

NEWSLETTER

OF THE ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB



- IMS.
- Promotion of sea canoeing
- Communication
- Organisation of events and conferences
- Safety and coaching

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

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NEWSLETTER NO.76

NOVEMBER 1989

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EDITORIAL

Here comes the last Newsletter of 1989, time therefore for me to wish you all a Happy Christmas and to remind you that renewals to the ASKC are due for 1990.

I trust you have all had a good kayaking year, if not a good year itself. My trip to Norway for six weeks this summer with the BSEA was the highlight of my year; let us know about your 'highlights' by sending me a report for the Newsletter. My plea for articles in the last letter has borne fruit and much of this one is made up of recently received material - many thanks to our contributors.

Please renew your subscription to the Club promptly. Despite the increase in postal charges I am going to continue the same service at the same subscription. I can do this because I have bought in a good supply of paper, etc., and should therefore be able to absorb the new postal rates.

I have just returned from the B.C.U. Sea Touring/Coaching Conference at Plas y Brenin in North Wales. It was a great success and very enjoyable. As an experiment we encouraged participants to bring along their families and Plas y laid on activities for the children. It all worked very well and went some way to make canoe sport more 'family-friendly' - I think it was a great idea. As for the symposium itself doubtless a full report will be available. You will need to contact BCU for this. Suffice for me to report that it was both informative and enjoyable. It is always fun to meet with many of the regular paddlers and it was gratifying to see many new faces around.

Derek Hutchinson, Howard Jeffs and Nigel Foster started the weekend off with practical sessions. I was very impressed with Howard's idea of using the split spare paddles to stabilise the kayak for re-entry after capsize. Derek's rolling session was good value, I like the way he relates the roll to the use the Eskimos actually made of them.

Mike Osborne from H.M. Coastguards (he took over from Dick Richards) brought us up to date with changes in the operation of the Coastguards and made a plea for greater contact by sea kayakers with their local Coastguard Officers.

Paul Newman gave a light hearted but meaningful look at alternative signalling devices (alternative to flares, that is). I have now found a new use for budgy mirrors which you can buy on the 'cheep'.

Following Paul's session we staged the A.G.M. of the Sea Touring Committee. The business was straightforward with the Chairman's, Secretary's and Treasurer's reports indicating a largely uneventful year in which we continued to monitor and safeguard the general interests of sea paddlers.

After the meeting was formally closed we embarked on a series of discussions, the first one introduced by Nick Padwick, concerned the hazards of coastal firing ranges.

The Conference dinner was a first class affair, the Plas y Brenin staff really pulled out the stops. Cmdr Chris Furse, O.B.E. was our after dinner speaker and he was tremendous value being very well received.

Sunday morning was kicked off by Brian Greenway who introduced the relatively new PADDLE WINGS. Although I had briefly used a pair only recently I knew very little about them. Designed in Sweden about four years ago they failed to catch on initially because in the hands of experienced paddlers they failed to improve performance. In the hands of novices though, they came into their own because they were able to readily adapt and use them correctly. Consequently the younger paddlers were beating the older ones.

Once the merit of these wing paddles was recognised they were able to knock six seconds off the 1,000 m record. The paddles are very concave and so prevent water from escaping as the paddle 'grips' the water. This has the effect of 'locking' the paddle into the position it is inserted into the water. I understand that using it brings into play other sets of muscles so they require some adaptation, apart from which there is not the give on the paddles because they do not slip. If any of you use these wing paddles for sea kayaking do let us hear from you.

Following Brian's session Geoff Good and Graham Lyon chaired a forum on what should be the B.C.U. recommendation on the carrying of flares by members of the coaching scheme and their students. The Sea Touring Committee have advised that all carry at least two flares. An interesting discussion followed and we await the B.C.U.'s final statement.

Peter Lamont gave us an uplifting talk on the use of kites for propelling kayaks. Peter was ably assisted by Keith Morris, an expert on inflatable and kite propulsion. All in all a very interesting presentation.

David Taylor gave us a talk on the rescue of kayakers by helicopter. It was hoped to have a real life helicopter, but as Geoff Good said on introducing Dave, "We'll have to manage without a chopper". I still can't work out what was so funny!!

ISLE de RE trip from 2nd to 10th June 1990 is still on. £10 deposit secures you a place on our minibus and trailer.

Expedition planning weekend here on Isle of Wight 25th to 28th May 1990. Let me know if you are interested and I will send you an application form.

A.S.K.C. SHOP

Ties @ £6.00 each
ASKC stickers @ 35 pence each
ASKC letter headed notepaper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets
4th National Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ 50 pence each
6th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £1.00 each
T shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £4.50 each (in yellow or black)
Sweat shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £8.00 each (in yellow or black)
Paper on basic sea kayaking navigation @ 50 pence
ASKC Ski hats @ £3.50 each
John Dowds' book - SEA CANOEING @ £8.95

Mach' to Milford or Around the Coast in 80 Days

By Amos Bewick

This isn't a report about exotic places, horrendous conditions, vast distances or trouble with foreign officials. In fact it can be done by any mere mortal sea canoeist. Over the last year my favourite canoeing partner went and got pregnant and then gave birth this could have seriously hampered my canoeing! But with careful thought things have worked out quite well. Instead of planning trips that go in circles I now get dropped off and picked up further down the coast. This article is really a series of trips over the last year either done with a friend or solo.

The first trip was in the middle of December from Machynlleth Bridge down the Dyfi, stopping off at Aberdyfi and then on the open sea to Borth (which is where I live). Unless you're local I wouldn't recommend this trip, no cliffs, caves, etc., but interesting if you live up here.

Next was from Borth to Newquay. Being a keen surfer this meant I could suss out all the obscure reef breaks to the south of Aberystwyth but I'm not going to tell where they are. There was a swell running so it was a very worthwhile trip. The scenery was pretty impressive and the birds and seals were more than I expected especially as I normally rush past this area desperate to get to Pembrokeshire. After lunch at Monk's Cave I could see a distant headland and decided that it was Aberaeron. So I went straight across, an hour or so later it appeared that Aberaeron was not on the headland but to my left. Then I began to find that Newquay didn't look like it ought to, then had I asked Bridget to meet me at Newquay or was it Newport? Basically I was on my own, doing a long open section and my mind was wandering. Don't worry, it was Newquay and my lift was waiting.

Two days had gone into paddling 35 miles and it had gone to show that the Ceredigion coastline was interesting and still unspoilt. The next trip was with a friend from Fishguard to Abereddi, a distance of some 15 miles. We had lunch at Strumble Head lighthouse and the weather, like so many of the trips this summer, was glorious sunshine and caused a lot of silly hats to appear on various canoeing partners. Then we hugged the coast closely inspecting all nooks and crannies it seems a lot more tiring doing this for a whole trip than the usual rock hopping/straight paddling type trip. Eventually we got to Abereddi an hour or so late which is why it's good to have a canoeist to pick you up they don't panic as much as normal canoe widows.

This is getting to sound a bit like "and then I did this and then we did this" but unfortunately that's how it was. Another solo trip was done connecting Mwnt to Fishguard. Again the weather was sun-tant weather and the scenery and wildlife excellent. I even got the tide right. It had a bit of everything, an island (Cardigan Island), an open crossing (across the estuary to Cemmaes Head), interesting cliffs, seals, sea birds and a good welcome at the end. But the idea to paddle a large section of coast had rally lodged in my brain. They may be short uneventful trips but 'epics' aren't really good canoeing practice. How many "sea canoeists" have you met that classify most of their own trips as "of course it was an advanced trip because" and then they list a catalogue of small mishaps that basically add up to a minor disaster. I suppose a story like "everything went beautifully" doesn't hold an audience.

A mate of mine from Dorset came to Wales and we set off from Milford Haven with full camping gear to get as far north and have as much enjoyment as possible. We had two and a half days. We set off on the ebb tide down the estuary and then out to Skokholm round the south end of the

island and across to Skomer. The tide did most of the work but once out of the estuary the northerly wind caused an inconvenient crop which meant that I even had to put on a cagoule. Unfortunately my friend fell out of his boat whilst inspecting a cave. It is very scary to be sitting outside and after a time seeing our mate's boat float gently out of some dark hole - upside down. In the books rescues look easy. But fully laden boats can't just be flipped up onto a deck and X rescued. So we resorted to putting the victim in the boat and sponging it out. Next we made for St Martins Haven against the tide. This was easier than I thought but once past the shelter of the islands we met a strong northerly wind well it wasn't that strong but it meant we got very wet, a thing I wasn't used to after a great summer. Damp, we landed at the Haven amongst a horde of divers Pembrokeshire waters seem so crowded after the unspoilt stretches of Ceredigion.

Anyway we found a space and managed to doss on the hill overlooking Jacks Sound. The Sound looked no trouble every time I looked at it but the crossing to Ramsey!! After a good nights sleep the sea calmed down and we were set for a good day. We set off down the Sound, that was slack, and around the south of Skomer, this time without mishaps. Before this we had a good long chat with the warden of the nature reserve. He seemed friendly and we certainly cleared some of the rumours up about exclusion zones of five miles and the ability of canoeists to scare wildlife. Basically small groups of considerate canoeists were welcomed; most of his work was spent with divers. Mind you we saw more birds and seals than he had.

Back to the water, we headed from Skomer to the South Bishop. Now for a bit of humble pie. I have been very scathing about sea canoeists getting sea sick because it always seems to happen when they are on S.I. or advanced sea tests ... especially if failure seems imminent. Well after an hour and a half I felt sick and much to our disappointment decided to head for Ramsey. One bonus was that we came across three porpoise. Real porpoise and not dolphins, they were much smaller and only just broke the surface as they breathed. Once on Ramsey we stopped at Aber Mawr and I went to sleep under the cliff. The sun moved and I got sunburnt. All summer I'd been in shorts and this was the only time I turned red. Next we found a path onto the island, saw the deer and had a good potter. Back to the path and there was the notice which roughly meant "well dodgy path DON'T USE". We had no choice and eventually got to our boats. Off we went again, headed for Whitesands. In all my journeying (that makes me sound like some great explorer) I haven't met as many other sea canoeists. There must have been at least five or six. They were local paddlers who had paddled up to the North Bishop and were on their way home to Porthclais. After this I was actually sick but did see a chough in mid wretch. We ferry glided across the top of Ramsey Sound, which was a bit of a struggle especially as the tide was going south and I threw again but had to keep paddling ... never again will I doubt someone who is sea sick in a canoe.

On Whitesands we found a nice place to doss just off the footpath overlooking the beach. Sleeping bags out and we cooked whilst tourists walked past jealous of our bedroom view.

Next day we continued our doss on the beach. We even walked a bit, not often done on a canoeing trip.

August Bank Holiday saw the completion of the Mach to Milford dream. Unfortunately it became a bit of a peak bagging process. Firstly I set off from Gwbert and paddled northwards. I quickly reached Aberporth (I 'phoned the military base to see if they would stop me) and cut across to Ynys Lochlyn, after that I went into a few caves and saw the best sights of seals I'd had all summer. Seals were basking on rocks high up in the caves and when in the water they could be clearly seen swimming under the boat. Unless I was

hallucinating I even heard them singing further down a cave ... I didn't have the bottle to investigate.

The final trip was a bit in the middle - Aberredden to Whitesands. It was blowing rough from the west and that was the direction I wanted to travel. Well, I set off alone and before long I thought that I shouldn't be there. But to go back would mean that my lift would have already left ... so I continued closely hugging the shore, which was rugged. The crux of the trip would be St Davids Head, wind against tide, no way of turning back and how much shelter was I getting from the cliffs? Anyway I went on and once in the main stream I flew along that section on a roller coaster ride. In fact I'd reached Whitesands a lot sooner than my e t a. and my lift. To celebrate the completion I went surfing,

So that is how I paddled that section of coast. Not all the trips would even be considered proficiency length. But if enjoyment was criterion of canoeing standard then it rates quite highly. I invariably chose when to go. so the weather was good. For the trip I used my wife's Sea Tiger.

From: Dick Faulder, Farnham, Surrey

Many thanks for the last Newsletter. The note on page 12 is the catalyst for the penning of some thoughts I have been considering for some time. My trips are not the epics of the lonely wild but the more mundane voyages in crowded commercial waterways and involve our relations with other traffic. I often paddle on the Solent, and in London River.

I should perhaps start by saying that I came to canoeing, first through helming Racing Dinghies where boats are in close proximity and adherence to the rules vital and later through helming Offshore Cruisers where a knowledge of the "International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea" (colloquially known as 'the Collision Regs') is essential. Thus, maybe, my appreciation of other skippers' problems and their responsibilities to many other vessels differ from that of many canoeists.

There have been several occasions (see below) which have made me ponder on our relations with other traffic and to wonder whether we may soon have 'access' problems on the sea for in the eyes of others we are somewhat like privileged pedestrians on a motorway. Some small boat owners who do not appreciate the seaworthiness of a kayak regard us as foolhardy and, like anglers, as 'a nuisance which should not be there'. Sailboards are already banned from parts of some U.K. harbours, and even apparently small cruisers from Zeebrugge (see Ferrero's letter pl4). Are we the next to be banned? Harbours are becoming more and more like airports with permission required to enter. Even now small craft entering harbour may contact the port authorities on VHF, and in some, vessels over 20m are required to do so. I have already been out with a canoe group where VHF clearance was obtained before crossing the deep water channel. (In this context is Mike Osbourne's offer on page 12 (VHF sets) a portent of things to come?)

Whether we like it or not the Collision Regs apply to us. (Rules 1a and 3a). 'Vessels under oars' are only referred to specifically in rule 25, Section C (the section on lights). We are certainly not 'sailing vessels' (International Canoes excepted) and by default I believe we can only be considered as 'Power Vessels', i.e., propelled by machinery. (A lever in my dictionary is part of a machine and what is a paddle or oar but a lever?.) As a 'power vessel' I would give way amongst other things to a vessel confined to a narrow channel, a sailing vessel and a power vessel on my starboards side. But I would expect, hopefully, to be given way to by an over-

taking vessel and a power vessel where I am on its starboard side in return for my obligation as stand-on vessel to 'hold course and speed' until 'collision cannot be avoided by action of the give-way vessel alone'.

An instructor has a hard enough job to keep a group of pupils well bunched up, but the leader of a group of mixed ability adults often has a harder job and the group soon spreads over a large area. Often when a yacht or small cruiser approaches a group, some members can obviously pass clear ahead and others will pass clear astern, but there is a tendency for the rest to stop paddling and stare at the cruiser like frightened rabbits in a car's headlights, before making a dash in different directions. In almost every case under the collision regs we are the 'give-way vessel' and are required 'to take early and substantial action to keep well clear'. In my opinion this means make a large alteration of course keeping the same paddling speed in order to give the approaching helmsman (1) the best opportunity to judge the relative speeds and his course relative to other traffic (perhaps behind us) and (2) to indicate clearly to him that we have conceded right of way. By the next rule 'the stand-on vessel' is required to keep 'her course and speed'. Only in such circumstances can a judgment be made as to whether proper avoiding action has been taken. Ideally from the point of view of the approaching helmsman a group of canoeists should move as one, but several well separated small groups (of up to four, acting uniformly) would be preferable to a scattered group.

I had planned to lead a group down river to the Pool of London for the Parade of Sail and rather resented the suggestion that I should inform the Harbour Authority, but I did so and was immediately phoned back to be told that the river was closed to private craft from London Bridge to Cuckold's Point for several hours on that day and I was referred to the statement in "Notices to Mariners" (see Appendix 1). But eventually the Authority was helpful and suggested a launch place on the Isle of Dogs and that we paddle up towards the Point provided we complied with any directions we might get from the Police! We had a good view from the opposite side of the river and took many photographs and eventually crossed the river at right angles and returned on the Surrey bank. In front of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich was ~~the~~ saluting base, the Lord Nelson, and this we inspected at close quarters before returning to the Isle of Dogs.

At the top of Limehouse Reach, just before we crossed to start our return journey we were met by a group of five or six canoeists in sea boats on our side but spread well out towards the middle. Meanwhile the spectator river buses were returning at some speed and some avoiding action was necessary. If they had been in a tight group even if well on our side there would have been no problem. I think on the whole that canoeists being so manoeuvre-able do not appreciate the problems of other helmsmen, who not only have to avoid us, but need to plan much further ahead to fulfil their obligations to other traffic.

Five of us left Stokes Bay to see the start of "The Round the World Yacht Race" and were soon met by a Police launch, which was trying to keep the main starting channel clear of all manner of spectator craft. We were advised to get across beyond the starting Frigate or stay on the mainland side. Two of us decided to go across but we were soon separated by the traffic. My colleague found himself a sheltered berth close to the starting launch and had an excellent view. I decided that there was too much traffic round the stern of the Frigate and went further down the course but the traffic was still going in all directions and the sea more confused than it had been a week earlier off Ramsey Island. I looked for shelter under the lee of the Three Masted Italian Training Ship, but it was merely reflecting the waves to add to the confusion. At this stage I realised that when the

starting gun went everything would take off and that an interest would centre in watching the race yachts (probably at the expense of a lookout ahead) and that as, in that density of traffic, I would not be able to keep a proper lookout astern (Rule 5) I would be in severe danger of being run down. So I tucked in behind the 'NE Ryde Middle Ground' buoy hoping it was tall enough and solid enough to deter the most avid spectator. But even so I encountered a head high braking wash a few moments after the start. Ten minutes later I encountered my colleague. We agreed it was an interesting experience and had an uneventful paddle back to Stokes Bay.

These experiences lead me to believe that unless we, and other small boat owners show ourselves to be much more responsible, dare I even say professional, with respect to other vessels then our access to estuaries and harbours may be severely curtailed. In this respect I hope the BCU (?Sea Touring Committee) will maintain the closest possible liaison with the RYA, and the Coaching Committee will ensure that canoeists have an adequate knowledge of the Collision Regs (see Appendix 2).

Appendix 1 - Does the BCU monitor "Nptices to Mariners" and is there any procedure for disseminating any relevant items?

Appendix 2 - A power boat helmsman claimed in his defence after a collision with a canoe, which was racing on inland waters, that he had sounded two blasts on his horn!

EL NINO by ROB WEBB, I.O.W.C.C.

Over the past months we have all seen and heard of the man made ecological disasters that have befallen us, ranging from the "Exxon Valdez" incident in Alaska to the distemper amongst seals on our own coasts.

All this is very tragic and has attracted debate and condemnation from all circles. But let us not forget that nature herself springs her little disasters upon us. One, whilst not being directly connected with kayaking, is still of a nautical nature and I am enclosing a report on such, if only for some light education, the subject being 'El Nino'.

The southern tip of South America stretches towards Antarctica and catches part of the West Wind Drift, forcing part of it northerly as the Peru or Humboldt current. This current flows along the west coast of South America until, a few degrees south of the equator, it swings westwards to join the South Equatorial Current.

Upwelling brings with it phosphates and other nutrient minerals that nourish one of the richest populations of marine life in the world. The Peru Current supports millions of sea birds, for example in 1956 birds produced 330,000 tons of guano, providing Peru with an endless supply of high grade fertilizer. This means that the birds themselves must have eaten some 4,000,000 tons of a small, sardine-like fish, the anchoveta. At the same time fishermen caught 120,000 tons of the fish directly, plus a substantial haul of larger species which feed on the anchoveta.

Every so often disaster strikes. The life supporting flow of the Peru Current slackens or moves out to sea. Close inshore the upwelling ceases, the surface temperature of the inshore water rises to abnormal heights and often a current of warm less saline water moves in from the north; EL NINO has arrived.

The normal fish population dies or moves out to be replaced by tropical forms. The bird deprived of their food panic - many of them abandon their fledglings and strike out blindly to the north and south, others fly in circles and die of starvation. The bird population may be reduced from a norm of around 30 million to somewhere in the region of five to eight million. All along the coast rotting bodies of fish and birds foul the air. Sometimes there are so many that the hydrogen sulphide that they release (rotting eggs) blackens the paint on ships, a phenomenon known as "Callas Painter".

Originally El Nino was the name given to the southward invasion of warm water, the phenomenon is more complicated than that; it is a complex of meteorological and oceanographic conditions that has several characteristic features, some of which may be more intense in one year than in another. Some of these features may even be normal aspects of Peru's coastal climate in the first half of the year, aspects which in El Nino years reach destructive proportions.

Conspicuous El Nino outbreaks occurred in 1891, 1925, 1941 and 1957. Dr Warren Wooster (Scipps Inst) investigated the last of these and offered a tentative theory of what may cause them.

In El Nino years there is a general weakening of the atmospheric circulation. This in turn is reflected in a weakening of the southerly winds that produce the upwelling along the Peruvian coast. As the upwelling dies down, no longer bringing cooler water from the depths, the surface waters are heated by the sun. Meanwhile the northern boundary of the Peru Current moves further south than normal and tropical waters from the north can move down the coast.

These conditions are sometimes accompanied by an invasion of "Red Tide", a bloom of tiny organisms that poison the waters and kill multitudes of fish. Other times the fish simply move out or go deeper to stay with the water environment to which they are accustomed. Either way the birds lose their food supply.

High sea surface temperatures lead to instability in the overlying atmosphere producing excessive rainfall causing damaging floods and erosion.

El Nino is usually associated with Peru. However, it is a phenomenon that to a lesser extent affects similar upwelling coasts elsewhere in the world. These include regions of California, South-west Africa, Western Australia and Vietnam. All these have sizeable or potentially sizeable fisheries.

MUDDY MEMOIRS by DICK WHITEHOUSE, CHINGFORD, LONDON

When John made an appeal to "help fill this Newsletter" my immediate thought was to think of writing about somewhere with imposing 300' cliffs, or bird colonies that stretched as far as the eye could see or with 10 knot tidal streams with a whirlpool thrown in for good measure, probably somewhere vaguely Celtic and definitely rocky, maybe even abroad, California or Alaska. But no, dear reader, from now on forget rocks, I want you to think MUD, and with due respect to my friends from the Bristol Channel and Solway Firth, not just any old mud but the most vile, most smelly, most polluted mud in Britain; that of the Thames Estuary.

I fully realise that once you've read this article the Thames Estuary will be on the top of your list for next years expedition but please

don't think that I've set out to write the definitive guide to paddling here, as I realise that there are far more illustrious sea kayakers than I who paddle here and can give better advice than me - in six years of summer and winter paddling I've never come across another sea kayak but I know they're out there somewhere!

The Estuary is a big place but for the purpose of this piece take a line due north from North Foreland, the north-east tip of Kent, and keep going till you hit Suffolk; everything to the west is the Thames Estuary and as well as the Thames itself it has the Rivers Swale, Medway, Crouch, Blackwater, Colne, Orwell, Stow, Deben and Alde flowing into it and over the centuries they have helped form extensive lines of sandbanks that run roughly southwest-northeast.

Right, lets look at what the Thames Estuary can offer you, the sea kayaker, and compare it with the more popular paddling areas.

MUD - In fairness its not all mud but where it does occur it's disgusting. It is particularly horrible around Heybridge and Malden on the Blackwater and around Southend on the Thames. Out solo one day, visiting the wrecks on Dengie Flats I got back in my kayak as the returning tide reached it, and sat there and sat there and sat there; some 90 minutes later with water lapping over the spraydeck, the buoyancy finally overcame the suction of the ooze. Be warned, given the choice of waiting or walking, wait; your leg muscles won't enjoy the walk even if you do make it to shore.

WILDLIFE - At first sight you could be forgiven for thinking that nothing in its right mind would live here but it does. Although we don't stack our sea birds one on top of another on cliff faces we have vast colonies of waders, diggers and other birds of the estuary. Judging by the number of hides and observation huts they must be worth looking at although as you've probably guessed by the lack of names in this paragraph I haven't a clue what half of them are called; if they'd only stay still till I could find them in the guide book!

For you kayak fishermen, a few flat fish would make a pleasant change from the ubiquitous pollack and mackerel, and we have salt marsh and saltings with I'm told, some unique insect life; all I know is that there is nothing as voracious as the Scottish Midge down here.

ROUGH WATER - Well maybe not quite on the same scale as The Bitches or Penmaenmawr but by paddling across the Colne Bar on springs with a big wind against, or cross the mouths of the Deben and Alde in full ebb with a contrary wind over the sand bars and I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

CRYSTAL CLEAR WATER - Not a lot; in fact none, but I for one don't really want to see what our water authorities are discharging; think of something yukky and I promise you its floating in the Thames. Oh yes, don't be fooled into thinking that flock of gulls is following one of our local fishing boats back to harbour loaded down with another full catch; its almost certainly dumping sewage. Lord only knows how we support a tourist industry such as at Margate and Clacton when the sea is a rubbish dump, but thats another argument.

CHALLENGING NAVIGATION - Plenty of buoy hopping practice and plenty of mist to make it difficult. If you think all the headlands you're passing look the same well how does 20 square miles of sand bank grab you? I assure you their shape bears no resemblance to the chart or OS map. How are you on Drying Heights? Get it wrong in Rocksville and you paddle round the rock or it costs you a bit of gel coat - in Muddytown on Thames it could cost you a six hour wait or one hell of a portage.

ARCHITECTURE - Seen one ancient burial mound or ruined croft and you've seen them all! (I jest but you know what I mean.) How about an obsolete hexagonal lighthouse such as the one by Gunfleet Sand, or if you remember the pirate radio station of the 60s then a visit to Red Sand or Shivering Sand Towers is for you. You can 'land' and climb on them but I lost my bottle at about the 40 foot mark when I realised the ladder had corroded at the top and that swaying feeling wasn't imagination. In a more traditional vein we have plenty of tide mills, Roman forts and some really ancient churches.

WRECKS - Apart from me that is. Unfortunately I don't know of any Spanish men-o-war lying in shallow water with fabulous treasure and I wouldn't tell you lot about it if I did, but there are plenty of wrecks that dry out, dating back to the days when being first at market meant the difference between life and death to the people of the estuary and the captains of the barges would take short cuts through the everchanging channels between the sand banks, with the occasional disastrous result.

ODD PEOPLE - Own up everyone of you who thought of me. I'm only a bit strange, especially on the run up to spring tides! Seriously though, take a paddle out to Roughs Tower, some eight or nine miles off Harwich; it is an old World War II anti aircraft platform on top of two immense hollow concrete legs and it was in the news several years ago when the owner declared U.D.I. and started issuing his own stamps and passports. He is rumoured to have taken pot shots at nosy 'yotties' but on our visit we spoke to his son, or the Heir to the Kingdom of Sealand, to give him his full title and he seemed reasonably sane. We weren't invited to tea but then again we weren't shot at so mustn't grumble. Next to the satellite dish is a gun so speak nicely to this man!

BIG OPEN CROSSINGS - Twenty, thirty, forty miles, whatever you fancy, you can even stop halfway on a sandbank if you time the tides right and the sea state will change constantly as you pass each channel or bank. This year's attempt was aborted and refuge sought in the Crouch, but not before the rather satisfying sight of surfing a big sea in the Swin Spitway and passing a huge yacht, reefed down to a bikini sized sail and having a torrid time, while we were enjoying ourselves; well thats what I told myself I was doing. There is perhaps a fine line or two between exhilaration, being petrified and lunacy.

CAMPING - If you see a sea wall there's a good chance that there will be a flat piece of grass behind it which in most cases is fairly well drained and out of the wind.

ISLANDS - Every sea kayaker loves an island but I'm afraid that the Thames Estuary cannot compete with the coasts of Scotland and Wales. Mersea, Canvey and Sheppey are almost but not quite attached to the mainland. To circumnavigate Mersea is no problem, just a short portage over a road. Canvey is the scene of my worst ever tide misjudgment and consequently my longest walk with a kayak and I defy anybody to really understand the tides in the Swale around Sheppey. The islands of Osea and Northey are both connected to the mainland by causeways at low tide and can provide interesting diversions when bad weather prevents paddling further out to sea.

INVISIBLE ISLANDS - Well not totally invisible but certainly disappearing, There is something rather eerie, even magical about a night paddle to the Gunfleet Sand which at low water neaps may be nothing larger than a football pitch. The paddling works up a good appetite for an unusual barbeque with the twinkling lights of Clacton as a pretty backdrop.

PUBS - I don't suppose you'd believe me if I told you I never frequent such places and prefer to sit in my tent and commune with nature. Anyway, someone told me that the coast is liberally supplied with such establishments and I have yet to hear of any turning away sea kayakers, even the really smelly ones; you do have to wash fibre pile you know!

I SUPPOSE that next year I won't be able to move without bumping into hundreds of ASKC members all exploring this neglected paddling area so you have all got to wave at the white Nordkapp and offer to buy me a pint!

Anyone wanting more details is welcome to phone or write or call in. 01-529-1988.

From: Rick Jones, Edale, Sheffield

Thank you for September's Newsletter. If there is room in the next edition you can print this if you wish! But that you for all you do for us.

Surprise! Surprise! in September's issue people are admitting to owning Sea Tigers. All well and good; does this mean the "saga" is over? There's no doubt about it, Nick Padwick should be applauded for having the guts to stick his neck out amongst the narrow views and "traditional" ideas. So let us paddle what we want to paddle and let us be grown up enough to accept new ideas and innovations without the distasteful bickering over what is and isn't, like 18 months of Sea Tiger and years of Pod.

The extract from "Ice" was great, it's a book worth reading. Incidentally, if anyone is interested and feeling flush, I have both volumes of "Farthest North" in First Edition and very good condition. I also have what I feel to be Narser's greatest work, "In Northern Mists". Again First Edition and in very good nick. It is quite rare I am told. It's a history of Arctic exploration and a supreme reference book for your egg-heads out there. Just think! buy these and maybe I could be the next to admit owning a Sea Tiger! I should like to try one actually, so if there's anyone near me let me let me know please.

It was also nice to see Aleut Sea II's featured in the issue. It's great, don't you all agree? Every time I paddle these at Nigel Dennis' I end up in the bow because I can't be trusted on the rudder; then again I've got a sneaking feeling that that young beggar Aled Williams insists on it so that I can't see it when he's NOT PADDLING! The version with the huge hatches is my favourite. Well done Howard!

Thinking back a couple of years to the 187 Nordkapp Meet I do recall an in-depth evening discussion on relieving oneself when taken short whilst paddling. Hilarity aside, it was a valid and serious subject revealing some revolting admissions which must have resulted in even more revolting wetsuits (so that's what rots your Hellys). Would it be a too delicate subject to touch upon in the A.S.K.C. Newsletter or shall we remain silent and go our own way about it? I remember afterwards sending Frank Goodman a drawing of an icefloe (or was it a Nordkapp?) with a toilet seat cockpit and overhead tank, chain and handle. I think it would have stability problems somehow.

Happy paddling everyone and mind what you step on down at the beach.

HANDY TIPS NO.1 - TYGA HOOKS AND THEIR USES

by PETER LAMONT

It all started with a chance remark. Three of us were floundering about 'rescuing' each other while a warm and dry instructor looked on.

"You can use the deck elastics and the paddles to keep the raft together" he shouted encouragingly. It crossed my mind at the time along with several wet waves that anyone with half an eye could foresee that the slightest puff of wind would drag the paddles from under the elastics and separate the kayaks, and three millimetre shockcord wouldn't hold very much anyway.

Much later a friend proposed a quick trip to Skye some 70 miles north which would involve several open crossings. We needed a rafting system which would hold the boats firmly enough for us to enjoy undisturbed snacks and lunch breaks (one must get one's priorities right) and also, of course, repose to figure out where we were. In the interval since the rescue practice I had come across Tyga hooks and therein lay the solution.

Tyga hooks are designed to be used with 8 or 10 mm. shockcord - much more substantial stuff than normal deck elastics. They are made in tough black plastic and have the advantage that they can be slid along the shockcord and locked off at any point. I now normally carry at least two lengths of shockcord each of about 1.4 metres in length with a Tyga hook at either end.

These are mounted on the deck in the manner shown in the schematic diagram. In this position they are easily detachable for other uses such as attaching beachcombing booty to the deck or guying a tarpaulin or tent to rocks, plants or the beached kayak.

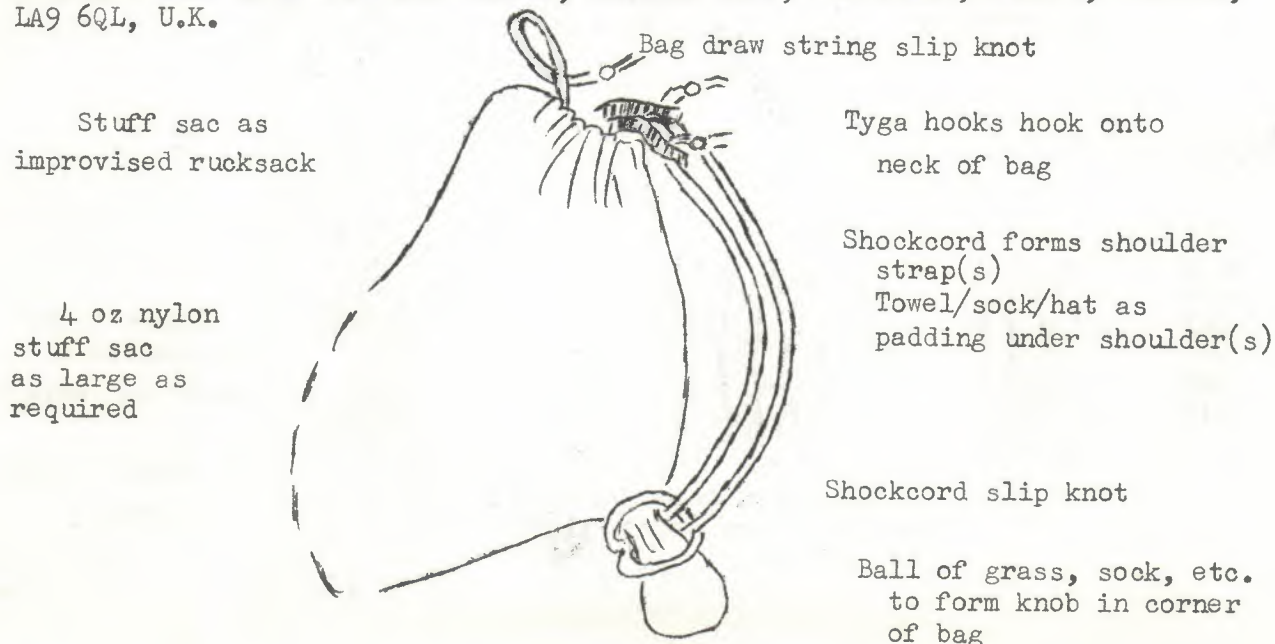
Another use is making up an impromptu rucksack. This is more for those with small deck hatches whose belongings take the form of a myriad of ingenious waterproof containers. These items can be thrown into a large stuff sack which on its own takes up scarcely any space. The shockcord and hooks form the carrying straps as illustrated in the drawing.

In situ on the kayak, fore and aft of the cockpit, the cords are in the ideal position for attaching the kayak to a vehicle roof-rack (apart from lines to bow and stern of course).

On the salty wet stuff there are a variety of ways of attaching other kayaks for towing or rafting. The more obvious are suggested below.

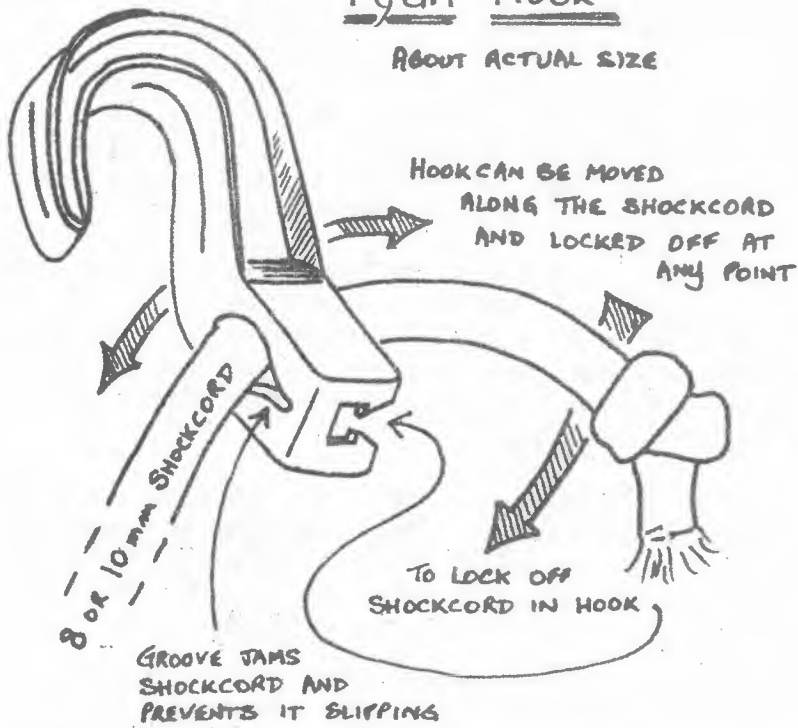
Finally, as connoisseurs of shockcord will know there is the cord which stretches and stretches and stops, and there is the cord which stretches and stretches and s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-s and -----. Make sure you have the best type for your application.

Supply sources? Most yacht chandlers should stock them. I have obtained mine from Lakeland Canoes, Hollins Lane, Burneside, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 6QL, U.K.

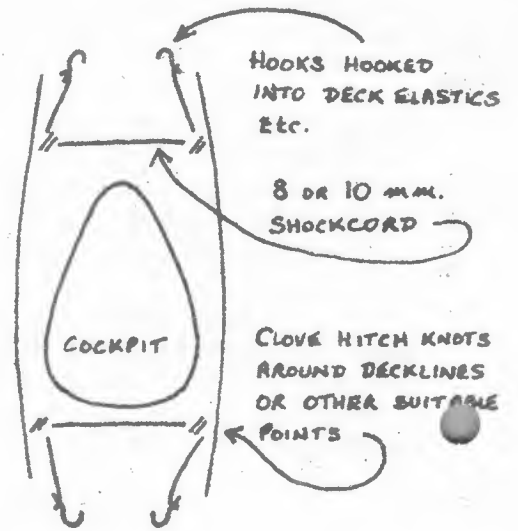


Tyga Hook

ABOUT ACTUAL SIZE

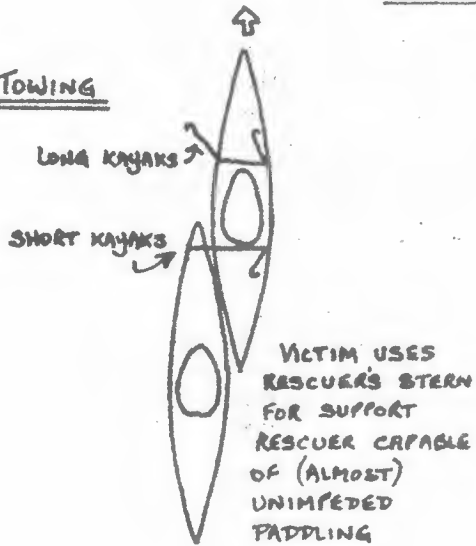


ARRANGEMENT ON KAYAK



USES ON THE WATER

TOWING



RESCUER GAINS STABILITY FROM VICTIMS

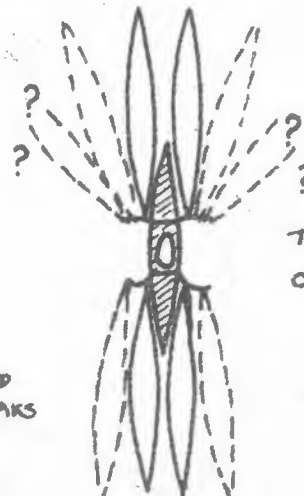
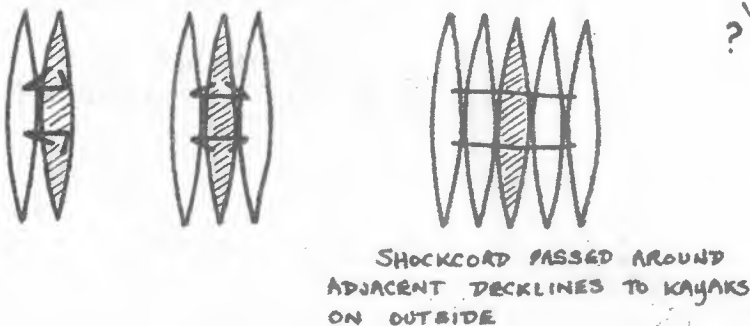


KAYAKS ATTACHED AT TWO POINTS = IMPROVISED DOUBLE KAYAK

VICTIM CAN PADDLE AND IS STABILISED TO SOME EXTENT



RAFTING



From: Michael Taylor, 21 Sunbury Place, Edinburgh

SHETLAND MEDIA MEGA STAR

It had not been my intention to court publicity. In fact I had not originally intended to go to Shetland at all. Six of us had planned to go to Alaska and paddle in Prince William Sound. The oil spillage occurred ten days before we had to pay our Apex fares and, on the available evidence of the time, I decided to pull out. My friends all decided to go and I was left to ponder a worthwhile alternative. I decided on a solo circumnavigation of Shetland excluding Foula. (Foula is 23 kilometres from the nearest point of the other islands. The safety aspect of such a paddle deterred me more than the thought of paddling such a distance for the circumnavigation of an island only 5.5 kilometres by 4.5 km.)

It is inevitable that Shetlanders should be interested in all that happens around their coast given that no point on the islands is more than three miles from the sea. Consequently, word soon spread from the Coastguard that a canoeist was setting off. My progress was reported on the local radio and this led to a stream of visitors to my tent while I was stormbound for four days at Maywick. Everyone on Shetland seems to read the Shetland Times with the consequence that, from the day that an article about my trip appeared in the paper, I did not meet anyone who was not already aware of me. Coincidentally, I landed one night in sight of the house of a freelance journalist. He appeared at my tent the next morning (I was again stormbound) with an invitation to spend the evening with him. This resulted in reports in several of the Scottish national papers and an interview on Radio Scotland.

The expedition itself was a clockwise journey commencing at Lerwick. The majority of the United Kingdom suffered temperatures in the eighties, humid conditions and light winds for the first part of July as a consequence of an almost stationary anticyclone in mid-Atlantic. Unfortunately, winds blowing round the top of the anticyclone brought strong north-westerlies and temperatures in the low fifties to Shetland. I was able to enjoy just two days paddling around the massive cliffs of Noss, Sumburgh Head and Fitful Head before I was brought to a four day halt at Maywick. A single day's paddle in calmer conditions before I was again stormbound took me round the island of Papa Stour which is renowned for its caves and has been written about at length in previous editions of the Newsletter. To sit in a cave the size of a house and be surrounded by seals while choosing which of the five exits to take is quite an experience.

Following another stormbound day I was favoured by south-westerlies for the only day and these helped me travel 60 kilometres up the coasts of Mainland and Yell to Gloup which gave me a good launching point for Muckle Flugga, the most northerly point, the following day. In a westerly wind there is no landing place in the 20 kilometres from Gloup to Muckle Flugga. Although the tidal streams on the west and north coasts of Shetland are weak (a feature of canoeing in Shetland is the little help to be obtained from tidal streams; virtually every mile has to be worked for) a strong tidal race (Skaw Rost) runs south down the east coast of Unst for a few miles from the north-east tip of the island. In order to reach this during the last hour of its run I estimated that I would have to leave Gloup at 1000 hours. I had the canoe packed by 0930 and paced the beach in pouring rain nervously killing half-an-hour. This turned into an exhilarating day. The high cliffs, the isolation of an uninhabited coast, a sky full of gannets, a sea carpeted by puffins provided a superb and lonely atmosphere. The further north I paddled the greater the confusion of the sea. The wind was only north-westerly 4-5 but the combination of the clapotis from the continuous cliffs, the overfalls and the weather pattern of the previous week ensured that the sea was breaking

for as far as the eye could see and there was no benefit to be obtained by paddling further out to sea. I rounded Herma Ness, passed the Muckle Flugga lighthouse and fought out to the most northerly island (Out Stack). A mile later I was sheltered from the wind and within two miles the sea was completely calm with no sign of the Skaw Rost race. Feeling that the most difficult paddling was over I relaxed and cruised into Nor Wick for the night.

I intended to potter down the east coast fishing and exploring the caves but the very next day the wind changed to the south-east where it remained for the rest of the trip! The eastern side of Shetland lacks the continuous magnificence of the west and north. It also lacks the seriousness as it offers far more frequent landing places. Nevertheless, I did not find it an anticlimax. Fetlar, in particular, is magnificent with more arches per mile than any of the other islands. Out Skerries looks an insignificant group of islets on the map but was well worth paddling out to with interesting inlets and superb cliffs and other rock features on the eastern side.

I could not help making comparison with other parts of Scotland. Shetland has more continuously interesting coastal scenery but less variety than the Hebrides or the west coast of mainland Scotland. I also missed the backcloth of mountains that is almost always present in the west. There is not the plethora of charming campsites that exist in the west. Sea birds are present practically all round the coast of Shetland but not in the numbers I had expected. Kittiwakes, puffins and arctic terns have failed to breed again this year and there are now only 30 per cent of the number of arctic terns that Shetland had seven years ago. The breeding bird colonies at Noss, Sumburgh and Herma Ness are impressive but no more so than at places like Cape Wrath and Handa Island.

My subjective impression of the warmth of the sea is borne out by the Admiralty Pilot which shows that summer sea temperatures around Shetland are similar to those on the west coast. It is unfair to make weather comparisons on the basis of a single expedition but I am not surprised at the meteorological records which show Shetland to be significantly cooler!

Whether the virtual absence of tidal streams compared with the west, north and Orkney is a disadvantage or not is a matter of opinion. About the advantages of the comparative absence of midges on Shetland there is surely no doubt.

I have certainly been nowhere with more helpful inhabitants. From the advice given by members of Shetland Canoe Club and the Coastguard, to the skipper of the only yacht I met who changed course and went a couple of miles out of his way to check that I was alright and had sufficient stores, to the dumper truck driver who offered to convey the canoe from Lerwick Harbour to the ferry terminale, everyone I met was interested in what I was doing and provided support.

From: Portsmouth and District Canoe Club, 27 Broadlands Avenue, Eastleigh,
SO5 4PP

Please would you put the following advertisement in the next ASKC magazine in the private sales column.

Moulds for sale - Sea King - £175
KW4 - £50

Contact Shirley Lawson, Portsmouth and District Canoe Club. Tel. 0703 618708

From: Phil Eccles, Porthmadog, Gwynedd

I was going to drop you a line to tell readers about the killer whales we sighted from a headland in the northwest of Scotland. It was on the last day of a canoeing expedition with eight kids from Coventry. These two majestic beasts were less than 100 yards away when they first appeared and as they cruised off towards the horizon the great dorsal fins and accompanying white shoulder markings rose four or five times. It was with trepidation that some of the group took to the water the next day. However, since then a more remarkable experience has befallen us and one that almost anyone could share. My wife (Jo) and I had been exploring the Iveragh Peninsula in southwest Eire and had heard tales of a friendly dolphin near Dingle. After a bivouac on Skellig Michael, some seven miles offshore, and a long haul back in a meaty Atlantic swell, we were ready for some easier won entertainment.

The neck of Dingle Bay is only some 400 yards wide and our first view of it confirmed the stories we had previously heard. Several small fishing boats laden with tourists slowly pottered about and every now and again the cries and shrieks would follow the glimpse of a tail or a fin. After the noise of the diesel engines had long faded and the stillness of the evening had given the water a glossy appearance we launched. From the nearest road the entrance of the bay is a mere 500 yards and as we eagerly paddled out we conjectured what made this 13 foot bottle-nosed dolphin return daily with amazing regularity; would he be attracted to our canoes and what was his diet? After splashing the water for a couple of minutes a dorsal fin broke the surface some 50 yards away. A minute later it appeared again but behind us. I had the feelings of a shipwrecked mariner as the shark moves in. Fungie, as the locals have named him, was just weighing us up as we were a very different craft to those he normally visits; so much quieter and closer to the water. Suddenly he was close to the stern of Jo's boat and then the head was fully two feet out of the water rubbing its chin on the rear decklines. This happened again several times. Obviously he wasn't too scared of us and we were thoroughly exhilarated with his antics. He once rose about three feet out of the water right next to my cockpit. And he loved to "race" It was possible to charge off at full speed across the water and watch as this graceful creature followed either just below the stern or directly alongside. Once he was so close that each stroke I made on my left hand side I would rub his body with the blade. A couple of times he enjoyed rubbing his back on the keel. Great practice for support strokes. Most amazing of all was to see him leap completely out of the water and once right across the bows of Jo's canoe. For a couple of days afterwards every time she closed her eyes all she could see was a grey flash inches from her face.

To play with a completely wild animal free to roam the seas; to gaze at such perfection of design, to watch a creature so at one with its environment and so in control and to feel it had enjoyed our presence for a few hours brings an incredible feeling both of humility and well being. How sad it is that the last leaflet from Greenpeace tells how we have successfully driven awak, killed or polluted all but two families of these marvellous animals from the shores of Britain.

On the one hand I feel almost privileged to have had such a special experience. On the other I wish everyone could play with a dolphin as we did then maybe we would begin to treat the sea and its creatures with the care and respect they deserve.

Good paddling.

BRITISH SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY TO
ARCTIC NORWAY, SUMMER 1989 by JOHN RAMWELL

You all know where Arctic Norway is, so let me start by saying something about the British Schools Exploring Society (B.S.E.S.). This is a charity organisation founded by the late Surgeon Commander George Murray Levick (RN) in 1932. Murray Levick went out with Scott to the Antarctica and on his return thought an organisation to help young people expedition to remote places was a good idea. For over 50 years the B.S.E.S. has been taking young school leavers between the ages of 16½ and 19 in fairly large numbers to out of the way places to both explore and undertake some science work

Only recently has the Society latched on to kayaking and sea kayaking in particular as an expedition medium. This is where I came in. They asked me to lead the kayaking on a trip they undertook in Greenland in the early 1980s. Since this time I have been to Alaska with them and this year to Norway.

Enough about the B.S.E.S. If you want to know more write to them at the Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR.

Now to describe our expedition to Norway this summer. I'll do so in four parts:-

- (1) The plan;
- (2) The preparation;
- (3) The expedition;
- (4) The equipment

THE PLAN

The B.S.E.S. and I agreed that I would take up to 36 young people and five leaders to give three groups of 12 youngsters and two leaders per group.

We were to travel the coast of North Norway by kayak; in other words a straightforward sea kayaking expedition and it was to last six weeks.

THE PREPARATION

Describing the plan makes the whole venture sound starkly simple. Of course you all know the logistics involved in even a simple expedition off our own shore of only a couple of weeks duration.

Two years ago we started putting our venture together. I certainly do not want to bore you with detail - suffice to say we had to acquire the kayaks and associated equipment and arrange for their transport to Norway. Then we had to select the young people from across the country and they, in their turn, had to raise their contribution by fund raising. Putting together the leader team was remarkably easy - it just sort of happened. Keith Maslen, Robin Catchlove, Paul Trott, Noel Smith, Chris Aylmer and Martin Rudd all volunteered and in the event we could not have had a better team.

Several meetings took place between myself and B.S.E.S. and my co-leaders. We had much to discuss. Food, transport, fuel, communications, tentage, cooking, routes, safety, medical cover, shore support this and much more had to be agreed and arranged. The first major item on our agenda was our training and briefing weekend which we held for all participants at Nigel Dennis' SCHOOL OF SEA CANOEING on Anglesey, North Wales.

We had used Nigel's Centre in previous years and, as previously, the weekend was a great success. Everyone turned up. With the help of virtually every centre in North Wales we assembled sufficient kayaks to equip everyone on the course.

THE EXPEDITION

On 12th July we all met up at Stansted Airport to board our chartered flight to Tromso. A three hour flight and we were aboard the three buses en route our joint base camp at Furuflaten on the Lyngen Fjord.

We spent one day sorting our gear and food and the next morning we all paddled off into the wind and rain to get our expedition under way. From now on we were three distinct groups, independent until we rendezvoused at our pre-selected re-supply points. My wife, Jenny, together with Simon, was our support crew and they kept us well supplied even though the van broke down and they had to scrounge another from a local factory!

The main E6 road ran along the Lyngen Fjord so we were never far from civilisation for the first few days as we paddled north. Of course all habitation hugs the shoreline as Norway is mountainous and sparsely populated. Eventually we turn east at the top of Lyngen Fjord and make our way between the islands. The scenery is magnificent. Though we had mixed weather, mostly low cloud, wind and rain, we found the mountains and fjords quite breathtaking.

The youngsters soon got into the paddling and camping routine. Their energy was boundless as they charged madly round 'til the early hours. As we had perpetual daylight there was no perception of time without a watch.

We found some excellent campsites. With 14 of us in a group I was not sure whether this might be a problem, and of course there were three such groups. We were certainly invading Norway on a grand scale, attracting a lot of interest and support from the local people.

Fishing was as easy as putting a line in the water. How different fresh cod tastes cooked with a little garlic, salt and rosemary.

After almost three weeks we made Hammerfest, the most northerly city in the world. The people of Hammerfest were very hospitable and allowed us the use of their Council buildings for the few days we were there. We used the time to be re-supplied, to carry out some kayak repairs, have a shower (what luxury!) and look around Hammerfest. Many of us joined the Ancient and Venerable Order of the Polar Bear Society and sport the badge to prove it!

Unfortunately we found everything very expensive so we were all soon broke.

THE EQUIPMENT

We used WEEKENDER kayaks as supplied by VCP. These kayaks proved ideal for their purpose and we had no difficulty in packing all our gear and food aboard. All kayaks were fitted with retractable skegs which proved essential and with deck lines. The leaders kayaks were additionally fitted with hand pumps.

We used Nordkap paddles by Lendals and we also supplied a cag, spray deck and two aqua sacks per paddler. We took spare hatches, footrests, spray decks and split paddles. Each group was supplied with a comprehensive glass fibre repair kit. Each group was also supplied with a marine hand held

VHF radio/transmitter, full first aid kit and each leader was issued with a compass.

With a few exceptions, all our gear stood up to the six weeks wear and tear.

We used Vango Force 10 tents and primus stoves (though we often cooked on wood fires). Sleeping bags, clothing, etc., was the responsibility of each paddler and much information was provided to assist with the best choice.

Food was broken down and packed into boxes - one box per group per day. Each box contained porridge, beans, etc., for breakfast, tins of meat and HEALTHY LIFE biscuits for lunch and a fairly substantial meal - precooked and packed in foil ready for simply heating up in boiling water. This was adequately complemented by extras like chocolate bars, cake, dried vegetables, a variety of hot drinks, etc. At the food re-supply points Jenny brought in fresh bread, fruit and milk. On top of all this we enjoyed fresh cod, char and salmon caught by ourselves. A concentrated effort to collect Blueberries provided us with Blueberry Pie, pancakes and even roolly-polly delicious.

SUMMARY

From Hammerfest we gradually made our way back along the coast to Tromsø. En route, with a definite improvement in the weather since the first couple of weeks, we spent more time walking out, visiting glaciers, etc. We even did 24 hour solo expeditions with the young people taking their bivvy bags and food and disappearing in every different direction.

Without doubt our expedition was an unmitigated success. We were blessed with a great bunch of young people and we could not have had a better leader team. Harmony, goodwill and tolerance prevailed. After all, living so closely together in small groups of 14 for six weeks makes many physical social and emotional demands.

At the de-briefing session at the end of the expedition the word most often used to describe it was 'enjoyment'. Clearly everyone had enjoyed the experience and I suspect we will all retain fond memories for a long time to come.

THE SEA KAYAK CLASSIC

The first Anglesey Kayak Classic was held at Cemaes Bay on 23 July 1989. The weather was excellent, very hot and very little wind, just right for the estimated 3,000 spectators, community stalls and charity organisations. Too hot (possibly) for the 67 entrants from all over Great Britain and the 15 non-competing participants. The 12 nautical mile course would pose no great problems to the august and experienced gathering of paddlers. However, the thick sea mist that descended 15 minutes before the race briefing sent many competitors scurrying for charts and compasses. The race organiser was in radio contact with the many support vessels at sea, and, with an outward air of confidence, simply delayed the start by 15 minutes!

The supporting slalom race over four nautical miles got underway. 27 entrants. Five ladies, the youngest 15 years, the oldest 58 years. An exciting race along an exciting coastline was won by Robert Davies in 48 minutes. 2nd Huw Aled Jones, 3rd David Jones. Awards went down to 7th place. First veteran was Michael Powles, first lady was Wendy Robinson. Congratulations to all.

A maroon fired by the coastguard at a signal from the M.P. for Anglesey, Ieuan Win Jones, and Lord and Lady Mostyn set the Sea Kayak Classic off to its inaugural start. The 14 nautical mile course proved to be the event that the organisers hoped for. The determined racing paddlers had their day, the sea kayak paddlers took the opportunity to test their skills over the tide, headland and around islands. The winner James Block recorded a time of 2hrs 2mins., 2nd Richard Horsley, only 15 seconds behind; 3rd Melvin Swallow, only 4 minutes behind the winner. Awards were down to 11th place. First lady winning the Midland Bank Trophy was Sandra Troop. First veteran Rodney Stallworthy placed 15th, 59 years young, 2hrs 18.45.

The Race Committee thank you all for your overwhelming enthusiasm and support for the event.

There will be changes next year, i.e., finishers' awards of value and a double class.

Keep your blades in the water!

Mick Box, Race Organiser

From: Jeff Albin, Raven Kayak Experiences

You may have already received a letter from Paul Schick of the MIR Corporation concerning RKE's trips to the Soviet Union. We are still seeking people for this year's expedition down the Syr Darya but this letter more directly concerns our plans for next year in the Soviet Union.

In September before setting off to the Syr Darya I will be talking directly to Profsport and beginning arrangements for next summer. Trip length will remain the same but we are hoping to get into some different areas. Of top interest are the Shantar Islands, the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. RKE will propose these areas for two trips in May and August of ten people each with a duration of 17 days and a total package price of \$3500 or less per person.

Sea Kayak clubs by their nature and purpose usually avoid outfitters but these experiences are unusual enough that I hoped you would be interested. They are exciting in that they are still exploratory in nature but safe because of trouble free itineraries and the constant presence of Soviet guides and interpreters.

To keep the costs to clients down I am making an offer to kayak clubs like yours of a 10 per cent discount. If, as a group organiser you can fill a trip, the tenth person will go for free. In addition, because the primary purpose for my company in doing these trips is to promote citizen summitry, I promise that I will pass any savings on to you. This offer will remain open until 1st December after which time I will open the trips to individuals.

If you are interested please reply in writing soon.

H.M. COASTGUARD/B.C.U. LIAISON OFFICER
by JOHN J. RAMWELL, CHAIRMAN OF THE
B.C.U. SEA TOURING COMMITTEE

This post is currently held by Mr Mike Osborne of HMCG Great Yarmouth. Previous to Mike, Mr Dick Richards, ex Regional Controller, HMCG Swansea acted as the HM Coastguard Liaison Officer for the British Canoe Union.

This short paper sets out to attempt to justify the continuation of this close association.

I would like to briefly mention the historical background to the present arrangements then explain how we make use of the Liaison Officer and finally how we, ourselves as canoeists, intend to play a greater part in the link between the Coastguard Service and sea kayakers.

In 1976 the sea kayaking enthusiasts in this country staged a symposium and we were particularly keen to involve H.M. Coastguards as we were finding it very difficult to establish our credibility as safe and conscientious users of the sea. The Coastguards, as many other agencies and members of the public and media could not and would not understand the viability of canoeing on the oceans. To become accepted we needed to persuade the Coastguards and to this end we invited a representative. Dick Richards came along and his attendance and consequent acceptance of our sport proved to be a turning point. No longer were we treated with undisguised amazement or negative response whenever we discussed a proposed sea kayaking trip with the local coastguards and our acceptance by others very soon improved. This, of course, helped us to establish sea kayaking to the extent it is now the fastest growing aspect of canoe sport world wide with its own specialised equipment and associated skills.

A year ago Dick Richards retired and Mike Osborne took over. Mike attends most of our meetings, being a member of the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee. On top of this he furnishes us with copies of incidents Reports involving canoeists around the UK coast which we examine, learn from and use to further our awareness.

In return we stand ready to participate in any enquiry involving sea kayakers and will offer information and advice on request.

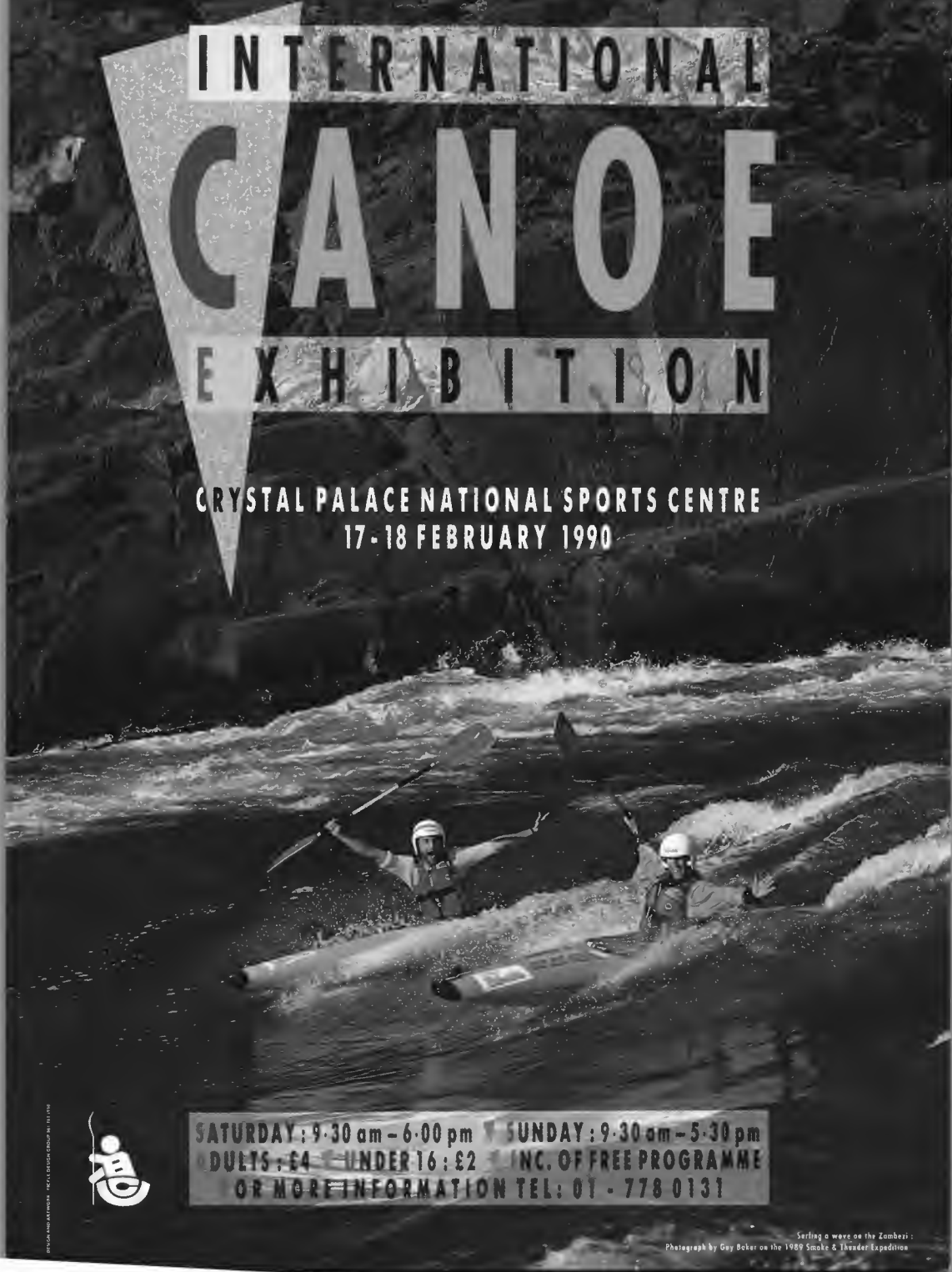
We are conscious that the energy between H.M. Coastguards and the British Canoe Union is predominantly one way in that we currently gain a lot more from the Coastguard system than they ever do from us.

We are anxious to redress this imbalance and as a Committee we have recently determined to form a much greater link with H.M. Coastguards by using the personnel in the existing Coastal Advisory Service established by the Sea Touring Committee some years ago. We shall be writing to them shortly inviting them to make direct contact with their local Coastguard Officers and, where appropriate, to greatly improve local liaison. In this way we hope to make ourselves much more useful.

As a Committee we are concerned that the Coastguard/BCU liaison arrangements may be under scrutiny. Should this be the case we would be grateful for any opportunity to properly plea for the continuation of these arrangements. We sincerely believe that the close association we have cultivated with the help of Dick Richards and lately by Mike Osborne has been and will certainly continue to be of mutual advantage.

INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION

CRYSTAL PALACE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE
17-18 FEBRUARY 1990



INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION - VISUAL DESIGN GROUP IN THE 1980s



SATURDAY: 9.30 am - 6.00 pm SUNDAY: 9.30 am - 5.30 pm
ADULTS: £4 UNDER 16: £2 INC. OF FREE PROGRAMME
OR MORE INFORMATION TEL: 01 - 778 0131

Setting a wave on the Zambezi:
Photograph by Guy Baker on the 1989 Snake & Thunder Expedition

THE TRADE

The annual gathering of canoeists and enthusiasts have their demands met by over 65 trade stands; this year covering the largest ever area of stand space. Whether buying or researching, the latest spectrum of kayak and canoe related equipment is on offer at the most competitive prices.

INFORMATION

The canoeing world is laid out at your finger tips in the free comprehensive programme. It offers an in-depth guide to the trade and information stands, together with guiding you through the days events. As more people take canoeing holidays, there are an increased number of stands from England and abroad offering you a wide selection of destinations. All specialist canoe disciplines are represented as well as the Regional stands in the largest ever Hall of Canoe Sport.

ACTION

There will be a continuous pool programme offering a chance to see some of the best paddlers in the country as they compete in the National finals of Pool Slalom and Canoe Polo Championships.

ENTERTAINMENT

A full international lecture and film programme is on offer, featuring the premier showing of Smoke and Thunder River Zambezi Kayak Expedition — The BBC Mick Burke Award Winners 1989.

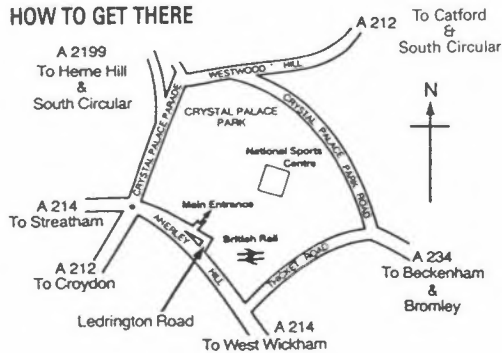
TRY CANOEING

For the novice there are free "Come and Try It" sessions and for the more experienced a Slalom Clinic at a cost of £4.00 per head. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis, so it is essential that you fill in and return the attached form NOW to avoid disappointment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tickets: Adults £4.00 Children Under 16 £2.00. Available at the door or in advance using the attached order form. 10% discount for parties of 10 or more booked in advance. Refreshments: Crystal Palace National Sports Centre has a refreshment area and a licenced bar. There will be NO RE-ENTRY to the building once tickets have been surrendered.

HOW TO GET THERE



By Car: Entrance in Ledrington Road which leads off A214 Anerley Hill 100 yards East of A212/A214 roundabout. Ample Car Parking facilities.

By Bus: To Crystal Palace Parade 2A; 2B; 3; 3A; 49; 63; 108B; 122; 137; 227; 249; N2; N86. To Anerley Hill 157.

By Train: From Victoria on Network South East (Northern Line Underground) by Southern Region. Times in minutes past the hour during exhibition hours:-

| To Crystal Palace: | Saturday | | Sunday | |
|--------------------|----------|----|--------|----|
| Victoria | 06 | 36 | 21 | 51 |
| C. Palace | 31 | 01 | 46 | 16 |

| From Crystal Palace: | Saturday | | Sunday | |
|----------------------|----------|----|--------|----|
| C. Palace | 27 | 57 | 14 | 44 |
| Victoria | 52 | 22 | 39 | 09 |

For daily confirmation telephone British Rail 01-928 5100

ADVANCE BOOKING

Order your tickets for a group of ten or more and take advantage of a 10% discount. There is plenty of parking at Crystal Palace. Complete this section and send with your remittance and a SAE to The International Canoe Exhibition Secretary, BCU, Mapperley Hall, Lucknow Avenue, Nottingham NG3 5FA. Tel: (0602) 691944. Tickets will not be sent unless a SAE is enclosed. All cheques and postal orders should be crossed and made payable to "British Canoe Union". The last date for applications is 10th February, 1990.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

| | SAT | SUN | £ | p |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----|---|---|
| No. of Adults @ £4.00 | | | | |
| No. of Under 16's @ £2.00 | | | | |
| Less 10% (if 10 people or more) | | | | |
| Postage | | | | |
| I enclose cheque/PO | TOTAL | | | |

'COME AND TRY IT' APPLICATIONS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

I/We would like to take part in the following event(s)

Event: _____ SAT _____ SUN
Number Required

Come and Try It
— Novices only SAT SUN
Please state if disabled
Slalom Clinic @ £4.00 per head SAT SUN
— experienced paddlers only
— please state division

Vouchers for the above will be issued UPON RECEIPT OF A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE ONLY, and these should be exchanged at the poolside 30 minutes before the session is due to commence.

Don't forget to bring your swimming costume and towel.

THE ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

AIMS: (1) Promotion of Sea Kayaking; (2) Communication; (3) Organisation of events and symposiums; and (4) Safety and Coaching

APPLICATION TO JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP TO THE A.S.K.C.

(Note that membership runs from January 1st through to the end of the year.)

Cost of membership is £5.00 per year for U.K. members and £6.00 per year for all non-U.K. members

NAME I enclose the sum of £..... as
ADDRESS subscription to the A.S.K.C. for the
..... year commencing January 19..... and
..... for items from the ASKC Shop as
..... detailed below
..... Post Code Signed
Date

Send to J. J. Ramwell, 7 Miller Close, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PS

A.S.K.C. SHOP

Ties @ £6 each

ASKC Stickers @ 35 pence each

ASKC Letter headed notepaper @ 50 pence per 10 sheets

4th National Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ 50 pence each

6th International Sea Kayaking Symposium Report @ £1.00 each

T-shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £4.50 each (in yellow or black)

Sweat Shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £8.00 each (in yellow or black)

Paper on basic kayak navigation @ 50 pence each

ASKC Ski Hats @ £3 50 each

ALL PRICES INCLUDE
POST AND PACKAGE