

NEWSLETTER of the



Advanced Sea Kayak Club

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



ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO.82

NOVEMBER 1990

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7 Miller Close
NEWPORT
Isle of Wight
PO30 5PS

EDITORIAL

You find a subscription form for renewal of membership. It would help the Club if you returned it fairly promptly. Let me remind you that for the first time in ten years I have to raise the subscription to £7 00 for U.K. members and £8 00 for all non-U.K. members. I set out the justification for this in my last editorial. It may help if I explain that membership runs from January 1st through to December 31st. For those joining late in the year I send all the back issues of the newsletter for the year in question. It is impossible for me to run a system that allows for renewal throughout the year.

For some time now I have been publishing material from a relatively small number of people about pods/bulkheads/sea kayak design/sea kayak safety/the Anglesey Incident.

A letter in the last newsletter was particularly vociferous and, with hindsight, I feel I ought to have broken the habit of a lifetime (if you can call 16 years of running the ASKC as a lifetime) and used my editorial powers to tone the letter down.

I have always resisted editing material unless it was obviously essential due to undue length. I know how an edited letter draws the editor into the debate. I have tried to remain impartial by giving all the protagonists in these particular discussions/arguments an unfettered free hand by a 'publish and be damned' policy. I am feeling somewhat uncomfortable by being 'damned' and to get myself comfortable again (remember this is not a commercial magazine where I realise that editors have to sit in hot seats and constantly have scorched backsides - this is a club newsletter doing its best to promote and inform) I have made it clear to the leading players that from henceforth this newsletter is not going to be the forum for any debate that I, as editor, believe is becoming too acrimonious.

Having said all the above, I will now go on to mention an issue that does cause some polarisation of opinion around the world and that is the issue of 'certification'. The exception is our country, Britain, where we have a well developed and respected 'certification' scheme or coaching scheme. The British Canoe Union Coaching Scheme has been the backbone to organised recreational canoeing/kayaking and, though any individual paddler can opt to ignore it, those who want to teach canoeing in a formal setting usually have to be qualified. This is as far as it goes. Should any paddler wish to paddle a zinc bath across the Atlantic then there is no necessary qualification other than to be 'hare brained'.

On the other hand should too many hare brains decide to embark on crazy expeditions to the extent that Rescue Services are extended then it will be only a matter of time before authority insists on a 'driving licence' in the form of a basic kayaking qualification before we are allowed on the water. The fact we have a well run coaching scheme has thus far prevented such a scenario because it has not proved necessary and should such legislation come to pass (God forbid) then at least we have a ready made scheme that we, as paddlers, have devised ourselves. I recently spent a weekend with Didier Plouhinec of Kayak Du Ponant from France and learnt from him the many restrictions, regulations and beurocracy necessary before serious sea kayakers can secure a piece of

paper from the Maritime Authorities giving them permission to leave the coast by more than one nautical mile.

But really I digress. The real force behind the argument for a certification scheme is that it goes a long way to keeping the sport safe, giving it credibility and unity and providing a way for newcomers to quickly learn and so encourages potential paddlers to take up canoeing. It does seem a pity that attempts to get a unified certification system of tests and awards off the ground (or is it off the water!!) elsewhere in the world often fail. This can be due to the huge size of a country though I suppose this could be overcome by more open-mindedness from the national governing body. Certainly the forum at the recent Great Lakes Symposium on Lake Superior which focussed on group leadership seemed to indicate a depth of feeling in favour of some sort of instructional qualification system to maintain high standards of teaching.

THE ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB.

AIMS: 1. Promotion of Sea Kayaking; 2. Communication between sea kayakers and others.

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

Note that membership runs from January 1st through to December 31st each year.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP U.K. MEMBERS £7.00
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T. shirts - small/medium/large/X large @ £5.50 each (in yellow or black).

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ASKC Ski Hats @ £3.50 each.

* please line through as appropriate.

This is the last newsletter of 1990 so it remains for me to be perhaps the first to wish you A MERRY CHRISTMAS and some good paddling in 1991.

Before I close let me tell you about the Wheel of Life as displayed at every Buddhist monastery. Among many of its lessons it tells us of the cause of all human problems. A Buddhist monk interprets as follows: "There is a kind of nuclear reaction going on inside our minds all the time. Every day the ego generates pride, jealousy, anger, desire and hatred which spread fear and tension in all directions, causing harm to ourselves and others".

Just a thought to close the year with.

From: Dr Michael A. Taylor, 21 Sunbury Place, Edinburgh EH4 3BY
16 August 1990

Dear John,

The first thing I would like to do is to thank you for the work you have undertaken for the Advanced Sea Kayak Club. I have been sea canoeing now for nine years and learned more from ASKC than any other source. Having been involved in the running of various small sports clubs I am aware of the tremendous amount of work that is involved in running the ASKC single-handed.

I enjoy sea paddling as much as at any time since I started. Initially it was a minor activity but since a car accident in 1985 which left me unable to mountaineer, run or ski, canoeing has been my major interest. Unfortunately, I no longer look forward to the ASKC Newsletter as I used to. Rather than just leave the matter at that I thought I should be positive and offer some constructive suggestions. I would stress that these are made positively and in the context of my opening paragraph.

I have tried to analyse what I would like from the Club and what is not in place at present. I know of some paddlers who think that the Club could only call itself a club if it were to organise meets and they do not join for this reason. I disagree; I think that sea kayaking is an activity that would not benefit from a national club of that kind. I believe that the Newsletter should continue to be the main focus of the Club. My disappointments with the Newsletter recently are:-

(1) there are now too many adverts. A high proportion of the space in the last few Newsletters has been devoted to advertisements for kayak hire in Alaska, Povenance and other places abroad;

(2) there is a "sameness" about many of the expedition reports. Some of my own contributions fall into this category! There is a limit to the number of accounts one can enjoy of unremarkable trips round Mull!

(3) there is rarely continuity from issue to issue. Unfortunately a member will raise an item in a letter which nobody follows up. For example Duncan Winning raised some issues about weather forecasts in May 1988 which I followed up in a letter you published in March 1990. This is the sort of item that should have led to an ongoing correspondence. I really cannot understand why there is not an ongoing correspondence on some issues. In most Newsletters the editor's difficulty is ending the correspondence, not encouraging it! Could it have anything to do with the length of time it takes for a letter to be printed? I know that you sometimes hold items over to a later edition and that could mean that a letter is published six-eight months after it was written;

(4) there are few technical items. In the early days, there were lots of ideas about tow lines, rescue methods, backrests. What has happened? Is there now an orthodoxy within the sport that precludes debate on these issues? Have manufacturers taken heed of these articles and produced items which cannot be bettered with the consequence that nobody has anything contentious to write? I think not. I still hear them debated as frequently at campsites and on the sea.

The item on the Howard Jeff's split paddle self rescue stands out in recent issues as one of the few exceptions. I would like to have seen this followed up with reports by paddlers who have tried the

method. The various Sea Tiger articles by Nick Padwick also stand out. However, both the HJ splits and the Sea Tiger articles were written by the manufacturers and/or designers with all that this implies;

(5) many major figures in the sport do not contribute to the Newsletter (this is particularly disappointing in view of the high proportion of the country's best paddlers who are members). Consequently, much of what is written is not about "advanced sea kayaking".

Quite clearly, these are not issues of your making as you can only print what you are sent, you regularly make pleas for contributions and you probably share my frustration. What are the options?

(1) Encourage reports on equipment. Your invitation to comment on tents a few years ago attracted a good response. Paddles, kayaks, spraydecks, compasses may be subjects for report. Climbing and cycling magazines are read more for their test reports than any other feature. If you were to include equipment reports you may have to edit some of the responses and I appreciate the ethical dilemmas that you would face.

(2) Identify themes in the way that Sea Kayaker does. This might encourage contributors to write on a wider range of topics than at present.

(3) Improve the production method. The widespread availability of desk top publishing would allow a visually much more attractive Newsletter. It would also allow the inclusion of reasonable maps.

(4) Include reports of activities of local clubs.

(5) Actively encourage contributions from people who have something to say about the sport. I think this is the most important but also the most contentious issue. Should you take the editorial decision not to include some items because they are not very good? Maybe an interview with a member could be published each issue with the interviewer drawing out adaptations of equipment by the paddler, unusual places visited, opinions on technique. Such an interview should encourage follow-up correspondence.

I fully appreciate that any of these changes would place more of a burden on the editor as he would be taking a far more pro-active role. It may be that it is time to look for an editorial team to help you to take the Club forward. However, you may think that this would lead to instability and prefer to keep the whole responsibility as at present.

I end as I started by thanking you for all that you are doing and to stress that this is intended as a positive letter and in no way a criticism of the enormous amount of work you have undertaken. It is also personal and not intended for publication.

Yours sincerely, (Sgd.) Michael

P.S. This was written before I received the current Newsletter. The publication of another long account of a paddle round Mull was a coincidence.

From: J. J. Ramwell, 7 Miller Close, Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight,
PO30 5PS. 13th September 1990

Dear Michael,

Many thanks for your letter of 16th August 1990. My late response is due to my absence for the last three weeks (kayaking in Canada).

I was pleased to receive your letter. Obviously the good bits were particularly pleasing but I must say that your criticism of certain aspects of the Newsletter are, by and large, justified, and your observations are certainly constructive.

As for the ASKC being a 'club'; I have previously published a short history of the ASKC which attempts to explain why we are a club, why we have the title 'Advanced' and why the club exists in its present form. You are right in that our 'raison d'etre' is clearly to publish a newsletter, although in our early days when there was a greater need than today for organised events, I arranged a host of these for sea paddlers including symposiums, coaching courses, meets and week long sea kayaking holidays - all done under the auspices of the ASKC.

In attempting to provide an international flavour to the newsletter I have promoted a range of commercial sea kayaking ventures abroad. By so doing I hope to encourage these concerns to flourish to the obvious advantage of sea kayaking world wide. Many Americans, for example, rely heavily on guided expeditions to get them started.

I have to agree that many of my expedition reports do have a 'sameness' about them. I am for ever encouraging people to let me have their post-exped reports in the hope I will receive some more interesting ones, ones where perhaps the initial plans fell flat due to incident/s out in the field. We always learn most from these. None the less, readers do appreciate hearing of the straightforward exped.

I usually get letters into the next edition of the newsletter but whether they get followed up is clearly a matter for the readers. I agree that many should be followed up but are not which is, as you say, a pity.

The sport of sea kayaking has inevitably become more sophisticated and the neat little innovations that abounded when the sport was new in the UK no longer proliferate. None the less, there are still many new ideas and features worthy of reporting and I shall continue to look out for them for publication.

Like you I wish that more of the contributions came from some of our better known paddlers. They have a lot to offer. Having said this, many of our contributors are already prominent members of the sea kayaking fraternity.

All the suggestions you make for livening up the ASKC are constructive and you can be assured that I have considered many of them already. Two main hurdles confront me - time and money. The club is run on a shoestring in order to keep costs down to members. To go glossy would mean taking on advertisers; simply to improve format would cost much more. As for time, well I am sure I have no need to persuade you how quickly life tumbles on by. Sea kayaking is not my only interest in life (though my wife might disagree!) and of course I do have a full time job as a civil servant and my bosses demand their pound of flesh.

As you intimate, I believe that the ASKC is now at a cross roads. Does it continue as it is and probably become extinct through not keeping up with the changing face of sea kayaking or does it 'explode' into a glossy magazine taking on many of the suggestions you make. You will be interested in plans I have to launch an up-market glossy sea kayaking magazine. I have 'targetted' a suitable individual who might be interested in taking on what will be a full time job and the early signs are promising. I intend to keep the ASKC going; in fact I am hoping that the ASKC will continue to run for some time as I believe there will be a continuing wish for this to happen among a significant number of paddlers me included.

Finally, you say your letter is not intended for publication. I would like to publish it, together with this response. Would you agree?

Keep in touch.

Yours sincerely, John J Ramwell

P.S. I have returned your original letter in case you are prepared to let me publish but might wish to change it in any way first (I see no reason why you should).

From Nick Thompson, Expeditions Officer, British Schools Exploring Society
Dear John,

Contrary to our expectations we are in possession of four unsold Weekender Sea Kayaks from the Svalbard Expedition. They are currently returning from North Norway by container and will be available from the end of September.

Advertisements will be placed in the B.S.E.S. Newsletter if they remain unsold and ideally we would be asking not less than £200 each (on the assumption they return in good condition).

If any of your Club Members is interested in purchasing any of these kayaks or would like further information they should contact this office

British Schools Exploring Society, 1, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR

(Tel 071 584 0710)

SEA KAYAKING EVENT 1991. MAY 3rd to 10th.
Sponsored by Anglesey Sea and Surf, Valley Canoe Products and the Advanced Sea Kayak Club. See this newsletter for further details

From: Zeljko Stojavljevic, Kanu Club Riverfree, Leskovarova 14
VII-41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia

Canoe Club "Riverfree" was formed in Yugoslavia in 1989: "River" stands for rivers, lakes and sea, and "free" stands against nature and wildlife destruction, pollution and limitations of access. It also stands for freedom of outdoor activities on rivers, sea, lakes, streams, their banks and shores. Although the country's top paddlers rank among the world's best, canoeing in general - as well as concern for our waterways - is on a very low level. Our aim is to improve that.

Mainly we do sea-kayaking, whitewater kayaking and canoeing but, of course, sometimes it is combined with hiking, rafting, bicycling or sailing. Yugoslavia is a paradise for paddlers, with many rivers or islands still unpolluted and not explored by kayaks or canoes. Therefore we do not plan any canoeing trips abroad yet but are willing to help canoeists from other countries to enjoy paddling on our waters.

We also provide services like instruction, guidance and boat rental to other canoeists, clubs, organisations and travel agencies that organise canoeing tours. This activity has helped us gain recognition and become the leading canoeing club in the country except for competitive canoeing. It also supported us financially so that we are now equipped with over a hundred canoes, sea and whitewater kayaks with gear, trailers, vans, etc. Our main supplier is a well known German manufacturer Prijon, so our equipment is of good quality. Now we are ready to help fellow canoeists who would like to canoe in Yugoslavia but never did it because of lack of information, boat transport problem or they had no partner.

I am enclosing a book on Elafiti Islands, one of the most attractive sea-kayaking areas on Adriatic not only for their nature but also for tradition and places of cultural and historical interest. Although the book is written for ordinary tourists, it is a good source of information for canoeists as well.

As a founder of the Club I believe that Riverfree and Salzwasser-Union have many common interests and hope for good co-operation.

With kind regards.

From Trevor Riches, 11, Station Rd., Snettisham, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 7QL

Dear John,

I would be grateful if you would put the following ad. in the next n/letter

TRAILER - will carry 4 Nordkapps or similar. Above gear compartment with waterproof cover. 10 cwt indispension units, steel braced radial tyres (spare unused). Needs paint job.

Contact Trev. Riches, Tel 0553 772395 (day) 0485 542299 (eve)

SEA KAYAKING EVENT 1991. MAY 3rd to 10th.

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A SPECIAL KIND OF MANAGEMENT

The Sports Council have instituted studies of the British coastline around Hants and the Isle of Wight and from Poole to Gloucester. They say there are other interests including industry, commerce and conservation in addition to sport and recreation in these areas which may result in conflict. The coastal recreation study follows a paper Into the 90s: National Strategy for Sport which the Sports Council say they have recently published. The studies will be completed in July 1990.

The aim is to provide a strategic overview of present and future demands and constraints and provision for sport and active recreation and to develop appropriate policies which can be followed through into regional strategies, statutory plans and local planning and management frameworks of relevant agencies. The main elements are:

- (1) To build a picture of the type of scale of demand for sport and active recreation on the coast, both present and future
- (2) To look at the attributes of the coast and at the ability of the coast to supply the demand
- (3) To examine any conflicts and constraints affecting the recreational use of the coast.
- (4) To produce a strategy which will include planning goals and management alternatives and suggested methods of implementation.

The prospect of the Sports Council 'managing' the coast and implementing 'statutes' is one we view with great alarm. Many canoeists are turning to the sea because of the absence of constraints compared with the state of anarchy which exists on our rivers. The Sports Council appear to have taken virtually no action to put pressure on the Government to adjust the law for 20th century needs and continue to pour money into angling clubs without any requirement to make use of the nation's rivers available to anyone else at any time. It is to be hoped that the Sports Council do not intend to reduce our coastline to the same appalling state into which they have let our rivers sink.

Jim Cornwell, Chairman of the BCU SW Region, takes a more optimistic line. He asks for information on any problems that have arisen for canoeists.

'Judging by the numbers of cars with laden roof racks that I see on the roads, kayaks, canoes, sailboards, surf boards, dinghies, inflatables, etc., all requiring space to launch I am certain that all is not ideal on our beaches. In fact, there is a notice forbidding windsurfers in a harbour right next door to a yacht basin wherein some £30 million are tied up (literally) in the shape of yachts and motor cruisers

The coastal study includes the 500 miles of the South West together with the coastline of the Southern Region so that two Sports Council regions are involved. The BCU has two members of the SW working party, Bob Ottley of the Sea Touring Committee and myself. I am also a member of the SW Sports Council's special Sports Strategy review committee which is looking at the inland as well as coastal sport and recreation needs into the 90s. The SW Sports Council committed itself some time ago to the idea of emphasizing the greater use of our coastal waters for sea touring and also surfing.

The problems to be resolved (or "managed" in Leisure and Amenity jargon) are many, harbour dues, launching fees, demands for registration/

insurance fees on surf beaches irrespective of the BCU third party insurance selective harassment of canoeists in waters close to bird sanctuaries, code of practice for boats and surf boards in both statutory and voluntary marine nature reserves and beach safety to name but a few

To enable Bob and I to fight the canoeists' battle we need the maximum amount of information about problems encountered by paddlers as well as any helpful local authorities. A questionnaire has been sent to a number of clubs which are coast based and the results are being assessed by the working party.'

Jim can be contacted at Church Cottage, The Hill, Langport, Somerset TA10 9PU with information.

We expressed our concerns to the Sports Council and received a detailed response from Roger Orgill, Countryside and Water Recreation Facilities Unit.

'The Sports Council, particularly from the Southern Region's point of view, have recognised that competing demands for the use of the coast have meant that we have to make a case for all recreational activities as opposed to, for example, built developments, particularly with regard to the demand for marinas, for example access in the Solent area being restricted by marina development.

Our news release states specifically that our coastal strategies will "aid management and policy making" - in other words, we are drawing attention to the needs of recreational users. Indeed, as part of the Sports Council Regional Strategy work we will be examining within the regions the needs of water users and, certainly in the Southern Region, canoeing will be one of the groups consulted.

Perhaps it would be helpful if I underline the Sports Council's activities in this area, particularly with regard to our efforts to resolve any problems between angling and canoeing interests

(i) In 1983 the Sports Council published a Statement of Intent by the British Canoe Union and the National Anglers Council in which it was emphasised that local access arrangements were the best means of resolving difficulties over shared use of water facilities.

(ii) In September 1987 the Sports Council set up an Angling and Canoeing Liason Group in order to discuss access agreements for specific rivers between all interested and affected parties. Membership of the group not only includes representatives from the BCU, the NAC and the National Federation of Anglers but also the Country Landowners Association, the National Farmers Union, the Sports Council for Wales and the Sports Council. The Sports Council provides a Chairman and secretariat for the group and will do so until the group agrees to hand over responsibility for meetings to the governing bodies on a rotating basis.

Since its inception the group has made good progress with the NAC and the BCU agreeing to exchange and respond to information to defuse any incidents and to draw up and exchange a directory of key officers to contact to resolve local disputes.

(iii) The Sports Council has also made progress on the pilot studies in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region and the Eastern Region for establishing local angling and canoeing liason groups to discuss access agreements for specific areas and rivers.

(iv) The Sports Council's financial support to canoeing over the period 1986 to 1990 currently totals £3,284,064 compared to the Sports Council's financial support to angling of £557,637 over the period 1986-1989.

(v) Included in the Sports Council's financial support to canoeing is £2.2m for the artificial canoe slalom course at Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre which was created in recognition of the legal difficulties sometimes encountered by canoeists in securing navigational rights on natural waters.

(vi) Within its Strategy for Sports 1988-1993, Sport in the Community - Into the 90s, the Sports Council recognizes that access for public use is limited for both public and private water areas. In view of this, the Strategy commits the Council to seek to safeguard and endeavour to expand existing opportunities for water recreation and thereby maximize use of all inland and coastal water resources for recreation. Thus, one of the Strategy's main themes for increasing community participation is to encourage the provision of improved access to sports sites in the countryside and on water.

(vii) The Sports Council has established a Countryside and Water Recreation Team at its London headquarters which acts as a central focus to advise, plan, implement and monitor Sports Council policy in relation to sport and recreational activities associated with the use of the natural environments of land, water and air.'

Roger fails to mention:

(i) The anglers have now admitted that they never intended to comply with the spirit of the Statement of Intent

(ii) The Angling and Canoeing Liason Group failed to prevent canoeists on the Seiont being taken to court by anglers and being given heavy fines with a second group being about to be taken to court by Seiont anglers as we go to print.

(iii) The pilot study in Yorks and Humberside shows no progress after a year except that the discussions have been switched to another river because of the lack of likelihood of progress being made on the first river. The study in the Eastern Region has met with a blunt refusal by anglers to discuss any form of access.

(iv) The Sports Council's grants to canoeing are generous compared with those to other sports. Unfortunately they are tied to the promotion of medal winners rather than to making our rivers available to the general canoeing public.

(v) The Sports Council's view of Holme Pierrepont as an alternative to river access is enlightening.

(vi) The Strategy for Sport does not suggest that perhaps 2% of our natural rivers have agreements for any sections at all of their length for any time at all in the year.

(vii) The Sports Council stop rather short of being heard to say that the law needs to be changed to permit sport for all or that anglers should share rivers with the rest of the population.

"OF MUESLI AND MEN" by Barry Howell

Don't get me wrong, I've nothing against health food. Just don't expect me to eat it on a sea kayak weekend, particularly at breakfast time. I'd pulled the sleeping bag out of the tent at 6.30 a.m. into a glorious Scottish morning, calm sea lapping on the sand, the odd gull wheeling overhead and stretched out on the grass to savour the experience. The next thing I knew it was 9.30 a.m. and I'm woken by the sound of the motordrive on Alan's camera as he took a close up of the effects of the night before.

I knew instinctively that something was wrong. Sure, I could detect the presence of woodsmoke on the morning air, and if I tried hard there was the barely distinguishable but delectable aroma of filtered coffee. But where was the mouth watering fragrance of frying bacon? I looked down to the camp fire area and the field kitchen we'd knocked together from fish crates and driftwood planks the night before. Don was on breakfast duty, pottering around the fire. "I've got a bad feeling about this, Alan", I whispered, "No smell of bacon".

"How's the breakfast going, Don?" he shouted. "Ready when you are" he replied instantly. We trudged down to the fire area with a sense of impending doom. There, laid out on the table, was a plastic bag of muesli. Not even the sickly sweet kind that comes out of a box with a picture of a mountain on it, but honest to goodness, genuine whole-food muesli. We sat down in a state of shock. Woken somehow by the seriousness of the moment, Martin appeared, right on cue, looking a little the worse for wear from the excesses of the night before. Now I have to tell you at this point that Martin has genuine Viking blood in his veins. A hangover he can cope with, albeit a little ungraciously, but no Viking ever set sail on a bowl of muesli. He took a look at the table and blanched horribly.

"Sheep shit and budgie grit!" he exclaimed, and sat down abruptly as his legs gave way. Now Don's a sensitive soul and astonishingly quick on the uptake. "I can't help feeling that you chaps might be a little less than satisfied with the breakfast menu" he commented perceptively. It was all becoming horribly obvious. While our boats floated like sea kayaking versions of squirt boats loaded down with food, drink and goodies enough to sustain the haute cuisine image of a proper sea trip, Don's barely touched the water. Now we knew why.

We discussed the plans for the day over another coffee. There was really only one option; fishing from the kayaks. With Martin every trip is an excuse to catch fish. It's incredibly contagious and wonderfully appealing when you're suffering from protein deficiency. We changed into canoeing gear and made ready to launch the boats. Don coughed apologetically; with Oates-like solemnity he confessed "I'm just going for a little walk, I may be some time". With that he set off with his rucksack up the zig zag path which winds its way up to the top of the cliffs. Paddling out into the long, slow swell we chose the spot to fish. Martin headed back again rather rapidly, a faint greenish tinge to his facial features, claiming an urgent call of nature. Surely a Viking couldn't suffer from seasickness?

I dropped the handline over the side and let the weight take it down to the bottom, feeling immediately the snag on the hooks as it caught on the rocks. Or so I thought. But rocks don't move, and they certainly don't fight back. I hauled it up slowly as Alan rafted up and held my boat steady. There it was, below the surface, glistening in the

sunlight. A big pollock, well worth the effort of paddling a couple of hundred yards. Our luck continued and over the next half hour or so we hauled in another half dozen sizeable mackerel. More than enough for lunch. Have you ever had fresh pollock fillet, fried in butter over a wood fire? Or planked mackerel, grilled in reflected heat pinned out on a driftwood plank? Give me that every time in preference to pot noodles, or mung bean and tofu salad.

Just then, Hutch paddled into the bay, living up to his promise to join us for the day. He's another health food freak, as evidenced by his packed lunch which he gleefully unwrapped. Hoola Hoops, Jaffa cakes and cherryade. "Didn't I count four boats on the beach?" Hutch queried. "Yes, the fourth one belongs to Don" we replied. "He's just gone off for a walk."

We ate and talked and laughed a lot. Soon we spotted a figure on the cliff top. Could it be Don? It was. He descended the path slowly, trudging wearily under the obvious weight of a large pack. He joined us by the fire, readily accepting a piece of mackerel and a mug of tea. He ate and drank wordlessly, clearly enjoying our guilty glances at the heavy backpack. I could stand it no longer. "Been shopping Don?" He nodded. "Yes, I walked along into Coldingham." With that, he slowly began to unpack the bag. A variety of four packs, a bottle of red and a bottle of white wine, fresh milk, all eyes were on the rucksack ... more muesli, cigars and then the coup de grace, pristine in vacuum packed polythene. All credit to Don; he'd saved our bacon.

THE 1991 BRITISH SEA KAYAKING EVENT

A weeks' programme of sea kayaking on Anglesey, N. Wales, aimed at all levels of experience.

MAY 3rd to 10th, 1991.

This event, backed by Anglesey Sea and Surf, Valley Canoe Products and the Advanced Sea Kayak Club aims at bringing together all those interested in sea kayaking in order to share experience and learn from a variety of experts from around the world via a series of presentations.

There will be opportunity to participate in a range of British Canoe Union courses as well as to take part in a variety of mini expeditions around the Anglesey area.

For further details contact Nigel Dennis at Anglesey Sea and Surf, Porthdafarch Rd., Holyhead, Anglesey, Gwynedd, LL65 2LP (Tel 0407 762525)

TALES OF GREAT VOYAGERS

by Amos Bewick

Tales of great voyagers and interesting places tend to make me envious and whether some Eskimo with an unpronounceable name used carbon kevlar in their boat production is all very interesting. But what we want is the sophisticated banter of two opposing groups. Who was the first to develop what? Did they patent it? Was it available in the 30s? Was Rob Roy McGregor a fictional character from "Boys Own"? Was it any use? And finally is anyone going to argue the point? The best discussion group by far is the Nordkapp/Tiger Debating Society.

It's good to see the old debate in the press once again. It's not opinions that I value but the style in which they are delivered. Mr Goodmans article scored highly with his brilliant backhander on the first page. If I can paraphrase it went: 'I was once like them but now I've matured'. This was a goal even before he identified his enemy ... such class. Towards the end he deftly chips in a superb goal with the 'truth of the matter is that the days of the pod have gone'. What a one liner, worthy of Mr Bond after he dispatches yet another enemy of the free world.

There has been some mention of tests being done. Would anyone like to let me have the method, results and conclusions? From both camps as I would like to know the facts. Though only if they aren't conclusive so the debate continues and our gurus of the sea can dazzle us with their wit and sarcasm and nifty use of the pen. Could I suggest a contest for teams of four experts from each manufacturer (part-time or professional)? Maybe as a sideline to the Bitches Rodeo (which I believe features boats without pods or structures that prevent water spilling from end to end). It could be a timed race involving self rescues, all in rescues and assisted rescues with the distance from the start taken into account so that paddlers would be encouraged to perform in the roughest water.

Now to something that ought to unite all sea canoeists. The state of our seas. The Friends of Cardigan Bay as the name suggests are concerned with the area of sea between St Davids Head and Bardsey. They are supported by Greenpeace and have the following aims:-

- (1) Studies into Irish Sea pollution
- (2) end disposal of sewage into the bay;
- (3) control marina development and the use of jet skis; and
- (4) statutory protection for Cardigan Bay.

Their latest newsletter reports how they have had consultations with the Welsh Water Authority and made clear the opposition to the proposed long sea outfall at Aberystwyth and suggested a full land based sewage treatment. They also want sewage and industrial effluent outfalls clearly marked ... with success on some beaches.

A big concern is the dolphins and porpoise in the bay and the lack of facts relating to these mammals. This is where canoeists can help, any sightings are useful and information on the species seen, their behaviour, the weather and other activity on the water is needed. Friends of Cardigan Bay are a pressure group and are interested in things that may concern us as users of the sea especially the area known as Cardigan Bay. If you have information for their dolphin survey, or noticed any changes to the seal population or would like to know more, write to:-

Friends of Cardigan Bay, Nant-y-derm Llandre, Aberystwyth

Now a question to link these two subjects. If a "professional" pisses in the Trent, taking into account the waterways of the Midlands, would it land on a canoeist whose home waters are the Bristol Channel?

SEA KAYAK SAFETY - A CLOSER LOOK AT NEEDED SKILLS
BY WILL NORDBY

The following article was taken from the American magazine "CANOE". Will Nordby is a frequent contributor to this magazine as well as being a member of the A.S.K.C.

Safe or dangerous? You can't think about one concept without the other. Or can you?

It seems that those who promote sea kayaking tend to favour the safe aspects of the sport while downplaying the hazards. In numerous ads. clear skies, flat seas and smiling faces are matched with colourful kayaks. Of course the kayaks are 'seaworthy', 'stable' and 'foregiving'. The message, apart from buying the specific product is that the kayak will compensate for your lack of skills.

If you ask an experienced sea kayaker what skills he feels are important, he'll most likely answer: paddling technique, seamanship, knowledge of the marine environment, self rescue, commonsense and good judgment. The problem arises when degrees of importance are arbitrarily given to these skills by influential kayakers. To suggest that commonsense is more important than paddling technique, as has been done, is a disservice to the beginner. In reality, each of the above-named skills is EQUALLY important. Like fingers on the hand, they function as a unity. Winston Shaw, veteran wilderness guide, observes "Far too often newcomers have little or no experience in dealing with the always unpredictable and oft times dangerous fickle moods of the sea and, more often than not, evidence a complete lack of proficiency in such things as navigation, paddle technique, weather and tide prediction, and group and self rescue.

Perhaps even more troubling, many seem either unwilling or unable to grasp the importance that a well rounded grounding in such things plays in their ability to survive the inevitable challenge every sea kayaker must eventually cope with".

One of the favourite demonstrations at symposiums are self and group rescues. Usually they are performed quickly and efficiently by hot dog paddlers in favourable conditions. But a few novice kayakers can relate such rescues to the actual sea conditions or circumstances in which the rescues might be used. Nor do they think about the physical condition of the person having to be rescued. Namely, fatigue, sick, injured or incapacitated. They don't think about the adverse effect cold water has on manual dexterity. Eskimo rolls and inflatable rescue devices are too often perceived as panaceas. Experience shows neither approach is 100% reliable and rather ineffective unless diligently practiced.

The deceptive ease of getting started in sea kayaking leads many paddlers into overestimating their proficiency. As long as they can get by, there is little motivation to improve their skills. Similarly, there is a lack of respect for the dangers of the marine environment. Complacency sets in. That's exactly what happened to me. It took a life threatening capsized to bring my perceived proficiency in line with the reality of my skills.

I'd been introduced to sea kayaking in the early '70s by my brother. He strongly recommended that I seriously work at improving my skills. But once I found I could paddle well enough to go on extended trips, I forgot about his advice. True, I'd encountered some scary rough water situations reminding me that I was at risk, but I had gotten by.

So it was with a fair degree of confidence that I agreed to accompany a friend on a day trip two years ago. He had just gotten interested in sea kayaking and apparently felt safe in my presence because of my experience.

The trip went well until we approached our island destination. My friend, who was following me, asked where we should land. Casually I turned rearward to answer. In doing so I shifted too much weight to starboard. Immediately the kayak rolled to that side. Instinctively, to regain my balance, I thrust out my arm. Wrong! I should have executed a paddle brace. Like a row of dominoes, my perceived skills collapsed into a series of errors. I came out of the kayak, repeatedly failed to re-enter and flooded the bow. (Only stern flotation kept my kayak from sinking.) Additionally I did not have a pump or bailer. My friend became panicky and I drifted away from land. Welcome to reality.

Despite my errors, I did do several things correctly. I wore a buoyancy jacket, had my paddle tied to the kayak, remained calm, conserved energy and maintained a positive attitude. My dilemma was resolved when, twenty minutes later, my friend got the attention of a passing fishing boat.

Following that humbling experience, I realistically became proficient in both paddling and rescue skills - something I should have taken care of at the beginning. Now, with proper training and practice my perceived skills more closely match my actual skills. As safety proponent and fellow kayaker Charles Sutherland notes, "Training has two vital objectives. The most obvious one is to bring one's physical skills up to the level necessary for safe and efficient paddling. The second objective, more subtle and more important, is to bring one's perception of risk in this sport and one's understanding of the marine environment into line with reality".

It wasn't until I met Ted Taylor, expert ocean paddler, that I gained a new perspective on sea kayaking. "You sea kayakers", he scoffed, "have this 'in the boat' mentality that blinds you to the possibility you might be in the water. Most of you do not know how to react in that kind of situation. Hell, if I am knocked off my surf ski and lose it, I'm mentally prepared to swim ashore."

Taylor is right. We paddlers have too much reliance in the 'seaworthy', 'stable' and 'forgiving' sea kayak. As a consequence, our 'in-the-water' skills are inevitably neglected. For whatever reason, we want to believe our 'in-the-boat' skills will carry us through. Yet, unless we develop 'in-the-water' skills, we will continue to widen the gap between our concept of what is safe or dangerous when sea kayaking.

WANTED

By Steve Selwyn in New York, two secondhand NORDKAPPS. Phone him on 718 615 1580.

STOLEN DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAY PERIOD FROM HERTS YOUNG MARINERS BASE,
CHESHUNT

DISCOVERY FAST TOURING KAYAK. Blue top on white hull, 18 feet long, large cockpit, fast touring kayak. Property of Nick Hodson, S.I. Edmonton Canoe Group.

This boat was supplied to me in February 1985 by Fladbury Caroes and is of good quality fibreglass. It has, however, a number of points which should make it easy to recognise. The seat was not taken when it was stolen, nor was the rudder. The rudder gear was taped up pending repairs. Therefore I would be grateful if canoe shops would look out for persons asking for seats or rudders for a Discovery. Since the cockpit of a Discovery is larger than any other K1 a normal spraydeck will not fit, and people asking for an extra large K1 spraydeck should also be suspected. In addition, there were a number of chips off the front of the boat, due to its having once pitched forward while being unroped when unexpectedly full of rainwater. These should be particularly noticeable. There is a dent in the deck, behind the cockpit, but the hull, though scratched through long use, is perfectly watertight.

There were a number of stickers on the boat, including two Devizes to Westminster Race ones for 1985 and 1986, also a number of Thames Licenses, including (if it has not become detached) a current one for 1990. I am not sure of the exact serial number of this licence, but as I bought three on the same day I can give the number of one of the others and the one on the Discover should be close to it.

Stuck on just in front of and to the right of the cockpit is a white sticker with rather cryptic abbreviations and numbers which refer to the pocks on the Marlow to Elmbridge Marathon course, and the times to pass through each one to attain the BCU Marathon Gold Award. There is also fitted behind the cockpit a number holder.

INFORMATION PLEASE to Nick Hodson, telephone (W: 071-631-3315, Ext.492) and pager 081-884 3344 callsign A6692. REWARD £20.

From: Evert Pronk, C. de Houtmanstr. 14, 1782 VB Den Helder, Netherlands

Dear John,

Could you give me some advice about kayaking around the Scilly Isles, I am thinking about spending a week in that area but I need some information about tides, currents, beaches, camping areas, forbidden isles, lights and buoys. The only thing I could get here was an ordnance survey map of the area and some touristic informations. Can you give me some titles and names of writers of books about this area with relevant information for seakayakers so that I can order them here. If you could send me some photocopies of relevant information I would be glad to pay your costs. Maybe you even have an address of a local seakayaker living on one of the isles. Thank you for all the trouble I put you through.

By the way my address in your file has a wrong postcode; the right code is listed above.

This is a report of the Ile de Ré trip on June 2nd to 10th June 1990. This report is given from a personal point of view and apologies are given in advance to anyone who may have seen things differently.

Map of the Island of Ile de Re.



John Ramwell organised the ferry crossing, minibus, trailer hire as well as costing it all out. John's work helped to make the trip a success for the British party even under the duress of failing equipment!

Sunday, 3rd June.

Met at Portsmouth Ferry Terminal. We arrived at midnight to be met by Nick Padwick and found the minibus and trailer. The rest of the party turned up at various times during the night and early morning. The loading of the trailer was accomplished straightforwardly and the wheel changed for the spare which was in much better condition. John decided, after consultation with the rest of the party, to buy RAC insurance "... just in case anything happens". Some things that are said in jest!

The bus and trailer were loaded with minimal customs inspection and as we stood on the bow of the ferry we wondered where Frank Goodman's car was. Not long before the ferry was due to set sail, the car was spotted. This was relatively straightforward as he had Howard Jeffs' Aleut Sea II double on the roof.

On arriving at Le Harve, we set off, saying goodbye to Frank for the time being. We soon managed to get lost well before reaching the outskirts of Le Harve. The bus seemed very sluggish and we thought that the bus was a bit underpowered for the job. As we pulled up to the bridge over the Seine, a passing French motorist pronounced that we had a "... wheel...fire...smoke..." so we stopped half-way over the Seine and looked at this wheel. Of course it was the better looking wheel but it had now lost the axle cap and the grease around the bearings was fairly molten and not providing much lubrication.

We managed to press on for a couple of miles and stop at a garage where the wheel was fixed. What in fact had been happening was the brakes were jamming on and this caused an undue amount of heat as well as a bit of a load for the bus. The brakes were duly disengaged (permanently) and after an hour we set off for Ile de Re.

The French countryside passed at a much better rate now and we made good progress. We stopped for a meal, after which I decided that the French don't have vegetables with their food. Then it was ever onwards south and west. Finally it grew dark and I thought that it could not be far now. I found that we actually arrived at the campsite at about 3am in the morning. The size of France for a first time visitor was a little overwhelming.

We fell out of the bus and made a grab for our kit to put up our tents and hit the sack as quickly as possible. Some people didn't bother with the tent and just bivvied out for the remainder of the night.

We heard that Christian was coming around (it was good to see that he was up to welcome and help us) asking if we were alright and offering places in the chalet of the campsite manager. The next morning whilst the rest of group went for an introductory paddle, we mainly slept on. Christian had even organised the bread for us all which again showed his thought and care for us.

Monday, 4th June

The first day of the circumnavigation. A meeting was held to sort people into groups and designate group leaders. The groups were organised so that about eight paddlers were in a group. These groups then set off from the beach outside the campsite, so there was no bussing around and the carry was not very far. The day was sunny and the start time was about noon. What an epic start!

We set off in John Ramwell's group, *Escargot II*, and headed out across the bay. There was a slight wind and we soon got into a rhythm. We paddled for about 90 minutes when we arrived at a pleasant sandy beach to be greeted by Christian and a representative of the Mayor from Loix. The table was set out with the Pineau and fruit juice. Speeches were made and the drink flowed. We sat enjoying the strong, warm sun. Before we all fell asleep, due to sun or Pineau or both, Christian got us on the water again with the instructions to head out to a lighthouse and wait for a microlight to turn up and take photos of us all. I had decided that it was so warm and neglected to put my cag on. As we headed away from the beach the weather changed. The clouds scudded across and the wind increased. As we all waited dutifully at the lighthouse, the waves got steeper and steeper as the wind whipped them up with a good fetch. People were getting a little impatient waiting for the microlight and eventually it was decided to wait no more and head into the next planned port of call. This was quite exciting as we had a following sea and it got a bit steeper still as a shelf extended out from the shore. We all made it to the little port and some people had quite an encounter with boats entering and the clapotis from the walls.

Tuesday, 5th June

This afternoon, another "alpine" start to the day, we picked up our kayaks from St Martin and paddled out of the harbour and past on old castle which we were informed was acting as the local prison. It was interesting to see the fortifications which were different from anything I had seen in Britain. Then it was around the corner and a paddle along the coast towards Rivedoux Plage.

We arrived at the beach to be met, again by Christian who had organised the local hall as a store for our kayaks overnight. We firstly had to wash the sand and salt off our kayaks so a routine developed with a long line of kayaks queuing for their turn under the hose. A couple from Paris who needed to return home also had a "douce" before bidding farewell and driving back. The hall also held the inevitable Pineau! The speeches were made and translated by the harassed Louis who had to keep stopping the mayor so that he could retain the speech to translate into English and German. I don't think that many of the mayors along the route appreciated the difficulties suffered by translators.

Wednesday, 6th June

Today the wind was blowing quite a bit stronger than before, so a reminder on group discipline was given before we set out from Rivedoux to paddle around the corner of the island and start the returning leg of the circumnavigation.

This was made more impressive by going under the very beautiful and striking bridge which connects the island to the mainland near La Rochelle. This bridge looks as if it were planned with the draughtsman's french curve instrument as it bends first one way and then the other. As we paddled under it we were met by the full force of the wind. The groups naturally clustered together as people formed "buddy groups". The sea got steeper as we all paddled on into the wind We grimly forced our way towards this stage's finishing point.

The passage along the coast was made interesting by the sea conditions, we didn't have too much time to consider the scenery, rather we watched each other in our groups. Some people had decided to visit an outlying lighthouse and we could see them out there.

The double with Frank and Doreen paddled off into the distance going at its normal (faster) speed. Along the way we could see the effect of the underlying shallower shelves on the waves coming in. It made a change to concentrate on these than just paddle against the wind.

Finally we saw that people were landing, and we moved closer to shore to see the landing beach. There seemed to be some surf. Several people had capsized coming into the beach so we considered our chosen spot carefully. Each of us went in one at a time (in our group) and chose the best place with the least complex breaking waves.

After everyone had come in, we found that several people had capsized along the coast and had thoughtfully been picked up by Christian and other helpers. The lighthouse people came in a little later and played in the surf for a while.

There was yet another reception where the excitement of the day was not yet over. When Di tried to sit down the metal chair collapsed and in trying to save herself she grabbed hold of me. We both ended sprawled on the floor with the chair very much the worse for wear! However, our hosts were extremely kind and helped us up and provided a very much more robust sofa for us to sit on. The hosts of each of the receptions were always very thoughtful and considerate. Every reception was treated as a great occasion for the village and the local dignitaries were pleased to be there. It was nice to be treated like special visitors. Very different to back home!

Thursday, 7th June

No paddling was done today as the wind was blowing Force 6, so we had to try to fill our day. Yet another trip to the cafe and shops! What coffee and what delights in the bakery!

Friday, 8th June

No paddling was again done by most people as it was still blowing a 6. But Noel, Paul, Stuart, Neil and Mark-Jan decided to uphold the strong paddling tradition by attempting to complete the circumnavigation. This they did whilst we sat around various street cafes enjoying cafe au lait and crepes.

On Friday evening, we all set out after yet another reception, this time it was not earned by most of us as we had not paddled. The mairie of Les Portes welcomed us and we all enjoyed our last formal reception of Pineau. Immediately after the reception we set out for the restaurant for our meal together. A wonderful atmosphere was created by the staff and aided by copious amounts of wine deposited on the tables. After the meal Christian called upon his trusty translator to perform his task. Christian then proceeded to give prizes for various members of the party. John Ramwell gained a huge trophy for bringing the British contingent as well as a medal for leader the Escargot II group during the week. Nick Padwick also received his medal for his leadership. Louis, Christian's long-suffering translator by popular acclaim received the cup for being the most "...lusty ..." paddler during the week. I was not quite sure whether the word had been translated correctly but Louis was overwhelmed.

Christian then reminded us that we had all guessed the number of paddlers who would paddle the first day. He had set out a variety of prizes and would allow each winner to select whatever prize was remaining. The first person to win chose a beautiful wooden paddle. Second, and much to her amazement was my wife, Di who, being totally flabbergasted couldn't decide what to choose. Anyway, with some prompting she went for the kayak trolley.

Saturday, 9th June

Today was our last day, so we started as with most with a trip to Les Portes-en-Re to sample the crepes and coffee. A last taste of the Isle for us all. We were given a very fond farewell from the campsite by Christian. The drive back was intended to be split about half way for a rest for John, our stalwart driver. However, this time we went a different way and found the roads slightly busier but faster. Therefore we made excellent progress and arrived in Le Harve at about 1.30 in the morning. After searching for a cafe and finding one open we all bedded down for the night in various positions and places. We spent the night on the pavement outside the ferry terminal with several others. We had a fitful night's rest as we were next to an air-conditioning fan which switched in and out all night.

Sunday, 10th June

We planned to get the early morning ferry and get back into Britain at about 1pm. This was a ferry earlier than originally intended but we were successful in boarding. In fact it seemed fairly empty. The ferry was on time and we arrived back in Britain in the afternoon.

The cars were retrieved and the kayaks transferred from the trailer, which had survived, onto cars for the trip home. Many addresses were exchanged as we set off back home. All of us stated that the trip was very enjoyable and eagerly awaited for 1992 when the next Ile de Re tour would take place.

This sums up the Ile de Re trip in that we all wished for the next one. Not a great deal of paddling was done but the friendships built and developed would last far longer than the memories of paddling.

Carving Sequence for Unfeathered Eskimo-style Narrow Blades
 Wood - single piece, approximately 2" x 4"

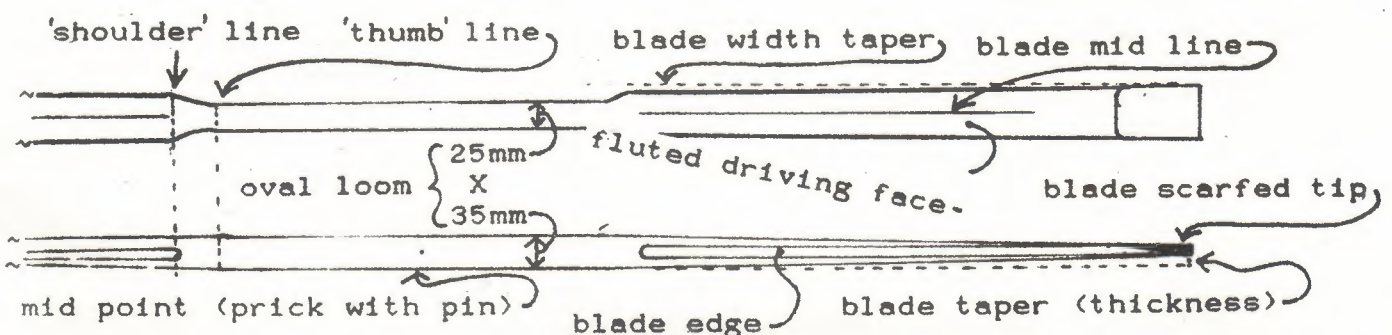
- 1 CUT to length (85")* - select out knots
- 2 MARK mid point
- 3 MARK 'thumb lines' (limits of loom)**
 & 'shoulder lines' (end of blade)
- 4 MARK blade tapers on edges of wood (4 faces)
- 5 CUT off blade tapers (cross-cut to lines and chisel off
 - watch out for contrary grain)
- 6 Dress up blade faces-to-be
- 7 MARK mid line blade faces and backs
- 8 MARK loom limits and shoulder profile curves (both sides)
- 9 CUT loom and shoulder profile (cross-cut & chisel)
- 10 Dress to lines
- 11 MARK blade width taper (58mm @ root to 70mm @ tip)
- 12 CUT blade width (4 edges to cut)
- 13 Dress edges straight (to take hardwood edging)
- 14 MARK blade edge width (15mm @ root to 10-12mm @ tip)
- 15 MARK 1st loom cuts (from oval cross-section on mm graph
 paper - I use 25 by 35 mm. dimensions)
- 16 Cut remove excess - loom corners (4 of)
 & blade mid to edges (8 of)
- 17 Glue on edge strips
- 18 CUT scarf blade tip (block plane & dress)
- 19 Glue on blade tip (pinned to prevent slipping)
- 20 CUT out fluting on driving face (band sander nose)
- 21 MARK 2nd cuts on loom (8 pairs of lines)
- 22 CUT to second loom lines (loom now = 16 sided)
 Prick loom at mid point to retain centre
- 23 Finish by sanding & dressing
 (balance on mid point)
- 24 Treat with varnish or Sadolin etc. Emery to a matt
 surface @ loom and blade roots for good grip.

*Paddle Length - Greenlander's formula is your height plus elbow to fingertips for a touring paddle. My view is that it should be possible to easily place all the paddle blade in the water without having to reach or stretch.

** Loom length - this should be the distance between your thumbs when the hands are allowed to hang naturally at one's sides.

Useful tools - metre straight edge, Sandvik sanding plates on block (for smoothing) and free (for curves), band sander, clamps (Workmate long clamping facility is useful)

Glue - I only use Aerolite 306 (Cascamite is too brittle)



HANDY TIP No. 2 - Get Knotted !

Have you ever tried to haul a waterlogged, loaded sea canoe over your fore deck in a T-rescue? Easy? - then turn the page ! No? - read on.

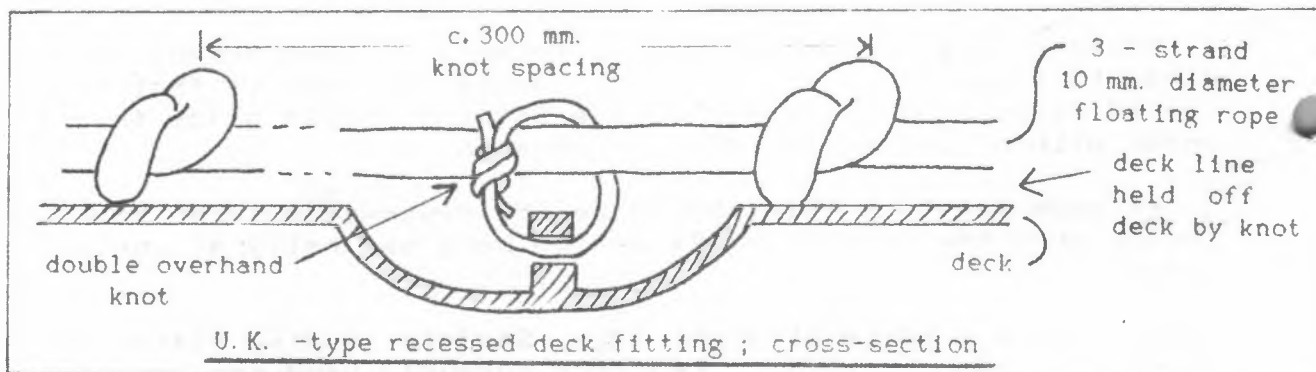
In the U.K. decklines tend to be 6 mm. diameter braided nylon in accordance with the minimum standard specified in the British Standards Institution recommendation BS MA91: Part 2: 1981 (shortly to be revised).

I find it difficult to gain a tight grip on a 6 mm. line especially with a combination of cold, wet hands and a wet slippery deckline. If the deckline is taut, as also recommended by BS MA91: Part 2:, then it tends to lie flush on the deck especially if routed through recessed deck fittings. In rescue situations I have often observed the floundering paddler having to make two or three grabs at a flush deckline before succeeding with a secure grasp. When the line is tight and flush with the deck the fingers can easily roll over instead of passing under the deckline.

Maintaining contact with your kayak after a capsize and exit, is of vital importance and it is easy to imagine circumstances where only one grab at the boat is possible.

Decklines can be made easier to grasp if they are thicker and perhaps separated from the deck surface. I use 10 mm. diameter line knotted at about 300 mm. intervals. The line is three strand polypropylene floating rope and is 'hairy' rather than smooth, which helps the grip considerably (it is also inexpensive).

Such line can be used with recessed deck attachment points by securing small loops of 5 mm. line at the recessed fittings through which the 10 mm. deckline can run.



Tensioning can be achieved by passing a length of 3 to 5 mm. line several times through the deckline and a strong fixing point at the bow or stern.

When rescuing, I have found my thicker decklines helpful to the paddler in the water when he or she is required to move along my kayak. The secure grip is reassuring. Portaging is also more comfortable with 10 mm. line which makes all the difference, where standard 6 mm. line tends to cut into the hands.