

# 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 95

JANUARY, 1993

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BL5 2SL

EDITORIAL

By the time this reaches you the Festive Season will be behind us and, for my money, it is down hill to Spring and the better weather which allows us to get away from it all. Of course there are the hardy among us who go off paddling all the year round. I have to admit to not being one of them, though time was..... This year I am determined to visit some of my favourite 'hot spots' like the Farnes Islands, West Coast of Scotland and Anglesey.

Many of you have written to A & C Black to prompt them to publish my book, for which many thanks. Unfortunately, just as I was posting off the last newsletter, A & C Black wrote to say that, because they had failed to find an American co-publisher, they had decided not to publish my book. Consequently I instructed them to send it off to the British Canoe Union who had previously expressed an interest in publishing it. Then your letters started hitting their office and now they seem reluctant to let it go so the situation is somewhat fluid. But let me say how grateful I am to you who wrote off to A & C Black. I have kept a list of those who wrote and I will honour my part of the deal -- who ever and whenever it is published. Watch this space.

The Nordkapp Trust met recently in Nottingham to plan the details of the Nordkapp International Sea Kayak Symposium, Anglesey. It is to be from the 1st to the 7th. May, 1993 and promises a full and varied programme.

What are you doing over the weekend of the 20th/21st March this year? Perth is hosting the Scottish Canoe Exhibition at the Bells Sports Centre, North Inch. Come and Try it sessions on the nearby River Tay; plenty of parking spaces and eating facilities.

Nigel Hingston, S.W. Rep to the B.C.U. Sea Touring Committee, has compiled a SEA GUIDE to cover the S.W. peninsula from Dorset to the Severn, including the Isles of Scillies. For details phone Nigel on 0626 854175

Lester Matthews is running a series of evening classes from 7 to 9pm, starting 6th January in Birmingham, leading to expeditions in the summer at 021 Nigel Denniss' place, the Anglesey School of Sea & Surf. Phone Lester on 235 2407

A.S.K.C. would like your views. Please send me a card to share them with readers: on the wearing of buoyancy jackets, use of flares and solo paddling.

First your views on the wearing of buoyancy jackets. Write down A or B or C or D

A = wear it ALL the time

B = wear it only in rough conditions, otherwise have it stowed on deck

C = as 'B' but also when coaching students.

D = very rarely wear it, even when the conditions are 'interesting'.

Secondly, let me how you value flares Write down X or Y or Z

X = never rely on them, don't bother carrying them.

Y = always carry them.

Z = carry only when you consider the conditions warrant.

Finally, solo paddling. Write down 1 or 2 or 3

1= solo paddle but generally advise against it

2= see absolutely no harm in it

3= against it in principle on the grounds it is irresponsible.

So send me a card, address as above. Include your name to help me keep this straw poll authentic. Your views will remain confidential - I just want the stats

Your card should look like this

Name	J.J.Ramwell
??/?	5, Osprey Ave., etc.

FROM MARTIN SPURLING, BATH

Anybody who went to the Sea Symposium on Anglesey in May 92 could hardly have failed to notice Richard Lennox's beautiful little traditional Greenland Kayak. For me it was love at first sight, I reckon that my Legend is a beautiful boat but compared to a real eskimo kayak .....

Richard let it be known that he was hoping to get Sven Alstrup over to run a course and I gave him my address; which he promptly lost.

So it was that I found myself with a small group of fellow eccentrics back at the ASSC on Anglesey.

As far as I can gather Sven spends most of his time getting groups like us to build our own kayaks in the traditional manner though using canvas rather than sealskin on a wood frame joined together with twine and wood pegs. Sven really uses no measuring instruments except his arms and his nose for large measurements and his fingers for small. When he is not engaged in building he teaches the owners of the new boats how to paddle them.

The start of the course was a bit like a Savile Row tailor. What sort of boat do you want? Baidarka, E. Greenland, W Greenland, fast, slow, style of bow and stern and lastly size of the paddler (these boats, especially the singles are tailored round the paddler). Trouble was - next step was, here's the wood now build your own bloody boat.

Richard Lennox and I with our partners had plumped for two hole Baidarkas with the characteristic double bow and slightly chopped looking stern. Construction commenced with the gunwales; two unprepossessing bits of 2" x 1" pine about 20' long were clamped together and a series of matching slots were cut along one edge using a 6 mm drill and a sharp pocket knife. Mike's skills as a violin maker started to shine here - even Sven was taking sharpening lessons. Into these aforementioned slots were to be sprung the ends of the ribs. Before this however the flat bow and stern pieces were cut and pegged into place, which together with temporary spreaders gave a boat shaped outline and a twist to the gunwales which would reflect the angle of the sides of the boat. The pre-cut curved deck ribs were then chosen, cut to length and pegged and bound in place. The next job was shaping the vertical bow piece with its double shape from a slab of oak using a jig saw and a murderous ex-kitchen knife which Mike had brought along; this along with the vertical stern piece was again pegged and bound into place (amazingly rigid).

The work now really began then in earnest. At 7 the next morning there was Sven and his steamer. This consisted of a borrowed primus on which sat a large saucepan. Lying horizontally, one end on the saucepan and the other on a paint tin, stood a wood tube about 6" square and about 3'6" long with a round hole in one side corresponding to the saucepan top. Steam rose into the tube in which were placed the 1 1/4" x 1/2" oak ribs after they had been mystically measured for size using some formula involving Sven's thumb. When deemed cooked the ribs were then bent by eye and shortened as necessary with a pair of garden secateurs. All 21 ribs on the Baidarka were done like this to an accuracy which proved amazing. We then proceeded to tie the stringers (3 each side) to the ribs, one tie every time a rib and a stringer crossed; you can work numbers out for yourself.

The keel of the Baidarka is a fascinating gadget. It is cut obliquely in two places. A small socket is then cut in the faces and a small block of wood inserted. The pieces are then bound back together. The effect is to allow the keel to stretch and flex to some degree but not to shorten and increases these boats flexibility. This seems to be an area unexplored by the plastic kayak builders. Certainly all eskimo kayaks seem to be built to flex round the gunwales and the whole structure like a model aeroplane is relatively weak until the skin is stretched over it but then becoming immensely strong relative to its weight.

Having bound our ten millionth joint, rounded off all surfaces to be in contact with the canvas and given the whole lot a coat of boiled linseed, covering began. A piece of canvas is cut about a foot shorter than the boat and pockets sewn in each end to slip over bow and stern. The stern end was fitted to the inverted hull and with me swinging like an Orang Utan underneath, Sven with his feet braced against mine stretched the canvas till the bow fitted into its pocket. With the hull the right way up the canvas was then stretched round the hull first using a continuous zig zag between loops sewn a few inches in from the gunwales and then in two rows along the deck midline first for further tension second to keep the water out. The areas of the two cockpits were as yet untouched, but while we were sewing away with what remained of our fingers, Sven was hard at work with Sharon Foster's preserving pan on the long suffering primus bending the cockpit coamings from Ash round a template of scrap ply. Holes were drilled round the coaming at 2" intervals and the canvas was stretched up to and fixed to these. The effect of this last process was to draw out the rest of the wrinkles from the hull and I was going to say that the duck became a swan. However, I agree with whoever it was who said that one should make two frames one of which should be left uncovered to adorn the lounge wall. Two coats of household gloss finish the job and except for a few adjustments she's ready to go.

Could I build another without Sven? Definitely not because I would not have a clue about hull shape but despite my state of utter exhaustion at the end I'm rather tempted to go back and make myself a single as a dayboat. Everybody on the course had previous woodwork experience which was an asset but I think that anybody with a very rudimentary knowledge of carpentry would manage perfectly well. Richard Lennox and also Nigel Foster are thinking of running further courses with Sven if enough takers can be found. Contact Nigel on 0248 602058.

My thanks to Nigel Foster for agreeing to come and help, and to Sharon for putting me up and for making the sort of dinners that still taste great at 4 am.

#### South Sea islands awash with rubbish

A "horrifying" collection of garbage found by a scientist on one of the Pacific's most remote atolls suggests that no island on earth is free from rubbish, he claims in today's issue of Nature.

Dr Tim Benton, a Cambridge zoologist, found 953 man-made objects on a beach in Ducie Atoll, which is 3,000 miles from the nearest continent, South America, and 293 miles from Pitcairn Island, the closest inhabited land.

"These included 171 empty bottles from more than 15 countries, 25 assorted shoes, seven aerosol cans, one tinned meat pie, six fluorescent tubes and three broken cigarette lighters," said Dr Benton, who also visited another rubbish-strewn atoll 190 miles away.

"Since Ducie is rarely visited, it was obvious that all this garbage had been thrown into the sea from ships and yachts, many of them hundreds or even thousands of miles away."

Dumping litter at sea has been illegal since 1988 under the International Convention of Pollution from Ships, which has been ratified by 42 countries.

British shipowners can be prosecuted if one of their vessels is seen dumping litter in international waters.

Shetland Sea Kayak Meet : 2nd July 1993

Information Sheet

Venue:- The island of Papa Stour, which lies off the west coast of the Shetland Mainland. The plan is to stay on Papa Stour from Friday 2nd July until Monday 5th July. Those who wish to extend their stay can stay at the Clickimin Camp Site in Lerwick which has toilet and shower facilities and is next to a sports complex.

Lerwick is ideally situated for day trips to anywhere in Shetland, but there are many islands on which it is possible to camp.

Members of the Shetland Canoe Club should be available to help with transport, etc. and to join in with day trips.

How To Get There:- Two P & O ferries leave Aberdeen on Thursday 1st July at 1800 hours, arriving at Lerwick at 0800 hours on Friday 2nd July. Myself and others will meet you off the ferry at Lerwick. We will then travel to Melby, Sandness and paddle across Papa Sound to Papa Stour. There are no shops on Papa Stour, but you can visit Lerwick before travelling to Melby.

For anyone travelling to Shetland without a car, there should be enough members of our club available to offer you a lift to Melby and back.

You would have to bring your own kayak.

Accommodation:- There is a choice of B & B with evening meal or camping. If camping, there is the option of self-catering or taking meals at the B & B. (These must be booked in advance) The house and campsite are located at Housa Voe. The sandy beach nearby is ideal for launching from. Shower and toilet facilities are available for campers.

Prices:- At the moment it is only possible to provide last year's prices. Up-dated ones will be available nearer the event.

P & O Ferry Passenger Return Fare From £100 to £170 depending on cabin option. Vehicle fare is from £150 to £170, depending on car length. There is no extra charge for carrying a kayak on a roof rack. There is a £10 return charge for car-less canoeists to stow their kayaks on the vehicle deck.

Accommodation & Meals at Papa Stour

Bed, Breakfast and evening meal	£15.00 per night
Use of campsite (inc showers etc)	£ 2.00 per night
Evening meal	£ 5.00 per night
Breakfast	£ 3.50 per night
Packed Lunch	£ 2.50 per night

Clickimin Camp Site £5.00 per night.

Registration Fee £10.00 per person.  
Cheques payable to Shetland Canoe Club

INFORMATION

Organiser Dave Gardner, 3 Andrewstown Terrace, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0SY  
Tel: (0595) 5096

P & O Ferries Tel; (0224) 572615

Shetland Tourism Market Cross, Lerwick, Shetland. Tel: (0595) 3434  
An information pack is available for visitors.

Clickimin Camp Site Clickimin Leisure centre, Lockside, Lerwick, Shetland.  
Tel: (0595) 4555

Papa Stour Accommodation and Meals

S Holt-Brook, North House, Papa Stour, Shetland. Tel: (059 573) 238  
Please note that the North House is a non-smoking B & B.

If anyone wishes to bring a non-canoeing partner to Papa Stour, please  
contact Mr Holt-Brook to arrange the use of his boat as a ferry.  
Papa Stour is ideal for bird-watchers and those who enjoy walking.

PLEASE REGISTER BY 31ST MAY 1993

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BRITISH CANOE UNION  
SEA TOURING COMMITTEE

Matter arising from the Meeting held 27th June 1992  
at Atlantic College South Glamorgan

To John Ramwell, Advanced Sea Kayak Club

At the meeting of the BCU Sea Touring Committee, it was resolved that the  
Hon Sec of the STC should write to you to the following effect:

The STC have noted that there are now over 2000 people interested in  
Sea Touring. Many of these are newcomers, and as such, are looking for  
a means of learning safely about Sea Kayaking. We are aware that new-  
comers flock to Symposia held here and in the U.S.A., and we desire to  
promote all such learning opportunities. We have the names and addres-  
ses of 2400 people with an interest in Sea Kayaking. While not wishing  
to send out names and addresses to all and sundry, I think a service to  
Regions and Local Clubs would be in order, to generate paddling oppor-  
tunities for those who want to get on in their Sea Touring.

Nick Hodson  
Hon Sec BCU STC

.....

FOR SALE "Sea Hawk" Sea Kayak. Good condition. Water tight hatches, hand  
pump, deck lines etc. Orange deck and white hull. Last trip across  
the Irish Sea. Price £150.00.  
Contact Noel on 0730 263720 (evening)

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BSES - FOR SALE: Plastick Skerries @ £235 (inc VAT) from Peter Steer, BSES,  
at RGS, 1 Kensington Gore, London, SW

.....

FOR SALE NORDKAPP HM sea kayak, VGC, full deck lines, hatches, pump,  
compass, ver-stern rudder and spray deck .... £350. Also Mark Gees all  
wood sea paddles - hardly used @ £50. Tel Mark Wood on 0270 500423

ARCTIC SEA KAYAK RAMBLE  
VESTERALEN AND LOFOTEN

3-7 AUGUST 1992

by Trevor Potts, Northumberland

The island of Vesteralen, one of the Lofoten Islands group is situated at a Latitude of 69°N some 250km inside the Arctic Circle. The islands are very scenic and the gulf stream gives them a relatively mild climate considering how far North they are. This was the setting for the second Arctic sea kayak race and its associated ramble.

I had spent a wet first week of my holidays with a group on an extended expedition from the Wirral. I joined them on their final week of six and led a short kayak camping trip up one of the fiords just outside Narvik. This was my introduction to the fabulous Sea Kayaking area of Northern Norway. It would have been idyllic if it had not been for the rain which I understand was particularly persistent this summer. Between the rain showers however there were some very stunning light conditions especially late at 'night' when the mid-night sun was hidden behind the snowy mountains.

At the end of my week with the Wirral Expedition project I had to get from South of Narvik to Lodingen and bus to Sortland the largest town on Vesteralen. Fortunately while waiting for the ferry I managed to hitch a ride from a young lady called Lis, heading for Sortland. I had flown out and was borrowing a McNulty Kodiak kayak, a quick phone call and that was soon delivered ready for the 7am start in the morning. There was just time for a 'Chinese' in Sortland before bed.

The first day of the race was 85km, a little too far for me as I had only paddled once or twice in the summer. On the strength of that I decided that the ramble would be more fun. The basic plan was to paddle about 35km each day and camp. There was a very mixed group of paddlers the youngest being about 16 years of age and the oldest about 60 years old. About half the group were women, most of whom had brought their husbands along. There was also a good spread of nationalities represented. The numbers varied as some dropped out and some arrived for the last few days. It was a very good international gathering. A lot of ideas on equipment and technique were discussed and some pretty strange liquids were drunk as a few variations of Irish poteen were passed around late into the night. Of course it was never dark as the sun never set.

The paddling started at 7am on the first day and a gaggle of about forty kayaks, set out Southwards down Sortland Sundet. I think the early start was to coincide with the race schedule and to give the film cameras a good spectacle. It was cold, wet and very long and dare I say boring. 20km before breakfast on a cold wet morning is not my idea of fun. However it did get better as the day went on. A very nice campsite on a deserted rock strewn sandy beach at Solskinvik completed the picture.

The next days paddle around the South West tip of Langoya and onwards to Straume was much more leisurely with a midday start. At Straume we landed on a small sandy beach just inside the rock strewn entrance to a short fiord. That night was calm and still and dry and we talked late into the night around a big campfire drinking home made hooche and a couple of cans of McEwans Best Scotch. For the next two days we threaded our way through the many small and sometimes large snow capped islands to the nearly deserted and semi-derelict fishing village of Nyksund.

Nyksund was different, what few locals there were, kept a low profile. The village was situated on a small headland and straddled two islands. These two islands were linked by a harbour wall at the South end giving a perfectly sheltered harbour from every direction. The two islands were less than 100 yds apart and the houses were built on stilts half on land and half over the water. They were all three storey with full width verandas on each floor, most of them

were semi-collapsed. It was a ghost town perched on the edge of the Arctic Ocean.

The final days paddle from Nyksund to Sortland was scheduled as a 48k marathon. The ramblers were all encouraged to part with approximately £10 to take part. All the entrants names were put in a hat for a prize draw, with the main prize a Svalbard Sea kayak. The ramblers were given an 8am start with the racers leaving about two hours later. Presumably this was in the hope of everyone arriving within an hour or so of each other. I thought I was doing well finishing very near the front of the field in under 7 hours, until the first racer arrived about 10 minutes behind me having done the 48k in about 5 hours. The swimming pool changing rooms were opened for the end of the race which enabled me to have my first hot shower for two weeks. Afterwards there was a very nice buffet and reception laid on in the town hall complete with a welcome beer.

The hospitality and race organisation was excellent. For anyone contemplating a sea kayak trip to Norway in 1993 I can thoroughly recommend it. I will be organising a mini-bus trip out for the 1993 Race and Ramble, the dates are 2-6 August. The organisers may have a stand at the Canoe Exhibition at Ponds Forge in February if you want details or contact them at the following address:

Arctic Sea Kayak Race  
C/O Vesteralen Reiselivslag  
P.O. Box 243  
8401 Sortland  
Norway. Fax 01047 8823666 Tel 01047 8821555

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

From: O J Cock M B E  
"Mavis Cottage"  
93 High Street  
WARGRAVE  
RG10 8DD

17 November 1992

Dear John

Thank you for the most recent issue of the ASKC newsletter. I was particularly interested in your editorial and the bit about canoeists being rescued by helicopter.

Some of the Coastguard answers are inaccurate, in particular the bit about the helicopter down-draft. They say that "rafting .... (is) virtually impossible and potentially dangerous". With trained and able canoeists it is neither of these. Some time ago, with the aid of the C.G's and the R.A.F. I made a film on air-sea rescue which I gave to the B.C.U. Canoe Lifeguards. For a time it got lost, but I have recently salvaged it and put it onto video-tape. It remains for me to add the sound track, which I shall do this coming week-end. Then I have to hand it back to the lifeguards, who are a bit better organised these days, I'm glad to say. Then I have to come to terms with them about its being available for hire or sale.

Thus I can't make any promises about its availability at the moment, but I promise to keep you informed about progress. I am hoping it will go into the new library which Colin Broadway of Mobile Adventure in Leicester runs, and that the lifeguards will get a rake-off. All remains to be seen!

Sincerely

Oliver



## CAN YOU MUCKLE FLUGGA?

A SHETLAND EXPERIENCE - BY MIKE DALES OF PERTH

An edition of the ASKC Newsletter last winter wasn't as innocent as it first appeared. It contained a letter from Dave Gardner of Shetland Canoe Club, and as soon as I read the first sentence I was sold on his plan. I knew there and then that my enthusiasm might result in a long and grueling sea trip. I've always wanted to visit Shetland, especially for a sea kayak expedition, and this was to be my opportunity.

Shetland Canoe Club were inviting paddlers from the UK for a long week-end at the beginning of July, and to share a club meeting on the island of Papa Stour. After a couple of phone calls, I couldn't wait for the ferry out of Aberdeen on July 2nd.

Six months passed and I was alongside the P & O ferry, frantically cramming the contents of my car into the depths of my Nordkapp. This scene of mayhem was soon quelled when a chap drove up in a Discovery. He would have looked as innocent as an ASKC envelope had it not been for the Nordkapp on his roofrack and a menacing look in his eyes that suggested he was out for adventure. This was Bill Stephens from Kendal,

Once on board we were confronted by a uniformed girl named Barbara who greeted us with: 'Are you the two sea canoeists?' Oh no, we've done something wrong, we thought, and started apologising. 'Its OK, I'm a sea canoeist myself,' she continued, 'so once we're out at sea, come up to the bridge and I'll show you the controls and we'll have a look at some charts'. The view from the bridge was tremendous, and we were seeing porpoises and sea birds which we didn't expect to see until we got to Papa Stour. A look at the various charts of Shetland was enough to set the pulse running.

Bill and I were both going over for a full week, so to team up after the wee-end, and go in search of further adventure seemed like a great idea. And so the seed was sown. 'Do you fancy Muckle Flugga?' 'Yeah, not half! Do we have enough time to get up there from Papa Stour?' 'We could do it in 3 days, I've already worked it out,' replied Bill, quick as a flash. 'Right, you're on. I've always wanted to go there'.

Later in the evening we met Matthew Taylor. We hadn't met him earlier because he wasn't taking a kayak, but had arranged to borrow one.

We were met off the ferry in Lerwick by Ray Saxalby. Within minutes we felt we had known Ray for years. He has a heart of gold, and a car of, well, sort of, bronze, with a slightly silvery lining. 'Its the salt, its not worth having a good car on Shetland'. he quipped. We all squeezed in through the door that opens, and watched Lerwick flash by through the window that wouldn't close. The destination was Dave Gardner's house.

Dave is a Glaswegian and fairly new to canoeing, but his enthusiasm is infectious even to those with experience, and his devotion to planning this week-end was indeed commendable. John Ramwell and Martin Rudd had flown to Shetland the previous evening, and had spent the night at Dave's. Chris and Harry Simpson from Midlothian were the other visitors to make the journey bringing the total number of 'southerners' to 7.

Friday afternoon provided ideal conditions for the paddle to Papa Stour. In clear weather a car journey on Shetland is fantastic with a fresh seascape around every corner. No point on Shetland is more than 3 miles from the sea. The sea dominates everything, and perhaps there is no better place to see Shetland from than out on the water looking inwards.

Papa Stour's attraction to sea canoeists is its caves and subterranean passages. We experienced 2 or 3 on our way into Housa Voe on the Friday

afternoon, but on Saturday, when we paddled around the south side of the island from east to west, we were all amazed at the scenery. We were able to explore the south coast in calm sheltered conditions, and venture out to the two islands off the western tip of Papa Stour, Lyra Skerry and Fogla Skerry. Lyra Skerry measures about 300 x 150 metres. Entering at the Northern end in a big sea is an experience that I can recommend to anyone searching for a real rush of adrenalin!

Saturday evening saw everyone back at our base by Housa Voe. The Holt-Brook family put on the most amazing barbecue for us on the Saturday evening, and there wasn't a midge within fifty miles. Being so far north meant that it hardly got dark at that time of year, so following the barbecue a football match was held. The full-time result at midnight was Shetland 7 - The Rest of the World 7.

Sunday was a much calmer day. Saturday's wind had blown out, and the sea, although still quite rough, was easing by the hour. Two groups set off in opposite directions. The north coast had a number of deep Voes and interesting caves, culminating in the subterranean passage to end all others. 400 metres long with 2 bends, so the centre section was totally dark. Headtorches on, and away into the long black roller coaster. Once you get through you just want to do it again.

After lunch our group split up. Bill, Martin and myself set off to make the crossing to the Ve Skerries, a group of islands, with an unmanned lighthouse, about 3.5 miles north east of Papa Stour. By the time we set off the sea was very clam, although the tide was pushing us out towards Foula. The Ve Skerries are a low lying group of islands notorious for their shipwrecks. They are also home to a large colony of seals. The steps up the outside of the lighthouse allowed us a unique view of Foula, Papa Stour and St. Magnus Bay.

The return crossing lasted 45 minutes and took us to the western end of Fogla Skerry and a series of amazing arches. The next hour was spent weaving in and out of arches, caves, subterranean passages, and cathedrals that eat into the flanks of both Fogla and Lyra Skerry. After that we still had to complete our circumnavigation of Papa Stour by paddling the south coast back to Housa Voe. Everyone had their own stories of the day when we were all back together, and all were equally fascinating. Members of Shetland Canoe Club had never heard of a sea kayak landing on the Ve Skerries before and felt that we had perhaps achieved a first.

On Monday we said a sad farewell to Papa Stour, paddled to Melby and said more goodbyes to our new friends from Shetland Canoe Club.

And then there were two! Bill and I set off to see if we could round the Flugga. After a week-end based on an island it was a pleasant change to be moving on to explore new horizons. Leaving Papa Stour didn't mean leaving the caves behind though. Muckle Roe on that Monday provided some amazing experiences. This was a reasonably long day of 25 miles. The afternoon was T-shirt weather, but the last few miles were in mist that would last until Wednesday lunch-time.

The best pub in Shetland is in Hillswick, as we discovered that evening. You can even camp in the garden. But the garden/camp site is also a zoo/seal sanctuary! I was pitching the tent, when a baby seal flopped out from under a pile of wood. My first thought was to try and help him back to the sea, but when I saw his razor sharp teeth I appreciated that this may not be so easy. Once in the pub I told the landlady that 'I found a Seal in the garden, but it's OK now, I've put it back in the sea.' 'You did what?' 'Only joking!' - This pub really is worth a visit if you are ever in the area it is called The Booth, and is the oldest pub in Shetland.

Tuesday was our big day. 33 miles, with three committing stretches. The day started by paddling to two of Shetland's most famous sea stacks: The

Drongs and Dore Holm. These are both fantastic, and the best way to view them is from a sea kayak. After Dore Holm things got rather serious. Esha Ness juts out into the ocean and you are no longer sheltered by St. Magnus Bay. A big sea rebounding off its cliffs forced us further out to sea in order to keep clear of breaking waves and unfriendly clapotis. A chance to rest in Hamna Voe was the lull before the next storm. The stretch of coast up to The Faither was like Esha Ness 2 - The Sequel. This was followed by another lunch stop at Lang Ayre, followed by the final act in the trilogy, the stretch of water up to Burrier Wick. We dragged the kayaks over the beach at Burrier Wick and into calmer water on the north coast of Mainland.

The journey was rounded off with a 5 mile crossing of Yell Sound, and the busy shipping lane for supertankers. The mist had caused us some concern about this part of the day, but a few yards into the Sound and the mist lifted sufficiently to allow us a relaxed paddle over to Yell.

Our wildest camp site of the trip was in Ramna Voe in Whale Firth, Yell is supposedly the only place in the UK which has an otter population that is increasing. Despite this they are still elusive creatures and we didn't manage to see one.

Wednesday began in familiar fashion, with mist around the cliff tops as we pulled out into the open sea to head north up Yell's west coast. A quick break on a beach near the mouth of Gloop Geo, and we were back on the water again. As we pulled away we realised that the mist was clearing. Ten minutes later we enjoyed our first view of Muckle Flugga, about ten miles away. Everything suddenly improved at once, and a strong tide began to push us northwards. We decided to cut the corner and by-pass the mouth of Bluemull Sound. This meant that we were able to stay out at sea, without the influence of the cliffs on Unst, and just head for Tonga Stack, then on to Herma Ness and Muckle Flugga beyond. As we paddled past the cliffs of Herma Ness we attracted the attention of the massive gannet colony. Despite being over half a mile out to sea, the gannets swarmed out towards us. The amazing thing was that they all circled in a clockwise direction. We weren't being attacked, so we were able to paddle normally and enjoy this spectacle. The performance of the Arctic Skuas harassing the gannets and forcing them to disgorge fish they had just eaten, was another incredible sight to see.

A tricky piece of water on the south western corner of Muckle Flugga demanded our total concentration, but our fears of rough water all the way round the island were not justified. The overfall eased and we paddled along the western side of Muckle Flugga looking up at its lighthouse perched on top. Many people think that Muckle Flugga is the most northerly piece of land in the UK, but it isn't. The less well known Out Stack lies another 500 metres north east out into the ocean. It is there, and we naturally wanted to paddle round it.

A landing on Out Stack would be virtually impossible, so we headed for the small bay on the eastern side of Muckle Flugga. The two lighthouse keepers were watching a game show on TV when we disturbed them, but they were pleased to see us all the same. We signed the visitor's book and from what I could see we were the first canoeists for exactly ten years. The year planner on the wall had an interesting entry on new year's day: 'The Big One.' This wasn't a reference to a hang over, but the storm which lashed Shetland with winds estimated at up to 200 knots.

The north coast of Unst is incredibly beautiful. Burra Firth would have been worthy of exploration, but we had to make up time after our stop. We cut inside Holm of Skaw and headed southwards down the east coast of Unst. Unfortunately at this point the wind picked up from the south west and made for difficult paddling. As it turned out, we had rounded Muckle Flugga in the only weather window of the week.

We battled into Haroldswick, and found a total lack of B & B, and camp site. a portacabin provided shelter for the night, and in the morning we visited the most northerly post office in the UK and a well stocked village shop.

Thursday's journey to Fetlar should have been a short hop, but the miles were hard fought, with a piercing wind always managing to find us despite being on the leeward side of Unst for most of the day.

We camped that night on the north west corner of Fetlar, but before turning in for the night we walked over to the south of the island and looked out to the Out Skerries and the island of Whalsay. The trip so far had been incredible for seeing wildlife, but nothing could have prepared us for what we were to see on Friday morning. Whilst breaking camp, Bill saw a fin by Stongir Holm, about 300 metres away. He called me, but for a few moments there was nothing, then it rose again and we both saw it. Then there were three, all at once. 'Whales!' We sprinted to the end of the peninsula. It was a pod of five Orca (Killer Whales), consisting, we think, of male and female adults and three calves. The male and two calves swam round the Fludir, but the female and remaining calf turned towards us and chased a seal in towards shore. The seal escaped, but the two whales came within 15 to 20 metres of us. We watched them surfacing for another ten minutes as they headed off towards Colgrave Sound, the same direction that we would be taking an hour later!

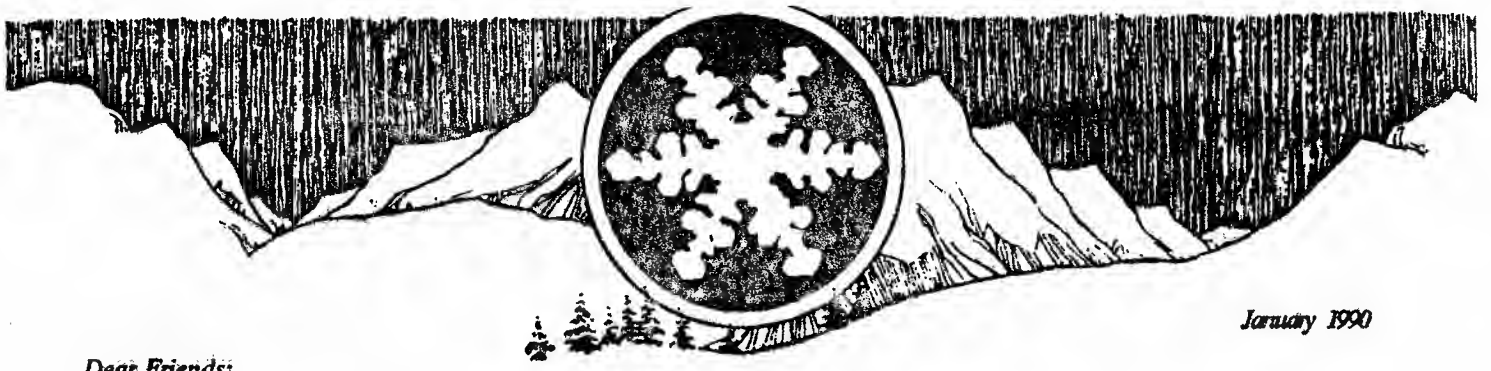
After all this excitement it was time to pack and leave for our final days paddling. By the time we were on the water the wind had picked up again. This was to make the trip back to Mainland a real slog. Half way from Fetlar to Hascosay I was paddling flat out and going backwards. At Burra Voe we finally met the wind fair and square in our face. We were forced to land and had to consider transporting our canoes four miles by road to the Yell Mainland ferry. We also had to let Dave know that we would be late. The logistics were becoming more complicated by the minute, and we were becoming resigned to spending the night on Yell. Just when it appeared that all was doom, the wind disappeared, we got back onto the water, and enjoyed a pleasant evening paddle to Booth of Toft.

At journey's end we were met by Dave. We were provided with a hot shower and real food, then took a taxi to the party, met up with some of the club members from the previous week-end, recounted our stories, listened to reports of the week-end on recordings from Radio Shetland and Radio Scotland, then fell fast asleep on the settee.

In 8 days Bill and I had paddled 150 miles, and both become ardent admirers of Shetland. Thanks Bill for sharing a really memorable trip, I'll see you on the ferry next year.

The Shetland meet will undoubtedly become an annual event, and I am sure that other canoeists will attend in future years and discover the beauty of these islands and the hospitality of the people. Those who went this year will certainly recommend it, and will probably all be there next year. I hope that John will be able to make it again next year because his contribution to the week-end was of immense interest and greatly appreciated by everyone there.

On behalf of all the visitors to this year's meet, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the members of Shetland Canoe Club for making us so welcome, and to Dave Gardner in particular for organising the event in such meticulous detail. The next time I see Dave writing in the Newsletter, I will assume the content to be guilty until proven innocent!



January 1990

Dear Friends:

Hello from Windy Acres!

*"If so many obstacles have beset these two souls in their quest to be united, can we — is there any scurrilous sailor amongst us? — who would dare deny them a ration of rum, a clean new shirt, pressed pantaloons, a day in the sun and — yes, my friends — a bit of a kiss and a fond embrace to seal a deal that has been forged on the Mighty Main."*

Yep, it's true. As promised in last year's letter, we did "tie up at Jill's parents dock in Larchmont". But that's the end of the story...

The story really begins with a long drive across the country, our mighty red Rabbit dwarfed by Doug's bright yellow kayak and Jill's 20' long rowing boat strapped onto the roof rack. Nine days, 6237 miles, and 3 ferries later, we arrived at Blanc Sablon on the Quebec/Labrador border. The country actually looked a lot like home with few trees and long expanses of tundra and we wondered why we had risked paralysis to reach this distant shore. Too numb to ask many questions, we left the car with a local fisherman, told him that if we weren't back by the end of September, he could have the car and on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, pushed off into a foggy Strait of Belle Isle.

This summer's trip was one of our best yet! We paddled/rowed from Blanc Sablon around the corner into the Labrador Sea and then up the whole coast of Labrador to Cape Chidley (the tip of Labrador and the Labrador/Northwest Territories border). From there, we turned around and paddled back down the coast about 385 miles to Nain, the nearest village. In 78 days and a bit over 1400 miles, we were mistaken for bobbing swordfish by two very surprised fishermen, saw shimmering waves atop a 100' hill on a (clue) very hot day, repeatedly found ourselves in the midst of moving masses of minke whales (known locally as grumpuses), grazed with caribou, and got stranded on a small island with a large polar bear for four days. In northern Labrador, we went 23 days straight without seeing or hearing any boats, planes, or people. It's a rough life but somebody's got to do it!

There's an old Newfoundland saying that "God made Labrador in six days. And on the seventh, He threw stones at it". The country has been mowed over, plucked, carved, and kneaded by glaciers. It is stark and beautiful with myriad small, dome-shaped islands and rugged headlands, miles of high cliffs with dramatic black stripes (once molten rock) slicing from water to sky, icebergs of every conceivable shape making their way south from Greenland, clear streams flowing over pink granite slabs, deep fjords, waterfalls, smooth boulders, and jagged peaks. In many places, the water was so clear that we could see the bottom even in depths greater than 40 feet. We spied on fish and forests of kelp and wished we had glass-bottomed boats. White, sand beaches are not uncommon and there is one particularly spectacular 36 mile stretch which the Vikings named the "Wunderstrand" 1000 years ago. It, as is true of most of Labrador, has changed little since Viking days. The weather, however, was capable of changing at dizzying speeds. It was not uncommon to go from dead calm to 50 mph winds in 5 minutes. Or to buck 30 mph headwinds all day only to have them shift 180° in a few seconds. Or to paddle with both our sunglasses and raingear on. A few times, spooked by dark storm clouds and building lenticulars, we scurried to the beach and battened down camp, only to turn around to find cloudless blue sky and still water. Much to our delight and surprise, we had little fog, little rain, and lots of warm, sometimes even blistering hot, weather. We even had several days when forest fire smoke from Manitoba reduced the visibility to less than a couple miles.

In southern Labrador, people who live at the head of more sheltered, forested bays 'shift out' to the coast in the summer to fish along with some fishermen from Newfoundland. We had a hard time understanding rapid fire Newfoundlanders. Doug's name was 'Dog'. Tide was 'tad'. Calm was 'cam'. We had whole conversations where we would laugh and nod with fishermen only to paddle away and find out that neither of us had understood more than a few words in 15 minutes. When we asked Newfoundlanders if they could understand us, they would laugh and say "aye, ye talks just like the people on T.V.". Further north (or as the locals would have it, 'down the coast'), there is one village of Naskapi Indians and the other villages are Inuk (Eskimo). We were lucky enough to be in the Naskapi village of Davis Inlet when a boatful of Smithsonian anthropologists/archaeologists pulled into town and one of the scientists gave a slide show on some of the work they've been doing in Labrador for the last 21 years. The room was thick with blue cigarette smoke and none of the villagers appeared to be paying much attention as the Chief translated the talk into Naskapi, yet the room was abuzz with comments in guttural Naskapi as people recognized places and relatives in the photographs. As always, some of our best memories are of the people we met along the way — the little boy straight out of Charles Dickens who felt Jill's arms and said in a strong Cockney accent, "Bye gawd, ye's got humps welded onto ye arms"; George, a kindred spirit who sailed 900 miles solo along the Labrador coast this summer in a 14' Laser; the Webb clan who fed and sheltered us as generously as their names are sprinkled on geographic features north of Nain; and many, many others.

OVER

For the entire length of the coast, except when we pulled in to a village or fish camp, we never landed on a beach with human footprints. On the other hand, it was just about impossible to explore the shoreline without finding evidence of previous occupation by Eskimos in the form of old stone tent rings, burial sites, chips from pieces of Ramah chert that had been worked to make scrapers or arrowheads, and other artifacts. Some of these sites are at least 8000 years old. One night, we were forced to seek refuge in a cave after our tent was flattened by 80 mph winds. When we climbed stiffly out of our bags in the morning, we realized that we weren't the first to sleep in the cave--Inuk from a previous era had used large rocks above the entrance to anchor a hide covering. A neat feeling. In another spot, we explored a Moravian mission site that dates back to the early 1800's. The post and beam construction mission building had been pre-fabricated in Europe and shipped to Labrador with roman numerals carved on the beams for easier reassembly. The outbuildings housed lots of abandoned old treasures including a work bench with a wood screw vise and barrels with wooden staves. We were amazed that in this day and age, in such spectacular country, so rich in history and so close to the teeming Eastern seaboard population, it was possible to travel for weeks seeing just about no signs of modern man. We can only hope that the secret lasts...

Labrador has no shortage of wildlife. Along the southern coast, we saw many large pods of minke whales. One time, as we were rounding a small point, we spotted a wounded whale that kept rolling over on its side, revealing a large gash spewing red blood into a red sea. We'd talked to a fisherman earlier in the morning who said he had run over a whale so we suspected that this one was the victim of his prop. We had read that whales will often protect an injured companion but we'd never before seen this phenomenon in action. Suddenly, we had about 20 whales making false charges at us from varying directions; our eyes got bigger and our strokes got harder as we watched fins slice towards us at high rates of speed. There wasn't much we could do so we hung as close to the shore as we could, just on the back side of the 5 foot waves that were breaking on the rocks, and kept paddling. At one point, Jill found herself eyeball to eyeball with two 'skyhopping' whales, that is, whales that were rearing their heads a good 6 feet out of the water to get a better look at her. She paddled faster. We had lots of other close encounters, including one with the fin of a large basking shark, but this one probably produced the most adrenalin.

As we travel, we use symbols to alert each other to the presence of wildlife. A peace symbol over the head means caribou, of which we saw hundreds. The caribou didn't seem to know to be afraid of us and it was not uncommon to wake up and find 15 caribou sleeping just outside our tent door. Flapping arms indicates some kind of interesting bird. We were witnesses to the intense life cycle characteristic of the Arctic as birds hatched, got their first swimming and flying lessons, and began to migrate south all within a couple months. Once we found a nest with one wet duckling, less than a minute old, and an egg that was rocking and rolling as another duckling was pecking its way to daylight. Stretching our necks in a bobbing motion means that we've just spotted a seal. And clawing the sky with one arm diagonally signifies polar bear. We hadn't used this last symbol at all until the day we reached the tip of Labrador. Jill, seeing Doug's sign and thinking that he was joking, turned around to see what appeared to be a white rock. A few strokes later, the white rock stood up, revealing a head larger than a bushel basket and legs the size of a telephone pole. The bear then padded down to the water's edge to check us out. Jill maneuvered her boat to within 50 feet of him, but only after convincing herself that she could row the known speed of a swimming polar bear (about 8 mph), if she had to. The second time we used the polar bear symbol was, unfortunately, when we were on land. We were stranded on a one square mile island due to strong onshore winds and 6-8 foot waves. On the second day, we went for an exploratory hike. As we crested the low ridge bisecting the island, buffeted by 80 mph winds, Doug remarked that "the only thing that could be worse about being stranded on this island, would be being stranded with a polar bear". Seconds later, we settled into a leeward patch of tundra for lunch and as we scoped out the beach below us with binoculars, we spotted yet another white lump. This lump appeared to be a very large and very dead polar bear. For 20 minutes, we strained our eyes to detect any motion. Doug, eagerly entertaining thoughts of scientific investigation, abruptly abandoned all such ideas as the massive carnivore suddenly came to life and rolled over. Fortunately, the winds were in our favor and we were able to beat a cautious retreat back to our side of the island. We then spent 3 restless nights, stirring to the slightest sound. Never have 45 mph headwinds and 5-6 foot waves looked so inviting as they did on the fifth day when we were finally able to push off the island.

The hardest part about a trip always is ending it but this time, we had a finale in mind. We worked our way down to the New York shores that Jill once plied in her first rowboat, the 'Little Ikky Kid', and were married on a beautiful sunny day highlighted by being with friends and family able to mobilize on the spur of the moment and by wonderful, unlimited food and wine. The opening paragraph of this letter is an excerpt from the ceremony, written completely in nautical terms, delivered, and kept as a total surprise from us by two true characters from the Last Frontier, Commander John Hale and Nan Elliot. Nan and John also engineered and fabricated a multi-tiered chocolate masterpiece (aka cake) decorated with polar bears, seals, whales, caribou, moose and wedding bells and topped by a dashing duo in a rowboat making their way through whipped cream waves. We had so much fun that we're thinking of making it an annual event but we're not sure of the reaction of Jill's parents.

So now we're back in Alaska, watching Mount Redoubt across Cook Inlet belch huge columns of volcanic ash and juggling an overloaded schedule of mountain safety education and avalanche hazard evaluation consulting. We hope that the New Year brings you clear skies and tailwinds and that you let us know what you are up to!!!

Hope to see you around the next bend,

Jill & Doug

## REVIEW

### Video Tape "Greenlanders at Kodiak"

Produced and narrated by John D. Heath

Camera-man David Kubiak

Viewing Time 38 minutes

Anyone who has an interest in Inuit Kayaks needs no introduction to the work of John D. Heath. For those who are newcomers to this aspect of our sport John is retired from the technical side of the aircraft and oil industries, lives in Damon, Texas but spent many years in Seattle a focal point of much North American Sea Kayaking in recent times. He has spent a lifetime in the study of the Inuit Kayak (or QAJAQ) and its use, accumulating a knowledge of native paddling and rolling techniques unsurpassed outside the Inuit themselves. So I awaited a viewing of this video tape with keen interest, I was not disappointed!

In Greenland today there is an upsurge in interest in the native culture among the inhabitants. The kayak plays a much more important role in the Inuit culture than we Europeans can probably realise. Thus in 1983 some young Greenlanders formed their QAJAQ KLUBBEN, by 1984 it had grown to become the Greenland National Kayak League or PEQATIGIIFFIIT QAANNAT KALAALLIT NUNAANNI KATTUFFIAT with about 25 clubs and in the region of 1,000 members. They have a bi-annual contest for the "Champion Kayaker of Greenland" which has nine different categories to be judged, in 1989 John Petersen won all nine. John's grandfather had been a kayak postman delivering the mail from NUUK (GODTHAAB in the days of Danish colonial rule) to MANIITSOQ, a distance of 112 miles or two days paddle in the open sea.

During the 1989 "Skin Boats of Antiquity Conference" at Kodiak in Alaska the visiting Greenlanders gave a rolling demonstration which is the subject of this tape. Filmed mainly at a swimming pool, with a follow up on the sea, John Petersen is the main participant with a short section involving Kaaleeraq Bech, President of the Greenland National Kayak League. While the picture quality is not as good as we might be used to from the video industry and the commentary could be more extensive the quality and quantity of the techniques demonstrated more than redress the balance.

Greenland Kayakers policy of staying in the kayak in the event of a capsize is underlined right at the start by the fact that it took John over two minutes, with warm hands, to get the hem of his TUVILIK (kayaking jacket) fitted to the rim of the kayak cockpit, it was so tight.

To describe all the rolls, braces etc. shown on the tape would be beyond my ability, sufficient to say John demonstrates about 18 different paddle rolls, the starting positions of which are quite varied eg with the paddle held across the foredeck, across the keel, behind the neck, with crossed arms etc., 3 or 4 types of throw stick roll and 4 varieties of hand roll, yet one gets the feeling that his repertoire is far from exhausted! In addition there are Greenland style paddle braces, sculling on the back, on the chest and stationary with the torso in the water and no paddle movement whatsoever!

John uses a short paddle with a "sliding hand" stroke yet the hand movement seems so natural and flowing that it is not noticeable at first. Very little effort seems to be used in paddling, rolling and bracing yet the paddle is short and the blade narrow. Perhaps we modern recreational sea kayakers have, as yet, a lot to learn from the Inuit? They have been doing it for a few thousand years more than us!

Some might think that with so many types of roll most will be "trick rolls" for demonstration only and of no practical value, far from it. In hunting for sea mammals the Greenlanders faced the risk of capsize in many ways and the variety of methods developed was in response to the need for survival in many different situations.

I can thoroughly recommend this video to those with an interest in the Inuit Kayak and paddling methods and no less so to those and their followers who think they have the answers to modern sea kayak handling.

The tape is available direct from John D. Heath  
Rt. 1, Box 125  
Damon, Texas 77430  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

It is produced in two forms

- 1) For North American systems (NTSC) V.H.S. at 75.00 U.S. dollars, post-paid airmail.
- 2) For most European systems (PAL) V.H.S. at 85.00 U.S. dollars, post-paid airmail.

Terms :- U.S.A. Orders, prepaid by personal cheque or money order.

:- Orders from outside U.S.A. prepaid by bank draft or wire transfer.

Proceeds from the sale of this tape go, to the Greenlanders, which is where they should go in my opinion

*Duncan R. Winning*  
Duncan R. Winning



Building boats and self-confidence  
Text by David D. Platt

FIGMENT is a North Greenland kayak. Nineteen feet long, she was built last summer in less than three weeks by 14-year-old Slade Maurer, who then climbed in and island-hopped along the Maine coast from Wiscasset to Bar Harbor - a distance of more than 100 miles. She leaked a little when she was launched and during the trip, but boy and kayak reached their destination without mishap.

The story of FIGMENT begins well before Slade Maurer arrived at Camp Chewonki in Maine from his home in Mandeville, Louisiana, late last June and started sawing up sheets of plywood. It is a story with roots in the arctic, where native peoples developed strains of lightweight, skin-covered boats for hunting and fishing. It is the story of a summer camp's search for new teaching methods, and of a professional boatbuilder's ability to impart his skills to teenagers. And it is the story of Slade Maurer and seven other young boys who built kayaks at Chewonki last summer, ventured out in them for three weeks, and stored away experiences that will be with the paddlers for the rest of their lives.

The pulling boats constructed at Chewonki are still used for camp expeditions. But building them was expensive, difficult and limited to a relatively small number of older campers. Besides, says former camp director Tim Ellis, "after a few years we had all the boats we needed." Still interested in boatbuilding as a teaching tool, Ellis turned to David Lake, a friend and boatbuilder who had been experimenting with lauan plywood as an inexpensive building material.

Lake adapted the lines of a traditional North Greenland kayak for Chewonki's purposes. FIGMENT and her sisters - nearly 70 have been built by now - are the result. "I didn't even loft the first boat," Lake recalls. "I kind of made it up."

The Eskimo who built the skin-covered kayak on which FIGMENT is modeled would recognize her flat deck and bottom, her hard chines, clipper bow, and rounded stern. Lake lowered the bow a bit to reduce wind resistance and added a keelson after the first season's boats proved to be a bit flexible, but the basic lines of the original are very recognizable in all of its modern descendants.

The new kayak's materials would be wholly unfamiliar to the builder of the original, of course: 1/4" lauan plywood instead of sealskin, bronze ring nails instead of hide lashings, 3/4" white pine strips instead of poles or driftwood strips, and generous amounts of 3M 5200 sealant.

"Lauan plywood is cheap, and it's a wonderful boatbuilding material," says Lake, pointing out that in the curious world of marine plywood there's not much available between \$10-per-sheet lauan and \$90 imports. The 5200 sealant, it seems, is as important as the plywood. Youth and inexperience mean "stuff doesn't necessarily fit together," Lake observes, and a caulking substance capable of bridging wide gaps is a necessity.

The white pine used for most structural purposes is another Lake-inspired bow to cost savings and ease of construction. It's cheap, easy to work, and available at any lumberyard. A camp staff member coats the bottom seams with epoxy before launching. The kayaks are not sheathed in fiberglass. Campers aren't allowed to work with highly toxic materials, but a lauan plywood hull that's well painted or varnished will get its occupant from Wiscasset to Bar Harbor. A six year-old boat used on this summer's expedition by one of the trip leaders made the trip successfully with only an additional coat of paint.

"It's different boatbuilding," says Lake, "It's the epitome of quick-and-dirty, designed to get you safely from here to there." "Safely" is the important word here. Chewonki is a very safety-conscious place. Lake and others involved in the kayak-building program point out that their design is nearly impossible to capsizes, and during the trip to Bar Harbor everyone was required to wear protec-

tive wetsuits and life jackets. Except for the usual cuts, bruises and sunburn, there have been no injuries in the program's six-year history.

"I always wanted to build something and actually see how it works," remarked Hilary Andrews at the end of his first week in the tarp-protected area that served last summer's kayak-makers as a boatbuilding space. "We take things for granted." "It's a lot of work, but I just keep thinking what the results are going to be," he said, looking somewhat amazed at what he'd done in eight days. Before his deck went on at the start of the second week, Hilary had carefully sanded parts of the boat's interior so splinters wouldn't be a problem. "It was hard at times, but it came out well," Hilary said after his kayak was done. He named her EXCALIBUR.

Joe Marini, from New Canaan, Connecticut, had helped occasionally in his grandfather's woodshop but had done "nothing like this - I usually play the drums." Joe sighted along a bevel he had planed into a chine. "Planing is the hardest part," he said. "It's coming out nice, but it took a while." Thinking back after a week on the job, Joe said he would be "more careful with notching and drill holes before nailing into the cleats" if he could do things over again. Still, the work had gone well.

The oldest member of the group at age 16, Matthew Oswald, from Wayne, Pennsylvania, spoke more thoughtfully than some about his experience. "I liked the prospect of building my own boat. To think I'm going to be in the ocean with this is sort of fascinating." Building had taught him the importance of precision, he said, and he had watched the boats change from common to individual property as they advanced. "In the beginning, when we were cutting out pieces, they were everybody's boats."

Sunday, July 21, 7.40 am: eight new kayaks and one recycled one, all loaded for three weeks of exploring the Maine coast, pause in front of Chewonki's dock for the pre-expedition portrait. Each boat (except for Keith Russell's KAREN MAY, which has made the trip before) has its builder in the cockpit. Full lockers and a few days' paddling practice have made the boats more stable than they appeared when first launched. Toby stands on the float for the picture, connected with these boys and boats for one last time before they depart without him. Everyone holds still, but only for a moment.

The camp cheer echoes across the tide-filled cove. Paddlers back and push to turn their boats, then strike out for the wooded point. In less than five minutes the last boat is out of sight.

Saturday, August 3, 10.00 am: The nine North Greenland kayaks, beached at Wadsworth Cove in Castine for a visit to the North American Sea Kayak Symposium, have a workboat look the other craft on the beach don't share. The symposium, an annual affair held at Maine Maritime Academy, attracts about 400 participants. In this setting, if a kayak's made of wood at all, it's likely to be an elaborate resin-covered affair. Three-quarter-inch pine? Lauan plywood? Boat nails and 5200 sealant? Get real, mister ...

But here they are, plywood and pine and paint, pulled up in a pod at one end of the beach: FIGMENT, EXCALIBUR, MILENNIUM, KAREN MAY, BLACK DOG, and the others, their captains lounging casually on the sand. Thinner than when they left Wiscasset, the boys answer beach strollers' questions with aplomb. Unlike the salesmen's bright toys elsewhere on the beach, the Chewonki boats tell you they didn't get here on top of someone's car. Their paint is bleached and scratched.

The boys have changed too. Their new confidence is as evident as their understated pride. Tim Ellis, back at Chewonki, had known the change would come if the adults allowed it; so had David Lake and Kristen Oehler and Keith Russell and even the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu. "A leader is best," Lao Tzu wrote a few centuries ago, "when people barely know that he exists ... when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say 'We did this ourselves.'"

From: Nick Padwick, Sea Touring Representative, Welsh Canoeing Association, Quarry House, Colwinston, Cowbridge, South Glamorgan CF7 7NL. Tel. 0656-656580

Military Ranges, The Coastguard and the Canoeist

Over the past 12 years or so great progress has been made in developing the relationships between the Coastguard and canoeists. This has been as a result of great efforts on both sides, the setting up of good communication links and the responsible attitude of both the CG staff and most, although it must be admitted not all, canoeists. This work has been co-ordinated by the SCU Sea Touring Committee, with the principal lead being taken by John Ramwell, and, before he retired, Dick Richards (the Coastguard District Controller based in Swansea). During this time the canoeing fraternity have demonstrated that those who go to sea in kayaks are not idiots out for kicks but do make every effort to ensure that all know what they are about and the dangers involved. To this end we ask all to do everything to help perpetuate and further develop this mutual understanding.

On a formal basis the Sea Touring Committee contact with the Coastguard is now Mike North from the CG Training Centre in Christchurch. This link we consider most important since it enables us to monitor incidents, develop ideas and, hence, feed back the information into our respective organisations. As far as canoeists are concerned our aim should always be that we ask for rescue assistance as little as possible, preferably not at all. This requires constant training and education.

On an informal basis we ask for anyone who goes out to contact their nearest CG Station to advise them of such things as how many there are in the party, colours of kayaks, the start and finish points, the expected time of arrival and a contact on land should a problem occur. At the same time the CG will be able to advise on the weather expected, sea conditions, potential shipping movements, any possible hazards, etc. Having done this it does not mean that the CG will go into a flat spin and start sending out search parties if, for example, the party is a bit late. They would if ETA was long past or if conditions developed such that concern was justified or if someone with good intentions contacted them to indicate they thought a problem existed. In these events they would then know exactly what they were looking for and approximately where - a major advantage at the start of a search and which can only be to the canoeists advantage. To ensure a search is not unnecessarily instigated the need to advise the CG as soon as possible after landing must be stressed. In the past much time and effort has been spent searching in vain when either or both of these simple acts of communication have not taken place. Remember - it is in your interest alone that the first line of defence lies with the canoeist himself or the party as a whole in order that rescue can be self contained and quick. Failing that, if the Coastguard and the other rescue services have to become involved they must have as much information as possible to work on. Finally, their time and effort must not be expended fruitlessly or unnecessarily for it costs and could be more effectively used on more important matters.

We have been particularly concerned with the dangers surrounding the Military Range at Manorbier on the Dyfed coast. We are most appreciative to Mike North in obtaining for us some information to assist in making passage past this range safer. Until now it has not been marked on any chart but we understand it will appear on the latest issue of Chart 1076 due out about now (1:75000 scale). It also appears on the PEXA (Practice and Exercise Area) series chart Q6402 -

Bournemouth to Heysham. The range limits are three miles either side of Castle Head and six miles out to sea. It is used to fire guided missiles against target aircraft. These should be under control - electronics permitting! Red flags are hoisted on the clifftops an hour before firing commences but the Range admit that they are very difficult to see from the sea. There are no physical marks or buoys to seaward to show that the range exists. They have a range safety boat on patrol - weather permitting. They also keep radar and visual watch. However, past experience has shown that any reliance on these features is misplaced since the flags have gone totally unobserved, the Patrol Boat has only caught up with canoeists after they have passed through the danger zone, canoes cannot be detected on radar and they are easy to miss when distant from the shore.

The Manorbier Range Controller sends me details of firing times monthly for the period of the following month. These arrive too late for publication and are subject to possible late changes. NOTE - Firing does occur at weekends and on public holidays. Details are available from me, from the Range Control on VHF Channels 16 and 73 (Callsign "RA Range Manorbier") or more importantly the Milford Haven Coastguard on 0646-636218. The latter will also be able to supply you with information on the Ranges at Penbrey, Castle Martin and Aberporth.

Both the WCA and the BCU are very grateful to the Coastguard. A few canoeists have much more reason to be so. They encourage us to use their advisory and monitoring service which is for your benefit. Please use it and aim never to have to make use of their search and rescue facilities. Keep training and practising group and self rescues. Finally, do not forget to "sign off" when you have arrived.

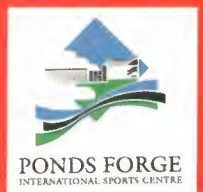
Safe paddling.

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L  
**C A N O E**  
E X H I B I T I O N

**PONDS FORGE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE, SHEFFIELD 20th/21st FEBRUARY 1993**  
SAT 9.30am - 7.00pm ■ SUN 9.30am - 5.00pm  
**ADULTS £5.50 ■ UNDER 16 £3.00 ■ INC. FREE PROGRAMME**  
THERE IS ALSO A "TWILIGHT TICKET" - ADULTS £3.00, UNDER 16 £1.50 - VALID FROM 4-7pm ON THE SATURDAY  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION TELEPHONE: (0602) 821100**



**INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION 1993**  
**Now in Sheffield !**

**EXHIBITION MOVES NORTH**

This years International Canoe Exhibition is to be held in Sheffield at the Internationally acclaimed Ponds Forge Sports Centre. This fabulous new complex was opened in 1991 for the World Student Games and offers some of the finest sporting facilities in Europe - a fitting home for Britain's most popular gathering of canoeing enthusiasts.

**THE CANOEING WORLD ON SHOW**

At least 100 trading and information stands will be exhibiting including all the leading manufacturers and retailers of canoeing and kayaking equipment - an ideal opportunity to kit yourself out for the season and discuss your requirements with the experts.  
 Book your 1993 canoeing holiday and find out more about the many facets of canoeing and kayaking from the information stands.

**CANOE POLO AND SLALOM CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The Exhibition is proud to host two major canoeing events in Ponds Forge international pool - the National Canoe Polo Championships and National Pool Slalom Championships - Don't miss the chance to see some Britain's top paddlers in action. There is a continuous pool programme over the weekend with many other fascinating events and displays. Ponds Forge's Exciting leisure pool will be open with flumes, wave machines and lazy river rapids.

**FREE PROGRAMME**

A full colour comprehensive programme is included in the admission price, giving details of all the stands on show and events over the weekend.

**REFRESHMENTS**

Hot and cold meals and snacks are available on the Exhibition campus, including licensed bars open from 11am daily.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

Ponds Forge has excellent facilities for people with disabilities, including special toilets and wheelchair access to all areas. An information sheet is available with locations of lifts and ramps.

**TICKETS**

Tickets are available on the door, price £5.50 adults, £3 children under 16. Save money and buy your tickets in advance from the British Canoe Union using the attached form or by calling in person at Ponds Forge. There are also reductions on party bookings of 10 or more people. There is also a "twilight ticket" for £3 adults, £1.50 children, valid from 4 -7 pm on the Saturday.

Creche available for toddlers, £1.00 per child throughout the exhibition.

**HOW TO GET THERE**

Ponds Forge is conveniently situated in the centre of Sheffield close to main road and rail links. Public transport is excellent and highly recommended, main line train and bus stations (the Interchange) are literally adjacent to the Centre. If you must bring your car, Ponds Forge is Signposted from the city centre, but parking is very limited - so be warned !

You are advised to park outside the city centre and take public transport to the Interchange



**ADVANCE BOOKING**

Complete this section and send with your remittance and a stamped addressed envelope to the British Canoe Union, Adbolton Lane, WEST BRIGFORD, Nottingham NG2 5AS. Tickets will not be sent unless an SAE is enclosed. Please cross all cheques and postal orders and make payable to:- British Canoe Union. The last date for applications to be processed is 11th February.

Name : .....

Address : .....

..... Post code : .....

Telephone No : .....

	Sat	Sun	£	p
No of adults @ £5.00				
No of children @ £2.75				
Party booking 10 or more @ £4.50 children @ £2.50				
Party booking 25 or more @ £4 adults £2.25 children				
Cheque/postal order enclosed, <b>total value:</b>				
Are you bringing anyone who has a disability?	Yes	No		