

# NEWSLETTER of the



## Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO 72

MARCH 1989

J. J. Ramwell  
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NEWPORT  
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PO30 5PS

#### EDITORIAL

Crystal Palace Canoe Exhibition time again. How the years fly by. We are looking forward to this event and to meeting up with friends - hope to see you there.

As Chairman to the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee I attend several other meetings, the most notable being A.C.R.M.C. and Council. The over-riding problem is clearly one of access to inland waters; the news is very depressing and we must closely monitor any problems emerging that may effect us as sea kayakers. Harbour dues, military firing zones, sites of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Conservancy Council and the R.S.P.B. are all possible threats. Thanks to people like Paul Airey from North Wales and Nick Padwick from South Wales and many others from around the country we are, hopefully, on top of the situation. At this stage I would draw your attention to Duncan Winning's letter which I have reproduced in full.

I have received brochures from Franco Ferrero and Alan Rees which describe their itinerary for 1989 which offers interesting expedition opportunities. Both are members of the A.S.K.C. and their addresses are to be found in the Membership List. I recommend you send for their brochures.

I recently received my copy of 'BLAZING PADDLES' by Brian Wilson. Available from Brian at 7 Meadowbank, Edinburgh, EH8 8JE, at £12.95 plus £1.50 postage, this book tells of his solo expedition around Scotland by kayak. It is a superb book and must grace every sea paddlers library - I know you will enjoy it.

COASTAL ADVISORY SERVICE is still available in return for a stamped addressed envelope. If you are prepared to be a coastal advisor - no strings attached - let me have full name/address/area of coast you are able to advise on. There are people willing to help in all sorts of ways should you intend to explore new coastlines - find out more by sending me that envelope.

DICK RICHARDS, our favourite coastguard, has recently retired amid thank yous and recognition from B.C.U., Welsh Canoeing Association and Sea Touring Committee. The A.S.H.C. adds its voice to the good wishes and gratitude that accompany Dick into a long and happy retirement with his wife Margaret to Penn in Wolverhampton. Keep in touch Dick.

In Dick's place we warmly welcome Mike Osborne who attended the recent Sea Touring Committee meeting and the Canoe Exhibition and is clearly intent on taking over where Dick Richards left off. Mike's address is:-

H.M. Coastguard  
4th Floor, Havenbridge House  
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30 1HZ

SEA KAYAKING/B.C.U. COACHING SYMPOSIUM is the big event of 1989, book early to avoid disappointment.

Date - 6-7-8th OCTOBER 1989  
Venue - PLAS Y NRENIN, N. WALES  
Cost - £35.00

Application to Geoff Good, Coaching Director, British Canoe Union,  
Mapperley Hall, Lucknow Avenue, Nottingham NG3 5FA.

This is the first time that such a symposium is being staged as a joint venture and there is bound to be people, talks, demonstrations, etc., of real interest to us all - see you there.

The Expedition Advisory Centre at the Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR are holding an INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS SEMINAR on Saturday, 20th May 1989. Chaired by Nick Crane, this one day seminar is intended for adventurous travellers of any age who wish to take an extended independent journey to the remoter regions of the globe.

Experienced intrepid travellers have been invited to speak on many aspects of independent travel and together with selective advisors will be available for individual consultation during the breaks.

A variety of exhibitors and information desks will be set up to offer assistance with your travel plans from health risks, medical care and insurance to actually getting there!

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From: Duncan R. Winning, 22 Brisbane Glen Road, LARGS, Ayrshire KA30 8QX,  
Scotland. Tel. 0475 673787. 23rd January 1989

Dear John,

I am wearing two bonnets as I write to you tonight. The first as a sea canoeist and member of the A.S.C.C. resident on the west coast of Scotland. The second a Scottish Canoe Association one as the touring committee's representative on the access committee (our touring committee covers both sea and inland, kayak and canoe).

We are approaching another season of sea canoeing when we will have many visiting canoeists on our coastal waters, most of them on the west. Some will be from distant waters, the Americas or Europe but most will be from England. They will be of many standards of competency, using a variety of craft from open canoes and canvas covered kayaks to the latest in polyethelene.

However, they all will have one thing in common, they will all be guests in our country and we would like them to enjoy their canoeing, at whatever level.

There seems to be an impression that our west coast is a wilderness area where anything goes; it is not! It is a home for many people who earn their living in a great variety of ways. In canoeing terms it is our home canoeing water and has been for over a century. We have canoe clubs resident from Shetland in the north, Stornoway in the west and Campbeltown in the south.

All that we ask of our canoeing visitors is that they show the respect our land deserves. Of course most do, but of late some unfortunately have not!

This has caused the occasional access problem. So please, if you are faced with an access incident in our waters remain polite and send full details of the affair to the S.C.A. at the undernoted address or, if you prefer, direct to me.

If this sounds a bit over the top be assured that we are only trying to protect our long established canoeing heritage for the enjoyment of future generations.

Regards, Duncan

Scottish Canoe Association, Caledonia House, 1 Redheughs Rigg, South Gyle,  
Edinburgh, EH12 9DQ

From: Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club Newsletter

Heresy: the Experience by Peter J. Carter

Sea kayaking is one of those fields of human endeavour where there is no simplistic solution, no single right answer, to each of the problems of design, construction and technique. We do not have a situation where the answers are 'according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not' (Dan 6:8), and anyone attempting to pontificate<sup>1</sup>, especially on the basis of speculation, is on dangerous waters.

A number of the ideas I have discussed in previous issues, cockpit liners, fins, etc., have been described as 'dangerous'. Let me recount recent experience, from both here and overseas.

Retractable Fins

A Selkie owner writes (Ingleton 1988):

'With the fin extended the boat ran like it was on a rail. However it felt differently to the Nordkapp; the fin appears to directionally stabilise the boat quite unlike a boat with a long keel line. I feel that the wind, as well as waves, affects the handling of boats like the Selkie quite a lot and a fin can be used to counteract wind effect.

On a recent trip with 15-20 knot winds I paddled with about half the fin extended. Normally the Selkie would require sweeping every stroke to stop it turning into the wind. But with a fin the boat remained neutral, requiring only a very occasional course-correction stroke. It is quite a delight to put effort into being able to concentrate on forward paddling, and a lot less strain and effort.

Overall the installation of a fin in the Selkie has offered a worthwhile improvement in ease of paddling and control. The fin system is neat and mechanically simple which is important because it reduces its chance of failure.'

The Selkie is perhaps the least well behaved downwind of all the current generation of sea kayaks, badly needing some form of control and the other fin equipped Selkie owners report similar benefits. Our experience parallels that of overseas users (Prause and Fester 1987).

We have had one breakage so far, in a ground handling accident. The boat was a 10 year old Nordkapp which rolled off a workstand when left unattended. The fin snapped and there was no damage to the hull or case. Epoxy resin is used to install fins into existing boats, because we recognise the possibility of delamination in older craft. The only problems so far have been with small leaks past the pivot bolt, a problem minimised by the use of O rings. Early minor problems with sand with the prototype have not been evident with production examples.

<sup>1</sup>The editor of this journal has to steer a careful course. On the one hand he must maintain a newsletter of interest to the club members, his first responsibility, while on the other, he must cater for the interests of readers across the country, across the world in fact. If I, or any other contributor, attempt to defame, misrepresent or ridicule another, or simply make unsubstantiated ex cathedra claims, the editor will rightly reject my contribution. Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club members can be proud of the fact that they have a respected journal that allows writers, especially non-members like myself, to discuss ideas that are often novel, perhaps controversial, in a rational manner. When we can do that we can all learn, and sea kayaking can develop. When ideas are simply dismissed on the basis of uninformed speculation progress ceases.

If you want to experiment and compare the effectiveness of fin and rudder, trim your boat for the conditions and then paddle for a minute or so with your eyes closed. A properly trimmed fin boat will yaw about a bit on the waves but hold its course without control input from the paddler. Is that true of rudder boats?

Sailing? We have people here who have always sailed quite happily without rudders<sup>1</sup>. The key to successful sailing is in the balance of the rig, and any lee or weather helm is a sign of drag. Eighty years ago Frederick Fenger was sailing his 'Yakaboo' quite happily without rudder, and his boat had a self draining cockpit too (Dowd 1981).

### Cockpit Liners

The current Voyager liner is in one piece, like the one shown on page 13 of the December 1987 issue, eliminating the joint beneath the seat, and the liner in the junior version is also a one piece type. Joining the deck and hull requires a bit more work with pole, but that has to be done anyway. Fitting footrests and the like is easier than in a side bulkhead boat because both inner and outer surfaces are accessible. Yakima type footrests should work well where boats are used by different paddlers.

What happens if a liner boat floods? We tried, with 30 / and then complete swamping. With 30 / the boat was still directionally stable, but was tippy. It was much the same completely swamped. Placement of buoyancy/gear beside the cockpit reduces the tippiness to an acceptable level. In contrast, the bulkhead boat completely lost directional stability with 20 / in the bow compartment, and would have been very interesting upwind with the aft compartment flooded. The two types are different, but roughly equivalent.

Overseas experience with the Sea Tiger confirms our own. The boat's codesigner, Nick Padwick, reports that the only holed example he knows of is 'one of the originals with a badly made seam' (Padwick 1988.) He also reports that he has '.... never been able to get the hull more than one third full of water . . .' because 'Being a completely sealed boat air has to get out before water can get in.' (Sea Tigers use VCP hatches, which do seal better than the DB hatch.)

What we might well find useful is an efficient method of removing water from flooded compartments. There are many recorded instances of kayaks with leaking joints, hatches and other holes, yet I cannot recall reading of any straightforward method, apart from opening the hatch and pumping or sponging, for dealing with the problem. (A flooded stern compartment was one of the factors leading to a forced landing on Kangaroo Island some year's back.) If someone wants an area for research, this would be a good one.

What happens if a liner boat is severely damaged? Alan Byde writes (Byde 1988).

'Pod craft snapped in half? Many examples among which I have pic of KW7 derivative in Brazil ... on Rio Claro. Weekend event, chap had entered an area of rockery and turbulence ... He slammed the bows of his kayak between two big bits of scenery, a rock and a hard place, and the front end sheared off as neatly as if sawn across. The point of severance was dead level with the front of the foot box ... he paddled the wreck to the side of the pool below the rapids and made an exit. It went better backwards once sheared off in front, but it went under some sort of control. The buoyancy of the footbox kept him up.'

<sup>1</sup>It's common for trainee dinghy sailors to be put to sea without their rudders so that they learn to control their craft by rig balance alone. The prime example of rudderless sailing is the sailboard.

Another example he cites is that of Nick Padwick:

'He then went to the River Wye at Bulth Rocks and in a semi-flood found himself stuck between two rocks, and the kayak parted into three pieces, the bit he was sitting in, and the front and back. He scooped up the remnants and carried them out, and remade the kayak which he was using as recently as two years ago.'

Admittedly, these and others Byde describes are of river accidents, but the same would be true at sea. Padwick himself has an interesting article in issue 66 of the Advanced Sea Kayak Club Newsletter, describing rescue methods for use with the Sea Tiger. His article makes a lot of sense, the more so because it is founded on considerable experience in heavy conditions.

Cockpit liners and side bulkheads do the same job, reduce the cockpit volume and strengthen the kayak centrally. Of the two, the liner has the minimum volume (and the maximum load space), is easier to build and causes no stress points on the hull. The disadvantages? There are no nooks and crannies for wedging small items into. That's easily overcome with a box beneath the deck, between the paddler's knees.

### Self Bailers

In most conditions people are finding that it takes between one and two minutes to empty conventional cockpits. We now have people taking the electric pumps out of their craft and replacing them with the RF-249 self bailer, with stainless steel vortex generator.

Two people have reported the same problem with newly fitted bailers: the seal can come loose and hold the flap valve closed. One paddler reached underneath the boat to free the flap. A smear of contact cement fixes it. Two of the original GRP plates were torn off, one by someone who didn't realise what it was and tried to remove what she thought was a 'foreign body' stuck to the bottom of the boat. The other came off when the boat was dragged backward across sand. The fix is two bolts instead of one. Others bore scratches continuous with those on the hull. There are no reported instances of hull damage. The only regular maintenance required is to check for sand and other debris.

Experience has shown that they work in all conditions, although of course the faster you go the faster they pump. Opening and closing is done one handed, and no-one has reported difficulties in the rough.

Self bailers in cockpit liners require a flexible seal between liner and hull. The present method, a pad of flexible material sealed with silicone, seems to work well enough, but I think more development is needed. A remote control bailer, connected by hose to the liner is a possibility, although it can be argued that bailers are unnecessary in liners.

### Dangers

Sea kayaking can never be perfectly safe: that is, after all, one of its attractions. The dangers of some things are acceptable, others are not. We prefer sea kayaks with bulkheads or liner/pod systems because the risks of leaking hatches are less than those of complete swampings of boats without bulkheads. We accept the risks of rudders and fins because the risks of fatigue induced by directional instability are greater.

There is a dangerous idea, and that is that we know everything. We do not. Sea kayaking is in a constant state of flux, as new ideas are devised and experimented with. Some of those ideas, like that of manual pumps, will fall

by the wayside. Others may well turn out to be breakthroughs. Innovation and discussion, not dogma and conservatism, are the way to progress.

#### References:

- Byde, A., Private correspondence April 1988  
Dowd, J., Sea Kayaking, Douglas and McIntyre 1981  
Ingleton, D., 'Retractable Fins' in Investigator Canoe Club Magazine May 1988  
Padwick, N., Private correspondence May 1988  
Praise, T. and Fester, W., 'Einziehbare Flosse' in Seekajak August 1987

#### Fishing from your kayak by Martin Meling

I have for many years been quite keen on fishing from my kayak, it can be good sport. I have been asked to pass on a few hints. Success at fishing is not difficult and depends basically on three things: (a) the right gear; (b) the right place and (c) the right time of year.

I often use live bait when fishing from my boat, especially for cod, but I only use artificial lures from the kayak. For the uninitiated, lures are anything on a hook that is designed to convince the poor fish that it is something edible. These are usually feathers or rubber eels, though I occasionally use a pirk if the quarry is cod. A pirk is a heavy lump of chrome pipe with a big treble hook on the bottom. They are very good lures to use for cod but they have a tendency to get snagged on the bottom which gives you a bit of a problem in a kayak. One solution is to use a "rotten bottom" a short piece of line of much less breaking strain than the main line to attach the treble to the pirk. Then if you do get snagged the line should snap easily and you will only lose the hook at least that's the theory. Of course if you get a really big fish on you may lose that as well (the biggest cod I have caught from my kayak was nine pounds and I can tell you it was quite a handful. The basic rig that I tend to use however is an 8oz lead with three rubber eels, red for preference, each on 4 inch leaders (see fig.1).

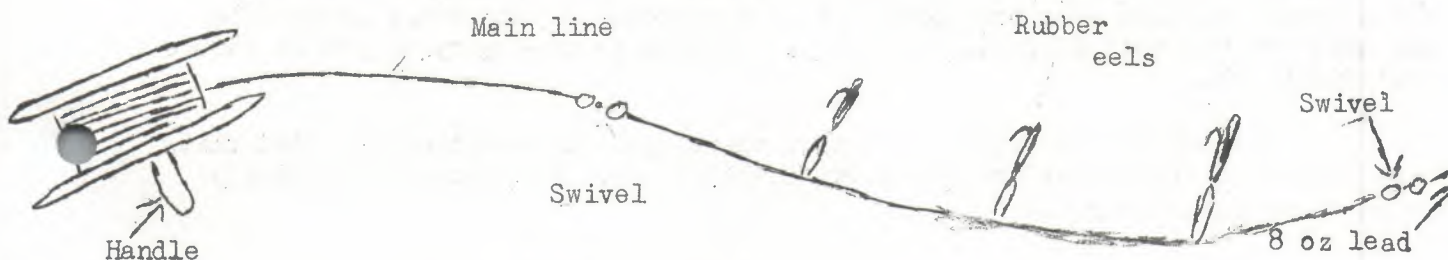
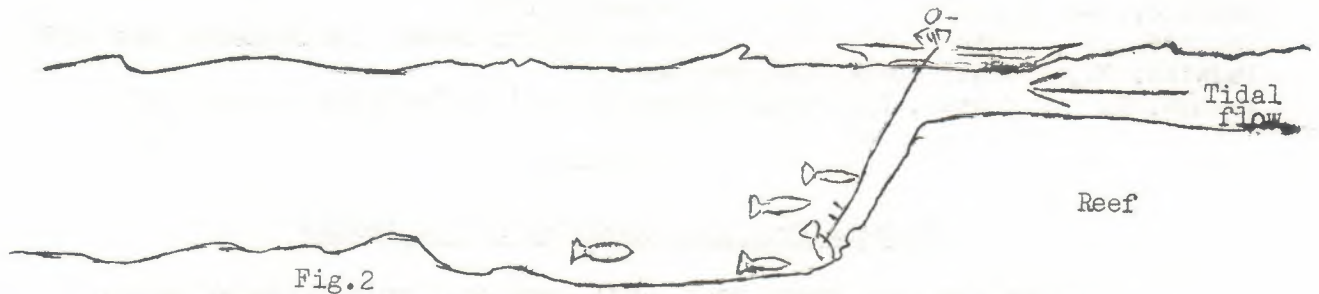


Fig.1

I use a hand line with about 70lb line because it's easier to handle and the trace at 20-15lb. When fishing for cod you need to drop the line to the bottom and then work the lures just above the sea bed. Cod tend to feed on the bottom and will often take the lure on the way up. Another advantage of fishing with artificials is that the fish usually bites aggressively and is impaled immediately. Retrieve your fish with a slow steady pull, don't be over anxious to get him to the surface. Getting the fish off the hook can sometimes be tricky and I always carry a club which anglers call a priest. It's also quite handy for helping you launch off the beach without getting your hands wet.

Now about the right place. This is the most difficult to get right. Always talk to the locals who I have always found most keen to display their knowledge especially when you tell them you're only here for a day and that you'll be fishing from your canoe. Most of them think you're made and anyway, whatever their opinion of you, you are clearly no great threat to their fish

stocks. Underwater cliffs are often good spots to fish for cod, especially in the lee of the tidal stream. Two local spots that I have used successfully are just off the north pier at Tynemouth and the gullies either side of the leading marks at Cullercoats.



Further up the coast at Seahouses there are excellent grounds not too far offshore, to the south of the harbour from the red can buoy down to Beadness, best on a flood tide. I remember Eddie Frost and I catching enough fish here to feed a course of 25 at the Beal Centre. We are very fortunate on this coast as we have the cod with us most of the year round but the best time is June, July and August. The weather plays a crucial part and really you will find that you need quite calm conditions to have any chance at all. As soon as the wind is Force 3 or more you simply drift too fast for bottom fishing, though I have caught mackerel from my kayak in strong winds, but that's another technique and perhaps another article.

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From: Mike Osborne, District Controller, Yarmouth

By way of introduction find attached H.M. Coastguard canoeing casualty statistics for 1988.

As many of you probably realise Dick Richards has now retired from the Coastguard service and handed the H.M. Coastguard canoe liaison over to me. I had a very good hand over from Dick and as a canoeist myself fully appreciate the need to keep this liaison continuing. I hope to meet most of you at future AGM's/meetings.

In addition to these statistics there were 21 occasions when SAR units were called out to reports of canoeists in difficulty which were subsequently found to be false alarms.

Sadly one life was lost at Ormesby Broad, Suffolk, but all other injuries were of a minor nature and as in previous years mild hypothermia was the most common cause for canoeists being hospitalised.

Generally, those getting into difficulties proved to be either poorly equipped and trained or lacked the experience needed for sea canoeing. These points were highlighted in incident 27 off North Stack on 18th September, when 10 Scouts got into difficulties in tide rips.

Although not strictly speaking a 'casualty' I have included incident 24 in the statistics in order to give credit to the canoeist at Hope Cove who assisted a windsurfer in difficulties.

On the whole nother creditable year for sea canoeists with a noticeable drop in the number of incidents recorded.

I wish you all good paddling for 1989.



16	3 Jul	Peveril Ledge	SW4	Mod sea	Diving party rescued capsized canoeist. CG boat attended.
17	17 Jul	Great Orme	NW3	Slight sea	ILB rescued two capsized canoeists. CG in attendance.
18	23 Jul	Skegness	SW4	Slight sea	FV Dawn rescued a capsized canoeist. CG in attendance.
19	28 Jul	Budleigh Salterton	SW7	Heavy sea	Exmouth LB rescued one capsized canoeist, a second person made shore unaided. CG in attendance.
20	29 Jul	Sharpness	SW4	Mod sea	Full scale search by CG, HC and IRB's for a missing/overdue canoeist. Person found ashore safe and well after swimming ashore when his canoe broke up.
21	31 Jul	St Davids	SW3	Mod sea	999 call reported two capsized canoeists unable to regain their canoe. LB launched. HC scrambled, both located safely ashore. CG attended.
22	4 Aug	Port Eynon	SW5	Mod sea	Lifeguard reported a number of canoeists in difficulties. ILB and HC on scene, ILB rescued four persons. CG attended.
23	9 Aug	Penmon	SW2	Slight sea	Auxiliary CG sighted capsized canoeist. Rest of canoe party righted craft. ILB took male canoeist ashore.
24	19 Aug	Hope Core	SW6	Mod sea	Canoeist assisted windsurfer with a broken mast. CG attended and GPB escorted canoeist back to shore.
25	25 Aug	Barry Island	W6	Mod sea	FV 'Naomin of Flat Holm' rescued and landed a capsized canoeist. CG attended.
26	2 Sept	Walton	N1	Calm water	Extensive search of backwaters eventually found two overdue male teenage canoeists safe and well sheltering on a moored yacht. ILB, LB and CG attended.
27	18 Sept	North Stack	NW2	Mod sea	Ten Scout canoeists in difficulties in tide rips. Seven rescued by ILB, one by HC and two swam ashore. CG attended.
28	9 Oct	Christchurch	W9	Heavy sea	Female canoeist rescued by HC and taken to hospital suffering shock and hypothermia. Male canoeist rescued by sailing club safety boat.
29	18 Dec	Brownsman Island	NW8	Heavy sea	Longstone LH Keeper sighted four canoeists in adverse conditions. H/C located party who were then airlifted ashore. CG attended.

Abbreviations: CG - Coastguard; ILB - Inshore Lifeboat; LB - Offshore Lifeboat; H/C - Helicopter; FV - Fishing Vessel; IRB - Inshore Rescue Boat (non RNLI); SAR - Search and Rescue; LH - Lighthouse.

(Signed) Mike Osborne  
 District Controller  
 HM Coastguard  
 Great Yarmouth  
 HM Coastguard Canoe Liaison Officer - 13 January 1989

H.M. COASTGUARDINCIDENTS INVOLVING CANOEISTS AT SEA DURING 1988

1	5 Apl	Poole	NE6	Mod sea	Two 18 year old youths rescued from Poole Harbour by a passing pleasure craft. Taken to hospital suffering from slight hypothermia.
2	6 Apl	Ormsby Broad	NE6	Slight sea	CG, H/C and Police carried out a search and recovered a body of a 20 yr old male canoeist
3	12 Apl	St Davids	N2	Slight sea	999 report of capsized canoeist. H/C effected rescue of a 39 year old man. CG attended.
4	15 Apl	Gower	SE3	Slight sea	999 report from a teenager that he had rescued a 24 year old capsized canoeist with his surfboard. CG and ambulance attended.
5	22 Apl	Southsea	SE4	Slight sea	999 report of a capsized canoeist brought ashore by a sailboarder. ILB attended.
6	23 Apl	Ryde	E6	Mod sea	Ryde rescue boat rescued two capsized canoeists.
7	30 Apl	Firth of Forth	E4	Mod sea	MFV rescued 33 year old capsized canoeist from Newhaven Harbour. CG attended.
8	30 Apl	Ilfracombe	S5	Mod sea	Ilfracombe lifeboat escorted five canoeists from seawards into Ilfracombe in deteriorating weather conditions after being located by H/C
9	1 May	South Stack	SE6	Heavy sea	One canoeist rescued by H/C and his canoe recovered by LB in deteriorating weather conditions. CG in attendance.
10	1 May	Gower	SE4	Mod sea	999 report of one canoeist with another person clinging to the hull being washed seawards. Both made shore unaided but needed airlifting to hospital suffering from hypothermia. ILB and CG in attendance.
11	22 May	Skegness	E6	Mod sea	999 report of three overdue canoeists. CG located persons safe and well in deteriorating conditions.
12	29 May	Newgale	SW3	Mod sea	999 report of canoeist in difficulty H/C rescued 36 year old man and airlifted him to hospital suffering from exposure. CG and ILB also attended.
13	29 May	Ryde	W7	Heavy sea	Ryde rescue boat rescued four 10 year old canoeists who were in difficulties due to deteriorating weather conditions. CG and H/C also on scene.
14	5 Jun	Llanddwyn	NW2	Mod sea	CG and H/C located one canoeist ashore after capsizing and airlifted him to hospital for a check up.
15	15 Jun	Loch Long	NW2	Slight sea	Person in dinghy rescued a male canoeist who had capsized. ILB and CG attended.

From: Ian Ludlam, "Rowardennan", Gaitsgill, Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7AM

In June 1989 I intend canoeing round Jura, Scarba and some of the other smaller islands off the west coast of Scotland and I am looking for other sea canoeists to join me. I would be grateful if you would advertise the fact that I want partners on the trip in the next ASKC magazine. My telephone number is 06996 435.

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From: Sea Tiger, Quarry House, Colwinston, Cowbridge, South Glamorgan CF7 7NL  
Tel. Bridgend 0656 56580

An additional note on Sea Tiger safety

No kayak of any manufacture can be considered seaworthy if it has a leak, however small or insignificant it may be. Any leaks should be identified and repaired as soon as they appear. If a leak develops in the course of a trip the effect it has on performance will differ from kayak to kayak dependant upon its hull and deck shape, how it is fitted internally and the size and position of the leak. Unlike conventionally fitted kayaks the totally uniform and symmetrical distribution of the buoyancy in all conditions and the presence of the cockpit within the hull ensures the Sea Tiger will remain horizontal, stable and capable of being paddled. As with any other kayak if a major leak occurs directional control will eventually be lost although this is a very rare occurrence. With the Sea Tiger the remedy is simple, requires next to no effort even if the hull and the cockpit are both completely full of water. Just remove both hatch covers (which should be tied to the kayak to prevent loss), turn the boat upside down and perform a standard X (or H) rescue by pulling the stern of the Sea Tiger over the rescuing craft a foot at a time rocking the boat from side to side in the process. As soon as the water seal is broken at the rear hatch the fixed buoyancy in the bow ensures the water drains from the front hatch. At all stages almost all the weight of the water in the boat is taken by the sea and the kayak will be completely empty by the time it is half way across the rescuing boat. Turn the emptied boat over, replace the hatch covers, repair the leak, get in and go. The whole process is as easy as a conventional rescue, even with a general purpose boat only partly full of water. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THIS SIMPLE RESCUE IS TRIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY ALL SEA TIGER OWNERS.

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From Ian Cammish, 18, Norman Crescent, Filey, North Yorkshire, YO14 9AP  
Telephone No (0723) 514569

Dear John,

I wondered if any of your members might be interested in any of the following items of equipment I have for sale:

- W.W. SALOPETTES X.L. never used £20.00
- GAYBO T.S. OLYMP RED/BLUE GLITTER DECK, YELLOW HULL, FITTED DECK LINES  
BACK STRAP, TOWING CLEAT, 4 AIR BAGS, STRONG CONSTRUCTION AND INCLUDING  
W.W. TWINSEAL DECK, ALMOST NEW ....£190.00
- KOBER MOLDAU PADDLES R.H., AS NEW....£25.00
- W.W. CAG, GOOD CONDITION ...£20.00
- PROTEC HELMET X.L. NEVER USED ...£20.00
- LONG JOHN WETSUIT, AS NEW...£25.00
- HARISHOK BOUYANCY AID, GOOD CONDITION ...£15.00
- BLACKS VENTILE TUNNEL TENT, NEVER USED ...£70.00

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## KAYAK HUNTING

Kayak hunting on the open sea is the most skilled and demanding form of hunting practiced by human beings. Kayak hunting was as important to the Aleut way of life as hunting in all its other forms has been for the successful evolution of the human species. Sea-mammal hunting placed the Aleuts squarely in the centre of a high-reward area that at the same time carried high risks. The personal rewards for successful whaling or sea otter hunting were considerable, both in this world and in the next. In this world they included acquisition of a large food and fabricational supply and social recognition that extended to an excellent funeral with provisions for a good life in the future world. More than this, there was a joy or pleasure in kayaking that sustained the hunter through incredibly adverse circumstances as well as the tedium of long voyages. Kayaking provided a time for thinking and for composing songs and stories. The goodness of fit between the Aleut and the kayak has been recorded in the aphorism that it was not possible to tell whether the kayak was made for the Aleut or the Aleut for the kayak.

There were many forms of hunting, but the most rewarding and dangerous kind was hunting on the open sea, out of sight of land, where navigational skills as well as physical prowess and accurate knowledge of animal behaviour were prerequisites to success. A mishap to the skin boat or a sudden storm has drowned many skilled hunters. Each trip was a final examination for which the participants were placed in only one of two classes, the quick and the dead. Adaptation to the sea profoundly affected the psychology of the Aleuts, it quickened their minds and conferred rewards for mental acuity, and it exterminated the incompetents.

Hunting is a complex organisation of behaviour, and not simply a "subsistence technique". It includes considerably more than the dramatic killing of a sea lion or harpooning a whale. The methods of despatch or killing are only a small, but necessary, part of the process. Man evolved as a hunter, he spent over 99 per cent of his species' history as a hunter, and he spread over the entire habitable area of the world as a hunter. If man had not made the decisive step from a vegetarian diet to a meat diet, he would still be in the jungle with gorillas and chimpanzees, eating leaves and bamboo shoots. That man achieved a world wide distribution while still a hunter reflects the enormous universality of this kind of behavioural adaptation. The major prerequisite is a knowledge of animal behaviour and a knowledge of the appropriate behaviours in response. Harpoons, spears, arrows and clubs are not usually effective at long ranges. The native hunter has to invest more in tracking and approach in order to use his killing weapons. In marked contrast, modern trophy hunters can dispense with a knowledge of animal behaviour and stalking. Using a high powered rifle with telescopic sights, an animal can be shot at a distance of more than 300 metres and helicopters or light planes simplify the location and approach to game. Thus, the simplicity of technology of early man and primitive peoples does not mean a simple mind; it simply means that they invested more heavily in appropriate training and knowledge that lead up to the killing.

In hunting societies generally, and most prominently in Aleut society, hunting was an organising activity with multitudinous physiological, psychological, social, genetic and intellectual ramifications. These factors, which are often partitioned into separate disciplinary divisions, are of course unified in the individual. In recognition of their natural unity and their developmental continuity in the individual, they may be termed biobehavioural elements.

The total biobehavioural configuration of hunting includes the ethological training of children to be skilled observers of animal behaviour, as well as that of other humans. The process includes five distinguishable

components, each with special training and technological correlates: (1) childhood programming; (2) scanning or collecting information; (3) stalking and pursuing game; (4) immobilizing or killing game; and (5) retrieving game. Viewed against this schedule, Aleut kayak hunting has many unique elements and very broad ramifications in the total Aleut culture.

#### THE KAYAK AND HUNTING EQUIPMENT

The supreme technological achievement of the Aleut was his kayak and the skilful use of this light skin boat represented a well-scheduled child training programme. In Aleut the kayak is termed an ikyak or ikyaadak, the latter meaning a small or little umiak and a word derived from the old word for an umiak, ik. The most commonly used term, however, is baidarka, a Siberian word introduced by the Russians. The large open skin boat known in Eskimo as umiak was also designed by a Russian word, baidarka, or simply baidar in two of its most commonly rendered forms. The chiton was also termed a baidarka. The origin of the kayak cannot be determined, although the above terminology suggests that it is a derivative of an open and more cumbersome skin boat. It was probably invented by ancestral Aleuts who enjoyed the necessary prerequisites: open water, wood, the use of some kind of skin covered boat, and the motivation of tangible and immediate rewards for a waterproof boat that could be launched through the surf and used in heavy seas. Archeological evidence, however, is lacking. The inventory of faunal remains at Chaluka and Anangula village suggests that it was already in use at the beginning of that phase of Aleut occupation. The pelagic albatross, fur seal and whale bones point to the early use of kayaks by prehistorical Aleuts.

There were many kinds of kayaks, more variant forms were used by the Aleuts than by any other people who used kayaks. They were made in one-hatch, two-hatch, and, after the arrival of the Russians, in three-hatch forms. The administrator occupied the middle hatch. They varied greatly in length. A small one-hatch form was as short as 13 feet (4 metres) in length and weighed only 30 pounds (13.6 kilograms). In all Aleutian forms the bow is cleft and assumes either an erect position or a horizontal position. The horizontal cleft is known to be only an Aleutian style and it appears to have disappeared from use during the Russian period. The vertical cleft form became dominant for both single- and two-hatch variations. This bow form is explicitly stated to emulate a sea otter characteristically lying on its back, its arms in front of its head. The shouldered stern is made only by Aleuts.

An ingenious part of the basic design was the use of a two- or a three-piece keelson, the main member running down the bottom inside length of the boat. The three pieces were joined with angle cuts and firmly lashed together with baleen. A shim of polished ivory or bone might be inserted at the matching faces of the three pieces to prevent wear on the wood and to improve flexion. This invention provided a high degree of flexibility and prevented fracture of the main element. It facilitated traversing waves as well as resisting the extreme pounding in running through heavy surf and breakers.

The cover was usually made of sea lion skins, four or five for a small kayak. All the ribs and long members, hatchcombing, and bow piece were neatly rounded, polished and often painted red. The ribs were steamed, for which one interesting technique was to place the rib side a length of kelp. Aleut kayak makers also held the rib in their teeth while they shaped it for proper curvature. The skins were cut to shape by men, sewn by women, pulled over the frame by the men, and the remaining long slit behind the hatch was sewn or laced by men. The skin was usually replaced each year, although it could be taken off and stored separately from the skeleton if the baidarka was left on a rack during the winter. The women who did the sewing had to bind their hair

and be especially careful not to get hair in a seam, for a sea lion would bite out that portion and cause the death of the hunter.

Paddles were double-bladed and sharply pointed. Occasionally, the points were tipped with ivory so that the paddle could be used as a lance. Other things essential to the boat included a drip skirt that was permanently attached to the hatchcombing. The hunter pulled it up under his arms and tightened it with a drawstring. A single suspender passed over the left shoulder of right handed men. Ballast stones carried inside the boat were named 'sea lion stones' after the stones carried in the stomachs of sea lions.

Inside the baidarka, the hunter usually had a bailing tube, a long cigar-shaped wooden tube made of two half-tubes lashed together. With this, the hunter could suck up water inside the boat by holding the tube between his legs, then covering the lower end with one finger. He then emptied the water in the tube over the side of the kayak with one hand. Patching material was always included for sharp rocks and irascible sea lions were a constant hazard. A flat rock or piece of wood was inserted between the skin and the frame of the kayak to plug small holes. A little blubber was usually available for daubing and could be used for many other purposes. In cold weather, if the hunter needed to make a fire on snow or very wet ground, he could take the dry grass from inside his boots, pound it into the blubber and start a fire with wet wood.

Accidents overtook the hunters in spite of the best precautions. Most serious at sea was a large tear or fracture of the frame with too large a hole to plug. Hunters usually had a partner (a formalized relationship) with whom they hunted on overnight trips or under hazardous conditions. The partner picked up the sinking hunter and carried him to shore. If a two-hatch baidarka sank, the two hunters joined hands over the deck of the rescuing craft for the trip to shore. If caught in the open sea by a williwaw or a prolonged storm, several hunters would lash their baidarkas together, thus forming a multihulled craft with sufficient flexibility to ride out a storm that would sink a single boat. This technique was also employed by a raiding party. They hoped to be mistaken for a floating kelp bed long enough to get close enough to make an effective landing. The Aleuts have a word specifically for this kind of cluster of kayaks.

The personal dress of the hunter consisted first of his waterproof parka (kam-leika), made of intestine or throat (esophagus). Its hood could be tightened about the face with a drawstring. The sleeves could be made watertight by bands tied on the outside around the wrists. Trousers and boots were optional. Although the baidarka itself and the kamleika were tastefully decorated with small feathers of eagles, cormorants, or puffins sewn into the seams and with fast pigments, the crowning glory of the hunter were his visor and his hat. Most commonly worn was the wood visor, beautifully painted with curvilinear designs in different colours and with the long whiskers of the sea lion projecting from the rear or from the offarm side. A little ivory figure sometimes sat on the long sloping bill, and a twisted sinew line passed under the chin. The more elaborate full hat came to a peak and more often had hunting scenes depicted on its surface as well as painted designs. A long, carved ivory wing passed vertically up both sides of the hat, and the seam at the rear was covered with a strip of bone or ivory (Ivanov, 1928). These hats were made of wood, scraped thin, polished and steamed into shape. Because of their length, a small wooden forehead rest was often glued on the inner surface. The visor and the full hat performed the valuable functions of keeping water out of the hunter's eyes and of reducing glare on sunny days. The full hat was used for ceremonial occasions, such as for formal visits between villages.

A belt knife of chipped stone hafted in a wood or bone handle was standard equipment on land or sea. A water bottle was carried on the deck

behind the hatch. Some were made of wood, others from the pericardium (the external tissue sheathing the heart) of a sea lion or a brown bear. An Amulet was, of course, a necessity.

Hunting gear was carried on the deck, tucked securely under thongs that ran across the deck, both fore and aft. The throwing board (atlat is a commonly used term) was an extension of the arm, a carefully carved and painted wood billet that enabled harpoons and spears to be cast much farther than could be done by the arm alone. The butt of the spear was engaged by an ivory pin set in a shallow channel. Since it could be used with one hand, the other hand could be used to steady the baidarka by holding the paddle with one blade in the water. Bows and arrows were seldom used from single-hatch baidarkas, since they required two hands.

The Aleut throwing board, unlike all those used by Eskimos, had a hole for the index finger. The complex surfaces and angles can be best appreciated in the photographs. Black paint on the back side represented the fur of the sea otter, and red paint on the belly represented blood. The various parts had anatomical names: the distal end, the belly side, was the 'forehead'. The ivory engaging pin was the 'ziphisternum' and the basin for the palm of the hand was named for the palm of the hand.

Harpoons and spears were also carried on the deck. The basic sea otter harpoon was four feet (1.2 metres) in length. The ivory head sat in a wood-lined socket in the whalebone socket piece. Other detachable harpoon heads were larger, and each had its own two-piece wood case. A float, made of a whole sealskin with nubbins of the flippers protruding, was carried behind the hunter. This was used for many things, from floating whales to decoying seals and, importantly, as a life saver.

Another basic item was a retrieving hook. This ingenious object had a wood shaft resembling a cigar but was slightly triangular in cross section. An iron halibut hook - probably made of bird bone or ivory in earlier times - was firmly lashed to the far end, and a small weight hung from the end on a short line. Attached to a long line, this retrieving hook could be cast from shore over the floating carcass of a seal and then drawn in. The shape of the shaft and the weight directed the hook into the carcass. It was invaluable for retrieving birds and even for catching salmon when they were running. Like a fishing line, sinker and hook, it was not essential to hunting from a baidarka, but it was generally useful and was often carried on hunting trips. A club was an essential and unvarying item of hunting gear. Halibut and other fish, as well as sea mammals, were dispatched with this two foot (0.6 metre) wood or whalebone club. A small lamp and other gear might be stowed inside if a long trip were planned.

A fully equipped hunter was a magnificent sight and was also a large investment in materials and man-hours of labour. It was important to present a pleasant appearance to entice the sea mammals to approach the boat, especially the sensitive sea otter. A powerful charm that was carefully wrapped in a waterproof pouch and that was known only to the hunter, in addition to many precautionary customs, were all necessary parts of open sea hunting. If a man slept with a woman, he must share the woman with the kayak who would otherwise become jealous, break, and not return the hunter to his village. This sharing consisted of rubbing the kayak in the morning before going out to sea. Interestingly, this practice was transferred to the dory and continued into recent times. An old story vividly depicts the plight of a hunter who failed to share his woman with his kayak and perished within sight of his family who awaited his return.

Avoidance of women was always an important custom, as was the fear of carrying to the sea a land product, such as grass. Whales and sea otters could immediately detect any hunter who dallied with women and promptly avoided such an imprudent person. Sea lions, oddly, were apparently less discriminating. A one-month avoidance of woman was necessary before sea otter hunting but none for the sea lions.

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TAKEN FROM DECEMBER EDITION OF CANOEIST

Sea Kayaking by John Dowd

The latest edition of John Dowd's authoritative book (July 87, p.37) expands on some aspects of sea canoeing and updates others but has the sense to leave unchanged the best sections. Some of his views have mellowed and this softening of attitude will be appreciated by British paddlers. In particular, he places less emphasis on doubles although he still prefers broader singles than are most frequently used here. He retracts his comments on skegs, now accepting their benefits, and agrees that feathered paddles are needed in a reflex brace situation whatever their disadvantages at other times.

Some of the rescues he previously dismissed are now cautiously included, along with an assortment of new braces and rolls, most provided by John Heath

Anyone who has ever tried to hide his ignorance as experts presented incomprehensible explanations about some technical subject will love Dowd's section on hull design. I can't remember when I last read a more entertaining and enjoyable demolition of acquired wisdom.

The hazards chapter notes that the growing hobby of whale watching from kayaks in North America has resulted in an increasing number of unprovoked attacks, usually on days following harassment of whales by powerboats. Amongst the dangerous animals he also includes a sea otter which nipped his elbow and then followed him ashore, going to sleep in his cockpit seat.

The first aid chapter brings in dislocations, phototoxicity and hyperthermia and there is a new chapter on tours, lessons, clubs and kayak hire. Sea kayak photography is covered in a new appendix and the major development in the long sea crossings appendix is Ed Gillett's 63 day solo paddle from Monterey to Hawaii.

Despite its well established reputation it is probably fair to say that the latest edition of Sea Kayaking has a much more balanced content than earlier versions and thus is a much better book.

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FROM 'ANORAK', THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH ATLANTIC KAYAKERS - AUGUST 1988

Going out alone  
by Bill Farthing, Bangor, Maine

It is time for sea kayakers to start talking openly, in print, about one of the worst kept secrets in the sea kayaking community: the fact that many experienced kayakers, and some not so experienced ones, like to paddle alone.

Those of us who teach sea kayaking or write articles about it frequently mention the importance of paddling with a group for reasons of



safety. But the fact is that many of us do not practice what we preach. I have been sea kayaking for five years now, and I have done most of my trips alone, including some four or five day trips as well as one day trips. Most of the sea kayakers that I know do some of their paddling alone, ranging from a significant minority to a large majority of their trips. I have not done any systematic questioning of other kayakers about their reasons for going alone. So in this essay I will talk about my own reasons.

On the practical side, five years ago I started paddling alone simply because I didn't know anybody else who was into sea kayaking. It was a question of going alone or not going at all. So I chose to go alone. Now I know several people whom I can call for a kayaking trip, and I paddle with other people about half of the time. But there are still practical reasons for going alone. Sometimes I decide on the spur of the moment to go paddling, and I figure that I probably couldn't get anyone else on such short notice, so I don't bother to try. Going alone, I don't have to fit someone else's time schedule, and I can go wherever I want to go.

Another good reason for going alone is that I can set my own pace when I am paddling. I paddle a slow boat at a moderate pace. I like to spend a lot of time looking at birds and rock formations and seals and scenery. Sometimes I stop to take photographs, or use binoculars, or contemplate the universe. And I like to be able to take rest stops or shore walks whenever I feel like it, for as short or as long a time as I like. Going alone, I don't have to worry about keeping up with other paddlers, or about slowing them down. Other solo paddlers, I am sure, like to go alone because they can paddle fast in their fast boats, and cover a lot of miles without having to wait for other people to catch up.

But the most important reason of all for going alone is not a practical one. It is simply the fact that sometimes I like to be alone. This is one of those desires that, if you don't understand it, there is no way that I can explain it to you. But I suspect that a lot of the people who read this article will understand intuitively. I do not see myself as an extreme loner. I am not a hermit. Often I enjoy being with other people, but sometimes I prefer to be alone. Sea Kayaking gives me a chance to enjoy the peace of being alone with my own mind at the same time that I am out communing with nature and getting some exercise. But sea kayaking was not my first type of solo adventuring. It started with hiking.

It was in the Rocky mountains of southern Colorado, in the summer of 1962, that I first discovered the joy of hiking alone. I had just finished a summer course at Colorado College, and my best buddy from back home in Missouri came out to meet me for two weeks of hiking and camping. One day when we were camped beside a mountain pond, just below timberline, John wanted to go fishing while I wanted to hike up to the ridge top. So we decided to go our own ways for the day. It turned out to be one of the most memorable days of hiking in my life. Above timberline, as I approached the ridge top I was hit by a sudden August snowstorm. For about 20 minutes it was so thick that I could only see a few feet ahead. Then, as quickly as it had started, it stopped. The sky cleared and a rainbow appeared. Colourful alpine flowers poked through the snow. The wetness of the melting snow brought out the varied colours of the rock strata. The view out over the open side of the cirque, toward the plains, was magnificent. As I reached the other side of the cirque I saw a herd of a dozen elk. When they finally sensed my presence they galloped away and the king bull stopped to look back at me just before he went over the ridge out of sight. Coming down toward camp, going through the krummholz and wind tilted forest just below timberline, I stopped to rest. A black squirrel chattered at me until I moved on. When I got back to camp I felt especially peaceful, and I didn't tell John the details of my experience until the next day. I wanted to be alone with it for a while longer, to savour it.

Of course I could have enjoyed sharing that hike - the snowstorm, the elk, the beauty - with my friend. But the point is that I enjoyed it even though I was alone. Experiencing it alone gave it a special quality. Perhaps something akin to a religious experience. It would not have been the same if my thoughts and my sense of awe had been interrupted by conversation with another person.

Since I moved to Maine in 1969 I have made a point of doing at least one solo overnight trip each year, as well as some day trips. In the earlier years my solo trips were hikes; in recent years they have been mostly sea kayaking trips. The greater proportion of my outings are done with friends or family. But I will continue to do some of my trips alone, for that special peace of mind and communing with nature that comes from soloing.

Now, for safety reasons I am not recommending that sea kayakers go paddling alone. Especially beginners. There is no doubt that you are safer in a group, since group rescues are more reliable than self-rescues. But let's face it: sea kayaking is inherently risky, whether you paddle alone or in a group. Sea kayakers are physical risk takers. And I suspect that many sea kayakers are also loners to some degree. Given the inherent riskiness of all sea kayaking, it is not surprising that a significant number of us are willing to accept the additional risks of going out alone. We do not do it to be macho or to prove something. We take calculated risks, rather than acting impulsively. We keep a close eye on the weather. And we usually keep the details of our solo trips to ourselves. We go paddling alone just for the joy of it.

The topic of solo sea kayaking is now open for discussion.

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FROM THE MAGAZINE OF THE MARINE  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY - WINTER 1988/89 EDITION

The Book that can save our Marine Heritage  
by Keith Ulyatt

There is no overall plan for the protection of Britain's beautiful coastline and fascinating seas. Development and exploitation are happening in an alarmingly haphazard way. This is resulting in areas of important natural coastline being lost, in underwater wildlife habitats being polluted and in the creatures of the sea being driven from their natural surroundings.

Much of this is unnecessary. For example, planners and developers often have no information to hand on the natural value of the coastal sites they are seeking to exploit, or of the importance of the sea areas their decisions will affect.

Now there is a book which can change all that. It's called the Coastal Directory for Marine Nature Conservation. Written by the Marine Conservation Society's Site Protection Officer, Dr Sue Gubbay and published by the Marine Conservation Society, it is the very first book of its kind ever to be produced. It gives an overview of all the important areas of sea and coastline around the British Isles. It explains why they are such important parts of our marine heritage and why they need to be protected. It is the foundation upon which a national co-ordinated planning policy for our seas could and should be built. And if adhered to by coastal planners and developers nationwide, it is the policy which could save much of Britain's marine heritage from being lost forever.

Sponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature, through the Heinz "Guardians of the Countryside" programme, the first section of the Directory takes a look at where we stand right now - what coastal nature reserves we do have, which areas of our seas are conservation areas, and which zones are allocated for commercial exploitation. The second section details the wide variety of natural features Britain's seas possess - from lochs and lagoons, to estuaries, intertidal mud flats and underwater cliffs and caves. And finally the Directory lists, area by area around our coast, all the sites of important marine nature conservation interest in Britain. Throughout there's mention of the threats that man's activities pose to it all, giving us the impetus to do something positive right now in the form of proper planning for our sea's protection.

The publication of the Coastal Directory may not have the spectacular appeal of conservation activities such as the tagging of sharks or campaigning against pollution, but if the satisfactory conservation of our coastline is to be realised it is absolutely vital that books such as this are written. It illustrates the complete approach that the Society has towards conservation. And the expertise it possesses to achieve is.

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#### Eskimo Rolling by Derek C. Hutchinson

Over the past few years, sea kayaking has enjoyed explosive growth. Sea kayaks dovetail nicely with today's lifestyle. They're easily stored and readily cartopped to wilderness weekend adventures or lunch hour recreations: they provide access to remote shores, estuaries, and rivers devoid of larger boats: and above all, they promote vigorous, healthful outdoor exercise.

But they're not without problems. There is the ever-present possibility of a capsize, leaving the paddler upside down with water up his nose and his head pointed toward the bottom. From this position he has two options: Roll back upright, or squirm out of the tiny confining cockpit - sacrificing dry gear, clothes and dignity for a lungful of air.

The latter option is humiliating, but the former is difficult. As a result, many kayakers avoid surf, chop and any other conditions that could induce capsize, thus severely proscribing the times and places of their adventures. This soon gets wearisome, and the ability to recover from a capsize without help or lost self-esteem has become a rite of passage among kayakers.

Eskimo Rolling is the clearest, most sensible treatment of the subject in print. The introductory comments are humorous and encouraging. The text is interspersed with anecdotes of well-known kayakers and their rolling experiences - these help to carry the reader through the instructions, as well as to remind beginners that even experienced paddlers have their difficulties. The drills that lead up to the roll are unique and helpful. The diagrams are clear and easy to follow. Finally, the book includes not only step-by-step instructions for drill and rolls (16 varieties of the Eskimo roll in all), but also helpful teaching hints to clarify the finer points for instructors.

In short, Eskimo Rolling is a valuable contribution to a growing sport and will appeal to novice rollers, intermediate, and even advanced kayakers wanting to learn other types of rolls or to help teach others.

Eskimo Rolling has been endorsed by the American Canoe Association.

In Britain: "Eskimo Rolling for Survival" published by A. & C. Black, Ltd.  
32 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4JH at £8.95p

One for the Log Book  
by Dick Edie, Midlothian

In every canoeists' career there are days which are outstanding for one reason or another. A day of remarkable paddling, a day of great distance, great weather or good company. We tend to play down the other outstanding days we all have, the true epics where we escape with our lives only just and come off the water much wiser paddlers.

In the autumn of 1987 I instigated a sea kayaking club in the Lothian area of south-east Scotland, an area which has some very fine paddling but which tends to get by-passed by the serious paddlers who set their sights on the tidal races of the west coast.

The club got off to a good start by paddling regularly throughout the winter. In fact there was only one weekend throughout the whole winter that no-one made it onto the water. So much for the unkind Scots climate!

In early March Richard, Alan and I decided to paddle from Coldingham beach near Eyemouth to Pease Bay ten miles round St Abbs Head and up the Berwickshire coast. The trip is a very committing short trip because it is almost totally a no landing zone until you reach Pease Bay.

On the way to Coldingham we checked the landing at Pease Bay. A regular 2-3ft. swell was rolling in. It looked as if the landing at least would be a doddle. Half an hour later saw us on the water setting off through similar surf at Coldingham beach. Despite the surf there was next to no wind and we had timed our trip to coincide with slack water at St Abbs Head itself. The area is known for its strong tide and with the water so cold we were going to take no chances.

I decided that as we would not be stopping there was little point in taking any gear with us but I did chuck the usual survival poly-bag and a flask behind the seat of my Baidarka. I also decided to wear a wet suit long-john for the trip.

I got soaked going out through the surf at Coldingham but canoeing cagoules are really made for the job and within five minutes I was warm enough if a little damp. Twenty minutes after setting off we arrived at St Abbs Head and found it considerably more difficult than we had expected. The 3ft. swell had built a little and had roughened up to an ugly chop due to the clopotis off the 300ft+ cliffs. I was bobbing about like a cork in my empty Baidarka. The Baidarka is one of the breed of sea kayaks that will handle any sea when fully laden but is slightly less than comfortable when totally empty in a rough chop. Alan was moaning his head off that the Anas Acuta he had borrowed from my wife had no footrest but beggars can't be choosers. Richard was probably having the easiest time of it - his KW7 with skeg which seemed to ride the swell best of all.

The paddle along the coast round to Pease past the interestingly named Fast Head was a bit of a disappointment because the swell kept us out from the interesting shoreline and so the trip degenerated into the usual plod with wee Alan whining away about having no feeling in his legs (I told him that if he couldn't feel them then he'd got nothing to moan about).

As we came within about a mile of Pease Bay we could see huge breakers rolling in and the whole area looked to be nothing but white water. On getting closer we realised that one of the east coast swells had built up from nowhere and that we were facing a landing through ice cold 10-14ft. surf which was running in a most confused manner.

Someone mumbled to me something to the effect that as the SI on the trip I'd better make the decision. There really was no decision to be made. We could not go back because it would be as bad there and there was no alternative landing spot. I said that I'd go in first and try to find a way in and that really it would end up every man for himself in these conditions.

Now moaning away to myself that as far as I was concerned this was not a teaching trip and to cast up a coaching qualification was bad form, I edged my way towards the break line trying to see a pattern to the sets. The truth was that I was so damned scared I was really glad to be going first.

Coming in through large surf is an odd experience, you want to look ahead and behind at the same time.

Before I knew what had happened a really large nasty wave had curled up behind me. I furiously back paddled but soon found myself airborne as I took off backwards. Frantically I launched into a support stroke but I was totally upside down before I made contact with the water. I slid the paddle to pawlata up (I wanted to be certain, the water was bitter) but the roll coincided with the next 12ft breaker hitting and I found that I'd rolled up but was still under water. The cold had taken my breath away so I reluctantly pulled the spraydeck and began the swim of a lifetime.

At first I did not appreciate the seriousness of the situation. I knew I was about three hundred yards from the beach but I was more worried about the fact that my boat was going to end up on the rocks. I reckoned that if I towed it to the middle of the bay then we would both end up on the sandy beach. This was the decision which nearly cost my life.

I began the tow in best bronze medallion life saving style swimming on my back but every ten seconds a massive wave would roll up and I'd have to swim away from the boat to avoid getting it in the teeth.

One of the difficulties I have in recounting this tale is that time lost all meaning and I don't know how long I was in the water.

After a long time of trying to swim the boat I realised that I was getting dangerously cold. I had no feeling in my arms or my legs and pulling the upturned kayak was fast proving impossible. It suddenly dawned on me that I was going to die trying to save a bloody kayak! I immediately started for the shore but found that I was already too stiff to swim with any power. Still every ten to thirty seconds I'd get hit by a breaking wave and seemed to be under water longer each time. I felt that my lungs would burst and I really began to wonder at which point does your heart give out with the cold. I knew that I was now moving into the intermediate hypothermic stage and if I didn't get ashore soon I'd had it. Another wave - a breath - another wave - I clawed my way to the surface - another wave - I blacked out face down. I came to spewing water - another wave - CHRIST THE COLD - BLACK - MORE SPEWING - ANOTHER WAVE - suddenly I felt myself accelerating and realised I must be in the final soup. Somehow I gathered the savvy to rap my hands round my head as I felt myself catapulting onto the rocks. Later I found a huge chunk out of my right hand which would have been my head otherwise.

A friend, Astrid, had come along to act as a driver and she had watched the whole swim. As I saw her wading across to me I tried to speak to her "sur - sur - sur - survival bag". "Where is it?" "Be - be - behind the sea - seat of ca - ca- ca.." She disappeared up to the car just as I managed to say "canoe". I fell again and again as I tried to get myself up onto the beach proper. In the end I just lay down until Astrid arrived back and helped me up. Alan arrived on the scene having paddled in unhurst and handed me the

survival bag then ran off to help Richard out of the water. Richard had not had quite so far to swim as I had and seemed in much better shape.

I had been left alone with the survival bag but found that stiff wet hands cannot open a survival bag that has never been used. I would suggest that everyone tapes handles to poly bags to enable you to open them in such a situation.

I decided, if I was still capable of deciding anything, to be down in the recovery position and wait for the others to put me in the bag. I was still coughing and spewing up water. The others arrived and put me into the bag where I stayed for the next forty minutes. It was the first time I'd used one in earnest and believe me they are fantastic. When I finally got out I discovered that there must have been about two gallons of water in the bag with me but it really didn't matter.

Having totally thawed out or so I thought I had a cup of tea and eventually felt well enough to drive to my in-laws house close by. Once there I collapsed again and really spent a very frightening night suffering from shock and secondary drowning. Later I was treated for water in both lungs.

Five weeks later I finally got the feeling back in my fingers having suffered frostnip. I was off work for three weeks with a cough so bad that I couldn't talk for about two weeks quite literally.

In the 20:20 vision of hindsight I would suggest a few things.

- (1) Handles on all poly survival bags;
- (2) Always go to hospital after any such incident. MACHO MAN here did not and paid a high price for it.
- (3) Don't winter paddle!
- (4) Save yourself and forget your beloved kayak!

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#### SEA KAYAK CLASSIC ANGLESEY

Mr M. J. Box at Cae Adda, Llanbadrig, Cemaes Bay, Anglesey, North Wales, LL67 OLN, is the organiser of the above race which is to be staged on 23 July 1989.

This is the first of what is hoped will be an annual event - a sea race for expedition sea kayaks over approximately 12 nautical miles of North Anglesey coastline.

There are to be substantial cash prizes.

This race will provide an opportunity for sea kayak paddlers to meet and compete over an exciting stretch of complex tidal flows and eddies around islands and headlands. The full but unobtrusive safety cover will be co-ordinated by H.M. Coastguards. The safety and welfare of the paddlers will be the organisers prime consideration.

Your support and participation in the SEA KAYAK CLASSIC will assist in promoting sea canoeing, bringing together people of like minds to help establish an annual event on the sea canoeists calendar.

Race details, entry forms and information pack can be obtained by contacting the Race Organiser address given above.