

NEWSLETTER

of the

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB



Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



AIMS Promotion of sea canoeing · Communication · Organisation of events and conferences · Safety and coaching

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO.78

MARCH 1990

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EDITORIAL

This is the 'Canoe Exhibition' edition of the Newsletter. As always I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the ASKC Stand (Arena 4 Indoor Football Pitch Stand No.411) at what is effectively the Club's shop window.

With this Newsletter comes the 1990 ASKC Membership List. Make good use of this. I know that many members enjoy contact with others and this address list is particularly useful if you are travelling, our members abroad are always very accommodating as I know we are with them when they visit the U.K.

For most of us, the Canoe Exhibition represents the start of the canoeing season. There are, of course, the hardy who paddle throughout the winter - I'm thinking of the D.W. competitors, the surfers who make use of winter storms that bring good surf and the slalomists and white water competitors and those who undertake the occasional sea trip. For the majority though, the Spring with longer and warmer days is responsible for stirring up the urge to simply get on the water and paddle.

I have all the arrangements in place for the ILE DE RE trip, leaving on Saturday 2nd June - returning Sunday 10th June. At the time of writing there are four places left but I suspect that by the end of the Canoe Exhibition these will all be taken.

There are still vacancies on my "PLANNING A SEA KAYAKING EXPEDITION" course, schedules for 25/26/27/28 May 1990 to be held here on the Isle of Wight at a cost of £15 per head. Further details are available from me.

I am now well into my new book on Sea Kayaking. Text is no problem - I do need some good sea kayaking pictures (slides or negatives) together with some shots of equipment, etc. Any contributions would be gratefully received.

Once again I remind you that this is your Newsletter in that it exists to communicate between you all and not necessarily to you all, so do keep those letters, trip reports and general news and views coming in.

Stuart Fisher in the January 1990 edition of his magazine 'CANOEIST' draws attention to the competitive canoeing opportunities following the massive revolutions in Europe these last few months. Already sea kayaking expeditions to previously inaccessible areas are happening. I am planning a trip to Arctic Russia next year myself. Soon I hope there will be ASKC members from Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Russia. Certainly the opportunities for us to explore these countries is an exciting prospect. I am sure that our sport will play its part in the future as the old 'cold war' thaws out.

BCU Sea Touring and Coaching Conference by
Peter Midwood, Plas y Brenin

Last year's conference was held at Plas y Brenin in North Wales over the weekend 7-8 October. Eighty delegates attended with many more coming on a daily basis

A wide and varied programme was enjoyed by all. Derek Hutchinson gave an excellent and amusing demonstration of rolling in the pool while mentioning at the same time that he had just finished 'an excellent little book on the subject - see me afterwards!' Nigel Foster and Howard Jeffs ran a practical session on rescues at sea including innovations for self rescue of double sea kayaks. Mike Osbourne has recently taken over as the Canoeing Liaison Officer for H.M. Coastguard and he brought us all up to date with recent changes. Dave Taylor advised us about helicopter rescues, illustrated with slides. As an indirect result of the Deal tragedy, a practical demonstration was not possible. Paul Newman talked about signalling devices, an amusing session provoking much discussion about budgie mirrors. Commander Chris Furse gave an illustrated talk about expeditioning in Antarctica and using canoes as a means of transport for exploration, certainly a different approach to keep purists on their toes. On Sunday morning Brian Greenaway started the day off with recent advances in paddle design and paddling style. Peter Lamont talked about narrow blades and also about kites to aid progress. This was supported by Keith Stewart who designs kites and he had brought along his most recent inflatable model. The AGM of the BCU Coaching Scheme was held on Sunday afternoon.

Positive measures had been incorporated to encourage family participation. A creche was organised and thirteen children enjoyed skiing, a forest walk and, of course, canoeing. Children were able to stay free of charge at the centre. This concept was most successful and hopefully will be repeated in future years.

Plas y Brenin did us proud. The facilities, including the new lecture room, were excellent and the catering was out of this world. Many thanks to all concerned, especially all the guest speakers.

From: Roy Spicer, Vancouver, Canada

Dear John,

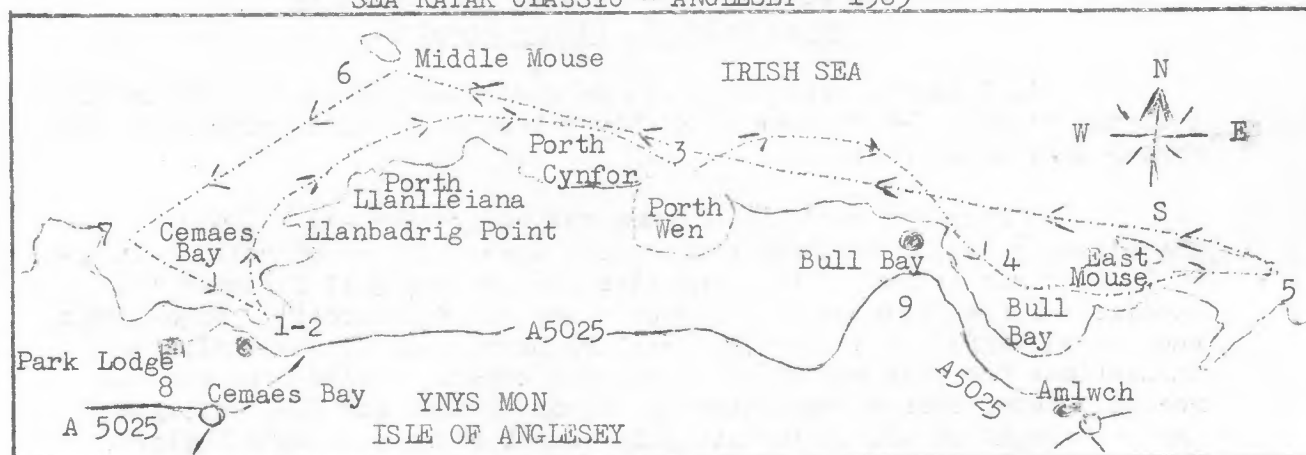
Just a fast line to renew my sub. and wish you and yours the best of the SEASON and for the coming years.

I would also like to comment on the question asked by someone about BEARS and fishing from a KAYAK. BEARS have a very acute sense of smell and the smallest whiff of fish rings their dinner bell. If you should ever have the opportunity to watch a bear travelling through the bush you will notice that he is always standing on his hind feet sniffing the breeze, checking for dinner and other things of interest to him. Be very careful and alert.

Sincerely,

Roy Spicer

SEA KAYAK CLASSIC - ANGLESEY - 1989



THE SEA KAYAK CLASSIC COURSE

When the season is over - for me at any rate as a sop to my advancing years - and the kayak and equipment have been checked and put away until warmer weather returns in the spring of the year, it is useful and perhaps salutary to run over in one's mind some of the questions and enigmas that have arisen during those fascinating and delightful days on the sea in the warm summer sunshine of July and August.

Why are those days so memorable and why, some of my friends enquire, do you still, and at your age, choose such an uncomfortable pastime?

Now my wife is a non-canoeist of total commitment and I doubt whether she really appreciates the reason for my enthusiasm. Although I know the answers I find it impossible to convey all that sea touring means and has to offer for those who can go out to seek it, or to pass on my fervour to non-canoeing friends. Any why some days on the sea are more memorable than others.

One such day occurred last July when I participated in the Sea Kayak Classic of 14 nautical miles off the north coast of Anglesey. I made it clear from the outset that I would enter as a participant - not as a competitor. I intended to enjoy it without feeling the need to exert myself unduly. I would be satisfied if I could finish the course in a reasonable time, or simply complete it, whilst enjoying the beauty of the surroundings - the cliff scenery on the outward run, and the variety of the sea birds which are ever present, and the colour of the sky and the sea with its changing lights when ruffled by the wind, its salty tang, and the pattern of the waves in the tide race on the homeward run. The competitors would be under pressure as heads down and arms and bodies exerting their greatest power to propel their craft at maximum speed, concentrating on overtaking those ahead, they would miss these details in their endeavours to keep ahead of the pack - or so I told myself! Maybe it was just a case of sour grapes now that my days of serious competition are over?

Whatever the reason, I sat there in my kayak in the sunshine, with a few other non-competing participants, at Cemaes Bay, just behind the long line of competitors so as not to impede their progress. As there were 72 kayaks it must have been an impressive sight to the 3,000 or so spectators who came to see us off, and many feet of photographic film were expended. Then a rocket was fired by the Coastguard to signal us on our way.

The competitors were off in a flurry of foam as they made a sprint start towards the first headland, whilst the rest of us followed at maximum cruising speed. Round the headland and along the coast eastwards leaving Middle Mouse to port, past Porth Padrig and Llanbadrig Point to starboard, and on to Llanlleiana Head, past Hell's Mouth and the headland of Torllwyn, across the wide mouth of Porth Wen with its abandoned brickworks - an architectural gem - and on to Ogof Goch with its rock formations formed by volcanic action long ago and more recently sculptured by the action of the sea.

The tidal current was much in evidence as we rounded the point into Bull Bay to find the stake boat which was our next check point. The main pack of competitors was now well ahead and almost out of sight aiming to reach the furthest check point before the tide turned against them. Already I was experiencing the reversal of the tidal flow and it was a hard slog across the broad expanse of Bull Bay in my rather heavy expedition kayak to where the next stake boat marked the start of the homeward run further out to sea in the grip of the tide race. Once in its grasp the kayak responded as though refreshed and my flagging spirits rose. Tiredness left me and the magic of the sea again took hold. Gone was the tedium of the recent pull against the tide. East Mouse to port appeared to pass like a ship going the other way at no inconsiderable speed. As the kayak responded to the motion of the waves there was a song in my heart and I experienced again that very special kind of freedom that only a sea kayaker really knows and appreciates.

The swiftly flowing waters of the tide race, like those of a rapid river, carried the kayak effortlessly over the intervening seven miles to Middle Mouse on the port bow. The waves were bigger and more confused as I rounded the western tip of that island to check in at the stake boat waiting in the shelter of the island, in an eddy. Then on to Wylfa Head, dimly discerned in the distance, to another check point before turning inland to the finish in Cemaes Bay and to a warm and unexpected welcome.

This event was the brainchild of Mick Box whose enthusiasm and energy was the inspiration and driving force which made it the successful event it turned out to be. It was a memorable day and he and his many helpers must be congratulated for making it all possible. It is intended to make it an annual event and I am to be there again next year.

Eric B. Totty, 9th December 1989

PADDLING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN ALONG THE
COAST OF PROVENCE, FRANCE

Twenty miles from Toulon on the island of Porquerolles, Julia, who is English and has floating accommodation, will supply you with fully equipped kayaks, charts and advise you

KAYAKS AVAILABLE

Mark FEUILLETTE		
INUIT 2 seat max load 250kgs	200fr per day	£20 (£150 deposit)
ESKIMO 1 seat	110fr per day	£11 (£80 deposit)
MINI ESKIMO max load 55kgs	110fr per day	(£80 deposit)
Mark CHAUVEAU 1 seat (similar to a Klepper) collapsible	100fr per day	

20% reduction on prices for customers staying on Julia's boats "La Belle Helene" and "Libecciu".

Julia also proposes a tour of the three islands Porquerolles, Port Cross and Ile de Levant, and/or the Maures, and Esterelle coasts between Toulon and Cannes with the kayaks on board her renovated 54 foot customs launch "Libecciu". Nine people can sleep aboard.

The underwater nature reserve at Port Cross provides interesting diving. Porquerolles offers beautiful scenery for walking or bicycling and wind surfing.

Recommended months are April, May, June, September and October.

Accommodation prices are between £5 and £8 a night depending on the season. Charter fees from £180 a day.

For information write to J. Champion, "La Belle Helene", Porquerolles, 83400 HYERES, France. Tel.: (33) 94 58 34 15

SEA CANOEISTS NAVIGATION THEORY COURSE
HOSTED BY H.M. COASTGUARD AND
NORFOLK CANOEING ASSOCIATION

This course will cover the navigation theory requirements for the senior instructor sea award and beyond. It will also be suitable for beginners as it will not assume prior knowledge.

All equipment provided.

Date: 20th-22nd APRIL 1990. Cost: £8.50 a place.

Accommodation not provided but can be arranged at extra cost if required.

Numbers will be restricted so rush your application to:

Arthur Watts, 2 Victoria Cottages, The Street, Halvergate, NORWICH, NR13 3AJ.

Please enclose stamped addressed envelope with enquiry or booking.

From: Trevor Potts, Northumberland

ACROSS THE BERING STRAIT

It all started for me just before Easter when I was approached at McNulty's for the loan of some kayaks for the crossing of one of the most inhospitable stretches of water in the world and did I know anyone who was slightly mad with about £5,000 to spare and fancied a trip to Siberia as the fourth man had to pull out for family reasons? This voice just came out of my head and I heard myself saying "Yes, no problem, redesign a kayak, large access hatches, compass, foot pump, rudder, flown to Alaska, six weeks, yes, that will be fine and I will be coming too!"

At 24.00 hours on 12th June the party of four British paddlers (Robert Eglestaff, Greg Barton, Peter Clark and me) paddling McNulty Alaska kayaks and seven American residents of Alaska paddling between them three single kayaks, two eighteen foot surf skis and one double kayak finally left Nome, Alaska, and headed north. The sub had just dipped below the horizon and it was cold, twelve cold miles to go before camp was set up at Penny River. They're a funny lot, these Alaskan paddlers; they start cooking dinner at 04.30! The next day saw the first of the shore ice, big blocks of it frozen to the bottom or attached to the shore. The scenery was not spectacular but the atmosphere was brilliant. There were two hundred miles to go to Wales village, the nearest American mainland village to Siberia. With no roads, the only way out in an emergency is by air. The first few days the sky was clear, sunny and warm enough to start to melt the ice blocks. Progress was at a sedate pace; all the boats were loaded with three weeks' supplies. The first of the many foggy days arrived on the fourth day out when we were crossing a wide bay; it rolled in like a heavy grey blanket and lasted two days. It was like a cold October for the next few weeks with low cloud and intermittent fog.

On the way up the coast a number of temporary Eskimo hunting and fishing villages were encountered. Sometimes they had little wood huts and sometimes big white tents. The whole village would live in these summer camps for almost eight weeks. As soon as the snow and ice break-up occurred they were out hunting, following the pack ice in little outboard-powered skiffs, looking for seals and walrus.

They fashion the seal skin into clothing and footwear; one of the women's specialities is traditional beadwork found on both sides of the strait. Much of their time is spent making things to sell to the tourists who fly into Nome and Wales. The men's speciality is carving walrus ivory tusks into intricate souvenirs for the tourists. The meat is butchered and dried for the winter or stored in deep stone pits dug into the frozen tundra. It is chilled but not frozen; they like their meat 'aged' for a few weeks before eating it raw.

Whilst we were paddling up the coast the little hunting camps were waiting for the salmon run which was late because of the cold spring and the late break-up. Unfortunately we were just ahead of the salmon and never saw one. We did manage to catch some small fish we were assured were called hooligan fish; they were only about 8-10cm long and we just fried them whole. The Alaskans were a bit better than us with the .410 handgun and managed to shoot some Ptarmigan and a goose for the pot.

Everything ran smoothly for the first few days and there was no more than the usual dissent that you would expect from a group with no clear leader. To overcome this state of affairs a very surprising decision was taken that we would democratically vote on each day's decisions, paddling by committee in the mistaken belief that we conduct our normal lives by democratic means. Democracy was never something that was practised in our household; we did as we were told or were punished. At my place of work I am dictated to by the company owner and I dictate to the rest of the employees. The whole process became time-consuming and unwieldy with at least two committee meetings each day. The biggest cause of dissent was night paddling; with 24 hours' daylight there appeared to be no real reason why not. The theory was that it was much colder at night and some of our body clocks could not adjust to going to bed at 7 a.m.

Much irritableness was caused by a break in the normal sleep pattern. Then decisions were taken to leave about mid-day. This compromise pleased no-one as the reality was that those who wished to paddle at night were never ready and forced a postponement until night time. When night time came those that had been up early claimed tiredness and forced a postponement until 2-3 a.m. to get some sleep. At 2-3 a.m. it was next to impossible to get everyone ready to paddle and yet another postponement resulted, ad nauseam. Eventually we would get on the water and have an enjoyable day/night and so progress was made.

The scenery was getting better; there were seals about, walrus and plenty of bird life. The odd dead whale or walrus on the beach caused some concern because of the possibility of bears being attracted to the area for an easy meal. We were carrying bear repellent in the form of a small fire extinguisher-type canister. This was loaded with a strong solution of cayenne pepper which, theory had it, would not only make the bear extremely mad but also blind for an hour or two. If the wind was in one's face when one fired it one would end up as the main ingredient for chilli con carne, bear style.

Eventual progress was halted by ice on 20th June; we could see the ice sheet stretching out to sea for miles and the shoreline a few miles ahead was covered with loose brash ice moving about in the swell. The party managed to force a way through the ice and land on a beach strewn with huge ice blocks, any further progress for the next few days was out of the question. After contact with the overflying bush pilots we were told the ice sheet extended for about eight miles out to sea and covered the whole area from where we were almost to Tin City. The ice edge was piled high with broken moving ice and would be impossible to land on. The first major split within the group occurred at this point. Some wanted to press on for a seventy mile non-stop push to get around the ice. Others thought it was suicidal and refused to move; a very heated meeting took place. Finally a weather forecast indicating offshore wind which would be blowing the ice into the path of anyone attempting to paddle and possibly forcing him out to sea made any further discussion pointless. After two days of reasonably mild weather it was possible to move on a short distance up the coast. We were then in a position where the boats could be dragged for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on ice then carried about 400 yards over a shingle spit into the lagoon on the other side. Progress was made for about ten miles in fog on the inside of the lagoon until we arrived at Fort Clarence Loran station on the end of the spit. They welcomed us and fed us for two days; it was a struggle to get away after two days of hot showers, Jaccuzis, soft beds, cheap beer, etc. The weather was still poor with a cold wind and fog but we pressed on through the ice leads across to

Brevig Mission hunting camp and outside to the open sea again. From here on, the rest of the forty miles to Wales was beset by shore ice. We managed to camp at Lost River for one night but the following day we had a thirty mile paddle to Tin City tin mining camp. There was no possibility of getting ashore to camp anywhere along that stretch. The wind picked up to about 25 knots from the south, giving us a nice 6 foot swell to ride on. On arrival at Tin City we had about two hundred yards of difficult ice to get through before we could land. It was very cold and miserable and there was nowhere very suitable to camp on the rocky ice-strewn beach. Fortunately the tin mining camp had enough spare beds so we stayed with them for two days until it was possible to get out through the ice which was being pushed by the wind into the bay. After a great struggle we managed to get through the ice and had a five mile paddle around Cape Prince of Wales, the most westerly point on the American mainland, and into Wales village. We were very warmly welcomed by the Eskimos who thought we were quite made; after all, they had given up using kayaks at least fifty years ago and were content to hang an outboard motor off the back of their walrus skin-covered open hunting boat.

Wales Eskimo village looks out across the Bering Strait westwards to the Diomed islands twenty miles away. Big Diomed at 508m high towers over Little Diomed 399m; they are separated by a two mile wide strait with the American-Russian border running up the middle. If it is Sunday on Big Diomed, Little Diomed has to wait for the Earth to do a full revolution before it is Sunday there. From the beach on Big Diomed one can easily see Russia thirty miles away.

The little village of Wales has a population of about two hundred and is a permanent settlement with small wood cabins ditted around a bumpy track. There are only a few three and four wheeled motorbikes for summer traffic and a handful of snow machines for the winter. An aeroplane flies in once a day at least and the helicopter once a week for Little Diomed. Most people seem to have telephones, TV and video. The community centre and the new laundry/shower even have flush toilets. It all ends up on the beach with the contents of the honey buckets from the houses. Water was collected by plastic bin on a trailer from a stream on the hillside.

In the early hours of Sunday, July 2nd, the visibility was one hundred yards, the sea state a moderate swell, the wind Force 4 in our faces, the sea temperature 40°F and the air temperature 50°F.

There is no record of the crossing ever being done by kayak although the local Eskimo population regularly sailed across.

The last party of three flew in from California; they were paddling a three hole fabric-covered George Dyson built Baidarka. They had a film crew with them who were going to film the crossing for Jim Noyes, a paddler paralysed from the waist down. The local Eskimos from Little Diomed island were providing a walrus skin-covered boat as a film platform and were excited about the prospect of making their first crossing to Siberia.

The first part of the plan was to paddle from Wales twenty-eight miles to Little Diomed. In the summer there is a continuous north-going current which averages about two knots but is by no means constant. It can be stopped by the wind or increase to more than double. The wind usually funnels north or south and fogs are frequent and persistent.

The party had been waiting for four days for the fog to lift. When it did lift a decision was made to leave immediately. The weather forecast indicated that it would be clear for about forty-eight hours with a light southerly wind. Four hours after setting off the fog rolled in and visibility dropped to about 400 yards and the wind freshened to a SW Force 3. With the wind and current pushing the group north at an unknown speed, finding the island was going to be very tricky if the fog persisted. No-one was inclined to turn back even though only about one third of the distance had been covered. If the islands were missed the Eskimos had said it would be impossible to paddle back to them against the current. As the night wore on and the sun got lower in the sky the fog became thicker and the temperature dropped. Stops became longer as the twelve paddlers struggled with pee bottles and flasks of coffee; others became colder as they waited. Eventually there was talk of hypothermia. The wind increased and the sea became rougher. The waves started to splash the decks, then the hands and occasionally the face; it was so cold it burned. The Eskimo boat wanted to change course three hours earlier than planned but the group refused and plodded on. The course was eventually changed at 01.30, 8½ hours after starting, ninety minutes later than the original navigation plan to allow for the long stops. At 02.30, after one hour on the new course, Diomedes should have been very close but was not seen in the fog. The position was now starting to become critical; there was no reliable means of finding a position. It could only be assumed that the speed had been overestimated so the group paddled on. At about 05 00 the fog lifted for about one minute to show the top of a mountain due south. Unfortunately what had happened was that Little Diomedes had been overshoot by two or three miles and by continuing on the course with wind and current behind us we had pushed on across the International Date Line (and the Russian border). When the mountains of Big Diomedes were seen they were about seven or eight miles too far north. There were now a number of choices, head south into a two knot current and a fifteen knot wind to Big Diomedes island, head forty miles east and land somewhere on the Alaskan tundra or head west about thirty miles and land on the mountainous cliffs of Cape Dezhnev in Siberia. After twelve hours paddling already with visibility fluctuating between two and four hundred yards it was decided to carry on towards Big Diomedes. Making roughly half knot over the ground it would take about sixteen hours continuous paddling. After two hours of paddling into the wind and current with the wind steadily increasing and the seas becoming steep and confused, little progress had been made. The pace had become so slow the Eskimo boat started to pick up the slower paddlers until eventually most people decided enough was enough and they climbed aboard with the Eskimos. Three single kayaks, including me, and one double decided to carry on and head south whilst the others were being picked up. Unfortunately the fog, which had lifted a little, became thicker and we were separated from the Eskimo boat. Those that were picked up tried to tow the seven boats but eventually they became waterlogged and broke adrift or were cut free. The paddlers sitting immobile in the open boat were now in danger of succumbing to exhaustion and exposure. It was two hours before they arrived on the Russian island of Big Diomedes. The Eskimos would only stay long enough to drop off two paddlers to try to explain to the soldiers what had happened. Normally the Eskimos are arrested if they stray into Russian territory. There was now concern for us five paddlers left afloat and Robert and Kelly stayed to try to co-ordinate a rescue. If any kayaks were picked up they would be able to identify whether or not they belonged to any of us paddlers still left out in the strait. The Russians sent their patrol ship to search but the Americans could not send their helicopter from three hundred miles away until the fog lifted. After we lost contact with the Eskimos we continued to paddle south, hoping the fog

would lift and the Eskimos would come back to search for us. As the morning wore on things started to become desperate for the double. Jayne was starting to become dehydrated through seasickness and was starting to become hypothermic and totally exhausted. Progress became very slow. The wind increased for a time up to about twenty knots and the sea state was very confused with waves about six feet high topped off by a foaming crest. There was a big danger that the double would capsize with a by now semi-conscious person in the back. Consideration was given to trying to raft up and streaming a drogue but it was so cold we would probably have become hypothermic fairly quickly. After nineteen hours' paddling concentration was waning, arms were tired, buttocks aching and wrists seizing up; we could not carry on for much longer. The brain was not so dulled that it did not realise the implications of a capsize; death would shortly follow.

A Russian patrol ship about the size of a minesweeper suddenly appeared about a mile away, tooting his horn. It then became a mad panic to find the flares before it disappeared again. Hands barely mobile managed to set off three red flares after rejecting three duds. Garbled Russian was spoken over the VHF radio and the ship altered course. The fog started to lift, the sun came out and the island was only about one mile away. There was sadness in the party because we were rescued, committing that awful sin of attempting the foolhardy and then having to call out the rescue services, also elation because we were saved and the thoughts of death could fade into the background. Stern expressionless faces looked down on us from the ship, Russians and Americans (and a Brit) face to face. Hours later, after a meal in the officers' mess, the reserve slackened and smiles and autographs were exchanged. Postcards and coins were swapped and photographs taken. The Russian sailors had not had so much excitement since they were last re-supplied nine months before.

We four British paddlers with a borrowed double to replace two lost kayaks completed the second half of the crossing to land in Siberia one week later. Two of the Alaskan team, Martin and Arlene Leonard (on their honeymoon) crossed two weeks after us. Eight weeks later two kayaks were reported as picked up four hundred miles away near the Arctic ice sheet. Robert's and Pete's kayaks were never recovered. Mine was given to a Russian expedition centre. Greg's was given to the Eskimos of Little Diomed.

Trevor Potts is employed by McNulty Seaglass who provided the Alaskan kayaks.

From: W. J. Black, 34 Riding Lane, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent,
TN11 9HY. Tel. (0732) 832639

Thought other ASKC members might be interested in a couple of products from SURVIVAL AIDS.

The main thing for me is their space pen refill at £1.30. It fits a Parker ballpoint and does write on wet or greasy paper or plastic. Also they have waterproof paper refill £1.30. I can't find my last BCU price list so cannot compare paper price. It's not paper but a tough untearable plastic. I'm not on commission but other people don't seem to know the firm.

They are at Morland, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 3AZ, telephone
0934 14 444

From: Donald Thomson, Mill of Fochel Cottage, Barthol Chapel, Inverurie
AB5 8TH

I thought you and your readers might be interested in a few additional points to Graham Arthurs letter about dislocated shoulders and the problems of getting the patient back into the boat.

For many years now I have been running training courses for the COCLG Assistant Lifeguard Award. As most of you know the award involves lifesaving and rescue work in open water. On many of these courses the opportunity has arisen at the end of a cold water training session, when everyone is wet but not too cold, to set various rescue scenarios, and see how everyone gets on. One of my favourites is rescuing a casualty with a dislocated shoulder.

The various methods employed to carry out the rescue defy description, as I anticipate would be the cries of anguish from the poor patient in a real situation. The easiest solution, and the one which has won hands down on every course, has been the use of a stirrup.

Use a towline or deckline to make a loop, and lower it approximately 1½ feet below the water on the casualty's side and secure it. The casualty can then in most cases help themselves onto the deck of the rescuer's canoe using the stirrup and decklines, with little or no assistance from the rescuer. The advantage here is that the casualty is always better at protecting the damaged shoulder and the rescuer is less likely to 'help' by pulling the wrong part. [A rafted 'X' rescue is normally best, although an Ipswich allows both rescuers to assist in getting the person into his own boat once out of the water. The disadvantage being less stability for the rescuer during the exit.]

This rescue method is also very useful if the casualty has other injuries, is disabled in any way or is just too big or inflexible to easily manage some of the standard methods.

As a final thought - Steve Watts comment about the incident making him think twice about solo paddling, rang true when I remembered an incident on a sea proficiency assessment a few years ago.

One of the candidates dislocated his shoulder carrying out an 'X' rescue on a rather full kayak and ended up in the water beside the casualty!! (I haven't seen that in any of the text books.)

Less than three there should never be!?

Food for thought, but I have to say it hasn't stopped me doing the odd solo paddle when the urge takes me.

Happy paddling in 1990 and may the wind and tide always be with you.

From: John Squire, Woodcote, Lynbridge, Lynton, North Devon, EX35 6NR
Tel (0598) 52365

FOR SALE

NORDKAPP HM SEA KAYAK - EXPEDITION SPEC. DECK PUMP, ORANGE/WHITE,
V.G.C. £275.

SEA TIGER - HARDLY USED, YELLOW/BLACK SEAM, V.G.C. £350.

REPORT ON AN ITALIAN EXPEDITION OF CIRCUMNAVIGATION
OF CORSICA BY CANOE - 29 JULY-19 AUGUST by
LUIGI BALESTRIERE

41° 20'; 43° Lat.; 8° 30'; 9° 40' Long.: here are the co-ordinates of our little dream, the ideal lines delimiting "our" island: Corsica.

For two years I have been entertaining an unusual and charming idea: paddling around Corsica by kayak. My two friends and I had not any experience of this kind: it was our first real expedition.

Despite that, the previous winter my proposal was accepted with enthusiasm; the outlook of living a little adventure was very stimulating but also alarming: paddling along 1000 kms of shore was not easy, even less so with our natural adversaries, sea and wind.

After several weeks spent working, studying, training and solving thousands of little problems, everything seemed ready: finally we could leave.

We travelled by car all the way and then took the ferry; three hours later we felt tired but excited: Bastia was just in front of us!

Just landed we soon looked for a good beach as starting point; Miomo's beach, a few kilometres from Bastia was ideal

The next morning our kayaks, "Pleiade", "Penelope" and "Nausicaa", were finally at sea Direction: north.

The weather was fine so we could paddle for 30 kilometres.

Our first campsite was Macinaggio, the last town before the wild Cape Corse.

Fortunately we had everything to be self-sufficient for some days, food, water, drugs, repair kit, tent, etc.

The next days were similar; nevertheless the landscape was so lovely and varied that we could never be bored.

Despite five or six hours of paddling we even had the chance to have a bath and a super breakfast.

Thanks to very good weather we could do several kilometres even though under a strong sun. We could have done better but needed time to find water, to prepare the camp and the dinner, our ritual moment for changing impressions and wisecracks.

When possible we stopped to visit pleasant towns as Saint Florent, I'lle Rousse, Calvi.

After a day long stop at Calvi because of the bad weather we set out again Our next stops were Porto and Cargese

We stopped at Ajacci again also for having a meeting with a reporter; the next day in fact we found a good article in the daily paper of the island

Two days later we were close to our "Pillars of Hercules": the Strait of Bonifacio.

I call it that because of the stories about it; the Strait seems to be the only point of the Mediterranean where the wind can reach Force 12!

Just round Capo di Feno we felt the headwind blow ferociously, an hour later, completely wet, we finally went into the fjord of Bonifacio, surely the finest town seen till that moment.

The next day we rounded Capo Pertusato, the most southern point of the island; in fact our compass began to turn toward north. On our left side the northern shore of the Sardinia and its numerous little islands.

At dusk we prepared our camp on the lovely beach of Palombaggia; as usual, just landed, some curious people got near our colourful and well equipped kayaks and asked where we came from

The next day the coastline suddenly changed its character; just after Forto Vecchio an endless sandy shore began with beautiful pinewood along the desert beaches.

Our next stops were Solenzara, Aleria, Moriani. At last we had arrived; we could see Bastia little far from us; this was a lovely sensation.

After 18 days of paddling we finally landed again to the Miomo's beach; we were very satisfied and when we opened a bottle of French champagne while we were taking a bath the perplexed people on the beach looked at us without knowing what we were celebrating. But we knew.

From: Michael Taylor, 21 Sunbury Place, Edinburgh EH4 3BY 1 September 1989

In the May 1988 Newsletter you published a wide ranging letter from Duncan Winning which contained a single paragraph concerning the increased cost of British Telecom's recorded marine weather forecast. I expected a flood of correspondence agreeing with Duncan but I guess most members did as I did - agreed with him silently. I was, however, engaged in an ongoing correspondence of my own with British Telecom complaining about the cost of both Marinecall and Mountaincall which, as its name implies, provides a comparable forecast for the Scottish mountains. The mountaineering lobby is a lot stronger than the sea canoeing lobby and, in due course, Mountaincall was reformulated in a manner which gave better value for money. No changes were made to Marinecall which could cost £1.60 off-peak from a payphone to hear only that part of the recorded message which gave the forecast for the following day, expensive for a single forecast but a considerable problem during a multi-day expedition. I looked for alternatives and found that the Coastguard was able to give forecasts for the following 18 hours or so and that, where there was a local station, the Meteorological Office was willing to provide forecasts for the outlook period. Consequently, I abandoned Marinecall and ended my correspondence with British Telecom.

During the subsequent year, I have continued to obtain considerable help from the Coastguard but the position in respect of the Meteorological Office has changed. This summer my enquiries for forecasts beyond the following day have met with the (usually embarrassed) reply that such information is only available to subscribers. Pleas that I require the information because I am on an expedition and will not have access to a phone during the next n days have usually elicited various suggestions about Mrs Thatcher and her privatisation policies.

I have increasingly relied on the radio. The shipping forecast, while helpful, covers an area that is too large and too far off shore to meet my usual requirements. The inshore forecast is ideal and, in my experience, accurate. This is broadcast at 0033 hours on Radio 4 long wave and at 0655 on Radio 3 medium wave. The former is invariably obtainable and, if I'm able to keep awake long enough to hear it, gives a useful guide to the following day but, at times of marginal conditions, is too early to depend upon. The latter is well-timed but is broadcast on a wavelength that is unobtainable on many places along the coast. I have written to the BBC asking that the forecast be broadcast on Radio 4 but without success.

Maybe I'm getting soft. I should, perhaps, study the clouds, learn my ancestors' weather folklore and think of the great explorers who achieved so much without the benefit of any forecast. Or maybe in an era of accurate weather forecasts I should feel aggrieved that through various economies and other factors, I am taking unnecessary risks.

From: Terry Holmes, Grimsby, South Humberside. 31 July 1989

I wish to inform you of an incident I was involved in which required the assistance of the Coastguard and the Inshore Rescue Services.

On 30th July 1989 I was the leader of a group of five canoeists that took part in 'Across The Humber Challenge', a sponsored event to raise monies for the charity Barnardos.

The group consisted of one instructor who with me had made the trip many times during the past three years. The other three had experience of coastal paddling though had not done the Humber trip before. (One being a 35 year old female and the other two males about the same age and training for instructor status.)

Our intentions were to depart from Grimsby Royal Dock on an outgoing tide at 0930 hours to arrive at Spurn Point at about 1045 hours, have a lunch break and return to Cleethorpes sea front from where the sponsored event was being run from, low water being 1130 hours.

All of the group were equipped with flares and two of us had parachute flares. I had a VHF ship to ship personal radio. Prior to leaving home a check was made of the coastal weather forecast which was north-west Force 2-3 variable at times increasing later to Force 5. We also rang the Coastguard Co-ordination Unit at Bridlington informing them of our trip. There was no warning of storms from them

We set off on time (two of us in sea kayaks and the other three in G.P. kayaks). There was little or no wind, the sea state was calm and visibility was good. On reaching nearly half way a shower of rain came upon us with a rise in the wind Force 3-4. After a few minutes the wind increased so we decided to raft up and rest whilst the weather cleared which we expected to be in 10-15 minutes. Conditions soon deteriorated so we remained rafted up and contacted the Coastguard. They informed us that the lifeboat had been launched but had been redirected to a May Day some two miles away. It was anticipated he would come to our assistance after dealing with that. By this time we were still comfortable in the raft and safer in that situation as to the alternative of paddling against the tide and wind which were both taking us out into the North Sea. Twenty minutes later conditions deteriorated further, winds to Force 9 (45 mph recorded by local coastguard) making it to say the least uncomfortable. I then requested assistance due to the conditions and the fact that we were being swept onto Bull Fort, a metal wartime

fortress at the mouth of the Humber. The coastguard stated that the inshore lifeboat had been launched from Cleethorpes and was on route to us.

We waited several minutes before we started to use our flares because of the poor visibility. The parachute flare would not work though the hand-held smoke one did and this established contact with our rescuers. By this time we were becoming tired with having to hold onto each other for dear life. One set of paddles having been swept away. Such were the conditions that we did not expect our canoes to be salvaged but the crew on the inshore craft seemed determined to do just that. They got us aboard leaving the canoes tied together. They then transferred us to a Humber Pilot boat who returned us to the Royal Dock at Grimsby.

All of the party were in good shape except for sore arms and shoulders due to holding onto each other so tight and for so long.

Our canoes were brought ashore at Cleethorpes and returned to us in good condition (they even washed the sand off for us).

It was an incident I hope I will never experience again as it is only after the event that one realises how dangerous the situation was and what fatal consequences could have occurred. It has proved to us that the purchase of a secondhand radio was one of the most essential pieces of equipment when sea canoeing.

If you feel that it will help other paddlers in the future I have no objections to you using this information. I also wanted you to get it from the horses mouth rather than some distorted facts from the press.

P.S. We were put ashore at 1100 hours and at 1140 hours the local radio put out a local gale warning imminent for the River Humber which only goes to prove that we must always be prepared for the unexpected.

INTERNATIONAL TOUR OF THE THAMES ITT 1990

Audrey Frew; 7, Thumwood; Chineham North; Basingstoke; Hants; RG24 OTE; Tel: (0256) 474228 is arranging a canoe-camping trip down the Thames commencing at Cricklade in Wiltshire; down the River through London to Greenwich. The date is Saturday 21st July through to Wednesday 8th August, 1990. Camping will be mostly at recognised camp sites. The distance will be about 200 miles in easy stages and is suitable for the touring canoeists who would like to do some sight-seeing on the way.

If there is sufficient interest I will plan a further weeks' canoeing in the sea area between Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, again canoe camping. The dates for the sea part - Thursday 9th August to Thursday 16th August, 1990.

This trip came about by a group of us who met on the Danube, spent last summer canoeing down the Connecticut River in the U.S.A. and I had my arm twisted to run a similar trip on the Thames.

As there were only a dozen of us and with the amount of work involved, it would be nice to expand our numbers; so any continental friends who would like to see this part of England please contact me to join our German/Dutch/States/British group.

I shall be pleased to send details to anyone.

Audrey Frew.

H. J. SPLIT PADDLE SELF RESCUE METHOD

The H. J. split paddle rescue method (named by Frank Goodman) was developed after the last Sea Symposium/Coaching Conference held at Plas Menai.

During the conference a practical session was held to try and evaluate the viability of different self rescue devices and methods. Most of these relied on extra equipment, blowing up bags and/or precarious balancing acts which in my opinion would not work very effectively in a REAL situation, even the old faithful roll and re-entry relied on by most, leaves you in the impossible position of trying to put back on your spray-deck and to pump out!

It seemed to me that utilising equipment we already carried like our split paddles would be the way forward but it was not quite that simple. At first I tried a variety of devices, pieces of tape and bits of string to hold the paddles on the back deck just behind the cockpit. This gave support but as the blades rested above the surface of the water they would slap from side to side until one blade submerged causing the kayak to trip over the blade and capsize

I decided that the paddles needed to go into the water therefore allowing resistance on both faces of the blades and giving double the support. Trying to achieve this while the paddles were strapped to the back deck was difficult as the paddles could not be put into the water at a steep enough angle due to the curvature of the deck.

The paddles had to go into the side of the hull! After many abortive attempts trying to remove the tubes from the mould I contacted the man who always comes up with the answer. Frank suggested moulding a cone shaped tube which would also allow the drip rings to locate the shafts in position. This works but can be improved I am sure.

OPERATION

When using the system it is best if the kayak is swam stern into wind, the rudder/skeg lowered (if fitted) and some form of droge rigged up (tow line) to keep the kayak on this track. If the kayak is allowed to turn sideways on to the sea it tends to trip over the blades and capsize.

Fit the paddles and climb onto the back deck until you are just behind the cockpit with your legs in front of the looms but still in the water. This gives you more stability and is similar to resting when using a wave ski.

The next stage of the operation is probably the most unstable but can be done quickly. Sort out your spraydeck, etc., lift your legs into the cockpit and drop your bottom into the seat. You are now in a very stable position which allows you to fit the spraydeck and pump out!

I do not believe that this is the ultimate rescue device invented, there is room for a lot of improvement (which I am working on) but it does allow a greater chance of success than anything else available at present

If you have any suggestions for improvement then please discuss it with me

Howard N Jeffs

VALLEY

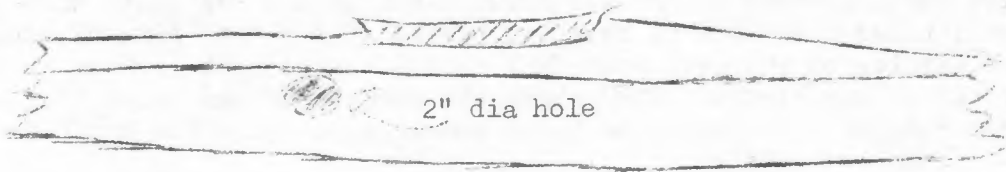
VALLEY CANOE PRODUCTS LTD., PRIVATE ROAD 4, COLWICK,
NOTTINGHAM NG4 2JT, ENGLAND. TEL. 0602 614995

HOWARD JEFFS
'SELF RESCUE'
PADDLE TUBES

2 TAPERING
GLASSFIBRE TUBES



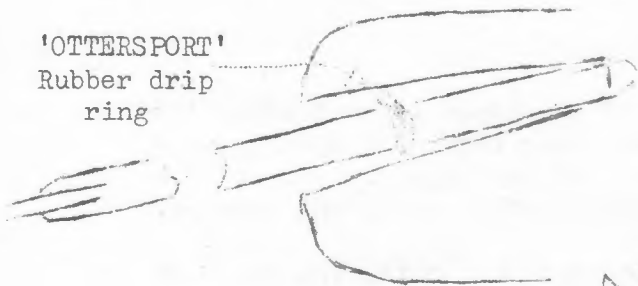
Closed at
narrow end



- (1) Bond to deck with
filler paste
Allow to cure
- (2) Laminate with resin
and glass mat a/b/c
- (3) Trim off excess tube



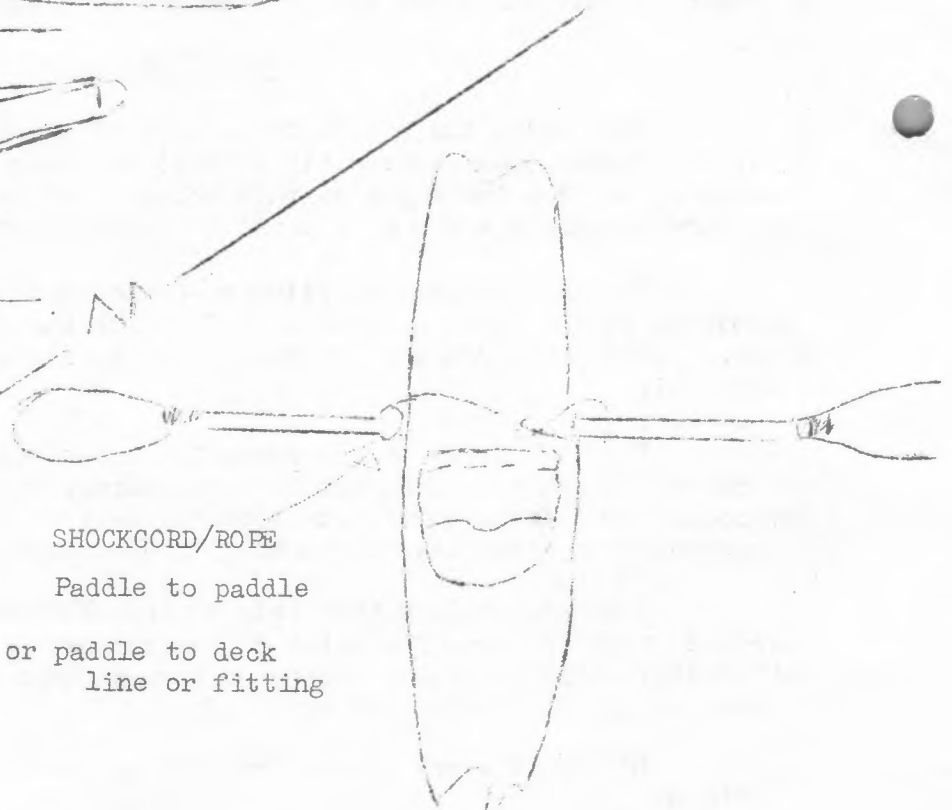
'OTTERSPORT'
Rubber drip
ring



SHOCKCORD/ROPE

Paddle to paddle

or paddle to deck
line or fitting



TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT HYPOTHERMIA

Definition

This is a condition which sets in when the body temperature falls below about 35°C (95°F).

Causes

- (a) Prolonged or accidental immersion in cold water.
- (b) Inadequate protection against a cold environment, particularly if the casualty is exhausted or at a high altitude
- (c) General exposure to cold by being in an unheated or poorly heated house or wearing wet clothes for a long period.
- (d) The ability of the body to protect itself from cold is lessened by alcohol or drugs.
- (e) Certain medical conditions such as diabetes may also be a contributory cause.

Symptoms and signs

The stages of hypothermia are as follows:-

- (a) Casualty complains of feeling miserably cold.
- (b) Casualty's skin becomes pale, although infants may be pink and appear deceptively healthy.
- (c) Casualty feels abnormally cold to the touch.
- (d) Intense and uncontrollable shivering may appear.
- (e) Shivering decreases and may be replaced by lack of muscle co-ordination and slurred speech.
- (f) General comprehension of the situation is dulled and the casualty may become irrational.
- (g) Pulse and respiration rate slow down.
- (h) Loss of consciousness: breathing and heartbeat become increasingly difficult to detect.

Treatment

The aim is to prevent the casualty from losing any more body heat and help to regain normal body temperature gradually. Arrange urgent removal to hospital.

- (a) Place insulating material around the casualty including the head and neck, but not the face, and lay the casualty down.
- (b) If the casualty is unconscious, place in the recovery position.
- (c) DO NOT place the casualty's hands in direct contact with the body.

(d) Remove casualty from the cold environment or high altitude. Place in shelter or move to a warm room.

(e) If the casualty's clothing is wet and adequate dry clothing is available, remove wet garments and replace them. If no clothing is available, leave wet clothes on and cover with waterproof material and additional insulation if available.

(f) Give the conscious casualty hot sweet drinks.

(g) If breathing and heartbeat stop or have stopped, begin resuscitation. A casualty with severe hypothermia may have a very slow heartbeat which is difficult to detect and an imperceptible breathing rate. Therefore, always check for heartbeat for at least one minute before commencing External Chest Compression.

(h) Examine the casualty for frostbite and treat as necessary.

(i) Remove to hospital.

(j) DO NOT give alcohol or rub or massage the limbs or encourage the casualty to take any exercise.

(k) If medical help is not readily available, apply gentle heat to the casualty to prevent a further drop in temperature. Place hot water bottles wrapped in a towel or clothing onto the casualty's trunk but not the extremities.

TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT FROSTBITE

Cause

If part of the body is exposed to wind in very cold weather.

Parts of body most frequently affected

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| (a) Ears | (d) Fingers |
| (b) Nose | (e) Toes |
| (c) Chin | |

Symptoms and signs

- (a) Loss of feeling and power of movement to affected part.
- (b) Affected part is cold, painful and stiff.
- (c) Blanching and numbness of the affected part which may lead to gangrene if not properly and promptly treated.

Treatment

- (a) Take care of casualty's general condition by sheltering him from weather.
- (b) Promptly remove anything of a constrictive nature (e.g., gloves, rings, boots).
- (c) If affected area is face, cover with dry gloved hand until colour and sensation restored.

- (d) If affected area is hand, place under clothing in armpits.
- (e) If the feet are affected wrap in warm blanket or sleeping bag or place casualty's feet in your own armpits.
- (f) Ideally rewarm the part in hot water, temperature 40°C (104°F).
- (g) Transport casualty to medical aid as quickly as possible.

TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT HEAT EXHAUSTION

The most vulnerable persons to this condition are those who are unacclimatised to high temperature and humidity.

The onset of heat exhaustion is gradual.

Causes

- (a) Exposure to excessive heat, especially moist heat.
- (b) Fluid and salt loss due to excessive sweating, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Symptoms and signs

- (a) An early sign is muscular cramp due to salt deficiency.
- (b) The casualty is exhausted.
- (c) He may be restless.
- (d) The face is pale and cold with a clammy sweat.
- (e) Pulse and breathing are rapid in rate.
- (f) He may complain of headache, dizziness and nausea.
- (g) Any sudden movement may cause casualty to faint.

Treatment

- (a) Lay casualty down in cool place.
- (b) If conscious, give cold water to drink to which has been added half-teaspoonful of common salt to each pint (half litre) of water. Give two pints.
- (c) If unconscious place in recovery position.

TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT HEAT-STROKE

The onset of this condition is more sudden and may be preceded by heat exhaustion.

Causes

- (a) High temperature associated with high humidity and lack of air movement.
- (b) An acute debilitating illness, such as malaria.

Symptoms and signs

- (a) Unconsciousness comes on quickly.
- (b) The face is flushed.
- (c) **Skin is hot** and dry.
- (d) Pulse is full in strength and bounding rhythm.
- (e) Breathing is noisy.
- (f) The casualty may be confused, lapsing into unconsciousness.
- (g) He may have temperature of 40°C (104°F) or more.
- (h) Casualty is restless and may complain of headache, dizziness and feeling hot.

Treatment

- (a) Quickly strip casualty and wrap in cold wet sheet.
- (b) Place in recovery position.
- (c) Direct currents of air onto casualty from above and below with hand or electric fans.
- (d) Keep sheet wet until casualty's temperature has been lowered to 38°C (101°F).
- (e) On recovery, cover casualty with dry sheet and, if possible, get him into air-conditioned accommodation.
- (f) Arrange for casualty to be removed to hospital.
- (g) If casualty's temperature rises again, repeat treatment.