

Advanced Sea Kayak Club

• AN INTERNATIONAL SEA CANOEING CLUB OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED IN THIS ASPECT OF CANOEING

NEWSLETTER

AIMS

1. Promotion of sea canoeing
2. Communication between sea canoeists
3. Organisation of events and conferences
4. Safety and coaching



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From James Vermillion, Chugiak, Alaska.

Dear John,

Having just received the June issue ASKC newsletter, and reading Mr. Alan Byde's letter therein, I must add some additional historical information. Not to dispute Mr. Byde's research, nor of others holding similar views, but rather to add collective knowledge.

I shall abandon the term 'sea canoe' here in favour of 'kayak' which I hold to be of greater historical accuracy. Kayak is closer to the original 'ikyak' or 'ikyaadak' of the Unangan people who are known as Aleuts, inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands.

Who were the earliest kayakers? From the historical record the Aleut people (Unangan) were using their kayaks in 6463 BC, and when allowance is made for statistical uncertainty, then possibly as early as 8631 BC. Continuity of cultural evolution is supported continuously to the present, although kayaking is not presently practiced by the Aleuts.

The Aleuts of antiquity are known to have regularly hunted at sea, out of sight of land, and to have undertaken long voyages in the expansion of their cultural area. The Aleut people occupied the largest longitudinal distance (2,000 kilometres) of any single language and racial group of antiquity. They are known to have undertaken extraterritorial journeys, under Russian occupation, as far south as California in their kayaks.

Those interested are referred to the following works:

1. Okladnikov, A.P., and Vasilievsky, R.S. ON ALASKA AND THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. Novosibirsk, USSR: "Science" Publishing House, 1976.
2. Laughlin, Williams S. ALEUTS: SURVIVORS OF THE BERING LAND BRIDGE. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980

and also Bering, Vitus and his journals.

Now is the Irish Canoe of the 7th century AD the oldest form of sea going kayak? Is there documentation of kayak use by other circumpolar cultures prior to 8631 BC., or are the Aleut people the oldest users and developers of the kayak?

I eagerly await response from other ASKC members!

Best regards, Jim Vermillion.

From Phil Eccles; now living at Porthmadog, Gwynedd.

Dear John,

I write to you on two counts. The first to give you my new address here in N. Wales. The second is to tell you and others about my last visit to the St. Tudwal Islands off Abersoch.

Being new to the area Joan and I were keen to explore anything and everything, particularly the Lleyn Peninsula. Max suggested a trip to the St. Tudwal's Islands off Abersoch, then on to surf at Porth Ceiriad. Easy enough. Half way across to St. Tudwal's East, Joan remembers a tale her boss at work told her a few days previously. "There are some sheep on the island". Nothing strange about that, "And some deer". Sounds fishy deer on a small island of about five acres "And a mad woman". "What!" we exclaimed in unison. With interest running high we landed to have lunch. Max and I convinced Joan's leg was being heavily pulled. The last of the flapjack was being washed down with black coffee when a flock of sheep appeared on the skyline some 50 yards above us. "There's the sheep" said Max, "And there's the deer!" he added with astonishment as eight deer appeared just after the sheep. "And guess what" said Joan who was looking in the opposite direction, "There's the mad woman!" We looked sharply round and marching rapidly towards us came a comical looking figure clad in cloth jacket, tweed skirt and green wellies. Towing her along at an ungainly rate of knots was a slobbering barking Alsatian dog. It seemed like a good idea to test the miniflares! As soon as she was within ten yards of us the

woman began to shout at us, trying to make herself heard above the dog's barking. "Leave my island, leave at once!" It was folly to try to explain that we were below the High Water Springs mark the dog in particular seemed unimpressed by our knowledge of tidal movements.

Max, who I'm sure will one day be a diplomat in the Foreign Office, tried to rationalise. Joan attempted to explain that we'd soon be gone and I said the thing that was frightening her deer most and disturbing her peace was the dog.

We soon left and enjoyed the remainder of the trip, sighting many seals, razorbills, guilliemots and even some puffins.

So, for anyone else making this pleasant trip, don't expect a friendly welcome on Tudwal's East, or plan to camp there. But the trip itself is very pleasant, and Porth Ceriad provides some excellent surf.

All the Best, Phil Eccles.

From Jim Baguley, Nr. Coventry, W. Midlands.

Dear John,

.....

On average, we are not a very 'macho' lot in the Sea Group (although there is a Cross Channel history), and I am certainly not an advanced sea kayaker, but I suspect that many ASKC members are in a similar category. I therefore wonder if our events would be of interest to ASKC members.

Sea Group is one of the six sections of the CANOE CAMPING CLUB, which, itself, is a section of the CAMPING AND CARAVANNING CLUB. Membership of the latter is some £12, and membership of each section is some £3. The other sections are: Boating/Mountaineering/Camera/Lightweight camping/etc. The Canoe Camping Club's regional sections are Thames/Herts & East Anglia/West Country/Dee and North West/Vale of York. They have a varied programme, from canals to white water and sea; short to long; day trips to holidays.

Sea Group, of course, mainly uses the sea, with no really short or guaranteed flat water trips, but still does a variety of trips, largely around the South Coast.

The events programme is usually available by the Crystal Palace Exhibition and covers March to December. I can provide anyone with further information, although the secretary of both Canoe Camping Club and Sea Group is Jean Morgan, 86, Oaklands Ave., Watford, London. Tel: 0923 26834.

Jim.

From John Powell, Essex.

HOW NOT TO SEA CANOE

I am over 70, but when possible, greatly enjoy a sea trip with experts. Apart from the natural decrease in strength due to age I have never been an expert canoeist, so the presence of experts is essential.

I looked forward to the 1983 Plymouth - Eddystone trip with its carefully prepared and adequate safety boats.

I was with the large group in the Scouts quarters waiting for the briefing to start when a gentleman approximately 46 years of age, approached. After the usual small chat between strangers, he stated that he had a severe eye condition which compelled him to leave his job as a teacher as he had only very limited peripheral vision. He said he would not be able to see the other canoeists and so could we go together. I explained I was a poor and slow canoeist but he stated he was a strong swimmer if anything went wrong and that he understood the capsizing drill, so I said OK.

A little later a young lady approached. She stated she was almost new to sea canoeing and found she was always being left far in the rear of the group. I said, with some feeling, "Me too!" She asked if she could join myself and companion.

I agreed and spent the time before the start thinking we were the perfect example of an accident looking for somewhere to happen! An old man, an almost blind man and an inexperienced lady setting out on a sea trip! Let's hope the support craft know their job.

Long before we reached the Eddystone we met paddlers returning. When we arrived at the Lighthouse we seemed on our own. We had intended to eat our food before returning but after a quick drink, we set off back on what we hoped was the right course.

The sea was calm with only small waves. Half way back we picked up the support boat. The young lady was very tired and was taken with her canoe from the water.

We two continued and finished very late. We had greatly enjoyed the trip and were pleased to have been the accident which did NOT happen.

GETTING IT TOGETHER Taken from 'SEA KAYAKER'. Written by John Ince.

"WANTED: PADDLING PARTNER FOR A THREE WEEK TRIP TO...."

The trip sounds good, so you answer the ad. You load up your gear and away you go. For the next month, you are off in the wilderness with your new friend - 24 hours a day, day in day out, sharing tent, meals. But wait a minute - you barely know the person! What if he or she is a nerd?

Although solo paddling has its own rewards, paddling with others also has advantages. It is safer and provides access to a much greater array of equipment. Most importantly, it offers companionship and shared experience, which our modern, industrial culture so often denies us.

To find a paddling companion for the trip you want at the time you want to do it often involves looking beyond your friends. Ads in the local kayaking club or kayaking magazine or word-of-mouth are the most common ways of finding paddling partners.

Kayaking is an activity that often puts strangers together. In this column I will discuss some of the things I have learned about this.

Looking back on my paddling trips I realise that one of the most important factors determining whether the trip was good or bad was the quality of the relationships I enjoyed with the other paddlers. Yet, the PEOPLE FACTOR is something frequently overlooked in planning a trip.

It is difficult to determine whether you are going to get along with a person over the long haul on the basis of a phone call, letter or single meeting. Everyone will have his or her own way of 'sizing-up' another person. Aside from the obvious question of whether your personalities are compatible, I have found it valuable to determine at least one thing about your proposed paddling companion(s); their PADDLING PACE.

In my experience, paddlers fall into two general camps; those for whom the destination and covering territory is the journey's main purpose, and those for whom the enjoyment of each day is more important than a set goal. Neither camp is better or worse than the other, and it is entirely a matter of personal choice as to what the proper pace should be. So it is perhaps not terribly surprising that differences in such preferences are in fact the most common sources of conflict on paddling trips.

If you are planning a trip with a stranger, be sure to discuss the matter of paddling pace. It is far better to discover divergent preferences before a trip begins: this enables you to avoid a potentially dangerous parting of the ways in the wilderness by adjusting routings, time allocations and, most importantly, expectations.

A rule of thumb for calculating the pace of another paddler is to determine how many hours per day he or she plans to spend actually paddling en route. To do this, consider the total distance proposed, the number of days allotted for the trip (excluding rest days), and the average hourly rate that you will paddle (3 knots is a good average). If the journey contemplated by your proposed partner involves more than five hours a day paddling, chances are that he or she falls within the first camp - simply because spending more than five hours per day paddling leaves little time for exploring on shore, beachcombing, fishing, photography, etc. If you account for the time required each day for making camp, breaking camp and preparing food.

The other most important area of potential conflict between new paddling partners has

just been mentioned: FOOD. Sharing a communal meal is a great way to intergrate diverse paddling personalities. But without careful planning, food can also create many uncomfortable situations.

This happened to me on a trip with a couple who wanted to 'live-of-the-sea' and brought very little food along on a two-week journey. The arrangement was this: they provided the fresh fish, mussels, sea cucumbers and abalone, and I provided the 'city food' to complement theirs. Resentments arose when it became clear that performing their side of the bargain involved vastly more energy than mine. (It is certainly much easier to pull a meal out of a food bag than it is to pull it out of the sea).

Food that is not shared can also be a divisive force. It is hard not to get jealous of a partner who has just prepared a banquet when you happen to be eating seperately.

The only way to avoid this kind of problem is to fully discuss the food situation prior to the trip, intergrating eating patterns as much as possible, and clarifying when it will be 'every man for himself'.

Assuming you have found satisfactory paddling companions, the next thing to consider is how many of them you want on the journey.

The greater number of boats, the greater the variety of communal equipment that can be taken. A dutch oven or two-way radio that might be too bulky on a solo trip can more easily be carried when there are more boats involved. Similarly, meals tend to get more interesting the greater the number of hands preparing them: an exotic bouillabaisse beyond the energy of one or two cooks may be no problem at all for half a dozen. On the other hand, the larger the group, the more cumberosely it moves, and the more complicated decision-making becomes.

In my experience, three to five people is an optimum number.

We all have our own opinions as to the best gender mix within a group of paddlers. My only comment is that machoism has been known to affect even sea kayakers, and has in fact been the cause of a few 'close calls' I have experienced at sea. I have found that a rough balance in the gender mix tends to enhance safety.

So, good luck with your paddling partners. And if things go wrong, take heart. The worst that could happen is abandonment is a remote wilderness location without food tent or spouse.

SEA FEVER SEA FEVER

Tarrocks are the young of the kittiwakes. They have distinctive collars, banded tails and bands of mottled brown across their wings. Already there are plenty of them about, streaming in playful companies across the shelving sands of the bay and out over the boisterous tide. Their flight is as easy and as graceful as that of their parents.

Yet ledge and cranny in the cliffs beetling over the shore still contain those lime-washed cradles, mere bundles of matted grass and seaweed from which only days ago they were brought, fluttering and screaming, to the waters edge to learn the sea-craft of their kind.

When they have thus worked far out into the increasingly rough water to windward, they suddenly rise, as at a given signal, to streak back on the wings of the wind to their former starting place. Then they begin that steady patient quartering of the sea all over again.

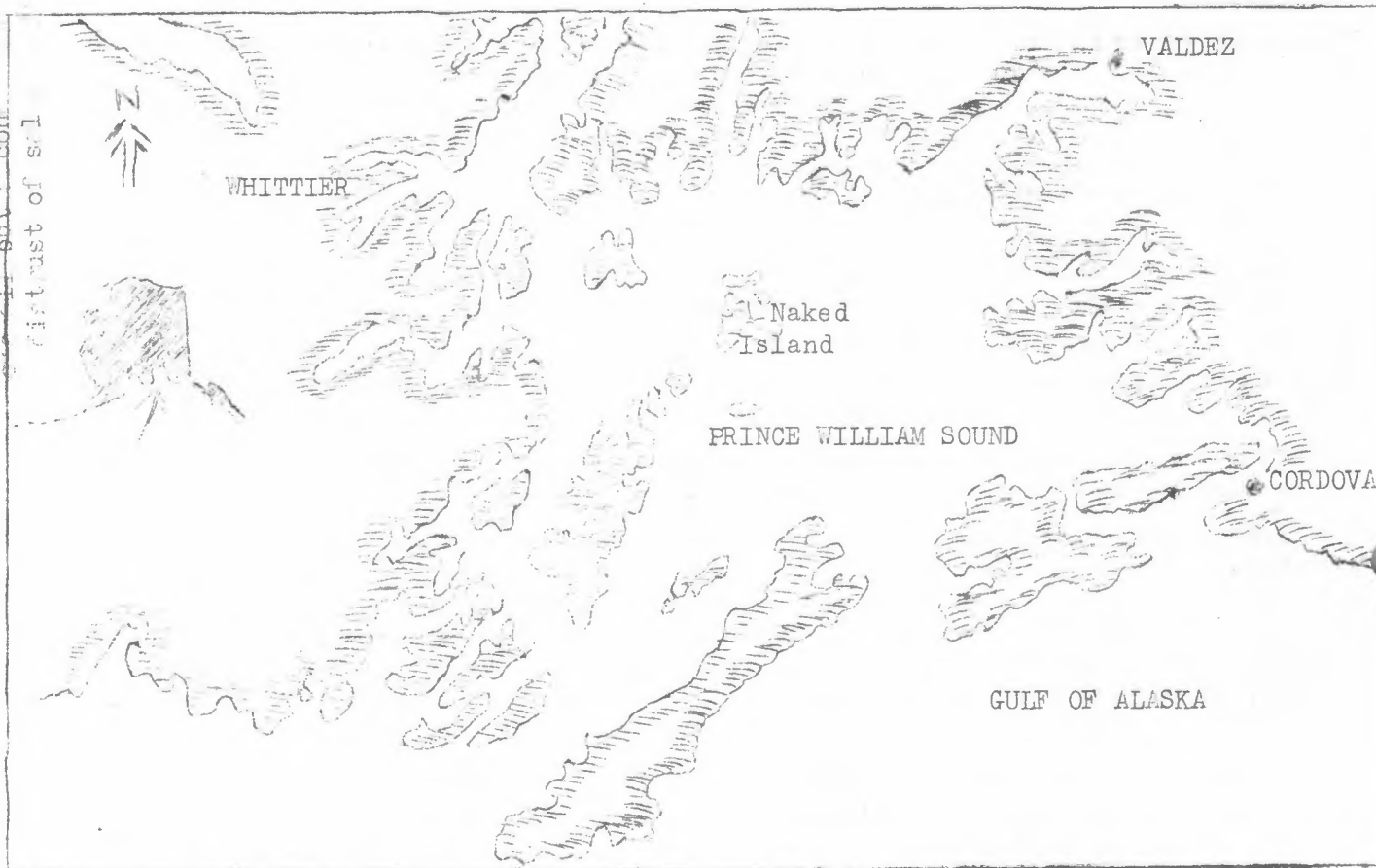
On those rollicking days when the white sea-chargers foam and curvet over the surging green of a flood tide, kittiwakes, young and old, are joined in their disciplined hunting forays by parties of herring gull. They mix peaceably enough. Yet a herring gull, 22 inches long (to a kittiwake's 16) and with a four foot stretch of wing, can sometimes seem conspicuously clumsy in such dainty company.

Only for a few weeks of the breeding season does a kittiwake come ashore to use its short black legs: but the average herring gull has become all but a confirmed land-lubber. And the difference shows. For he has an obvious distrust of salt water.

He will hover over the waves, stooping lowere and lower on uneasy wings with his long legs dangling nervously, before making any effort to seize a titbit from the top.

W. W. F. J. King

WITH THE BRITISH SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY TO ALASKA - SUMMER 1985
by John Ramwell



As with my Greenland expedition in 1983, this summer I accompanied the British Schools Exploring Society to Alaska for six weeks, returning only last week after an exciting and very enjoyable time.

The British Schools Exploring Society exists to encourage and enable school children of 17 and 18 years of age to visit and explore remote wilderness areas abroad. It is usually a case of many applying but only 100 being accepted. They are first told that they must raise a substantial contribution towards the cost of the expedition; that they must equip themselves with a long list of gear and know how to use it. They are told that they will be taking part in a serious scientific programme as well as having the opportunity to take part in adventure activities.

Twenty leaders are chosen by the Chief Leader who, this year was Dr. John Cohen, a G.P. from London. Because kayaking was to be included on the list of expedition activities, John invited me to take charge of this aspect which included being responsible for the procurement of all the necessary equipment (- this in itself led to a few days earlier this year being spent in Alaska whilst I set about this task -). I was asked to get the help of a further two canoeists and Noel Smith, one of the young expeditioners from Greenland '83, and Keith Maslen, an old friend from Derbyshire, agreed to provide this help.

The original plan was that we should paddle on the Copper River assisting with the collection of scientific data (eg sediments from the river-bed) while at the same time giving the young people the opportunity of canoeing in this wild and beautiful area.

In the event the river proved too fast, too difficult and therefore too dangerous for the relatively inexperienced young people. My kayaking companions and I found this out when we reconnoitred sixty miles of the Copper River in just over 7 hours! This single kayak journey must rate as one of the most exciting trips I have had for a very long time. Through narrow steep sided gorges with the water running fast and broken. Here at home we would call this 'white water kayaking'. This

would be a misnomer on the Copper River as it is a glacial melt river and is so thick with sedimentation that it takes on a thick dirty grey appearance which is too opaque to allow normal reading of the water in order to determine the best way ahead. Eagles flew overhead and several times we were startled by bear and moose as they stood by the river.

Once we had entered the river at a really wild and desolate spot called COPPER CENTRE, we were totally committed to completing the journey to our base camp at CHITINA, some 60 miles down stream. The banks of the river were so inhospitable, the current so fast, an absence of any habitation and any form of tracks along the route, all meant that once on the water, there was no easy way off.

Having decided we could not take the young people on the Copper River, we had to consider a contingency plan. Our eventual plan meant breaking away from the main B.S.E.S. base camp and setting up our own at a place called Valdez (see map) some 200 miles away from the Copper River and located on the coast at the head of Prince William Sound which, itself forms part of the Gulf of Alaska.

Apart from the wild and beautiful country - snow capped mountains, waterfalls tumbling thousands of feet, abundant wild and marine life, the friendliness of the local people and the fact that it is the termination of the Alaska Pipe Line, Valdez is famous for it's rainfall - 30 feet a year! I think that most of it fell whilst we were there. The Rain Festival in Valdez begins January 1st and ends December 31st!!

We spent nearly three weeks at Valdez and during this time we took groups of young people, who were bussed out from the B.S.E.S. base camp, on two or three day kayaking trips. The highlight of each trip was the visit to SHOUP GLACIER. This lay at the end of a four mile long fjord. Suddenly you turned a corner and there opened up a vista which took your breath away. The glacier appeared from the top of the mountains and ran gracefully down 4,000 feet to the sea. The face of the glacier was approachable by kayak but this could be a dangerous place to be as it is very much an active glacier as was evidenced by the bergs and ice-floes floating slowly away from the face.

Seal lay on the floes and could be closely approached before the 'sentry' took sight of us creeping up on them, when they would quickly slide into the freezing blue water. A Kittiwake colony on a nearby island completed a picture of awesome beauty. I used to get satisfaction from watching the faces of the young people as we paddled into this wonderland of nature.

The highlight of the expedition has to be the final paddle out across Prince William Sound. We had selected the best and the most enthusiastic paddlers. We were spoilt for choice and making the selection was difficult.

We left Valdez late one afternoon, appropriately enough in rain and low cloud. We camped on a small island some 7 miles along the coast. The next day dawned clear and sunny and this good weather endured for the remainder of the seven days as we travelled across the Sound to Whittier. At Whittier we would catch the train for Anchorage from where we would eventually fly home.

It was important to us that we should have good weather for this second day of our journey as we were to visit the famous COLUMBIA GLACIER. If Shoup Glacier was good, then Columbia Glacier was mind-bending. We forced our way through thick pack ice and bergs to get as close as we could to the head of this three mile long glacier. It was awesome. As we made our way closer and closer to the glacier face we saw many seal and a school of porpoises. The clicking of cameras and the sound of colliding ice floes filled the still air.

The fear of being trapped by the moving ice and the cold breeze coming off the glacier eventually drove us out to find our second camp site. We had had a remarkable day.

For seven days and six nights we enjoyed one of the best kayak journeys I have

ever experienced. A whole collection of memories floods back now that I come to write about it. The good weather; good company; fair breezes. Beautiful sun-sets with our camp fires blazing away. Night skies ablaze with stars (the fact that one usually admired them late at night having just crawled out of a warm sleeping bag, shivering in the 'buff' whilst being bitten by nocturnal mosquitos did rather take the edge off it slightly!) Picking Blueberries and cooking them into pies. Watching a family of three Black Bears feeding from a salmon choked river not more than fifty feet away. Having a Killer Whale blow and surface around us, seeing eagles, puffins, herons. Hearing moose and bear in the bush at night. These and many more special memories will live with us all, probably for the rest of our lives.

This report cannot be complete without recording the open-hearted friendliness of all the people we met in Chitina, Valdez, Whittier and Anchorage and at places along the way. Homes were thrown open to us, unstinting kindness and generosity were the order of the day with nothing wanted or expected in return.

Needless to say, most of us will no doubt return to Alaska, the 'Great Country'.

O SPIRIT OF THE NORTHERN SEA by Bill Baker.
Taken from Blue Water Paddler Summer/Fall 1985

She knew she had to own a kayak. Paddling was something she wanted to do and she didn't want to rely on the goodwill of her friends to lend her boats. There were a lot of kayaks to choose from: double or single, skinny and fast, or slow and stable? She'd heard kayakers talk about things like 'fish-form' and 'chine' and 'rocker'. These terms didn't mean much to her. It would be awfully nice to have some help in making the decision.

She looked up from the tidepool and off into the misty coast that disappeared in the fog. "O Sprrit of the Northern Sea, help me find the way to travel in your bosom!" She laughed out loud at herself. "What a cornball". What she really needed was a prayer to the spirit of the Savings and Loan to get her the money she needed to get her totally outfitted and take a six week paddling vacation. She laughed at herself again, broke into a chorus of the Everly Brothers' "All I got to do is Dream" and paddled towards home.

Three weeks later she was more determined than ever to own a kayak - and more confused than ever about what to buy. She had a box of literature from kayak manufacturers and had sought out every paddler she could find for advice. It was all very confusing.

She noticed that most of the catalogues sold not only sea kayaks but white water boats as well. She thought it odd that modern kayak design should have taken such a circuitious route. Kayaks originally used by Eskimo and Aleut paddlers were adopted for European purposes on rivers. Then the European designs were remodified for use on the ocean.

Back at home she read the same sentence in the magazine article three times without remembering what it said. She found herself staring at the steam pouring from the spout of the tea pot. It billowed up, half obscuring the mobile shells and drift wood that hung over her stove. She heard a noise.

"The tea kettle", she thought. The noise was different. Sort of clip-clip-clip like paddles dipping in the ocean. Then a voice. She sat up and looked around, tense but not afraid. The steam from the kettle billowed and became large. Her eyes grew big as she imagined a form coming from the mist. Then, it was'nt her imagination. It was a person. He became more solid and she saw an old native man dressed in skins and furs. She recognised his kamiks as being Eskimo in design. His flowing parka fanned out at the bottom like the traditional kayakers garb; a kamlika.

They stared at each other for a moment. She wanted to ask who the hell this guy thought he was. What was he doing here? She was astonished when the words came from her mouth, but she said, "Would you like some tea?" He smiled and nodded slowly.

"Who are you?"

"Inqua Igyax", he replied.

"Why are you here?"

"Someone called me. What do you want?"

It came to her. "Oh, I called you - but I didn't mean to - I mean it sounds silly. I want a boat I can paddle in harmony with the sea. But there are so many. Which should I choose?"

"No kayak for you. You should paddle an umiak like other women. That is the woman's boat".

She felt rage rise in her until her ears were hot.

"Look pal", she said, "this is 1985. So spare me your stone age morality. Can you help me or not?"

"You modern people have so much to learn. You have been so busy forgetting."

"My problem may seem slight to you. But there are so many kayaks to choose from among....."

"There are not so many", he cut her off, "only three or four really".

"Oh, no. There are at least twenty kinds. You may have been gone for a while, but they've been working on and improving designs since the 'Rob-Roy' in Victorian times. That's 50, maybe 100 years ago".

He started to laugh. He laughed so hard he lost his balance and fell over. He rolled on the floor and laughed until there were tears in his eyes. He stood up and backed toward the still boiling tea kettle.

"Improvements in 50 years? No, No, There have been no improvements in 5,000 years!"

"Oh, come now, Five thousand years is a long time. What do you mean, no improvements?"

He began to dissipate before her eyes. He was still chuckling.

"Hey, where are you going?" she asked.

"I will show you," he said as he became indistinguishable from the tea kettle steam.

She squatted on the floor of the store, sighting down the very long, straight keel of the bright yellow kayak. She felt someone looking over her shoulder. It was him.

"No improvements, eh?. I suppose this is'nt state of the art?" she said.

He grunted.

"But do I want it? There doesn't seem to be much room for anything very bulky. I know it's fast, but it takes some fancy paddling to manoeuvre and what do I do if I have to roll it?"

"Paddle with the skill of the kayakers of Kotzebue Sound who designed this kayak and you will have no problems. Go light and fast as they did".

"Kayak men?", she baited.

"They made and used kayaks just like this thousands of years ago. Since they hunted near their settlements they had little to carry and towed their catch. If you want to carry a lot do as they did, give it to the women to paddle in the umiak".

"O.K., so maybe this kayak design doesn't need improvement, but your view of women certainly does", she answered him. But he had moved off to wander around and look at the array of modern goods.

"Here's an improvement. In this boat I can stow a lot of gear, stay dry and I don't have to be too macho to paddle it", she said.

"Maybe you'd stay drier" he said, "if you'd wear a kamlika - a garment that is both of these", he said holding a paddle jacket in one hand and a neoprene spray skirt in the other. It is what the men of King Island and Nunivak Island wore then they paddled a kayak in past millenia just like the one you are looking at".

His own kamlika was cut quite loosely and came down to his knees. She could not help but notice some bulges beneath the garment.

"What have you got in there?"

"Nothing" he said over his shoulder as he quickly walked away.

Later as she looked at a double kayak she saw him again.

This time he started the conversation.

"Ah, the Aleut's kayak. They were able to hunt the large mammals with one man to paddle and one to harpoon the quarry".

"So this is an ancient design too, eh?"

He smiled and nodded. "You see, there are different types of kayaks. Each is better at doing a certain thing. But there have been no improvements". He turned and walked away. She noticed this time even more lumps beneath his kamlika.

She sat at home amidst the pile of brochures and catalogues. Everything in kayak design, it seemed, was indeed a trade off. And all the trade-offs had been worked out so long ago. But had there really been no improvements? She put on the tea kettle and sat down to think. Again she heard something. She was not surprised and sat calmly as Inua Igyax materialised. They watched each other for a while, silently. She offered him tea and they sipped quietly.

Finally he spoke. "There is nothing new. Your 'improvements' do not make one kayak suited for everything. Compromises simply result in a kayak that does nothing very well. In choosing, decide if you want to go light and fast like the Kotzebue kayakers, carry much meat like the Nunivak and King Island kayakers, or carry two people like the Aleutian kayakers".

She sighed. "I can't help but agree with you basically. The designs have 'nt changed much in 5,000 years. But kayakers have changed. For one thing, we are not all kayakers. Surely, there is something that is better now".

She looked up at him and noticed that his kamlika was bulging in the oddest places. Her curiosity peaked and she moved toward him with the tea pot, as if to offer him more to drink.

Suddenly she put down the tea pot and reached beneath his kamlika to see what he had there. To her amazement, roll after roll of grey duct tape fell out. He must have had twenty-five rolls of the stuff stashed away in there.

"What is this?" she demanded, holding one of the rolls to his face.

He laughed. "I am exposed. You have persevered and have learned the truth. I admit there is a major improvement".

"What are you talking about?"

"Your modern materials are by far superior to our skins. Even with the best of care we had to replace our kayak skins every year and a small puncture or tear meant days and days of repair work. Just one roll of this stuff could mean food and life for a family whose kayak had been damaged. And your fibreglass and plastic kayakers are much stronger and more durable. You can't improve the design - but I, Inua Igyax, will trade the secret of the ancients for the finest of your modern materials - duct tape!"

He began to laugh again. As he laughed he danced around the room picking up rolls of tape and stuffing them under his kamlika. He began to spin as he danced - faster and faster until all she saw was a blur that quickly dissipated. Again she was alone.

She looked on the floor at all the catalogues. In the centre of them all was one five hundred yard roll of duct tape. She picked it up and looked at it. Then she grinned. The grin became a chuckle and the chuckle a laugh. She laughed until she cried. Finally, she regained her composure, picked up her cheque book and walked out into the cloudy day. She was off to buy a brand new five thousand year old kayak.

And is it not the kayak that soothes your spirit?
When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall
find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.
When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see
that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight
Joy and sorrow are inseperable. Together they come, and when one sits
alone with you, the other is asleep on your bed. THE PROPHET.

General Correspondence

From Beatrice Dowd, SEA KAYAKER, Vancouver, Canada.

Dear John Ramwell,

About David Burch's article, THE KAYAK NAVIGATOR'S TRICK PLAY, which appeared in your Newsletter No. 51, August 1985.

- You forgot to quote your source: Sea Kayaker magazine, Vol 1 No. 3 (Winter 1984);
- You neglected to obtain David Burch's permission to use his material, which is copyrighted;
- You took some liberties with the copy.

As for Laura Deschner's article, WOMAN OVERBOARD, which you ran in the same Newsletter, No. 51, this also initially appeared in a North American publication (Pacific Yachting, I believe), and I hope you bothered to get Laura's permission for its use.

We do believe in cross-pollination and the sharing of knowledge and experience; however, there are a number of written and unwritten rules to abide by, both within the publishing fraternity and the paddling fraternity. These boil down to elementary courtesy, and we'd certainly encourage you to give this a try.

Regards,
Beatrice Dowd
Associate Editor.

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My reply

Dear Mrs Beatrice Dowd,

Many thanks for your letter of Sept 5th, 1985 which was received registered mail.

I understood that we had a reciprocal arrangement whereby I could extract copy from 'Sea Kayaker' and you could use material from the A.S.K.C. Newsletter.

Obviously I have been mistaken and at this juncture all I can do is to apologise and say that I shall not be repeating this error.

As you suggest, in future I shall try some elementary courtesy.

Regards,
John J. Ramwell.

A STORM OBSERVED by Joan Busby.

Great seas are running, great seas are running,
Ponderously pounding and hammering the sea wall;
Wild waves are breaking, clamorously breaking -
Relentless, explosive, white-dressed overall.

Breakers are surging, inexorably surging,
Rearing and leaping, tossing and curling;
White crests are creaming, foaming and streaming,
Eddies and backwash captive and swirling.

Huge waves are booming, deep-throatedly booming:
Furious drumfire of near-hurricane;
Deep, hollow tones, long-drawn like an organ,
Rise o'er the climax of tumult insane.

Galloping, galloping, thund'rously galloping,
Like the wild horsemen of Apocalypse;
Making their timeless assault on the coastlands,
Embracing them vice-like in merciless grips.

Mad wind is howling, dementedly shrieking,
Screaming high-pitched through storm-rent grey skies;
A banshee let loose is running the gamut
Of heaving green waters of titanic size.

Grey clouds are scudding, racing and ripping,
Torn by the gale to tatters and shreds;
Under the wide blue vault of the zenith,
A gap in them opens and instantly spreads.

The wind is alive, elementally alive,
Its cold, cruel anger overwhelms me;
Eternally moving, moaning and sighing,
Awesome in power, its spirit roams free.

Racked are the ships in the mountainous seas,
Shrouded in spray, but fleetingly seen;
Looming like ghosts through the great grey yonder,
Lashed by sharp hail and the raging sea gree.

Gulls in close phalanx, wheeling, nigh stalling,
Planing on air, and gliding o'er deeps;
Sometimes blown backwards, plaintively calling
To venturesome spirits skimming the steeps.

Thin cutting spray, knife-crested with hail,
Drenches my form, my face and my hair;
In the eye of the storm, and teeth of the gale,
I'm soaked to the skin, but what do I care?

Spellbound I stand, gripped by the drama
Of unfettered wave power running its course;
Deafened by roar of seas' mighty symphony -
Whence this unbounded, unquenchable force?

Born in the faraway deeps of the ocean -
Mother of tempest, and cradle of storm -
Rocking and rising, racing, augmenting,
O'er the vast fetch great swells gather form.

Onwards and shorebound, gaining momentum,
Whipped by the furies and primeval forces;
Rhythmically rolling, towering and toppling,
Prancing unbridled, advance the white horses.

Then, near the coastline, strikes the crescendo -
Pent forces of nature 'till now held their sway -
Shattered, swift-broken, they burst in the shallows,
Hurled high to heavens in torrents of spray.

Force 10 it must be, Force 10 it must be -
God help all sailors caught out in such seas
Spume twists and streaks in the depths of the troughs -
Beaufort Force 10, it surely must be!

My soul's strangely stirred, unbearably moved -
Witness to glory of nature's mad moods;
Chilled to the bone, yet chained to the vision,
Dear God, here indeed, Your great Spirit broods.

O why are the runes of my being so stirred,
With longing so painful, so tangibly framed?
I'd not have it otherwise: I would not be spared
The ache of my love for great beauty untamed.

This year I joined Nigel Dennis on two sea kayak expeditions which were to test not only my technical ability, but also in true expeditionary style, the 'inner man'.

South West Ireland in June; big seas blasted by wind, drenched by sea and rain, burnt by sun, isolated yet surrounded by thousands of sea birds. The noise of the elements contrasting to the silence of Caher, a Celtic burial island; drinking poteen around a peat fire and delving back into a bygone age on Inishturk. Guinness like a fantasy.

Southern Spain in October provided similar moments of idyllism, without the hostility of the elements, sleeping under the stars on deserted beaches, paddling in sunshine every day over clear, warm waters watching shoals of fish and the myriad of colours provided by rock and weed. Night paddling providing phosphorescence that was dazzling.

By now of course, the hard men will be throwing up into well worn polar gear: "Where's the attack by killer whales or the epic struggle against unchartered tide races?" In our case the 'inner man' was tested in a completely different way

The second week in Spain was to be spent at the mouth of the Med. with the chance to cross the Straits and explore Morocco, Gibraltar and Tarifa.

The journey down from Fuengirola provided a foretaste of events to come. A road block on the coast road to Gibraltar by machine gun carrying Spanish Police. How do you explain dried mixed herbs to a suspicious drug squad officer? Eventually we left Tarifa in the company of flying fish and porpoise in a choppy sea but with a clear, sunny sky and headed for Tangiers. A young albatross soared overhead and with a chronic lack of foresight, we regarded it as a good luck sign.

After a two hour crossing we pulled the boats onto a warm Moroccan beach watched with some amusement by pantalooned fishermen and the obligatory scabby dog. We discovered that wind and current had taken us about thirty miles east of Tangiers.

Tim started to show the first signs of sun-stroke (a bit of a blow to his ego as his father is Indian!). The rest of that day and all the following day was spent looking after him. On the third day he was still too ill for an open sea crossing or a flog into the wind to Ceuta; instead we decided to follow the wind to Tangiers.

Ten miles down the coast we pulled onto a beach and had a discussion with a worried military detachment (shades of 'Cockleshell Heros' perhaps). A taxi was ordered, the goats taken out but the flies left in, and we were taken to Tangiers.

Nobody seemed to know what to do with us. Our passports had no entry stamp or visa, both of which we were informed by various official sources outside Tangiers, were not required. We were passed from one department to another and then locked up for the night by the military. The next morning, fortified by bread, cheese and mint tea, we returned to Tangiers with our boats to catch the ferry home.

A delay at passport control, followed by a short car ride to the Chief of Narcotics in Tangiers and an even shorter trip to the cells. Immediate thoughts of the film, 'Midnight Express' prompted our request to be kept together. We need'nt have worried; the world and his uncle seemed to be in the bare, concrete cell with us. The experience is one we shall never forget. Once our belts, shoe laces and glasses were taken from us, we were lead through into a cell. The cell was split into two, the first being quite full. We decided to go into the second half of the cell where we settled down into a corner next to the cell bars. As the night wore on the cell filled until there was no more room for anyone to sleep. If it was necessary to visit the cess-pit in the corner your space was immediately occupied. The sewage was removed twice daily and a water tap switched on for five minutes every two hours. We spent a sleepless night amongst drug addicts, one of whom was convinced he could pull apart the bars wide enough to squeeze through. All the time was spent wondering how and when we were going to get out, and trying not to think about typhoid, cholera or dysentery.

The next day dawned with the Mullahs calling the faithful and the faithful receiving corporal punishment in the cell next door and calling for forgiveness. We were informed

that we were free to go but over the next six hours something cropped up to prevent our release; three times we were taken back. Continually in our minds was the nagging doubt that our kayaks in the harbour could be tampered with or could have drugs planted in them. Our actual release came five minutes before the final ferry departure of the day. The narcotics squad, for the first time, acted at speed, taking us into the harbour in the back of a landrover. We collected our boats and ran to the ferry - only to be stopped yet again by the police. For the second time in twentyfour hours the ferry left without us.

A sprint to the hydrofoil office - they would not accept Spanish pesetas; a faster sprint to the bank - it was shut; a desperate sprint back to the office to either plead or smash in teeth was the next choice before us. They would now accept pesetas but not the four boats. Two of us could catch the hydrofoil but the other two must remain with the boats until the next ferry. There was no choice to be made as to who went. I had to catch my plane back to England that night and Nigel was the only driver. So tickets were bought, good wishes to the two remaining and off on the hydrofoil. Tangiers, however, had not finished with us yet. As the hydrofoil started to pick up speed it broke down. As we pulled into the harbour and saw the police at the docking point, the childhood promises of "If I get out of this I will go to church every Sunday, etc." started to run through my brain.

In true Moroccan style two drivers with sledge hammers delicately repaired the damage and Spain was eventually reached in time.

The remaining two, Dirk and Tim, returned the next morning and endured the whole delaying procedure over again, eventually catching the last ferry out.

Throughout our detention the most terrifying aspect was the fact that we had no means of contact with the outside world - a situation which was even more forcibly brought home by the story behind two vehicles left in the Tangiers harbour carpark. One had been equipped to cross the desert and the other was a German green grocer van. We found out that the German police had the vehicle and the owner down as missing and the owner's wife had not heard from her husband for three years.

For a full expedition report contact Nigel Dennis at the Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Trearrdur Bay, Anglesey, N. Wales.

Expedition members: Nigel Dennis/Paul Robinson/Dirk Sturmer/Tim Jadwat.

Support crew in Spain: Joni Dennis/Dave Lawson.

Expedition kayaks: Nordkapps and Anasacuta.

* * * * *

Colin Lilley of 127, Waveney, Grove Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, (0442 - 217777) writes as follows:

Dear John,

EXPEDITION WANTED

During 1986 I am looking to join an extended sea kayak trip of about two weeks preferably abroad, but if not, somewhere about the British coast including Scotland, Ireland. I realise that Sea Canoeing is fairly insular in terms of expedition - and for good reason, but everyone has to make an effort to make contact! To date my experience of sea canoeing is as follows:

- 1982 - 6 day circumnavigation Isle of Wight
- 1983 - 2 week circumnavigation of Isle of Mull, Inner Hebrides.
- 1984 - 1 week circumnavigation of Isle of Jura and Scarba, Inner Hebrides.
- 1985 - 1 week Devon/Cornish coast.

I list these trips to give an idea of my experience to date. My own club has a number of sea canoeists but most are unable to escape for more than one week!

If anyone is willing to consider an extra person on a trip they might have planned for 1986 perhaps they could write to me at the above address letting me have some details re: duration, area, milage, etc.

Many thanks for producing the newsletter John, It provides a useful service. Hope to see you at the A.S.K.C. weekend.

Sincerely, Colin Lilley

Taken from Farley Mowat's book, PEOPLE OF THE DEER

These are but few of the pleasure which belong to the days of the Ihalmut. Their most lasting pleasures come from the labours of creation. Old Heckwaw at work on a new kayak is a man who is lost in his task. He knows the exquisite pleasure of creating a thing he can love. He knows all of the subtle joys of a fine craftsman as he delicately shapes the slender ribs of his craft. And it is only because he is in love with his labours that he can bring to completion this vessel, so light and graceful. He has only tools that he makes for himself. Using a bow-drill constructed of a small bow, a wooden rod and a fine point of metal, he drills tiny holes in the willow ribs of the kayak and laces them firmly to the frame with delicate lashings of rawhide. He prolongs the easy sweep of the little craft into a long fragile beak supported by longitudinal stringers composed of dozens of short sections of spruce which have been intricately mortised and fitted together to make a piece of the requisite length. When the kayak frame has been finished, it looks like the exquisitely delicate skeleton of a great fish. It is a true work of art.

Later, when it is covered with hides, Heckwaw paints a brilliant design on its decks with colours he grinds from stone and mixes with the fat of the deer. At length the kayak will take to the water. It will live under the hand of Old Heckwaw and give him joy.

The Ihalmut do not fill canvasses with their paintings, or inscribe figures on rocks, or carve figurines in clay or in stone, because in lives of the Ihalmut there is no room for the creation of objects of no practical value. What purpose is there in creating beautiful things if these must be abandoned when the family trek out over the Barrens?

But the artistic sense is present and strongly developed. It is strongly alive in their stories, and in the string figures, but they also use it in the construction of things which assist in their living and in these cases it is no less an art. The pleasure of the abstract creation is largely denied to them by the nature of the land, but they still know how to make beauty.

They know how to make beauty, and they also know how to enjoy it - for it is no uncommon thing to see an Ihalmut man squatting silently on a hill crest and watching, for hours at a time, the swift interplay of colours that sweep the sky at sunset and dawn. It is not unusual to see an Ihalmut pause for long minutes to watch the sleek beauty of a weasel or to stare into the brilliant heart of some miniscule flower. And these things are done quite unconsciously, too. There is no word for 'beauty' - as such - in their language; it needs no words in their hearts.

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The first day was a cloudless one in September. A steady south wind kept the glowing leaves of the dwarf willows in motion above the close cropped lichens. A raven circled lazily over the river called Inuit Ku, alone in the sweep of the sky, playing and rolling in the wind like a leaf caught in an updraft of warm air. The raven could see more than the man, yet Heckwaw knew without seeing that the tundra to the north had come alive and was moving.

Heckwaw climbed carefully into his nervous kayak from an overhanging ledge of rock at the river's edge. With a few quick strokes of the long, double-bladed paddle he sent the kayak clear of the slack water and into the swift and steady flow of the river. The south wind carried the smell of cattle and the rough banks of the river were scarred by deeply worn ruts like the trails thirsty cows leave on the muddy banks of placid woodland streams in the far south.

The kayak drifted on toward the mouth of the river, where it emptied into Katut Kamanik, and the stink of fresh manure grew heavier on the air. A strange waterline ran along the shores, a wide band of pure white, set between rock and water in sharp contrast to the brown stream and the black rocks. This was a belt of hair, a solid mat of hair shed in the river during the passage of the deer which had come that way in the space of a week.

A hundred yards short of the river mouth the steep banks abruptly subsided and the low rolling plains lay open to Heckwaw's gaze. Now he thrust against the paddle and the kayak fled into a backwater and hung there, rubbing its thin flanks on the edge of the rocks.

Heckwaw loosened the lashings of his deer spear and lifted the short-handled weapon until the arrow point just grazed his lips. Then he laid the spear across the thwart in front of him, satisfied that it was ready. He waited.

Three minutes, four then the deer came!

They seemed to emerge from the rocky banks of the river as if by some strange geological genesis. They came quickly to the edge of the water in single file, a fawn leading and agilely threading its way between the sullen shapes of the boulders.

Heckwaw moved no more than the rocks about him. He held the kayak in check against the overhang and watched steadily as the fawn reached the water and, behind it, a hundred deer crowded forward on the slope.

The fawn stopped by the edge of the river and grazed idly amongst the harsh sedges while the rest of the herd reached the bank and began to shoulder each other forward. Turning a startled look at the throng which pressed upon it, the fawn left the sedges and waded carefully out until the current caught it and swept it off its feet. Then, with head high, and its minute tail erect, it struck off bravely for the opposite shore.

Still Heckwaw did not move. He waited without motion until half of the deer had crossed, and the great bucks who were in the rear had entered the water. Then the kayak leaped into the swift current like a dog unleashed and in an instant it was among the swimming deer. With his left hand on the trailing paddle, Heckwaw steadied the fragile craft, and with his right hand he gripped the spear at its balance point - lifted it high - and made his first thrust.

His appearance had been so sudden that a few moments were taken before the river of deer dissolved into clots and fragments. There were perhaps fifty beasts in the river when Heckwaw appeared among them and these gave way to panic. Some swam for shore, and when their feet were almost on the rocks, turned about and thrashed back into the dangerous centre of the river. A doe plunged into eccentric circles while her fawn, borne under by the surging hooves of a group of bucks, was carried lifeless downstream. With their massive antlers raking the air, the bucks followed the drowned fawn towards the bay.

Heckwaw sent the kayak after the fleeing bucks. He closed with them in half a dozen strokes, but for the moment he made no effort to come into spear distance. Instead he held the herd as a good cowboy holds a herd of beeves, and the bucks swam ahead of him with all the strength they could muster, holding their heads half sideways to catch recurring glances out of white, staring eyes of the pursuing thing.

The hunter held them until a good mile of open bay separated them from safety on all sides and they were thrusting their weary bodies far beyond the river mouth. Then this went as Heckwaw wished. Without effort he drew abreast of the last buck in the line. It shook its head, swerved violently, but could not avoid the flickering thrust of the spear. The spear barely seemed to touch the beast before it was withdrawn, and the kayak was gone leaving the doomed buck to die.

Heckwaw killed with ease and dexterity of a trained butcher, but with far less effort. Soon the herd of fat bucks swam no more and the surface of the bay was free of all motion except where the wind ruffled the clear waters.

Finished with the bucks, Heckwaw turned back toward the river mouth. As he passed each of the floating deer he stopped to hook the foreleg cunningly behind the antlers in such a way that the deers nostrils were held above the water and the animal could not become waterlogged and sink. The breeze was rising and it was brisk enough to make the kayak bound like a live thing. Heckwaw bent forward over his flying paddle. Under the worn parka his muscles ebbed and flowed until the kayak slipped above the water's grip and skimmed upstream to the crossing place.

* * * * *

(All the facts contained herein are totally accurate).

DAY 1. Crossed to the Scilly Isles on the Scillonian III in a force 7. Brown paper bags everywhere. Missed our connection to Agnes and had to paddle across. Is this a taste of thing to come?

Day 2. Sunny, S.W. force 2. Decided to go for one of the expedition's main objectives, Bishop Rock Lighthouse. It beckoned to us invitingly across a sea littered with rocks. On passing the northern end of the Western Rocks irresponsible fishermen tried to abort the mission because of their inexperience of the local waters. Despite the arm waving and "them thar ledges" we pressed on into the west through a horrifying sea. The water became calmer near the Bishop, so did we. As a scenic diversion we decided to run back south of the Western Rocks, not quite so hairy. Lunched on Melledgan and headed back through the drizzle and the mist to the sonorous accompaniment of the Bishop's boom. Two blasts every minute and a half.

Day 3. Ears are better now. Spurred on by yesterday's achievements we headed out across the open sea to the Borrads, weatherbeaten rocky out-posts of the Scillies. The S.W. force 4 pushed us along. Inspected Mincarlo and Scilly Rock, crossed the inferno of Hell Bay before pushing round the north of Tresco. Entered the sheltered waters of New Grimsby Sound under the cover of a steady drizzle and took Cromwell's Castle. The defenders had fled before the ghastly apparitions from the sea! Headed home past the gibbet on Hangman's Isle.

Day 4. Radioed the Coastguard to advise them of our plans. Had we heard the forecast? Force 6 rising to 9. How do you explain to the Coastguard officer that your radio developed a violent crackle during Sole and Finisterre? Flew across to St. Mary's before a S.W. force 4. Looted and pillaged the town etc. Fortified ourselves in the 'Mermaid' and headed home into a force 6. What a time to discover a rudder pin has gone astray. Landed among rocks and fitted a spare. Resumed crossing in pouring rain. Coastguard worried by our absence and despatches a lookout. Poor chap stood on a cliff in the rain and heavy wind despite his 'flu.. Arrived and put the Coastguard at ease. Hereinafter we were referred to as 'the professional canoeists' on the island.

Day 5. Gale warnings everywhere. Savoured the delights of the island during the day. In the evening the wind had dropped to N.W. force 4. Unable to restrain ourselves any longer, we crossed the calm, sheltered waters to Annet. After the 1750 shipping forecast we decided to round off the day with a gentle run round Annet. Met the usual crashing waves on the corner of the island and turned S.W. The crashing surf failed to peter out and became mingled with terrifying clapotis enlivened by a huge swell. Threaded our way between the wild, white turbulence of the rocks both above and below the sea. As we turned S.E. we had the huge seas following us. The surfing was fun as we escaped through Hellweathers Neck.

Day 6. Force 6 - 7 forecast. Decided to stick to terra firma and give the Coastguard a rest. Crossed the sand bar to Gugh, keeping a careful eye on the surging waves and jumping at the right times. Climbed some rocks. The sea looked quite flat. It was strange the way the boats kept disappearing behind the pretty little white bits. Fortified by cream teas we returned home.

Day 7. Crossed the calm water of St. Mary's Road to the white, sandy beaches of Tresco. Skillfully evaded the excise man collecting landing fees. Wandered in amazement among the palm trees in the sub-tropical paradise of the abbey gardens. The steamy heat was unbearable. Headed across the green, sandy lagoons of New Grimsby Sound through the rough waters past Kettle, Golden Ball and Men-a-vaur towards Round Island. We knew that landing was forbidden but they must have spotted us through the thickening mist as we suddenly heard the boom of their cannons, four rounds every minute. Landed on St. Helen's instead and surveyed Round Island for a possible future assault.

Day 8. Ran to St. Mary's before a S.W. force 5. Pressed on through heavy seas to St. Martin's. Sure we saw a patch of sunshine. All the other ships seemed to be heading for St. Mary's. What did they know that we didn't? The forecast was S.W. force 6, occasional gale force 8. Continued north to St. Martin's, comforted by our bivvy tent in case we needed to stay the night. Sheltered among the dunes for a late lunch in the sunshine. Then battled our way back against a force 5 to St. Agnes. The crew was becoming mutinous; will have to cut their rations!

Day 9. Fled north from the relentless sun. Hid in some sand dunes for coffee. The unbearable heat drove us further north round St. Martin's and White Island. The sea lived up to the island's name. Ran between the two Mackerel Rocks in St. Martin's Bay. The ebb and surge of the waves formed an interesting whirlpool across half of the gap between them. We confined our interest to the other half. Headed out to the Eastern Isles. The bronze age settlement on Nornour offered a level of comfort which compared favourable with the average canoeist's campsite. The seals off Great Ganilly displayed much interest. Some were sleeping in the water, their nostrils flaring in synchronism with the waves. One followed us persistently, swimming on the surface. Was it seeing us off it's territory? The mist dropped as we reconnoitred the rest of the Eastern Islands. We gave the Irishman's Ledge a wide berth. From Little Gannick we set a compass course back to St. Mary's via the Boiler. Half way across we spotted the Scillonian scrape past the isolated danger mark on Crow Rock at great speed. It then did a sharp 'right hand down'. We saw the stern dig into the water and the bow rear above the waves as it headed straight for us. A lurid leer spread across the face of the Scillonian's captain as his parrot spat out a squirt of tobacco. We raced for the safety of the Hats south cardinal mark. We thought he was going to score fifty by ringing its bell, he came so close. Some of the passengers waved, we waved back. The captain's signal seemed ambiguous. Headed home through the mist steering 230 degrees.

Day 10. The booming of the Bishop kept us awake all morning. Set out to finish off the Scillies. Headed south and rounded Horse Point into a S.E. force 2. Paddled through lumpy clapotis. There were fewer cliff walkers now, but then we were'nt looking at the coast as much. A landing craft, flying the blue and white divers flag, seemed to fancy our canoes as it upped anchor and raced after us through the big seas. We slid between the rocks into sheltered water in a bay for rolling practice. More rolling practice and half paddle rolls on the way back. This time the tide was just right for us to cut off the detour round Tins Walbert and Burnt Island, two rock outcrops barring the way to the campsite, by darting across the barely submerged rocks straight into the campsite bay.

Day 11. Packed and crossed to St. Mary's. Boarded the Scillonian and hoped the captain would'nt recognise us. And so we headed back across the sunny Atlantic to the wild white water turbulence of the automatic washing machine.

SEA GROUP'S DORSET COAST TRIPS 29th and 30th JUNE 1985
by Jim Baguley, West Midlands.

The group was myself as leader, Caroline Pennington, Ted Backhouse, Jeff Halford, Mike Hennigan, a capable newcomer, Roger Pratt, an experienced friend from Leamington Canoe Club, and for one day owing to pressure of other things, John and Jean Morgan.

Boats were two each Nordkapps, Atlantics and Stip Yaks, an Islander Expedition and a Sea Tiger.

We used Lightfoot's farm at Hordle, near New Milton; run down and with basic facilities, but peaceful, adequate and 'free and easy'. I gave up trying to find the two water taps at midnight on Friday, and found them to be rather obscurely placed, the following day.

Saturday, 29th June.

The plan was to launch at Mudeford Harbour at 9.00am, paddle West along the coast, past Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth and Poole Harbour mouth, to Studland Bay (or Swanage, or Anvil Point), and back straight across Poole Bay.

The forecast was force 4/5, SW, becoming force 3. In practise, we had force 3/4 SW against us going, and force 4 with us coming back, cool and with intermittent sunshine, i.e. quite good for this year!

It was quite lumpy going past Hengistbury Head, as would be expected with wind against tide, and choppy along the coast, with little tidal help, as had been expected. There were few holidaymaker 'grockles' on the beach, and no nudists at Studland Bay - it being a nudist beach. We were just able to go over the training bank at the West of Poole Harhour, to Studland Bay at 12.45, with the low tide; meeting a mass of canoeists from Newbury, and stayed there for lunch, with Jeff taking his customary swim.

Caroline and Roger had not seen the Old Harry cliffs and rocks before, and Mike and I wanted to see them again, so we went to them and back, while the others waited. The vertical pillars of limestone, and holes in the cliffs are worth a look.

We had expected to be going back along the coast, since Jean had felt a bit seasick, and John's back had been playing up, but a discussion in our absence had come to the conclusion that the eight mile crossing, three miles off shore, would be all right. We set off back at 2.00 pm, and, as the fetch from Studland's protection increased, so did the waves, until there was a fair, but manageable, following sea. We arrived back at 5.00 pm, as planned, completing a 22 mile trip for some, and a 26 mile trip for others.

In the evening, we had a bit of a problem finding a suitable open hostelry for a meal in Lymington, possibly because the 'Round the Isle of Wight Yacht Race' was on; but I recollected having had this problem before. Afterwards we found a suitable bar, on a first floor, overlooking the harbour and it's 'floating gin-palaces'.

Sunday 30th June.

The plan was to launch from Lepe Beach at 9.00 am, paddle diagonally west across the Solent, along the north coast of the Isle of Wight, past Yarmouth and the slight overfalls and tide race of Hurst Point, through the Needles, for lunch at Scratchells Bay, just round the corner, on the south side (or to Freshwater) and back.

The forecast was force 3/4 variable, but we had flat calm, with mist rolling over the top of the cliffs next to the Needles, and brilliant sunshine most of the time, i.e. a fantastic day for this year!

We had a peaceful paddle to the Needles. At this point I created some excitement by having a diabetic hypo! I had started to have the delusion that my boat was weighted on the port side and was trying to capsize me and I simply collapsed that way. Caroline and Roger promptly had me back in the boat and to Scratchells Bay for some much needed food. I have not had a hypo on the water before (or a proper one at all) but had not been well recently. I guess that a fresh diabetic regime, after years of good control and the delay of lunch from 6.00 am breakfast (with organising the trip) led to being too low on food. I think that the lesson for the future is not just to pop the odd extra peice of chocolate in, but to do tests just before a trip to determine if blood sugar is low. I bore you with the details but it is possible that another diabetic is reading this.

We had a long peaceful lunch, from 12 to 2.30 pm, sun bathing, swimming etc in the brilliant sunshine trap of the bay, since the timing had been based on going to Freshwater and going back past Scratchells Bay at 3.30 pm. The energetic Mike went on to Freshwater and picked the rest of us up on his way back past.

For the trip back, Jeff and Caroline swapped Sea Tiger and Atlantic, as others had swapped at various times, but soon swapped back at Alum Bay. The overfalls at Hurst were good and bubbly, but not as interesting as hoped, since we were an hour earlier than planned. The rest of the trip back was a steady plod, and we arrived back at 5.30 pm instead of 6.30 pm, completing the 28 mile round trip (or 34 miles for one). This was not as onerous as it sounds as we had got our helpful tides right.

Summary.

The weather was very kind (for this year), I got my first planning of such a trip right, I think we all enjoyed it.

* * * * *

A.S.K.C. SHOP

- Ties @ £2.50 each
- Stickers @ 30 pence each
- Letter headed note paper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets.
- 4th National Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ 75 pence each
- 5th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £2.00 each
- T shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £3.50 each (in yellow or black)
- Sweat shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £6.50 each (in yellow or black)
- Information Sheet on Tides & Buoyage @ 75 pence each
- H.M.Coastguard Report on Safety @ 75 pence each
- Expedition Report on circumnavigation of Nunivak, Alaska @ 75 pence each.
- Cloth blazer badges @ £1.80 (available only from Dave Greet - 14, Ditten Court, Widey, Crownhill, Plymouth, Devon. PL5 6LP)
- Angmassalik Around Britian by Geoff Hunter @ £3.50 each
- The Little Kayak Book by John Brand @ £7.50
- American style sea canoeing T shirts in light blue @ £6.00 (state size)

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FIBRE GLASS REPAIRS by Joe Matuska (Joe is a kayak and paddle manufacturer based in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia)

So you're in a hurry to get home after a few hours on the water and don't want to be late for dinner again. You can't be bothered to tie down your boat as you normally do. It's only a few miles home. As a bus passes you in the opposite lane, your spirits sink as you watch your favourite kayak take off, complete with roof-rack, glide momentarily, bounce once and grind to an abrupt halt in the ditch. This kind of damage is called road rash and is characterised by gouges, holes worn all the way through the fibreglass, deep scatches and cracks, as well as a woefully deflated ego.

Or maybe you're not the seasoned paddler described above, but a novice. You've just purchased a new sea kayak and don't want to lose it. After cinching down the middle section of the kayak to the roofrack, you tie down the bow and stern to the bumpers and add a bungy cord here and there for good measure. CRACK! You've just wrapped your boat around the roofrack and onto the car hood.

Most sea kayaks are not damaged on the sea but while in transit. Road rash and roofrack damage may require professional help but most on-the-water damage is relatively minor and easily repaired.

Let's repair a simple crack caused by a rocky surf landing.

You will need the following:

1. A dry, ventilated well lighted area such as a garage or carport.
2. A small amount of fibreglass resin ($\frac{1}{2}$ litre) and catalyst (100ml), preferably vinyl ester resin. This resin bonds to cured fibreglass better than polyester resins and is available from most kayak manufacturers.
3. Fibreglass cloth (2 sq.ft.) for reinforcing the damaged area.
4. A sheet of sandpaper (60 grit wet & dry) for roughing up the patching area.
5. Acetone ($\frac{1}{2}$ litre) for cleaning up.
6. A 1" paint brush for spreading the resin.
7. Saran Wrap and a roll of tape to cover up the patch and give it a smooth finish.

Let's start.

Sand an area 2" out from the edge of the crack. If you boat is gel-coated, sand through the gel to the fibreglass underneath. Rough it up well. Cut three pieces of glass cloth; the first one should be 1" wide and 1" longer than the crack; the second, 2" wide and 2" longer than the crack; and the third just smaller than the sanded area.

Next mix up about 100 ml of resin with the appropriate amount of catalyst (see the table below). Centre the smallest pieces of cloth over the crack and saturate with resin. Centre the second smallest piece over the crack and saturate as before. finally, centre the largest piece of fibreglass cloth over the crack, tap it in place with your brush, using no extra resin. Cut a piece of Saran Wrap about four times as large as the patch and centre it over the wet fibreglass. Tape the corners, stretching the plastic film in all directions to tighten it down over the patch, removing all wrinkles. Using your fingers on top of the plastic film, push all air pockets to the edge of the patch. Once the resin has hardened, scrape the excess resin off the unsanded hull area. Your boat patch is now complete, perfectly smooth and structurally sound. Finishing your patch to the original cosmetic appearance is very difficult indeed. Gelcoats and resin pigments change colour with age and are just about impossible to match. If the damage is minor you can avoid having to deal with gelcoat by patching on the inside.

RESIN-TO-CATALYST RATIO VARIATIONS ACCORDING TO TEMPERATURE

	RESIN	CATALYST
45 to 55°F	100ml	2ml
	200ml	4ml
55 to 70°F	100ml	1ml
	200ml	2ml
70°F +	100ml	.75ml
	200ml	1.5ml

* * * * *

I've just read "13 Years Of Travel & Exploration in Alaska" by W.H.Pierce. This book was originally published in 1890. It's a superb story of the life and times of the early trappers or frontiersmen in what, even at this time, is a wild and unforgiving area. I particularly enjoyed Pierce's account of the frontiersmen and I have copied it below for you.

SUCH IS THE LIFE OF THE FRONTIERSMAN. He generally starts early in life - a mere boy - and often from an eastern home. His first experience will be in some of the near territories, where, if he engages in mining and is successful, he may return to his home with wealth, and, perhaps, settle down as a farmer or business man. He sees men making fortunes and pursuing this course; he thinks he will acquire one also. He is only waiting for a stroke of fortune. Years pass by and he does not succeed in getting it. He becomes a prospector for precious metals. He is unfortunate and does not strike anything of value. He goes farther west, thinking that in a new country his luck may change. More years pass by, and he is still a poor prospector. His hopes are aroused by every new excitement. All in vain. Fortune will not smile upon him. Perhaps he succeeds in accumulating a small fortune. He returns home with that, thinking he will settle down and be contented, but he is disappointed. The friends of his youth have gone, or changed. They are no longer boys or girls, but men and women with families. Many of his old associates are roaming the west, as he did, in search of fortune, and the old home is not what it used to be. His old familiar landmarks only bring up sad memories of the past. He is lonesome and unhappy, and he again returns to the frontier; this time with no intention of ever returning. He lives his life out on the frontier, braving every danger for the sake of excitement. And when his end comes he is rudely buried by honest hands; often in a grave that is never again visited by a white man. No tomb stone marks his resting place; no flowers grow upon his grave. But when the end of time comes he will be counted as good, or better, than those who have amassed millions by schemes which rob the poor and fill the world with misery.

On the coast I saw some of the parties who had preceded us in coming for the interior, and who, through their criminal carelessness, had destroyed our provisions and driven off the game by allowing their camp fires to get out in all directions. I could not refrain from telling them of the consequences of their careless conduct. I considered them to blame not only for our suffering and losses, but I also believed them to be the cause of the loss of our three unfortunate companions. Some of them spoke of it with feelings of regret, but others only laughed brutishly. But those who laughed were not miners. They were creatures from the slums and cities whose modes of life had hardened their feelings. Such a man as this is not the kind of a man who will stand up bravely in the days of danger and hardship. He is the first to give up; the first to become a burden to his less pretentious companions. You can hear him with his feet elevated near a bar room stove, bombastic and loud mouthed, recounting his deeds of bravery. But he must stop sometimes to take another dose of rot gut whisky to renew his courage; for here is where his deeds of bravery are done, at least all he ever does.

He sometimes mingles in a bar room fight. His courage there is great, especially so if he can find a small, weak or helplessly intoxicated man, with whom he can pick a quarrel. He will beat, kick and abuse him beyond description. He is so brave that, if others do not interfere he may beat the poor, helpless creature to death. He has done a brave thing, and why not? Has he not been drinking whisky all day? And if whisky is not good to raise the courage in a roughian I would like to know what it is good for. There is only one improvement he could make that would make him a still greater hero. He might take another drink and then go home and whip his wife or his mother. Of this class of men are those who laugh when I informed them of the consequences of their criminal neglect.

Now what is such a man in the presence of hardship or real danger? If there is hard labour to do he feigns sickness, and remains sick until it is done. If danger from crossing rivers he must have the safest place. If danger from indians he brings up, the rear unless he fears an attack from that direction. Then he gets in the middle, and, if any real fighting occurs, he is so cowardly that he cannot fight. If food is scarce he must have his full supply. No self denial there;

no sympathy for an unfortunate comrade. If a fellow miner meets with an accident and is crippled, he will not assist. If a comrade loses his provisions will spare him nothing, although others in the party will divide. But enough of such characters.

Now who is the man who does the work? Who meets and overcomes the dangers? He is the quiet, unassuming man. He never talks of his great deeds. In fact he hardly appears to know that he has done anything extraordinary. If you want to find him do not look for him in the bar room. If he is not busy mining or prospecting then look in the workshop; or, if it is Sunday, go to the church. There is where you will meet the right kind of man. He also attends the meetings of temperance societies and literary societies. These are the men to choose for companions on hard and dangerous trips. They can be relied upon. If you are sick they will do all they can to assist you. In the face of danger they do not shirk, but meet everything bravely, quietly and with determination. They do not exalt over a fallen foe. It is sad to think that we are ever obliged to take the life of a human being, even if it is only a low, degraded savage; but we sometimes must in defence of our own lives.

These men are not all members of the church, although some are, but all are men of good morals. If there is labour to be done all are willing and prompt. If food is scarce all are self denying. They are on the best of terms with each other. There is no profane language, nor coarse, brutal jokes. In the evening the conversation around the camp fire is pleasant and interesting. And although gruff in their manners they are honest. Many of them remember their creator, and return thanks to him nightly on retiring, for his never ceasing mercies. These are the men who explore the frontiers and pave the way for the future greatness of the country.

Although the large majority of frontiersmen are such as I have just described, there are enough of the other class to do much harm. They debauch and antagonise the natives, thus causing an almost continual warfare where ever the two races meet. God have mercy on them, for they have much to answer for.

* * * * *

EARLY NATIVE WHALING IN ALASKA

Although the only Alaskan whaling which survives today is that of the northern Eskimo, there were many Native whaling cults along the coasts before the coming of the whitemen. Baron von Wrangell reported that the Kenai and Tanaina Indians of Cook Inlet did not hunt whales, supposedly because they were inland people and only newly arrived at the coast. Although it is said that the Kenais had rock shelters around Kachemak Bay that were "secret places where the whalers used to boil out the human fat from which they made poison for their lance blades. Afterwards the bones had to be reassembled (probably with pitch) and fed regularly, otherwise the skeleton would pursue the whaler and devour him." Anthropologists speculate these rock shelters may well have been made by early Eskimos who preceded the Indians to this region and were forced out by them.

Farther south the majority of Tlingit Indians also abstained from whaling, perhaps because the forests were rich with game that was easier to obtain maybe. The only exception among the Tlingits were the people of Yakutat who did pursue the great whales. According to an account written in 1801 "the Yakutat Tlingits used a barbed bone harpoon with a long shaft. When they came to a spot where they last saw the whale dive, they slow up their kayaks and play slowly on the surface of the water with their paddles and as soon as the whale appears, the harpooner reaches for his harpoon and throws it at the monster."

Aleut hunting techniques were quite different from those in the north: "The pursuit of whales was encumbered with many observances and superstitions. The spear heads used in hunting the whale were greased with human fat, or portions of human bodies were tied to them, obtained from corpses found in burial caves. The hunters who obtained such charms were always fortunate in their pursuit but meet with untimely and painful deaths. All such objects had their own special properties and the whalers always kept them in their bidarkas."

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SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EXPEDITIONS

Exploration is supported more strongly than ever before by a large number of bodies, government and otherwise, providing a service to young and old expeditions alike. These organisations directly or indirectly support the expedition game through training and information, either from a scientific, adventurous or youth standpoint.

A selection of the more active follow in alphabetical order. These have been categorized by their association with SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (*) and ADVENTUROUS EXPLORATION (**)

If you are planning an expedition, early contact with the appropriate bodies is recommended. Write to the secretary concerned with a stamped self addressed envelope for details. Wait until you have received the necessary application forms before sending off further details of either yourself or your interests.

1. ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB (**) 4, Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, W.Yorks.
2. THE ALPINE CLUB (**) 74, South Audley Str., London W1
3. ARCHAEOLOGY ABROAD (*) 31/34, Gordon Sq., London, WC1H OPY
4. BACKPACKERS CLUB (**) 20, St. Michaels Rd., Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG3 4RP
5. BRATHAY EXPLORATION GROUP (*) (**) Brathay Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria
6. BREMEX (*) (**) 65, Forty Ave., Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 8JR
7. BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY (*) Madingley Rd., Cambridge, CB2 3IS
8. BRITISH CANOE UNION (**) 45/47, High Str., Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.
9. BRITISH CAVE RESEARCH ASS. (*) 2, Broadelms Close, Sheffield, S11 9ST
10. BRITISH MOUNTAINCLIMBING COUNCIL (**) Crawford Hse., Precinct Centre, Manchester.
11. BRITISH MUSEUM (NATURAL HISTORY) (*) Cromwell Rd., London, SW7 5BD
12. BRITISH SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY (*) (**) 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR
13. BRITISH SUB-AQUA CLUB (**) 16, Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H OQP
14. CENTRAL BUREAU FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND EXCHANGES (**) Seymour Mews House, London, W1H 9PE/ 3, Bruntsfield Cresc., Edinburgh, EH10 4HD/16, Malone Rd., Belfast, BT9 5BN
15. COMMONWEALTH YOUTH EXCHANGE COUNCIL (**) 18, Fleet Str., London, EC4Y 1AA
16. DRAKE FELLOWSHIP (**) 10, Trinity Sq., London, EC3P 3AX
17. DUKE EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME (**) 5, Prince Wales Terr., London, W8 5PG
18. EARTHWATCH RESEARCH EXPEDITIONS (*) (**) 31, Hyde Park Gate, London, SW7
19. ENDEAVOUR TRAINING (*) (**) 17, Glumangate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 1TX
20. EXPEDITION ADVISORY CENTRE (*) (**) R.G.S. 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR
21. FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL (*) (**) Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury.
22. GAP ACTIVITY PROJECTS, (*) (**) 2, South Drive, Leighton Pk Sch., Reading, Berks.
23. GIRL GUIDES ASS. (**) 17, Buckingham Palace Rd., London, SW1W OPT
24. GLOBETROTTERS CLUB (**) BCM/Roving, London, WC1N 3XX
25. INT. COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION (*) 219C, Huntingdon Rd., Cambridge, CB3 0DL
26. INST. OCEANOGRAPHIC SCIENCES (*) Wormley, Godalming, Surrey, GU18 5UB
27. INT. UNION CONSERVATION NATURE (*) World Conservation Centre, CH-1196, Gland, Switzerland
28. INT. LONG RIVER CANOEIST CLUB (**) 238, Birmingham Rd., Redditch, Worcs, B97 6EL
29. JOINT SERVICES EXPEDITION TRUST (*) c/o Ministry Defence, Main Building, London, SW1.
30. NAT. ASS. FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION (**) DMIHE, High Melton Site, Doncaster, DN5 7SZ

31. NAT. CAVING ASS. (*) (**) c/o Geography Dept., University Birmingham, B15 2TT
32. OCEAN YOUTH CLUB. (**) The Bus Station, South Str., Gosport, Hants, PO12 1EP
33. OPERATION RALBIGH(*) (**) Room 440, Old War Office Building, London, SW1
34. OUTWARD BOUND TRUST (**) 360, Oxford Str., London, W1
35. PLAS Y BRENIN NATIONAL OUTDOOR CENTRE (**) Capel Curig, Betwys Coed, Gwynedd.
36. PROJECT TRUST (**) Breacachadh Castle, Isle of Coll, Argyll, PA78 6TB
37. RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION (**) 1/5, Wandsworth Rd., London, SW8 2LJ
38. REGIONAL EXPLORATION SOCIETIES (*) (**) c/o Young Explorers Rust.
39. ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS (*) Inverleith Row, Edinburgh/Kew, Richmond, Surrey.
40. ROYAL ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY (*) 41, Queen's Gate, London, SW7 5HH
41. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY (*) 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR
42. ROYAL SOCIETY (*) 6, Carlton House Terr., London, SW1Y 5AG
43. SCHOOLS HLBRIDEAN SOCIETY (*) (**) 484, Linnet Drive, Chelmsford, Essex.
44. SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION SOCIETY (*) (**) Manor House, South Str., Wilton, Wilts.
45. SCOUT ASSOCIATION (**) Baden Powell House, Queen's Gate, London, SW7 5JS
46. SOCIETY FOR UNDERWATER TECHNOLOGY (*) 1, Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ
47. THE STA SCHOONERS (**) 2A, The Hard, Portsmouth, PO1 3PT
48. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION SOCIETIES/DEPT. (*) (**) c/o Expedition Advisory Centre.
49. WEXAS INTERNATIONAL (*) (**) 45, Brompton Rd., London, SW3 1DE
50. YOUNG EXPLORERS TRUST (*) (**) c/o R.G.S. 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR

From Graham Poulter Public Relations, Poulter House, 2, Burley Rd., Leeds, LS3 1NJ
 To the Secretary of the A.S.K.C.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of our client, FOX'S BISCUITS, we are keen to hear from any expedition requiring support during the next twelve months.

We have an open mind about the exact nature of this support, but would be particularly interested, for example, in supplying free of charge, quantities of a new range of highly nutritious cereal bars called NATURAL CRUNCH.

Made entirely from 100% natural ingredients, this is a healthy snack product. Each bar is light in weight and sealed in foil, thus withstanding extremes of temperature.

Should you be interested, a sample and nutritional data can be sent and the proposal discussed in more detail.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely, Brian Clark, Managing Director.

THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM REPORT
 A REFERENCE DOCUMENT FOR EXPEDITIONS
 BY SEA KAYAKISTS

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