusual book. Unusual because it expounds a very personal philosophy which gives a fascinating insight into the "inner man" of the author and interesting because it should stimulate reflection amongst adventurers and educationalists alike.

Adventurers amongst us are often asked why we climb, paddle or pit our wits against the wilderness, frequently enduring considerable and apparently self-inflicted hardships. Those of us working in the field of education, and more specifically adventure education, should also try to define our aims and objectives if we are to have any credibility in the eyes of society. This is a bold and welcome effort by Colin Mortlock to answer some of these particularly difficult and controversial questions. As he points out in his introduction, ".....almost anyone who is involved in teaching adventure activities to young people subconsciously and instinctively knows that what he or she is doing has significant value beyond that of learning skills". But WHY we adventure or what this 'significant value' actually is remains extremely hard to define.

Definitely a thought provoking book. Take it, read it and discuss it. I certainly think that I will have to read it again!

Chris Dickinson.

* * * * *

TO FEATHER OR NOT TO FEATHER from SEA KAYAKER (CANADA)

Until recently, such a question would not even have been asked. Paddle blades, someone once said, were placed at right angles to reduce windage, and that was that. I noticed how they caught side gusts dangerously in that position but never seriously considered other options. Then, in the middle of a wilderness trip, with a heavily loaded kayak, I developed severe tenosynovitis in my right wrist. I switched feathering to the left hand and, two weeks later, that wrist also packed in. In desperation, I unfeathered the paddle and completed the remaining three months without problems, I was also relieved to discover I was much less threatened by sudden side gusts since the edge of the paddles now cut the breeze while, in the rare case of a following wind, the unfeathered blade even caught a little push. In storm winds, the unfeathered blades proved noticeably more controllable, with no tendency to 'paddle-wheel' out of my hands, or even across waves if left floating. Thanks to my enforced switches, I had learned to paddle left handed, right handed and unfeathered so I could still feather into a head wind for short bursts. On the negative side was that I had to be more deliberate about my paddle brace and less able to rely upon my reflex.

Given so many apparent pros, why do people still feather their paddles? Is it simply a hangover from whitewater racing? Although it is tempting to believe this, I don't think it is the case; however, the clue may be there. Feathering does make sense for short paddles with narrow boats, especially when they are empty on flat water (they also make sense for negotiating slalom gates). Here, the efficient stroke is a high one. To achieve it, the wrist automatically twists - not usually as much as 90° - but it is certainly more comfortable than the unfeathered position. However, the high stroke is not the most stable and, without the same need for manoeuvrability, touring paddles tend to be longer, requiring a slower, steadier pull than whitewater or racing paddles. Because most touring paddlers prefer longer paddles than a river runner would use, blades tend to be smaller, even spear-like, since to retain the same blade size would greatly increase the load. Incidentally, Inuit paddlers never did use feathered paddles

So what should it be, feathered or unfeathered? As usual, there is no single, simple answer. It depends upon: 1) the LENGTH of your paddle, and this depends upon 2) the BEAM of your boat and such personal factors as 3) your HEIGHT and the condition of your joints; 4) the WEIGHT of your boat also seems to be a significant consideration or, more precisely perhaps, the load on each paddle stroke. This load is a factor of the length of the paddle and 5) the AREA and 6) SHAPE of the blade John Dowd.

ENCOUNTERS

THE FOLLOWING IS A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF A DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN A PACIFIC GRAY WHALE AND A SEA KAYAKER. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED IN JANUARY DURING A GUIDED TRIP TO MAGDALENA BAY, BAJA, MEXICO, ONE OF THE LAGOONS WHERE GRAYS GIVE BIRTH BEFORE THEIR SUMMER MIGRATION UP THE PACIFIC COAST, PAST CANADA TO THE ARCTIC.

Excited by the sight and sound of many whale cows and calves, I set off solo in a double kayak and before long saw a mother and baby whale two hundred yards in front of me. I moved toward them on a fast current; the gap between us was quickly closing. I stopped paddling and drifted. I lost sight of them as they went under, then minutes later the calf surfaced, 75 feet away. I never saw the cow again, but the calf continued towards me. I clicked off photos, and my excitement increased as he got closer. The calf looked up at me as he slid underneath my boat. Then I heard a loud sound, felt a rude jolt and was pitched mercilessly into the water. I'd come to Baja to get close to the Gray whales, but this was carrying things a little too far!

I was floating in the water along with my gear. Fortunately, I had recovered my waterproof camera and was, at this point, more excited than afraid. This was not my first wet exit and several things were in my favour; I had a PFD on, the water was quite warm, and I was'nt far off shore. I managed to flip the kayak upright and, for the moment, hung onto the cockpit. Always stay with your boat, right? This conventional advice became of dubious value when the boat was violently torn out of my hand and knocked into the air. The calf had returned.

Now I was very worried. This baby whale weighed close to six tons and on its last pass had come within two feet from my elbow.

The calf returned yet again, this time lob-tailing the surface about fifteen feet away with great resounding splashes. I had just realised how totally helpless I was when a power skiff arrived, attracted by the commotion. The people aboard were making a film about whales and before I knew it, the calf had disappeared and I was in their boat, being interviewed on camera.

My kayak was brought back to shore. The seat and the stern flotation were missing and the front bag barely kept the boat above water. There were holes in the fibre glass hull, and longitudinal cracks several feet long. Here and there, whale flesh, with barnacles and lice, was stuck to the boat.

Gray whales have been known to attack whalers, which seems fair enough. Surfers have also suffered broken bones because of them and at least one commercial whale watchers group has had injuries from contact with a Gray. Yet in some Baja lagoons, and near Tofino on the west coast of Vancouver Island, people can actually reach out and TOUCH them.

In retrospect, I wonder if the calf attacked me, was playing with me, was playfully attacking me, showing off for mom or what? My activities seemed benign in comparison to those of some motor-powered whale watchers. I was not caught between a cow and its calf, nor was I aggressively advancing towards them. Was it the yellow colour of my boat perhaps?

Rich with new appreciation for the mysteries of the deep, my impulse, when I saw Orcas a few months later, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, was NOT to rush towards them. Instead I headed quitely for shore to savour a more distant dignified perspective. Not afraid exactly. A lot more careful, yes.

Art Hohl
from SEA KAYAKER (CANADA)

THE QUALITY OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS AS GOOD AS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS
ANY NEWS, VIEWS, OPINIONS, EXPEDITION REPORTS, EQUIPMENT
APPRAISALS, FUNNY STORIES, NOT-SO FUNNY STORIES - ALL
ARE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND SUBSEQUENTLY ENJOYED BY
SEA PADDLERS ALL OVER THE WORLD.

PISCATORIALS AND SEA KAYAKS or How To Catch Fish From A
Modified Cigar Tube.

In November 1981, Canoeing Magazine carried an article of mine, entitled "Circumnavigation - Raasay and South Rona, Inner Hebrides". I mentioned in that article the "delicate art of fishing from a cigar tube". Recently a sea kayaker who had found an aging copy of the magazine and had read the article, asked me a very serious question; "How do you modify a cigar tube for the purpose of fishing, and did you find it successful?". You must appreciate the fact that this guy was being deadly serious, and my muffled sniggering did not impress him in the least.

Like most sea kayakers I know, who expedition on the sea, I always carry some fishing gear and enjoy supplementing my diet with a little fresh fish. Not only is this good fun when conditions are suitable, but fish is really very worthwhile as an addition to the expedition diet. It also tastes very good, depending on your personal tastes and the variety of fish available. Some of my most memorable moments involve sitting around an open fire on some uninhabited island cooking the days catch, in between chatting with friend and sipping good quality malt.

I have experimented with various methods of fishing from the kayak, excluding hand grenades, but hitting salmon on top of the head with a paddle has been well tried. The latter, if performed with great reverence is extremely productive. If you do not believe me, ask Mike Taylor of Hemel Hempstead Canoe Club.

By far the most popular fishing equipment for the kayaker is the normal 'hand-line', designed on the principal that 'simplest is best'. These are commonly available and can be seen in their hundreds during holiday periods, dangled off piers by would be 'Jaws' catchers. If you did not know better you could be excused for assuming that these items of advanced technical know how are used for clearing the sea weed and crabs from around the ends of piers. In fact, if used correctly they prove extremely productive in use. There are, of course, variations on the original theme. The super deluxe, which is a professional looking plastic reel with a handle on the back. The deluxe, a plastic frame which the braided nylon is wound. The basic, similar to the deluxe except that it employs a wooden frame. Finally there is the super basic, a piece of fish box with a notch at each end around which we wind mono filament sea fishing line.

I use a super basic model and find it easier to use than the super deluxe, much cheaper, and a much better conversation piece. In all seriousness, I see no point at all in paying out money when something cheaper, that can be manufactured easily is just as effective, is readily available. Likewise, why pay out for expensive lead weights when a bunch of old spark plus are equally good? They are readily available and cost you nothing, Bearing in mind the number of expensive weights that are lost when fishing over kelp and foul ground, this must make good sense.

There are certain dangers associated with fishing from a kayak, and it is these that we need to be mindful of. Traces, lengths of pre-tied hooks, usually with feathers attached, are very long, on average up to two metres, including between 6 to 8 sharp hooks. Imagine hooking a haddock on the bottom hook on the traces. We then need to handle across our cluttered deck line lengths of line and trace, including all those sharp hooks. My fear at times like these is capsizing into a mess of hooks and flapping fish. The problems would be incredible in proportion. To evacuate and cut the hooks that are attached to you, or to perform an eskimo roll with hooks firmly attached to arms, face, eyelids, ears, hands, etc. Lovely thought, is it not? Because of this I keep the number of hooks to a minimum, only two or three. This still gives ample opportunity and a variety of depths. I feel that by reducing the number of hooks and the length of trace fishing can be made much safer, and that suits me down to the ground.

Baiting up hooks also needs some prior planning. Feathers are very effective, and so is a strip of silver foil, but it is my experience that nothing is quite as good as a nice strip of mackerel, herring or mussel, in that order. Of course, it does depend on the type of fish you wish to catch. First, catch your mackerel (or buy it!), second, cut it into strips; third, put it into a well sealed tin or plastic container; fourth, don't forget it is in there; fifth, if you do forget about it get a friend to open the container for you!

Certain kayaks are better than others in the stability stakes, and problems can occur when our all seeing eyes are taken off the horizon to bait hooks or to retrieve and despatch a struggling fish. Therefore an efficient method of baiting and despatching is important. I usually despatch fish by stunning them on the deck of the kayak, but for larger fish I either use a priest (a weighty object) or a knife. A knife is doubly important because it allows you to cut the line if by chance you hook a monster of the deep. This should only be done if absolutely necessary, because stray fishing line does not do the sea bird population any favours at all. If in a group the problem of large fish is easily dealt with by rafting up and bringing the creature up between the kayaks and over the paddle shafts, This method offers good stability and an extra pair of hands.

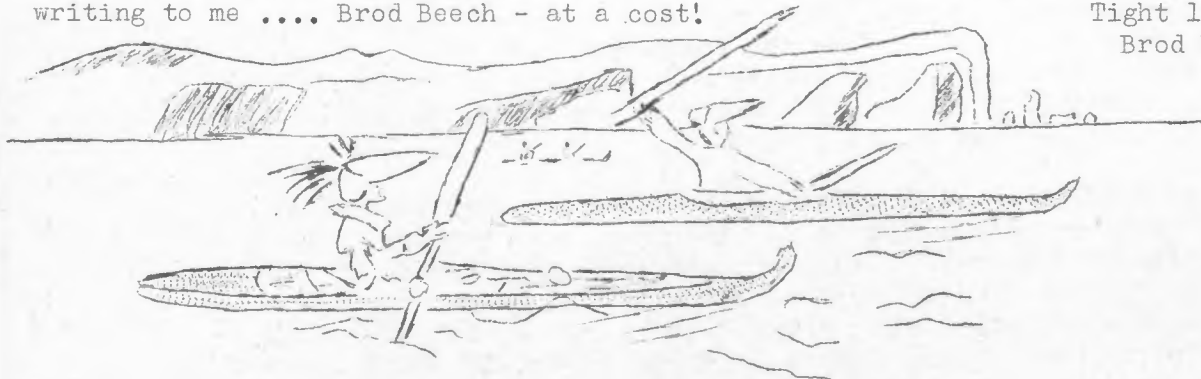
During a trip to Skye some years ago, I had the need to try another method of fishing. Unfortunately, due to a mechanical failure of our bus, a new gearbox was called for, and this saw the last of our finances and threw us into a major economic crisis. The situation was such that we needed to feed seven adults and three children. Our ultimate solution involved the setting of a long line with 120 hooks, to be set with anchors at each end, and identified by floats. The floats would provide a dual purpose, carrying a line to an anchor which would enable us to retrieve one anchor and thus retrieve the line laden with fish. So the theory went anyway. In reality it was not that simple. Not only was it awkward paddling with heavy bags of rocks on the deck of a Nordkapp (anchors), but the problem of baiting the line holds tremendous dangers for the paddler. In order to retrieve the line we found it necessary to use two paddlers because of the prevailing conditions. One controlling the drift of the other by the use of a tow. The 'worker' passing the line of hooks over his deck in order to check each hook. The end result was two very tired paddlers, and not a single solitary fish! We did not starve however, because over the next two evenings we filled a domestic chest freezer with haddock. Hand lines were the answer. Sue Taylor and I fished together and whilst I landed the greater variety, Sue landed the greater quantity.

Trolling a line behind the kayak can be quite productive. Fishing can continue whilst still making way, but the line needs to be streamed a good distance astern of the kayak. You must also remember to retrieve the line before coming to rest otherwise snags can occur. When trolling a line, unless adequate weight is used, the lure will eventually stay on or very close to the surface. In order to keep the lure at depth a weight of 8oz is probably best. I cannot quite think how many spark plugs this is off hand, but I suppose it depends on whether you use long or short reach plugs!

At times I retrieve a line when there are creatures around that I would prefer not to hook. Seal, whale, porpoise, shark, etc. feature high on my list of undesirables. Maybe they would not normally take the bait, but there does exist the possibility of 'foul' hooking them. The prospect of this is not very attractive. Last summer, whilst paddling from the Treshnish Island to Staffa we had an encounter of the minor kind with a fifteen foot thresher shark. Fishing lines were rapidly retrieved as the adrenalin started to flow. It really is quite amazing how fast you can retrieve 100' of mono filament line with a piece of old herring box when you are well and truly worried!

Next time you are out at sea, give fishing a try, you may enjoy it. By the way, if anyone would like a set of plans and explanatory notes concerned with converting a Castella Cigar Tube into an instrument for fishing, these can be obtained by writing to me Brod Beech - at a cost!

Tight lines
Brod Beech.



From John Chambers, 1, Maple Grove, Breaston, Derby.

Dear John,

It is interesting of late how your newsletter keeps bringing back memories for me, and your latest is no exception with the article on "Grasholme - The Elusive Isle" by Hugh Andrews. At risk of boring you (again!) I enclose a copy of an old article from the Midland Canoe Club newsletter, July '73, "Half Way There And Back" by Alan Gibson.

For us, The Smalls was equally elusive. We had occasionally espied the 'concrete pencil' on exceptionally clear days from the peaks above Whitesands Bay. Also, on some evenings its light had been spotted beyond that of 'The Bishop'. It was an ambition of George Bayleys to go there, and I just did what I was told! Alan, against his better judgement, had been roped in (to help with the rescues) because our usual partner of that era, Ian Tatum, was not around.

Our (George's) plan was to set off, just prior to the peak of the ebb, and paddle on a plotted course of mainly due west, entirely on the compass, until we could 'transit' our way in. We expected it to take a few hours and the St. David's Coast Guard had told us the keeper would welcome us (with hot soup) around 1400, our E.T.A.

As you can see from Alan's account we were well out to sea when we had to decide whether to go on, turn back or turn in. The agony was that our dead reckoning told us we should be well within sight of the rocks and light house, but the sea mist reduced our visibility in that direction to about a mile. Whilst we were stopped, deciding what to do because Alan had felt unwell for an hour, and was getting worse, George puked.

We did hasty sums from the info on deck and turned east, really frustrated, but with 2/3rds of the group ill..... After a while we saw a tiny island in the distance and were relieved to be heading for 'Skomer'. It was only after paddling considerably closer (knowing Skomer to be close to the mainland) that the expanse of sea beyond this island began to take on some significance. As we passed this island of Grasholme, which had not featured at all in our plans, we saw the real Skomer. By this time Alan was really grim, so George, who was not much better, decided to tow Alan to take his own mind of his nausea.

It was some while before we landed in the northern cove and, after a relatively short but reviving stop, two more hours before we landed back at Whitesands Bay. Another nine hour failure!

We planned a return and towards it, during the year, I obtained aerial photo's of The Smalls from Airviews at Manchester and from Trinity House, some super large plans (plan and elevation) of the main rock, showing heli-pad, steps, landing places, etc. They took pains to point out to me how they had lost a boat there! We did not, in the event, manage a return, but it remained a 'possible' for many years.

Hugh Andrew's final sentence is exactly parrallel.

Yours, soggy with nostalgia,
John Chambers.

HALF WAY THERE AND BACK by Alan Gibson.

I looked out of my tent on Monday morning to a gorgeous thick mist. Whitesands Bay was not visible, in fact you could hardly see to the bottom of the campsite. 'Great', I thought, 'the trips off, back to bed'.

It was not long before I heard J.C. loading his van; 'he must be nuts,' I thought, 'we cannot go with weather like this,' but he informed me that, mist or no mist, George would have us out there. To please John and to show willing, I arrived in the car ready to go.

Just before we were to set off the mist cleared revealing the stark, white, Bishops Lighthouse bathed in the sun's rays. It would have made a marvellous post-card, if it was not for the fact we had got to paddle out there. The comment for this miraculous disappearance of the mist from J.C. (and I am beginning to believe him) was that George had been on the telephone to his connections above. So with fond farewells from families and wellwishers, the three intrepid paddlers set off into the distant horizon, cherishing the last civilised words spoken to us that we might ever hear, "You must be bloody mad".

Paddling a direct course to take us off the N.W. corner of Ramsey, then out to South Bishop, we made good time, taking just over an hour. The sea conditions were quite moderate apart from passing through overfalls near some unpronounceable named

rocks between Bishop and Ramsey. This part of the trip was made with references to some Red Indian and, "what a good place to bring Keggie Cooper surfing".

We took our first break at South Bishop Lighthouse which was undergoing refuelling at the time. After asking for the latest weather forecast, which the lighthouse keeper did not know (great!) we passed on to look for our little clump of rocks in the distance - The Smalls.

As we paddled further out, so Bishop got smaller and smaller and the open sea got bigger and bigger. Feeling lonely was not in it. I tried to conjure up the most welcoming pub in Britain and all I got in reply was, "Anyone for Dynamo?".

About 1½ hours out from Bishop I began to feel a bit queazy in the stomach. After a short conference I decided to carry on for a while to see if it would settle down. Unfortunately it did not and so at about 2½ hours out from South Bishop we decided to turn back. It was not that I could not have got there, but having arrived the question as to whether I would be fit enough to paddle back again concerned me. To be on the safe side we turned back and as it showed later it proved to be the right decision.

Whilst sitting around discussing this move we had rafted up. This proved fatal as it made me much worse and also brought on an attack of sickness for George. His comment was that the Dynamo did not agree with him, although it certainly came up nice pleasant shades of pink, instead of the horrible creamy lumpy stuff. Another point in the advertising favour for Dynamo. Ugh!

After about 1½ hours paddling back to Ramsey on a compass bearing, we found our calculations up the creek. The island on our right turned out to be Grasholme and the island we were paddling towards was Skomer. Twenty minutes later I felt worse with sickness, dizziness and drowsiness. George offered to tow me in (thanks George).

We came into Skomer on the west side and had to paddle round to the east to find a place to land and where I could die in peace.

On the way round we passed a boat full of sight seers. I still do not know whether it was the sight of three manly canoeists appearing out of the west or our pleasant shade of green that they were looking at!

Climbing out of our canoes onto land was sheer agony (I enjoyed every minute of it). After twenty minutes on land I felt perfectly OK and it was hard to believe that the last hour had taken place.

All of us feeling refreshed, we set off to cover the nine miles across St. Brides Bay to the mouth of Ramsey Sound which was lost in a bank of mist. We had arranged to meet Keith Cooper and party somewhere at the beginning of the Sound.

Paddling towards where we thought Ramsey was, in the mist, seemed to take ages. Skomer was getting smaller and Ramsey getting no bigger. After about 1½ hours paddling the mist began to clear and there was the Sound - but no Keith and party. We searched the cliff tops for about twenty minutes then decided to press on with out them.

There was slack water in Ramsey Sound so we had a leisurely paddle through, rounding St. John's Point (most aptly named) to bring Whitesands Bay into view. The last ½ mile never seemed to end until at last the canoe grated on the sand - a marvellous feeling, but "never again!".

Although not achieving our ultimate destination, the Smalls Lighthouse, we did manage to get in nine hours canoeing, covering a distance of something like 36 miles

P.S. On second thoughts perhaps I might try again, in the QE2.

Alan Gibson.

N.B. "Some 20 miles or so out in the Atlantic, beyond Grasholme and beyond the 'Hats and Barrels', the Small number maybe twenty rocks clustered where the Irish Sea meets the southwest swell from the Atlantic. These hidden rocks and the fierce currents present a murderous combination where untold scores of vessels went to their doom in the days of sail....." (Taken from the "Sounds Between" by Roscoe Howells)

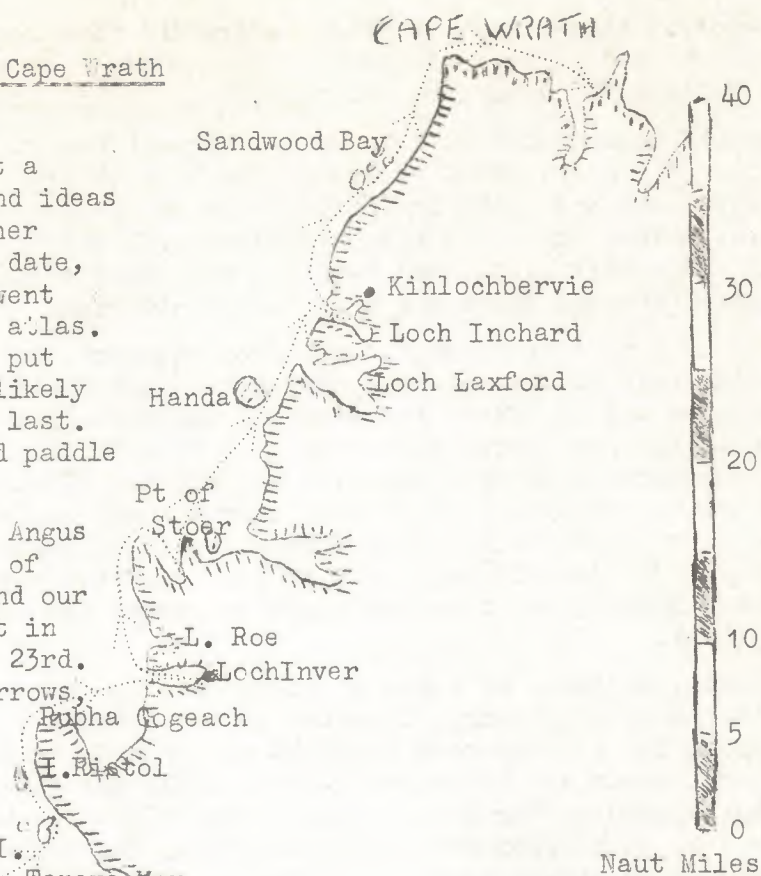
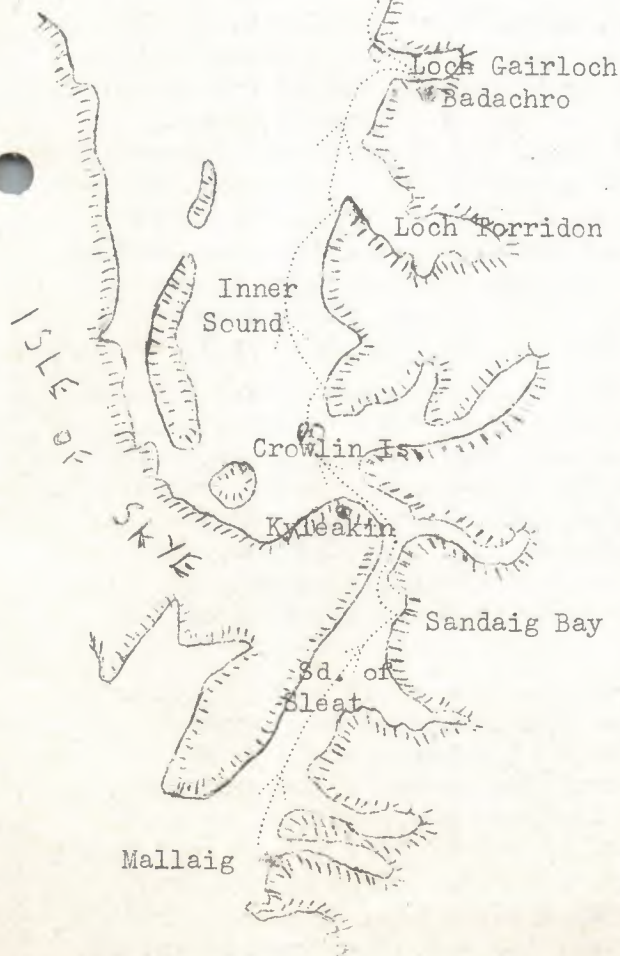
BIG 'W'

Poole Harbour Canoe Club Assault on Cape Wrath

by Nick Featherstone

Early in the spring, starting to get a bit restless, we began to toss around ideas for the summer sea trip. Several other venues having put aside for a later date, we decided on Scotland again. So I went away and pored over the trusty road atlas. Finally I had three rough plans and put them one by one to Angus, the most likely collaborator; saving the best until last. This was to set out from Mallaig and paddle north towards Cape Wrath.

In the event the party consisted of Angus and myself, and after a month or so of getting everything together, we found our selves heading up the Sound of Sleat in the early afternoon of Monday, July 23rd. The tide being against us in the narrows, we made our first camp 11 miles from Mallaig, near the natural harbour of Sandaig Bay. The sun was hot and the midges were asleep for once.



That night we roasted fresh mussels in the embers of a driftwood fire and counted our blessings.

Next morning saw us paddling through the narrows to Kyleakin with about 3 knots of tide under us. Sadly we couldn't arrange to do it on springs - what a place this must be then! We thought of hanging slalom poles from overhead power cables..... It was a hard slog against a rising N.W. wind to the Crowlin Isles, and through the narrow slot between Eilean Meadhonach and Eiln. Mor. This would be a lovely spot to camp, but I had'nt read my notes very carefully and so did'nt realise there was fresh water there. We pressed on to the mainland near Toscaig, where a slightly stagnant burn eked out our diminished supplies. The sun was still shining.

Wednesday's forecast promised us a northerly 3 to 4 - head winds again. Previous trips had tended to take on a declining pattern - up at 10, launch at 12, camp at 7, eat 11.30, up at 11; but this time we had the goal of Cape Wrath to pursue and were usually away by 10 with no apparant ill effects. The northerly was indeed force 4, but by 1330 we'd reached the little loch, Loch na Chuaig for a lunchbreak, and I'd had my first sight of a sea otter. The water in the burn was suspect but we gave it a good boiling....

Hapilly the wind declined a little and by 1730 we'd made it across the mouth of Loch Torridon and into Loch Gairloch where three of the biggest mackerel I've ever seen

surrendered themselves. In these waters the fish seem eager to be caught and can usually be relied on to supplement your diet. I swear I caught and threw back the same pollack twice in three minutes!

We camped near Badachro, but not near enough, as we agreed during the tramp to the pub over the moor, which abolished any hope of dry socks for the rest of the trip. The view down into Badachro Harbour had us spellbound: it's one of those perfect natural havens that must make yachting worth the trouble. Here we had our first "half and a half pint", and even got our water cans filled over the bar. And, for future reference, there was a camping field right there in front of the post-office.

It was hard to tear ourselves away from Badachro, but on Thursday after a quick shopping trip we were heading across the loch towards Rubha Reidh (Ru Re). This morning we had our first taste of the sea canoeists special ecstasy of donning wet clothes, the sun having given way to a fine drizzle with a light N.W. wind. Seabirds were abundant as we approached Ru Re, and the fulmars became our special favourite; they have a lovely way of gliding over the sea surface and an inquisitive, unafraid look. We rounded the point against a couple of knots of tide, but without too much trouble. The tides in the northern Minch are not very violent and require less planning than in our familiar cruising ground the Channel, with one or two notable exceptions.

The swell, breaking on a row of rocks near low water mark made landing in Camas Mor look decidedly hairy, but further on we found a cove with a tiny surf free landing spot. The scenery came straight out of a fairy-tale: red cliffs covered in greenery, caves and a waterfall. This idyll was rudely shattered when Angus reported the boats heading for sea - crewless and with open hatches! We took the hint and pressed on to Slaggan Bay across Loch Iwe. The beach here had been well combed but we scraped up enough wood for a fire and dried out our gear.

Friday 27th., and some proper highland weather! The Met Office promised us S.W. 4 or 5, increasing 5 to 7; occasional rain. The morning was obviously one of the occasions since the rain came down non-stop. However, sea canoeists being bold pioneering types, are never daunted by a bit of atmospheric moisture; we must be imposters because, although it took a little ingenuity, we stayed in our sleeping bags until nearly midday.

Once launched and nicely wetted in the small surf, things were exhilarating. The trip to Greenstone Point took 30 minutes - 6 knots! Here we had a decision to make-around Gruinard Bay, or directly through the mist to the Summer Isles? Priest Island decided the issue by showing itself for a minute, and we set a compass course. An hour of lumpy swell and mist later, we arrived at this, the first of the Summer Isles an interesting spot, but in a cold wet sou-wester, no place for a tea-break. We set a course for Tanera Mor and pressed on, amid a maze of misty islands. Tanera Mor has an excellent harbour with a perfectly sheltered anchorage, the 'Cabbage Garden', but the shore was a bit built up for camping and we continued our soggy course to the N.E. coast. Here Angus found a trickle of water which he was pleased to call a spring, and we half filled our water cans, being too lazy to walk further in the rain.

Saturday is remembered as a morning of all-pervading dampness which evaded all our defences and penetrated everything - matches, sleeping bags, 'dry' clothes We dodged behind Isle Ristol and then out into the westerly wind and swell. Reiff Bay passed by with some spectacular opportunities for rock-hopping on its reefs, but in a group of two it's not wise to risk a broken boat. Rubha Coigeach gave us some good surfing, and five minutes fishing provided supper. Our friends, the fulmars looked on hungrily but in the conditions we decided against trying any fish gutting. Provisions were getting a bit low and so we dripped and trickled our way around the shores of Loch Inver.

We had intended to stop in Loch Roe, which appeared from the chart to be a mysterious narrow steep sided place, but it was so mysterious that we missed the entrance completely and found ourselves in an inlet which a few bearings proved to be Achmolvich Bay, with a caravan site and windsurfers. The number of touring vans, holiday parks and campers in the extreme north of Scotland never failed to amaze us, and when we finally arrived on the north coast, it was to find that a good half of the population was German and French tourists. I was a bit tired by now but Angus had the bit between his teeth and there was no holding him, so on we went to the Point of Stoer where there was a good-sized swell and some fine rock sculpture,

including the 56 m high Old Man of Stoer. Clashnessie Bay provided a campsite and a good drying wind.

Saturday's good milage and late stop gave us an excuse for a lie-in until 9 on Sunday and a bit of warmth and dryness was very welcome. Before 1400, however, we were surfing up the Sound of Handa to a lunchbreak on Handa Island. This is a bird sanctuary, and we watched with interest as visitors were carried across the Sound in a tiny ferry boat; some of them getting a good dousing during the landing. Walking back from the naturlists shelter, the ferryman mistook me for one of his passengers but I decided I preferred my own boat. Killer whales were reported off Handa on May 28; we were quite happy not to see any and even happier that they didn't see us.

Later that afternoon we passed the pink headland of Rubha Ruadh, and went on through the rather spectacular mouth of Loch Inchar. We could see exactly where Loch Bervie should branch off but failed to spot any sign of it until Kinlochbervie was suddenly revealed, a complete herring fishing port hidden in the hillside. The perfection of the place was slightly marred by the amount of rubbish floating around, mainly fishboxes: there were hundreds of them, floating around and washed up on the shore. Does no-one collect them, even for firewood? Perhaps the wooden fishbox is now valueless due to its impending replacement by the garish blue plastic type. It will be a sad day for the sea canoeist when he can no longer find a fishbox to make a fire, provide camp furniture or shelter for his stove.

We made a last visit to a bar, one of those big empty drinking rooms favoured in the north. Tension was beginning to mount: tomorrow came the assault on the 'summit' - Big 'W' himself.

The 0625 forecast was favourable; variable 4 or less, rain at times. We were already up - the tides here cannot be ignored and dictated an 8 o'clock start. Mist heightened the atmosphere and a little adrenalin was beginning to flow as we launched. A few fishboxes drifted folormly out of Loch Bervie to see us off.

We made good speed up the coast as if the weather might break at any minute; up past Am Balg Island, the impossibly-standing stack of Am Bhuachaille, and Sandwood Bay. Cape Wrath mentioned in hushed tones throughout the trip and described on a post-card as a 'grim bulwark against the Atlantic storms' was himself guarded by a series of grim headlands looming one by one through the mist. From time to time we passed a fishbox - also making the trip.

Cape Wrath was rounded at 11.00 in fairly quiet conditions but with the sense of exposure intense. The cliffs a little further east rise over 200 m and the whole coastline is battered, twisted and alien. After a quick break in a superb cove near Kearvaig we passed Stack Clo Kearvaig, with difficulty for here we ran into the west-going tidal eddy which is almost continuous here. Luckily we were able to cheat the tide in a narrow lane inshore - between adverse tide and suicide. Flocks of seabirds circled us - puffins and shags in numbers I'd never imagined, along with skuas, gannets, guillemots and many others. We spotted the occasional seal taking a jacuzzi in the violent broken water amongst the reefs.

Gradually the cliffs declined and we arrived on what may be a good surfing beach at Balnakeil Bay, and pitched our tents among a few intrepid tourists. Visiting the village (to buy our 'Grim Bulwark' post-cards) our eyes were caught by a familiar legend: "Kinlochbervie Fish Selling Co. - No Unauthorised Use" - after their long and perilous pilgrimage our old friends the fishboxes had at last found a happy home and employment in all kinds of unauthorised uses.

P.S. Mallaig is a terrible place to get back to by public transport!

I liked the equipment list in the Lundy Island report, so I've copied the idea:-)

<u>Member</u>	<u>Kayak</u>	<u>Tent</u>	<u>Sleeping Bag</u>	<u>etc.</u>
Angus Fitchett	Lindisfarne Voyager Mk I	Force 10 (Mk III) 1-man, nylon fly; cotton inner.	Blacks Icelandic	Gaz stove 'Autan' midge rep.
Nick Featherstone	Anas Acuta	Very cheap, very modified 1-man nylon	Blacks Icelandic	Optimus 8R petrol stove 'Autan', 'Secto stik'

From Dave Greet, Widey, Plymouth, Devon.

Dear John,

Thank you for another interesting newsletter, No. 44.

I was interested to read the article by Chris Pendlebury on 'Bivvi Sheets'. I've used a bivvi since I joined Her Majesty's Forces and slept in them in the tropics, European climate and the Arctic and I've always managed to be comfortable in them.

It was a natural progression to continue the use of a bivvi when I started canoeing some years ago. I have never yet used a tent on any camping trip or expedition. Chris Pendlebury recommended the use of a 'Gortex' bag as well. I've been using one for over a year now and strongly agree with him, a gortex bag and a bivvi have many more advantages than a tent, the first factor is bulk and weight. I can pack a bivvi, gortex bag and a sleeping bag into a package 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " X 7" X 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " with a weight of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., how many tent users can pack shelter and something to sleep in in all weathers into that size and weight?

Chris mentioned 3 disadvantages with a bivvi but I think that out of the three, only one was valid 100%, - midges. The other two can easily be got over by avoiding the use of canoes in bivvi construction. If a wall, rocky outcrop, or rising ground can be used in place of a second canoe, then it can also be used in place of a first canoe, leaving the canoes to be used to paddle from and back to the campsite.

Of the advantages, there were some that Chris didn't mention - most of them have a 'service leaning' but could be interesting to readers and bivvi users. They can be slept under (as a bivvi), in (as a survival bag) or on (I've made a hammock with mine when faced with rough ground), they can be used to carry large quantities of water in (from a supply to a campsite), they can be used as a make-shift stretcher to carry an injured person to 'civilisation' and medical help, and there are many more practical uses if the bivvi is a strong one. I've used a service 'poncho', bought from most Government Surplus Stores, and designed for use as a bivvi as well as something to wear if it rains. I find the space inside it is adequate, or, if I need to I can join two together (they are designed to join) and I have more space than I need, ideal for two people.

As Chris stated, a bivvi correctly erected has great stability, and, because of its low height, will often prove more superior than a tent in strong winds - add to this the small, light package it folds into, and the perfect answer for shelter on a canoeing trip becomes obvious.

Well, John, I hope this letter will be of some use to readers, and with the diagrams Chris produced, may even persuade some tent users to change over to a bivvi, - tents are great if you have a car boot to put them in!

Yours sincerely, Dave Greet.

* * * * *

LUNDY

The tidal streams flow strongly here:
I sit alone on this granite sanctuary
Watching the overfalls surge
Seeking to know their purpose, their direction.
Above, the clouds retreat. ("Wind southerly, force four")
And there is the illusion of remaining fixed,
Rooted, hard-fast, left behind -
As the sun goes away to the west.
("Visibility moderate to poor").

This rocky hardness, this end to fear
So stable, strong against the turbulent seas
Immovable in the currents, so long my goal.
- But rested now comes again the urge
For action, conflict, senses alive without protection
Chainless mind cresting waves ("Pressure falling, becoming cold")
Finding the very life of life
In seething surf or sea-torn caves.
("Depression deepening, Sole").

BOB LLEWELLYN.

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

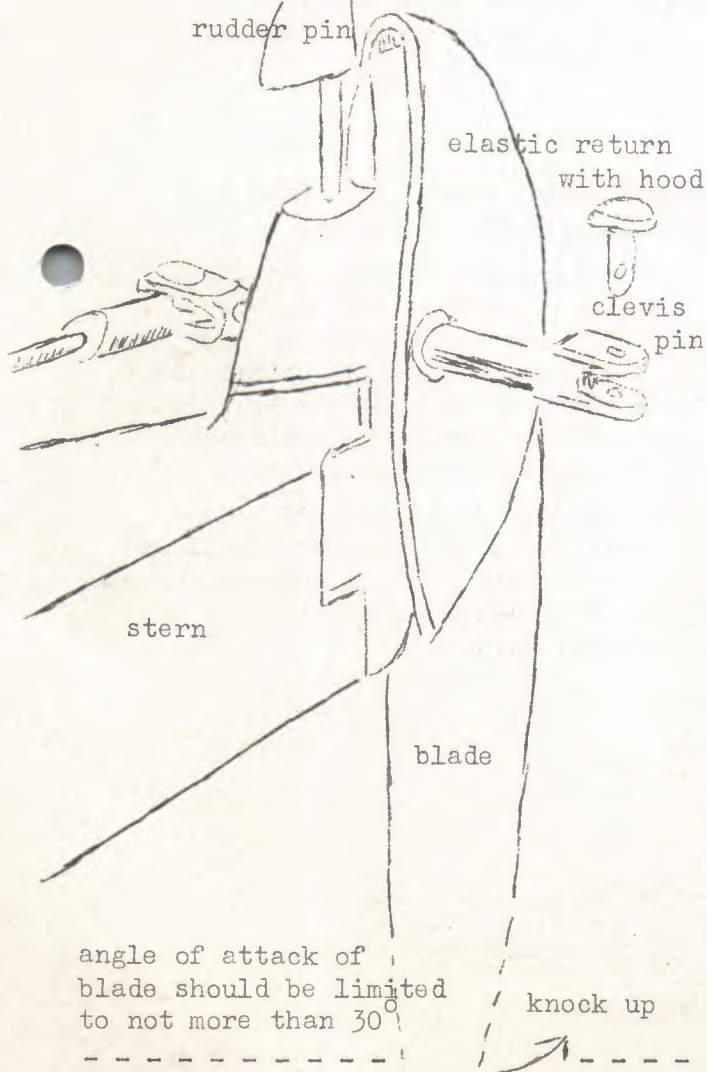
Dear John,

Aaaaaaaarrrrrrgggggh! It's too much. The latest ASKC newsletter has given me both a sense of helplessness and a reason for digging up some history. Thanks for both. I know I am because I am cogitating like mad. Enclosed please find the third newsletter of the Guild of Canoe Designers and Builders, which I was daft enough to try to run, dated September 1968. Do you like the drawings of an improved rudder system at the back? I designed and drew one, the single blade system, and Dick Gays, who had some great ideas, designed the other twin blade method. Refer to Brod Beech's item on the VCP rudder. You may think that there is some similarity in the two types. My inspiration was A.J. Marchaj's book, 'Sailing', pub Adlard Coles. I am sure that both Frank and Dick Goodman received copies of the newsletter at the time. Could it be that the idea, once planted, germinated lately but with such superb effect? The rudder is great, Frank.

Extract from third newsletter of Guild of Canoe Designers and Builders, Sept. '68

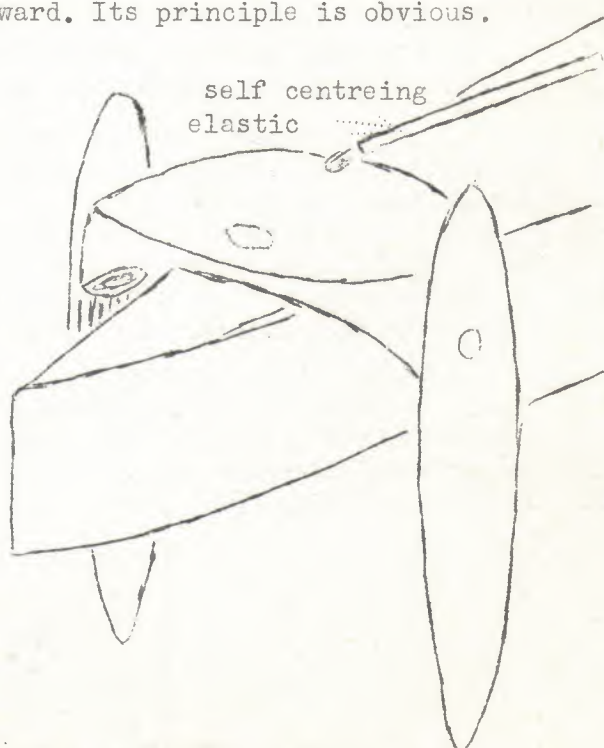
IDEA NUMBER NINE

Here comes another that has not yet been put into practice, although the principle is well proved. A.J. Marchaj, a Pole, did some research into hull forms for sailing boats. One of the boats that he used for research into centre boards and rudders was the International 10 Sq metre Sailing Canoe. The most efficient form for a rudder which gives maximum turning effect with least loss of forward movement is a narrow knife blade on the following principles. Aspect ratio, (profile) 1 : 5. Profile shape, parabola. Chord, 1 : 20. A rudder blade $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long would be $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and $1/12$ of an inch thick. Only steel would be strong enough at that lack of thickness. Stainless steel. A G.R.P. rudder blade could be made about three times the thickness without serious flexing. It would lose a little in efficiency. A stern hung rudder to be associated with the footrest (idea 7) could be made as follows. Note especially the high hinging point. By the way, this rudder would collect debris in canals. A different shape of blade with associated loss of efficiency would be necessary for weedy places.



IDEA NUMBER TEN

I showed the idea 9 to Dick Gays and he turned up the following idea which allows the blade to knock up both forward and backward. Its principle is obvious.



Note that this idea can be used for all kinds of experiments, including bow hung rudders. There may be some drag from twin blades. A variety of ideas may stem from this.

Alan's letter continued.....

Not only that but also your sketch map of Ramsey shows Bardsey translated. I know that the currents around Bardsey Sound are powerful, but to shift it all those miles south! Wow! The coast of Britain has tide races we have'nt dreamed of yet. Tectonics!

I'm not finished yet: Brod mentions that Eskimos never used rudders. He is right. What he does'nt mention is that they did use whacking great skegs, not for keeping a straight course so much as to retain balance when using the throw stick to hurl a harpoon off centre or when firing off centre with a twelve bore. The skeg worked as a damper.

As for the design of the Anas Acuta, mentioned by Duncan Winning, (good to see him in print again) the Anas Acuta was first made in plywood by Geoff Blackford. He told me way back (1969?) that he had taken its design from the picture in the Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America, pp 208/9, published 1964. The figure 201 shows a Disko Bay kayak collected by Wm M. Beebe, Jnr., 1882. From the several pictures shown Geoff was able to develop his own drawings. Ken Taylor may indeed have had a similar inspiration as he travelled to the States before that time and was working with Prof. Drever of St. Andrews Univers. and went to Igdlorssuit, Ubekendt Island in 1959. I have colour slides of that expedition.

Alan Byde.

From Robert Kincaid, Outward Bound Loch Bil.

Dear John,

I am now enjoying ruddered paddling having taken the drastic measures. I drilled holes obliquely through the deck with a drill the same size as the PVC tube, then with a file of the same size slowly filed the holes to be almost perfectly in line with the direction of the cables glued the PVC tubes in with araldite. Took them through the bulkheads then glassed them under the deck. The result is very neat, water tight and works well. The up/down line I threaded through the R.D.F.'s instead of a deck line. Result clean looking deck.

Good paddling, Robert Kincaid.

From Paul Coward, Lydlinch Common, Dorset.

Dear John,

I would be interested in some advice, either from yourself or from one of your readers, on allowing for side winds when planning a course,

On a recent paddle back from Lundy to Woolacombe we were out of sight of land for three hours and had a force 4 - 5 crosswind. We added 10° to our calculated course in an attempt to allow for this wind but still ended up blown four miles north of our destination - a distance that had to be recovered against tide and wind, adding a full hour to our crossing time. What is the best way to calculate the effects of a side wind of this nature? All suggestions would be most interesting. Wind effect is, I feel, the big unsolved problem in kayak navigation.

Also, have you seen the new American magazine 'Sea Kayaker' edited by John Dowd. I picked up an issue whilst in Maine this June. It seems an excellent publication full of pictures, reports and sensible editorial comment. (There was an article by Derek Hutchinson) Overseas subscription is £ 12.50 U.S. to: SEA KAYAKER MAGAZINE, 6050 SEAVIEW AVE., N.W., SEATTLE, W.A. 98107

