

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 93

SEPTEMBER 1992

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5, Osprey Ave
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EDITORIAL

Maybe you have wondered at the time gap between the last newsletter and this one. The last one went out early because I was about to move house, - this one is going out late because I have moved house!

PLEASE NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS AS ABOVE

Not only have I moved house but obviously changed my place of work - quite a different role from that I had on the Isle of Wight. On top of this I, like most of us these days, am facing much uncertainty about the future as the Public Service I work for is being 'market tested' or contracted out to the private sector. Hey Ho!!

As well as moving house and job I have also just returned from a very successful BRITISH SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY expedition to the N.W. corner of the White Sea in Arctic Russia. I shall be giving the first of many presentations on this expedition to the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee Sea Symposium on the 3rd October at Calshot. Suffice to say that Russia, once you overcome their bureaucracy, is a land full of expeditioning opportunity. We found the Russians so hospitable and generous once we got to know them.

Prior to spending six weeks in Russia I was able to attend the Jersey Symposium and a few weeks later, the Shetlands Sea Kayaking Meet. Both were great fun and very successful in achieving their different aims.

I am conscious that this editorial has been about my activities rather than looking at broader issues of the sea Kayaking world. Mainly this is due to the fact that I have yet to read through the relevant magazines, newsletters and reports that have come my way over the past few months. I will do so before my next editorial - I promise!

I trust you find this newsletter, though a little late, worth waiting for. If not, the YOU send me some material.

Finally, I have to apologise to Eric Totty. His address is incorrect in the ASKC address list. Eric's address remains as it has previously been - 9, Undercliffe Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PS.

ASKC SHOP

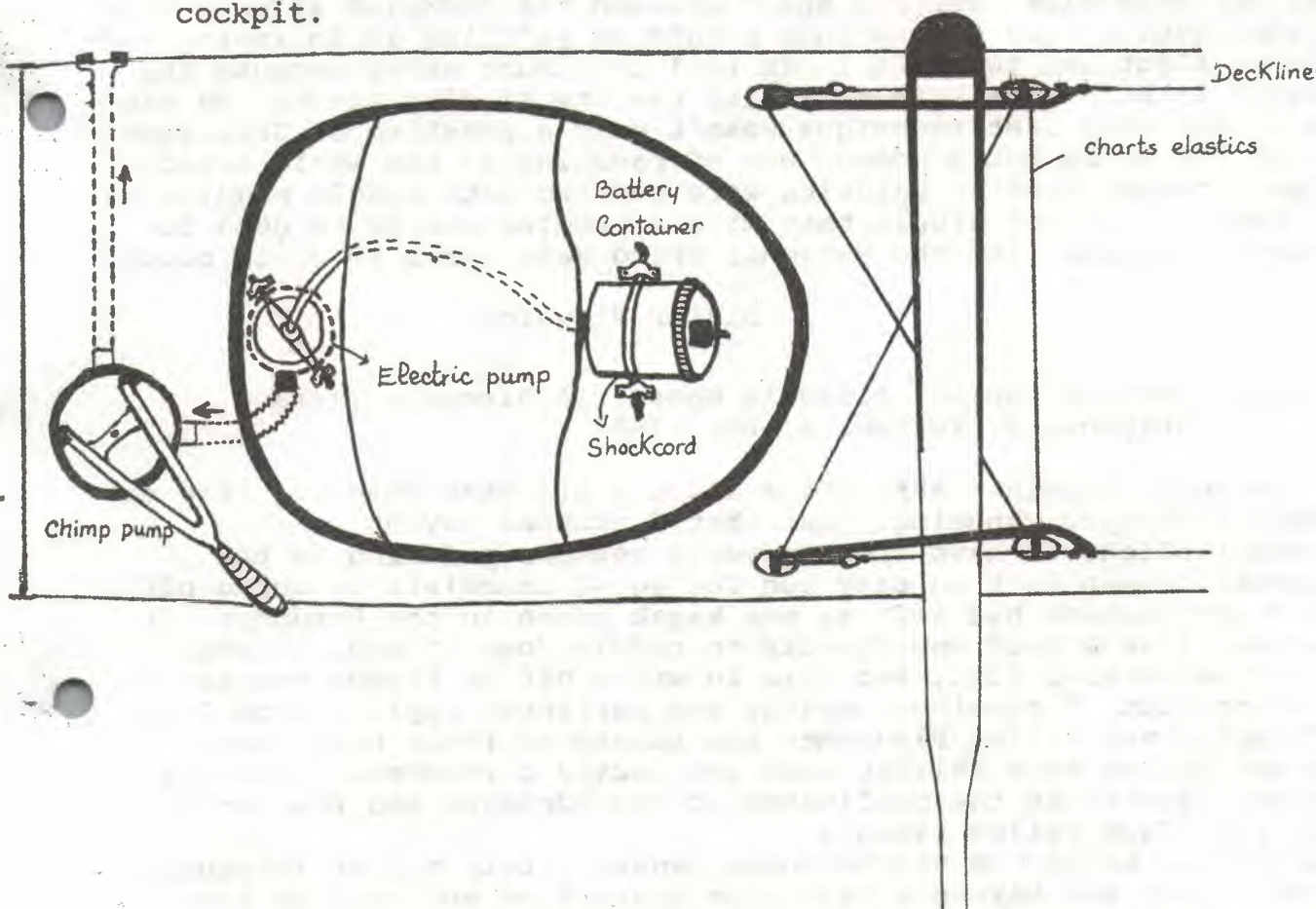
QAJAQ - The book *Invit Kayaks* by David Zimmerly @ £12.50
ASKC Ties @ £5.50
ASKC Stickers @ 35p each
ASKC letter headed notepaper A4 size @ 50p 10 sheets
T-Shirts Small/Medium/ Large/X-large (yellow or black) @ £6
Sweat-Shirts Small/Medium/ Large/X-large (yellow or black) @ £12
ASKC Ski Hats @ £3.50 each.

All prices inclusive of post and package.

Electric Pump, Eskimo Paddles ...
Safer and easier way for Kayaking
By Didier Plovhinec

In reference to the article of Jim Cordingly in the newsletter No 90. I can give a good idea for an electric pump experienced with Remy Le Cann of the association kayak Mer du Ponant.

At the beginning he used a piece of inner tube as outlet hose but this hose was too soft and his Skerray was equipped with a Chimphand pump he just removed the strumbox and place the electric pump as a strumbox. For a small amount of water he can use the hand pump and he keeps the electric one for emergency. The battery container equipped with 3,4 and 5 volt batteries (cheap and available in any place in France) is held by 2 rings bonded in the cockpit and a piece of schock cord. This container is situated in front of the seat, with an easy access to the waterproof switch. There is no problem of entry in the cockpit.



Personally on my Nordkapp, I have fitted on each side between the deck-fittings an elastic cut in an old inner tube. In front I passed this elastic is the deckline and the other side is tied with a small piece of rope to the R.D.F. This is very useful to stabilize the kayak by putting the paddle as an outrigger while eating, drinking or risking at sea.

Last summer during an expedition of 380 sea miles around Bretagne without landing on the mainland (only on islands) I did a test in open sea. I put my cruising eskimo paddle (2,30m) as described on the front deck and on the right side and my spare storm paddle (2,08m) on the rear deck and opposite side.

I was then standing up on the rear deck, just behind the cockpit, of my full loaded Nordkapp. This system can also serve after a capsiz while climbing aboard or pumping. Its just one more system used by Greenland Eskimos, but only for kayakers who trust their tools.

The actual tendency in Kayaking is to say, broader is your Kayak, longer must be the paddle. Reading the books "Baidaika" of George Dysim and "Qajaq" of David Zimmerly, I found that Aleut paddles used longer paddles in single kayaks (a paddle of 2,56m is represented with a single baidaika) than in double on three holes baidaika. (a paddle of 2,32m is represented with a double baidaika). In fact a big paddle was necessary to cope with the high instability of a single kayak; 0,42m wide only. With such a paddle they can brace easier and safer. With the double baidaika (6,20m and 0,56m) the paddle is used just for propulsion. When they needed, they used the sliding stroke which is very efficient when you want to turn faster or go faster. Using a short paddle without the sliding stroke you paddle without any effort for hours. Against hard wind the sliding stroke seduce the windage of the paddle. Looking very close the pictures of the books I noticed in two seaters that the Aleut often didn't paddle on the same side at the same time. The big space between the cockpits allowed this technique. I have tested this method of paddling in following seas in my Aleut Sea two, and I can tell it's much safer because the kayak is much more stable. I also use the sliding stroke. We can see that this last technique wasn't only a practice of Greenland with the storm but a common way of paddling in the whole artic. The broadest kayak's baidaika were paddled with single paddles so I think it is not stupid that single paddles should be good for folding kayaks like the National Grand Raid which is 0,95m broad.

Didier Plovhinec

From: Patrick Dowman, Airedale House, 18 Airedale Terrace,
Skipton, N. Yorkshire, BD23 2BA.

I recently rejoined ASKC after about a six year default. It's not that I stopped canoeing, just that I stopped paying subscriptions. I have spent several seasons paddling in the Mediterranean (not an easy bug for aging canoeists to shrug off) and last autumn had left my sea kayak close to the Dordogne. It seemed like a good opportunity to paddle down it and, through your membership list, was able to write off to French members for information. I received lengthy and pertinent replies from Julia Champion and Didier Plovhenec and thanks to their help spent a great Spring Bank Holiday week (obviously a teacher!) paddling from Argentat to the confluence of the Dordogne and the Verzere at a village called Limeuil.

Three sea kayaks on the Dordogne caused a fair bit of interest, and if any sea kayakers have some spare time and want to try something different, I recommend some of the larger French rivers. Not difficult and very beautiful, especially out of season (April, May is probably best). We had no problem camping 'au sauvage' each night and never failed to find a village for the bread and wine, and a good spot for playing boules each lunchtime and evening. (No kayaker should travel without a set of boules).

Didier was also able to help me with the problem of French Law and paddling across the Channel.

It was also as a result of reading your newsletter that I came across 'Paddlers International', an organisation until recently called 'The International Long Rivers Club'. The club is superbly organised by one Pete Salisbury up in Scotland, and he has been very helpful with information about paddling the Brittany coast. Can I please take up space in one of your newsletters to thank all of the above and particularly yourself for the immensely valuable work that you and ASKC do?

From : Rick Jones, Middle Ollerbrook, Edale, Sheffield.

I thought people may be interested in how I recently fitted an old Chimp foot-pump in my touring/ little sea boat (a weekender). As the footrest is positioned as far forward as possible, I could, with feet outstretched, touch the forward bulkhead, so obviously there was room to fit the pump and have it in a useable and comfortable position. As I expect many have discovered when buying a Kayak fitted with this pump and that is attached to the fail-safe footrest often requiring unstable contortions to operate. How to fit it was a problem as I don't get on well with fibre-glass and resin (dermatitis). What I did instead was this;

- 1, Bolt the pump to a piece of plywood
- 2, Bond 3 x 2" strips of VELCRO to the ply so covering the whole ply sheet.
- 3, Bond the opposite strips of Velcro to the bulkhead.
- 4, Drill a hole in the deck and fit the pump outlet.

The ply was 9" x 6" oversize to the pump to ensure good surface contact with the Velcro, the bolts being countersunk slot-head nuts on the pump-side. The Velcro bonded to the bulkhead was sewn edge to edge to make it easy to reach inside and slap it on the bulkhead as one sheet. I stuck the Velcro to both ply and glass bulkhead with Uniboard. The outlet pipe I have is flexible enough for the pump position to be altered a little from side to side and a little up and down. I also stuck some more velcro onto the cockpit floor so the inlet pipe can be secure. What other applications ?

The Anglesey "Symposium" was enjoyable. I only go to get dragged about the place and play buses with Rhiamon and Naomi Jeffs. Later on in the week there was a game of "See how many people fit in Vince and Di Smith's tent!". Quite a lot as it happens (it was raining hard). Nice to see old faces again.

COASTGUARDS FEAR BEING LEFT HIGH AND DRY!

High on the cliffs outside Boscastle, North Cornwall, all that separated Mac Reynolds's Bedford Bravo pickup from a 150ft drop was six feet of rocky ledge. Roped to a hefty steel stake, Mac and his partner, Steve Ainsworth, were out on exercise, honing skills which make them one of the highly trained HM Coastguard cliff rescue teams stretching from Land's End to Bude. Each summer these cliffs, some of the highest in Britain, swarm with tourists ranging from properly equipped walkers to daytrippers in high heel shoes. Lives are at risk every day, but Mr Reynolds is threatening to resign over government proposals which he says would end his effectiveness as a life-saver. Mr Reynolds, 40, auxiliary-in-charge at Boscastle, has been a part-time coastguard for 21 years. His operations room contains framed letters - each testifying to a life saved along one of Britain's most unforgiving coastlines.

"I just want to write and thank you and the team of men who rescued my son Ross," wrote one mother. Mr Reynolds said: "We have quite a collection. It is one of the things that makes the job worthwhile." But he and dozens like him at coastguard stations along the Cornish coast fear that before long they will be little more than impotent observers.

Last year the Government ordered a review of coastguard auxiliaries - the volunteers who operate in their own time for very little reward. In the interests of efficiency it was decided that coastguard stations should split their roles.

Some would become I.R.T's (Instant Response Teams) and others B.U.R.T's (Back Up Response Teams). The auxiliaries say this will mean IRT stations losing nearly all their rescue equipment and becoming little more than observers. They will answer 999 or radio alarm calls, assess whether an emergency exists, then call a BURT to mount the actual rescue. This takes no account of the atmosphere at the scene of an accident. David Phelps, auxiliary-in-charge at nearby Port Isaac, asked: "What is an anguished parent, whose child has gone over a cliff, going to think of a coast guard who doesn't even have the equipment to get within 10ft of the cliff edge? How do you explain to that parent that you have got a radio for a back-up team?"

Mike Grundon, an auxiliary at Land's End, said the review came top of drastic cuts in the lookout hours there and at St Ives. Nine days ago nearly every auxiliary-in-charge in Cornwall attended a meeting in Truro. They passed a resolution condemning the review and sent a protest letter to the Shipping Minister, Patrick McLaughlin, and to the Chief Coastguard, Derek Ancona. They also issued a press release describing the review's conclusions as "laughably inadequate".

The unprecedented press release pulled no punches. "Experienced auxiliaries scoff at the idea that six men each with just a pocket first-aid, a touch, a map and between two the use of binoculars and hand-held radios will be able to convince either locals or holiday makers in the South-west that thee coastguard means business," it stated.

Compare this with what Mr. Reynolds currently carries in the back of his vehicle: a stretcher, two cliff-climbing harnesses, three 800 foot nylon cliff lines, a self-inflatable lifejacket with floating line, a rescue line, steel stakes, gear for winching a casualty up a cliff, flares, a helicopter harness, cliff helmets, thermal jackets, blankets, a loud hailer and life-lines. He can also carry a petrol generator, searchlight and tripod; all of which he insists is vital for effective rescue.

"We are not asking for more money or more equipment," he said. "All we want is to keep what we've got and what we need to provide an effective rescue service."

Vivian Roberts, auxiliary-in-charge at St. Agnes, holds the Royal Humane Society Award for Gallantry. "All along we were told that the IRTs would have enough equipment to secure a casualty on a cliff or render first-aid at the bottom and prevent them from being washed away," he recalled.

"I said at the time that this was the best of a bad job. Then two weeks ago we were told it had been decided that IRTs, which are being cut from 15 to six men, would have virtually no equipment at all.

"It means we can do nothing if someone is trapped or bleeding to death. To me it is the last straw."

Mr. Roberts said the Falmouth Regional Controller, retired RN commander, David Eliot, had described the protest as a political action. "That is absolute nonsense" he said. "How they can construe a battle to retain a credible rescue service as 'political' is beyond belief."

Last night Cdr Eliot said that as a civil servant he could not comment during a general election. "You will get no comment from any full-time coastguard officer, period," he said. "I decide whether anything is political or not, and this very definitely is."



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

Dear Sirs,

We are pleased to inform you that since two years, in our country too, a national sea kayak association has been established. Still in its early steps, this year the "Associazione Italiana Kayak da mare" (Italian Sea Kayak Association) has been officially recognized by the Italian Canoeing Association, the federal body of canoeing activities in Italy.

Our main purpose, like that of many other similar foreign associations, is to promote all activities related to sea canoeing and friendship among its members, improving general knowledge about safety at sea.

We regularly organize sea kayak training courses, lectures about equipment, navigation, marine weather, first aid basics and so on. Twice a year all our subscribers rejoin in a meeting organized in the island of Sardinia in the month of June and in a seaside resort on the mainland in September. The meetings are open to all sea kayak friends, also outside the association, provided they subscribe for the occasion in order to be covered by regular insurance. All our members have an updated list of the subscribers, so that whoever wants to paddle in a particular area will know who is the nearest located member and can ask for information, local knowledge, occasional help or hospitality for a short period of time. We keep in touch by a quarterly bulletin which covers all aspects of our sport.

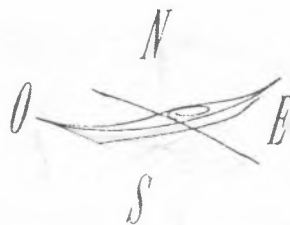
Please find attached a notice of the next meeting in Sardinia. We hope to welcome some of your subscribers and best friends in our ranks on the event. We would also like to keep you updated about future meetings, with the aim to establish solid links between sea kayakers in your and our country.

Do not hesitate to write us for any explanation or request, or just to inform us about your activities. Your correspondence will always be welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Sergio Cadoni

Sergio Cadoni, Executive
Associazione Italiana Kayak da mare
Viale Colombo, 118
I-09045 Quartu S. Elena
Tel. + 39 70 884336



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

Our Association organizes the second meeting in Sardinia open to all sea kayak lovers, from 3rd to 8th June 1993 at Porto Pollo, near the village of Palau.

The meeting has no official organization, therefore no rescue at sea or assistance on land shall be provided. Everyone will be held responsible for his own safety and that of his equipment. The meeting has been organized to promote friendship between the participants and to share common experiences of safety at sea.

Where the meeting is organized

In the beautiful resort of Porto Pollo, situated in the north of Sardinia, just in front of the islands of La Maddalena. We will paddle along wonderful white sandy beaches and high and wild rocky cliffs, full of seabirds, sealights and so on...

For the more experienced the islands of La Maddalena are just there, in the middle of the Bonifacio Straits. The island of Corse is very close and clearly visible on fine weather days. For those of us that are some lazier the village of Palau offers a wide range of restaurants, local craftmanship shops and a regular ferry service to La Maddalena main island, and from the hills in the neighbourhood you can admire the beautiful landscape.

How to reach the meeting

We have chosen the camping "Isola dei Gabbiani" (tel. 0789/704024 - 704019) as logistic base. Heaven for surfers, we will try to conquer the place!

For those who will reach Sardinia by the daily Tirrenia ferry connection from Genova to Porto Torres (departure time h. 08.00 pm) we advise to take the national road S.S. 200 direction Platamona - Castelsardo - S. Teresa di Gallura. Five km before this last village take S.S. 133b on your right, direction Palau. Drive another 16 km and you will find a crossroad on your left to Porto Pollo - Porto Puddu. Then drive straight down the road, the camping is located at its dead end.

For those who will chose the daily Navarna ferry connection from Livorno to Olbia (departure time h. 10.30 pm) or any of the other connections available from Livorno (contact Sardinia ferries) or from Marina di Massa to Olbia, take S.S. 125 direction Arzachena - Palau. Two km before you reach the village you will find on your left

S.S. 130 to S. Teresa di Gallura, and after another 3 km turn on the right at the crossroad to Porto Pollo - Porto Puddu.

How the meeting has been organized

Everyone will provide for his own eating and camping needs. The camping has hot showers, toilets, a bar, a restaurant, a pizzeria and a small market. More shops for whatever you need and gasoline stations can be found in Palau, at a distance of 5 km. As soon as you arrive report to the camping direction for registration (an identification document will be held until departure) and ask for our location inside the camping site. The daily fare should be around 15.000 lire per person.

This is the list of essential requirements for participation:

- To be a regular member of the Association (insurance is included in the subscription fare). The price to adhere to the Association has been fixed at 50.000 lire.
- To be more than 18 years old.
- To be healthy and fit to paddle an average of two hours without landing.
- To have basic paddling skills.

Solitary paddling is not allowed. Several small groups will be formed according to personal requirements and technical skills. Every group will be led by a paddler with good knowledge of the area we will visit, and shall provide for the safety of the group itself through conventional measures. We will paddle in sea only with sea state up to force 5 Beaufort scale, according to the weather forecasts for the next hours. If it is too windy or foul weather will approach the trip of the day will be delayed or cancelled, according to the decision taken by the organizers. We kindly ask you to comply with these rules. Whoever wants to take to the sea in bad weather conditions against the will of the organizers is of course allowed to do so, but will do it strictly under his own responsibility.

Basic equipment

Whatever you need for normal and marine camping

A sea kayak with aft and fore hatches and bulkheads

A bilge pump or at least a bucket

A towing line...who knows

A spraydeck, a paddle, an homologated life jacket that must always be worn while paddling

A whistle or fog horn

A spare paddle

A waterproof torch

Two red star flares and two hand flares

We advise to wear neoprene boots.

For those who feel the strong call sent by the La Maddalena islands, we advise to bring along a deck compass, an AM/FM radio, parachute flares and a copy of nautical chart I.M.M. 325/326 (INT. 3350) scale 1:25.000 and 1:100.000.

ATTENTION!!!!

Subscription is best done by letter. Deadline May 10th 1993. Please write to the following addresses:

ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

c/o Sergio Cadoni

Viale Colombo, 118 - 09045 Quartu S. Elena (Cagliari) (ITALY)

Tel. 070/884336 (call at dinner time, English, French, German and Dutch spoken).

or

c/o Raymond Varraud

Via L. Da Vinci, 6 - 50132 Firenze (ITALY)

Tel. 055/319384 (office)

055/584135 (home) (French spoken).

DO NOT SEND MONEY, YOU CAN PAY THE SUBSCRIPTION FARE AT THE CAMPING.

Goodbye and see you in Sardinia.

Greenwood Cottage
Low Hesket
Carlisle CA4 OEU

ARCTIC SEA KAYAK RACE
from Martin Bell, Carlisle.

With a race of 280 km in five days I certainly picked the longest paddling race for my first one. I think the challenge of it was quite appealing, but probably more of a reason was I've always wanted to go to Norway, this was a fine excuse. I definitely wasn't disappointed as the race was a real challenge and Norway is a wonderful country, especially Vesteralen and Lofoten where the race was held.

In May training and planning were going really well. The ferries were booked and sponsorship secured, with gear coming from **Jack Wolfskin** and **Lendal**, proving to be very useful indeed. Early June came along and I put off a big training trip to Scotland to attend a Squirt Rodeo in Nottingham. What a cracking weekend at the rodeo, except I came down with really bad Dysentry on the Monday morning! So six weeks of my training programme went out of the window, just when I should have been training most. About this time as well, a couple of friends backed out of making the trip so I faced a 1000 mile drive on bad roads, in two days just to get to the start on time. Despite this I got back into training in early July determined to go through with the plan.

One week before departure I arrived home late to find a message on the ansaphone "I'm coming to Norway, get me on the ferry". Chris Little you're an absolute hero, things were looking up at last. With a driver and ace support crew my confidence in the venture began to climb.

We set off in good spirits with a van full of gear via **Wolfskin**, for a quick photo call, and on to the ferry in Newcastle. 24 hours later we're in Bergen. 27 hours of non-stop driving and non-stop rain we arrived at Sortland, base camp for the duration. Saturday afternoon and Sunday were filled with race preliminaries, sight seeing and a lot of sleep, ready for a 7a.m. race start on Monday morning.

DAY ONE

7a.m. and I line up with twelve Norwegians in the pouring rain to start the race. Despite this rain it was calm and flat so the first leg (22 km) was very fast as everyone wanted to get a good start. Wondering what I'd let myself in for I arrived on the beach in the middle of the field and heartily tucked into the food that was provided. Leg two (27 km) was a transport leg. We were not to race this but had to be at the next start point by 4p.m. This information was followed by a warning that we had to be through Raftsund by 11a.m. as the tide would turn against us shortly afterwards. Some paddlers got caught in this so the race was delayed until they had arrived and rested. Leg three (35 km) into a force four and driving rain - just what you need at the end of a hard day! I arrived at Henningsvaer at 11.30p.m. feeling shattered but happy to finish. I don't mind admitting that I had thoughts of quitting towards the end of this leg, but a good night asleep and loads of food put pay to that idea.

DAY TWO

A sunny and calm Tuesday greeted the seven of us left in the race as we lined up for a transport leg (30km) at 11a.m. A civilised start after yesterday and a paddle through excellent scenery. Leg two (38km) saw six of us take the start line, as one was exhausted from his efforts on day one. By now a healthy force three had got up from behind so the trip was surfed away quite quickly. I made up a bit of time on the leaders here, as they were really flat water marathon boys paddling light weight kevlar boats. My Ynys was coping admirably with me feeling confident and fit on this afternoon.

DAY THREE

A rest day, and boy was it needed. The brochure about the race had mentioned many local activities. I took this to mean sleep and resting of wrists with bad "teno."

DAY FOUR

With the creaking and inflamed wrists a bit better, 75km of sea faced us for this day in three stages. The first leg, again a transport leg(22km) was sheer bliss in the morning sunshine and stillness. Following this were two legs (27km and 28km) to put us in Nyksund for the night. This place is a deserted fishing harbour and looks like *Dodge City-by-the-sea!!!*

DAY FIVE

The final day was also Marathon day, so nine others joined us six racers to complete the single leg of 47km back to Sortland. A 10a.m. start saw us heading into a force three, which had strengthened by the time we were half way through the paddle. Despite this and "screaming teno" there was no way I was not going to get to the end. Just under six hours after leaving Nyksund the race was over for me.

Coming home in 5th place I was very tired but satisfied with my performance. A few beers were sunk that night I can tell you- even at four quid a pint!!

Now, sitting at home, I can reflect on a very hard but very enjoyable "holiday". The organisation throughout the race was excellent, although I did have to make a couple of phone calls to Norway to check details before I left Britain. The atmosphere around the race was very hospitable and relaxed, our Norwegian hosts being really friendly and hospitable people.

So if you're after a challenge, or a paddle in a sea canoeing paradise get up to the race next year. Along with the race is a ramble which covers less miles at a more relaxed pace so there is more time to marvel at this wonderful place. I'll be back up that way just as soon as I can book another ferry!!! Once again thanks to **Wolfskin** and **Lendal** for the gear and to Chris for being an absolute star.

The race is usually held in the first week in August. The contact address for information is:

The Arctic Sea Kayak Race
C/O Vesteralen reiselivslag
P.O. Box 243
N-8400 Sortland
Norway
tel: 4788 21555
fax: 4788 23666

Thanks to Rowland Woollven of Faringdon, Oxon for the following:-

'Of Whales and Men'

'Beep, beep', 'beep, beep', 'beep, beep'. Hell's teeth, it can't be 0245 already, surely? I'm getting too old for this lark - gear still wet from yesterday's paddle in freezing rain; body starting to complain after 3 weeks continuous paddling - the aches are supposed to decrease, but in reality, they don't! A pretty grim meal last night - maccaroni cheese (of a sort) half warmed over a log fire that didn't really want to burn in the continuous downpour. Breakfast, at least the first one, due to be a cup and a half of lukewarm coffee and 2 biscuits. Then, on to the water to catch the tide and go north again, this time to the true face of the tidewater glaciers.

An hour later and mini-bergs are collecting in the inlet, with larger bergs grounded on the shores on either side. To starboard, the Nunatak stands proud and clear, hiding the views to come, whilst to port Wolf Cove lies back with the start of White Thunder Ridge rising from its upper rim. The cloud lifts and through the torn fringes of the veil a glimpse of blue and green ice - like a gigantic motorway running down the mountainside to end in the upper reaches of Muir Inlet. Tantalised by the glimpse we paddle on, well spread out and content with our own thoughts and company. The bergs resemble swans, castles, animals and ships - almost everything appears in a pale and ghostly ice form. Then, amid a cloud of wheeling arctic terns, the entrance to McBride Glacier appears suddenly to starboard. A quick paddle through the narrow entrance sees us into the outwash bay. Even at this distance, over a mile, the glacier is tremendously impressive. We paddle forward to get closer - disturbing sleeping harbour seals (after all, it is only 0600!). The internal collapse of the glacier snout is continuous - creaks, groans and explosions all mix in a continual barrage of artillery. At a quarter of a mile the scale becomes irrelevant - the glacier is big and we are very, very small. Chatter ceases - it is irrelevant (irreverent?) in this natural wonderland. Without warning, part of the face cascades into the water. We don't realise how big the calving was until we see the waves surging 20 feet up the side walls of the bay. The swell, when it reaches us, is very impressive - we have faced smaller in the open Pacific Ocean! At last a combination of cold and hunger bids us return to the outwash plain to set up camp for the next 2 nights. For me, it was moving to see the full majesty of a glacier dropping sheer into seawater - I had seen many glaciers in the Alps, Norway and

Himalayas but somehow this was different and so much more memorable. For Tony, whose aim this had been over the last 7 years, the emotional impact can only be guessed at.

That afternoon we paddled further 'up bay' and visited Riggs Glacier - the one we had glimpsed at 0445 that morning. This was impressive, being over $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide at the snout, but because it ran out onto gravel outwash plains it did not have the same impact for me as McBride Glacier. At least we felt somewhat warmer - most of us were wearing nearly everything we had brought with us! Finally, after an unforgettable 36 hours at the head of Muir Inlet, we returned over 2 days to Bartlett Cove and the entrance to Glacier Bay.

Of the start and finish of the expedition? We paddled 287 nautical miles from Sitka to Juneau; primarily on the open seaboard of the Pacific Ocean coast of South East Alaska. Five days in Glacier Bay provided the highlight - killer whales in Beardslee Entrance, humpbacks throughout the Bay and black bears investigating just about every campsite we set up.

Other memories? Surfing the Lynn Canal in weather we should never have been out in; landing salmon in a loaded sea kayak and, later, eating salmon steaks grilled to perfection over the ashes of a log fire; watching grizzlies forage for food on the foreshore and black bears dining on mussels; being within feet (too few!) of a pod of humpback whales as they 'bubble netted'.

And of the title? Being awoken from a paddling reverie by a humpback surfacing 30 feet from me; Kevin being all but overturned by the flipper of a humpback as it turned beneath him; Tony being surrounded by 3 humpbacks as they surfaced all round him and Paul and Simon's disbelief as the killer whale pod raced towards us at nearly 30 mph.

Leaving Glacier Bay en route to journey's end and the ferry at the start of the way home, we set out at 0400 to beat the turn of the tide at the Bay's entrance. Dawn light was vaguely breaking and all around us humpbacks fed - breaching, blowing, showing flippers and flukes. On the surface of the Bay thousands of tiny phalaropes fed, pattering around in pursuit of krill and plankton. Then, as a finale, a wolf pack started howling in the forests to the east. As a scene from a film it

would have been thought overdone - but we sat and watched and listened - and wondered - for over half an hour.

John Muir said of Glacier Bay that its beauty and magnificent splendour affected the whole of his life after his having seen it for the first time. I have every intention of returning there next year.

CLIMBING KAYAKS SKEGS AND PLONKERS

by Angus GEDDES, Swindon, Wilts

Some years ago I used to spend most weekends climbing. I was never very good having started this sport on the wrong side of thirty. Rick however moved to Mansfield for some reason muttering about a nice law firm he was joining and the attractions of Millstone grit. I struggled up a number of hard severes even making an occasional VS on a good day, with a variety of partners, most of whom now don't count a climb unless it has some E number in front of it. E numbers to me are something to be found on packet food and as far as climbing goes are strictly for lycra clad athletes.

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FIRST CANOE CROSSING BY A DOUBLE SEA KAYAK.

FROM START POINT TO GUERNSEY.

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 1992.

UNDERTAKEN BY

ANDY STAMP & NIGEL HINGSTON.

So there we were, 02.00 hrs Wednesday 20 May 1992, Lannacombe Beach, 1.5 miles west of Start Point, the start point for our longest trip yet. A canoe venture to Guernsey, 60 n.miles of open waters in a double sea kayak, crossing one of the busiest shipping channels in the world.

Like smugglers of old, three darkened figures groaned under the weight of a fully laden Voyager Sea II kayak. Our predecessors may have shipped brandy for the parson and baccy for the clerk, but our cargo consisted of camping equipment, clothes and food. Enough to keep us going for the trip and two further two days.

Countless hours had been spent in preparation, letters by the dozen and phone calls by the score. Andy Stamp and myself had dedicated long hours training, enduring rough and at times cold weather in preparation. Joining us for this early morning start to provide support, transport and wish bon-voyage, Gary. His bottomless teapot and camera flashes would do wonders to my night vision and later would result in endless hourly pee stops!

By 02.15 hrs we were under way, a clear night, a bright moon, a slight swell and a light North Easterly wind on our port quarter. The magic of the night was with us, perfect. After four days of waiting a weather window had appeared in our allotted time period and there was no stopping us. Start Light became a pinpoint in the distance. Before it had disappeared over the horizon a bright orange sun extinguished it into oblivion, another day. 05.00 hrs my body was screaming for shut eye, starved of sleep bar one short hour before we had departed. The previous 19 hours of awaking was starting to take its toll. Continuous yawning, difficulty in concentrating the mind and a fuzzyness made me question why the hell two "normal" family men would undertake such an exposed crossing.

"For the same reason that people hit white balls into little holes" was Andy's stock reply. It summed up our situation pretty well.

Our bodies would be subjected to a spectrum of emotions in a journey that we estimated should take between 14 and 15 hours, events would prove otherwise. At that moment and for the next two hours I was on a low.

05.50 hrs, In the middle of nowhere, the singing of "Rule Britannia", "Greensleeves" and "Scotland The Brave" to name but a few could be heard emanating from our small craft. The introduction music to Radio 4, the prelude to The Shipping Forecast. A stop, a well earned rest, food and drink. Our spirits were high again the outlook good.

10.00 hrs, 8 hours into our crossing, about 28 n.miles under our belts, no problems. We had seen no craft, so much for other shipping hazards. Half an hour later it was to be a different story. All the seemingly tall tales you may of heard from mariners about crossing the main shipping traffic separation zone in a small boat are true. Imagine trying to cross a motorway on foot and all the oncoming vehicles are without steering or brakes, there you have a comparison to the shipping lane and our predicament. The first of what can only be described as mamouth office blocks appeared out of the haze, by now visibility was down to 5-6 n.miles. It passed "harmlessly" astern some 1.5 n.miles distance. A feeling of intimidation came over us, we were in the lap of the Gods. Several more vessels came by, fleeting glimpses through the mist, the constant thumping of engines pushing thousands of tons of steel through the water. Large office blocks some 300 ft long, 100 ft high, moving at speeds of between 20 and 30 knots.

We estimate at best, 10 minutes before an office block would cross our path. 5 minutes to determine its shape, course, direction and 5 minutes to take any necessary evasive action. A minimal amount of time for a small frail 22 ft craft which could manage 6 knots, at a push !

They say third time lucky, for us it could'nt have been further from the truth, or could it ? A grey object began to materialise from the haze. We sat like rabbits frozen on a road of doom transfixed by a pair of oncoming anchors. We debated whether to go forwards or backwards, our paddles making token movements. The shape bore no resemblance to any ship we had seen before, a square rectangular block with a foaming bow wave increasing in size as the minutes ticked by. Our 5 minutes was up, decision time, a brief exchange and the founder members of the devout cowards club were turning their kayak and heading for Start Point. A bulk container ship passed within 300 metres of our new position, small figures could be seen on the bridge. Two reports sounded from her, a warning to others of our position.

For the next 3 hours we paddled fast, constantly on the alert. By 15.00 hrs the last of the office blocks were passing astern. We were clear our paddling pace reduced as did our pulse rates.

The inshore zone revealed changes in boat sizes and types. The odd fishing vessel with a Guernsey registration gave clues that we were little more than 10 - 15 n.miles out. The haze still restricted our visibility to about 5 n.miles. With a combination of atmospheric and tiredness our attempts to sight the island were frustrated. Illusions of land masses played tricks on our subconscious minds. I'm sure at one point we saw the island, but discounting it as yet another mirage we paddled on blissfully unaware how close we were. Four o'clock rolled into five and ten to six fast approached.

The 17.50 hrs shipping forecast predicted Northeast/east winds force 3 or 4, visibility had improved to 10 n.miles. We agreed to paddle on for five more minutes, the air of silence and tension between us both said it all. Both immersed in our own thoughts. At 18.00 hrs I called a halt, we had been paddling for nearly sixteen hours. A combination of compass error, windage, approximate navigation and dodging big boats had caused us to miss our objective.

During the last five minutes my mind had worked overtime, "Lifeboat called out", "Air sea rescue", "Bodies found floating", newspaper headlines used time and time again to announce some poor mariners misfortune. I cursed myself for having ever suggesting to Andy and involving him in such a mad hair brained scheme. Possible permutations and eventualities made my mind work overtime. Things that seem so stupid now, In the safety and comfort of home, (would I see my family again ? could we end up in France ?, maybe we were on the east side of the Island, the Alderney Race would be very close !) took on a different meaning in the reality of the situation.

Feelings of hopelessness surged through my thoughts, blind panic threatened to endeavour, swallow and consume my self-control. We sat in the midst of a vast sea of emptiness, no reference points and no sign of any other vessel. We were on our own, well and truly up the creek. We did however have a paddle and a few other back up items.

Logic and dead reckoning told me we had drifted to the West of Guernsey, The wind had been constantly blowing from the Eastern quarter, thus causing our drift and the Casquets, to the east had not been visible. By my estimation if we paddled for 2 or 3 hours due East the Island would come into view. Andy agreed although a hint in his voice indicated a slight doubt, but as final confirmation he suggested using my small radio to confirm Guernsey position. He reasoned that the V.H.F. transmissions worked by line of sight and any object in between would block it's reception. I tunned into Radio Guernsey with the radio held close to my body. In the mean time Andy started to turn the kayak through a full circle whilst keeping his eye on the forward compass. At about 280 degrees the reception faded slightly. A reciprocal course of 100 degrees would put us on line with the Island. We called up Peter Port Control on our marine radio. A voice came over loud and clear, the first we had heard since our goodbyes to Gary 16 hours previous. Andy advised on our position, we were in no danger, estimated time of arrival at Hanois Light would be 2 or 3 hours later and request Brixham Coastguard be advised of our situation.

Visibility had now improved to about 10 n.miles, we agreed if necessary to wait until darkness in order to use the navigation lights that warn of the Islands. For the moment we were paddling like we had never paddled before. Summoned from hidden depths a reserve came, pumping through our bodies. Any thoughts or feeling of tiredness disappeared.

An hour later (19.10) we made another call to Peter Port Control to confirm all was well. The Duty Officer had locked onto our transmitter and by use of a Radio Direction Finder confirmed we were on a bearing of 283 degrees from Guernsey. Andy's theory had worked, the electronics wizard had worked wonders. By 19.30 hrs un-mistakeable faint outline of land was visible. One and a half hours later Hanois Light glided by on our port side.

At 21.45 hrs with darkness just begining to fall the Voyager's bow touched the slip at Fort Gray. Nineteen and a half hours later, we had made it. In our twenty odd years of association on other demanding expeditions I had seen the same expression on Andy's face. It showed no weariness, no aching, just a warm smiling feeling of achievement. His expressions mirrored my thoughts.

We would stay for one day on Guernsey as guests of Brian and Marie Aplin. Then on to Jersey, our arrival coinciding with the Jersey Sea Symposium. Our trip had been planned well before we knew of this event. As luck would dictate being able to attend such a well organised, prestigious event on the sea kayaking calender proved the icing on the cake.

Why did we do it ? A question I have been asked on numerous occasions. When asked the same question by a member of the press I gave the well used cliché and throw away reply, "Because it was there" and yes you've guessed it that became the leader for that particular article.

A satisfactory reply for "Joe Public", but for canoeist involved in our sport I wanted show by using techniques and designs from other disciplines an efficient and safe crossing could be made. Marathon racing came first and foremost to mind. In particular three items of equipment performed admirably.

Firstly, the Voyager's sleek bow and fore section is more akin to a K2 than the traditional lines of a sea kayak, as a result it is possible to maintain the same speed as a comparable sea kayak double with less effort. Secondly, our paddles were matched Lendal Powermasters, carbon 1F shafts and blades. Their construction, combined strength with lightness and gave us a far greater advantage than our more traditional wooden asymmetric blades. Finally, the Nookie Marathon Cags were ideal for the conditions we encountered. Their lightweight construction and compactness made them ideal as a water/windproof which could withstand the continual and infuriating splash that is encountered on a trip of this nature.

Our thanks are extended to the following for without their assistance and support a trip of this nature would be so much harder, if not impossible;

Kinton Kayaks, Lendal Products Ltd, Nookie, British Channel Island Ferries.
Brian and Marie Rplin, Kevin and Nicky Mansel, Gary Ford, and most importantly, our patience wives Michelle and Sue.

Lastly, to my long time friend, fellow partner and conspirator in "crime", mobile computer and one with the ears in front, Andy, Thank you.

Nigel Hingston. July 1992.

Q:CIERSFNH1792

CLIMBING KAYAKS SKEGS AND PLONKERS

Some years ago I used to spend most weekends climbing. I was never very good having started this sport on the wrong side of thirty. Rick however moved to Mansfield for some reason muttering about a nice law firm he was joining and the attractions of Millstone grit. I struggled up a number of hard severes even making an occasional VS on a good day, with a variety of partners, most of whom now don't count a climb unless it has some E number in front of it. E numbers to me are something to be found on packet food and as far as climbing goes are strictly for lycra clad athletes.

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**Dave Gardner, Shetland Canoe Club, 3 Andrewstown Terrace, Lerwick,
Shetland. ZE1 0SY. TEL : 0595 5096.**

I recently organized a venture which went by the title of "The Shetland Sea Kayak Weekend 3rd. to 6th. July 1992. The venue was Papa Stour, a small island off the west coast of Shetland reputed to have the best sea caves in Britain. Twenty two canoeists took part, 15 from the Shetland Canoe Club & 7 visitors from areas ranging from Perth to the Isle of Wight. We were fortunate to have the company of John Ramwell of the Advanced Sea Kayak Club. John paddled with us & entertained us with slides of his travels around the world plus talks on planning for expeditions.

Most of us camped at Papa Stour with the remainder staying at the local B&B. We mostly had our meals at the B&B & packed lunches were available.

We spent the weekend paddling around the coastline of Papa Stour visiting the remarkable caves, subterranean passages, natural arches & stacks. John Ramwell said that during his many years of paddling he had never come across so much to see in such a small area.

On Sunday 5th. July three of the canoeists paddled from Papa Stour to the Ve Skerries. This journey, while being only about 5 miles, is across an area subjected to tide races & overfalls plus very confusing tidal streams. The 3 lads were delighted to be able to land on Ve Skerries. As far as I can ascertain this was the first landing there by kayak. They described the journey as "interesting" technically. I feel sure that this was a gross understatement as the 3 of them are very competent paddlers.

On Monday 6th. July we paddled back across Papa Sound to "mainland" Shetland. This crossing requires a bit of planning as the tide runs at 6 knots on springs & there are a few small overfalls. With wind against tide the trip can be very "interesting", however we had an easy crossing that day.

Two of our visitors, Bill Stephens & Mike Dales, set off for another 4 days of paddling around Shetland. During their travels they landed on the isle of Muckla Flugga, the most northerly island in Britain, and had tea with the lighthouse keeper. I understand that he was quite surprised by their arrival, they don't get many visitors there. The next day while camping at Urie Ness on the isle of Fetlar Mike & Bill saw a pod of killer whales feeding on seals just offshore from their tent. They finished their trip

Friday 10th. July & were storm-bound for a short time at Burravoe on the isle of Yell. The final stage of their journey included a difficult paddle across Yell Sound with a fair tide running.

Shetland does not have very strong tides generally but there are exceptions, the worst areas are Papa Sound, Yell Sound, & the Roost at Sumburgh.

Another two of our visitors, Harry & Chris Simpson, stayed in Shetland for the rest of the week camping in Lerwick. During this time they paddled to the islands of Vementery, Noss, & Mousa. Noss is a bird reserve and Mousa is famous for having the most well preserved broch anywhere.

I intend to organize the event again next year on behalf of the Shetland Canoe Club. The plan is to spend the weekend of Friday 2nd. July to Monday the 5th. July on Papa Stour with options on camping, meals etc. For those who wish to stay longer there is a camp site in Lerwick, our main town. This is an ideal location for day trips to anywhere in Shetland. There is also a large amount of islands suitable for camping "wilderness" style. Some of the club members should be available for paddling and could help with transport etc.

I will be putting together an information sheet & registration form. For more details contact; Dave Gardner, Shetland Canoe Club, 3 Andrewstown Terrace, Lerwick, Shetland. ZE1 0SY. Tel. 0595 5096.



EMERGENCY REPAIRS

OR HOW TO COPE WITH THAT SINKING FEELING

by Ron Moore

At my first assessment for Inland S/I, my ten-minute talk was on 'Emergency Repairs'. I took some black plastic tape and a bottle of meths, and gave a practical demonstration of drying a boat before applying the tape. In case you don't know, there are two ways of using meths to do this. The first is quite safe. Meths is miscible with water. That means it mixes with it, so you can soak the boat in meths, and when you wipe the meths off you wipe the water too. The second uses the principle of combustion. You soak the boat in meths and then ignite it, and the heat of the burning meths dries out the boat. I hadn't ever done an emergency repair as I'd always been pretty careful with my kayak, but I'd heard that you should always make your lecture a bit visual so I did this demonstration in the lecture room with about twenty S/I Trainees and six assessment candidates and all the staff watching. Quite a lot of the meths ran down the boat and onto the carpet, and when I lit it there was rather a larger fire than anyone had anticipated! My assessor told me that I needed more practical experience in several areas . . .

I passed my next assessment a year later, and strangely enough, I had the same topic for my talk. This time I was well prepared because I'd broken several boats on various wild water trips — mostly because it was a dry winter and there wasn't so much wild water, but plenty of exposed rock. I'd discovered Sylglas which sticks like something to a blanket, and to be on the safe side, I also took a little G.R.P. kit along for my lecture and did a quick repair job on

a little hole that someone conveniently had in the side of his boat, using a lot of hardener and a fan heater so that it went off inside my ten minutes. I didn't demonstrate the meths technique this time, and everyone seemed to think it was a good lecturette.

Well, as I took fibre-glass to my S/I Assessment, it seemed to be a matter of honour that I should carry it regularly in my repair kit after I'd passed, although I'd never carried it before, and I only took it to the Assessment to make an extra good impression. I felt a bit silly doing it for this reason because I'd always found Sylglas was good enough for any riverside repair, but it stayed in my repair kit — half a pound of resin, a tiny bottle of hardener and a few pieces of chopped strand. I also carried a bottle of meths for a similar sort of sentimental memento of my first disastrous lecture on the subject of emergency repairs, but I still stuck to Sylglas and never found the need to use anything else to mend the odd split.

Gently heaving sea

In the Autumn I was paddling on my own down the Dorset coast, about three miles offshore, cutting across from one headland to the next on a cool but fine day with little wind and a moderate swell. There were one or two rocks that came close to the surface, but nothing that dried out, and I was looking at the headland I was making for which was still a few miles away and taking not too much notice of the gently heaving sea around me. I noticed a set of bigger swells which began to lift me

higher than before, and suddenly, I dropped in the trough with a loud crack right on top of a sharp pointed rock barely covered by the water and in seconds my forward compartment filled with water! The set of big swells was an isolated disturbance, and the sea was again just gently moving. I had to take off my spray deck and exit quickly, as the kayak was awash, and was kept afloat by the rear compartment, floating at about 45° with the bow and most of the cockpit completely submerged. My feet touched something hard, and after the first second of excruciating panic, I realised that it wasn't the snout of Jaws III, but the submerged rock which had holed me. The time was 4.30 pm, and low tide was at 6 pm.

Standing, or rather juggling on the jagged platform, I was up to my chest in water at the height of each swell, and about knee deep in the troughs. I was already quite cold, and I felt quite incapable of swimming to shore with a water-logged boat, and absolutely unwilling to consider trying without it. I've only swum a few times in my life, and that was when I was in my prime at about fourteen years old, when the long process of gathering senility began its insidious work.

I realised I was in big trouble, but it was hard to appreciate just how bad it was. I wasn't drowning, or trapped. The weather was good, and the waters were cold enough to deter man-eaters. I had a flask of hot tea tucked behind my seat, and all sorts of goodies tucked away in the two compartments of my sea boat. In one pocket of my buoyancy aid I had a flare, with more in the boat, and in another pocket I had some pre-cut strips of green Sylglas.

Drained surprisingly quickly

I made my paddle fast with the paddle park, and with a bit of a struggle during which I fell off once into deep water, I managed to lift the bow of my canoe, letting the buoyancy in the rear compartment take most of the weight. I rested the bow on my shoulder, and let the water drain out so I could look at the damage. It drained surprisingly quickly, and I knew it must be a big hole. When it stopped gushing out, I twisted my head under to have a look and saw a round hole, about 5" in diameter with the end of one of my polybags sticking out. The swell made it very hard to support the weight of the boat on my shoulder but I turned it upside down and dropped it onto the water where of course it floated fine, in fact I could lean on it to rest while it heaved up and down about 3-feet at a time.

It was easy enough to take out the Sylglas and peel off the polythene strip, although I had to hook one arm through the deck line so the boat wouldn't drift away. I put seven strips of tape overlapping each other, and pressed the edges out really hard, then flicked the canoe over the right way up. The weight of water pressing on such a huge hole was too much for the tape, and it tore inwards with a rush and I had a semi-Cleopatra's Needle again!

It took a little longer to do all this than it takes to read and I was beginning to feel a bit worse for wear, but it was getting easier to handle the boat because the tide was still slowly falling, and I was in shallower water. Only the biggest swells were up to my waist, and most of the time I was less than knee deep. It seemed quite hilarious at the time, when I fished out my flask from the cockpit and had a cup of tea. Everything

Emergency Repairs (cont.)

that I used had to be secured and the quickest way of doing this was to stuff it down the front of my buoyancy aid. I now had my flask, repair BDH, my knife, hat, sun-glasses and fishing line down there, and it was difficult to see over the top! I was plastered with Sylglas adhesive, the stuff that reminds you of the early months of fatherhood, and meanwhile everything stopped for tea.

Also, I still had a big leak to cure. My G.R.P. kit was still in its sealed jars at the bottom of the repair BDH and some more juggling was needed with elbows and chin to hold the boat and the various containers while I made a strong mix, using all the hardener and mixing the resin in its own jar.

I wetted out a long piece of chopped strand on the deck, and draped it over half the hole. I had to wedge some gear inside the compartment to support the wetted mat in the middle of the hole, otherwise it would have just plopped in, so I was really glassing onto polybags of spare clothing inside as well as to the edges of the hole on the hull of the canoe. I threw my little glue brush away and stippled the edges with my fingers. I had just enough mat and resin to cover the hole, with an overlap of an inch or so all round. The sun had gone down, and it was very cold. I waited twenty minutes and it still didn't go off. It was now ten past six, and the tide had turned . . .

Obvious answer

It's easy now to see the obvious answer, and I suppose the cold and exertion had made me stupid, but it took me all that time to realise that I had the answer with me. I needed heat, and there unused was my half pint of meths. I didn't want to wash the resin off the repair so I laid my woollen hat over it as a sort of wick, and poured a quarter of the meths onto it and lit it with my lighter. When the blue flame had gone out, I poured more onto the charred ashes. It warmed the resin up nicely and lasted a good ten minutes, and when I pressed it carefully with my fingers, I could feel it had gelled. I used the rest of the gas in my lighter to harden it off, and at last turned the canoe over again the right way up and entered the boat as if it were made of eggshells.

When I eventually got back to Plymouth and told Digby about my miraculous emergency he was very scathing. *'There was a much easier way if only you'd used your intelligence'* he said. *'You should have taken out your hacksaw blade, sawn off the leaking part and paddled ashore in the remaining two thirds of the canoe.'* *'What's more'*, he said, *'All repair kits should always contain a 5" diam. cork' . . .*

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