

NEWSLETTER

of the



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.

THE ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER No 102

MARCH 1994

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Editorial

This is the last newsletter going to those who have not renewed for 1994. I have enclosed a renewal form. Some of you are using the form more than once and I'm having to refund subscriptions...so do please check that you have not already renewed. I must say that renewals have been most encouraging.

This is effectively the Canoe Exhibition edition of the newsletter. I normally send out the ASKC Membership List at this time but as I want to include those that join up at the Canoe Exhibition I shall be sending it out with the next newsletter.

Ile de Re is attracting much interest and already there are several deposits of 50 pounds to secure places. I included details in the last edition of the Newsletter. I have acknowledged deposits so do let me know if you have'nt had yours.

THOUGHTLESS canoeists (I'm assuming it was canoeists!) who dumped their kayak at sea have been criticised by the Coastguards. Apparently four members of the Coastguards, the Hunstanton Inshore Life Boat and an RAF Coltishall heli went searching for paddlers after an emergency call. Once it was learnt that members of the public had seen people dumping a canoe, the search was called off.

And 'THOUGHTLESS' again.....the following is a copy of Amos Bewicks' letter to Focus. "I was watching a group of 40+ grey seals and two pups on a remote beach that can only be approached from the sea. I was watching this from a cliff top. This canoeist deliberately took a group of eight novices within a few metres of the sleeping seals. The result was that all the adult seals fled into the sea abandoning their young.....one of which still had a portion of its umbilicus attached showing just how young it was.

Now that the seals had been so totally disturbed I stopped waving and asked them to leave and explained that there were pups on the beach. The leader said that he was taking the boys to see the pups. I then became really angry as this showed that he deliberately sought out this isolated seal colony knowing that there would be new born pups. Two hours after the canoes left the adult seals had not returned to their young which were now getting wet from the incoming tide. Many people paddle to get closer to our wildlife but do let us be sensible. Getting within yards of a pupping seal colony is bound to create some distress. If sea canoeists are to keep the good name we have in the environmental circles then let us be circumspect; watching from a safe distance"

LYME BAY INCIDENT. There is much international interest in this tragic event as well as the inevitable national interest...hence my reporting of it in this newsletter on a regular basis.

The trial of the two directors on four counts of manslaughter has been opened. The main trial is unlikely to take place until Autumn.

In the meantime we have been told that all the evidence is now sub judice so any opinions are not permissible.

What is of public record, however, is the fact that the whole incident revolved around the group being blown out to sea by an

off-shore wind. Therefore it has no direct relevance in situations where this is not a possibility.

Some of the media reports have given the impression that the sad deaths occurred almost instantaneously. This is not so. The 'raft' was held together for a long time before the first kayaks swamped. Another period of time elapsed after all the group was in the water, before hypothermia set in and drowning occurred.

* * * * *

The following is a short extract from a lengthy article in the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership on the subject of outdoor education/residential experience and the National Curriculum: "There is a genuine feeling at my school and especially from staff who participated in the weekend that this type of activity is absolutely essential in at least once in a primary aged child's career if a school is to create a purposeful and accurate profile of that child. Personal and social skills can be highlighted and National Curriculum assessments can be made as purposeful as possible. There is no doubt that the residential experience has become the most treasured memory that every child will take away with them from the school. In the days of devolution of funds and power, there may be a case for schools to make the decision that Outdoor Education Centres are not such a priority as increasing staffing numbers or buying that extra computer."

* * * * *

A 'thought'....."Why is it that whenever a new book on sharks is published it nearly always contains graphic pictures of people with scars, missing limbs, and gory details of fatalities due to shark attacks? Books on elephants, or on the subject of bee keeping, hardly ever shows pictures or gives details of fatalities and attacks; yet bees and elephants kill more people every year than do sharks."

* * * * *

REVIEW of a video by Chrisfilm & Video Ltd/14 minutes/available from 'Canoeist' \$ 14.99p + #2. p.& p.

When Oliver Cock shot his canoeing films they were intended to be informative but some of the earlier ones included an element of humour to improve their presentation. Over the years, these earlier films, particularly the 'Clarence' episodes, have acquired greater humour as fashions and techniques have changed with time. On the other hand later films have changed less.

This is the 13th film in the Oliver's' Archives series and covers helicopter rescues of paddlers from the sea. (Ed.. I'm the solo paddler being scooped up by a Wessex!) In colour, with a commentary by Oliver, it is relatively up to date. Even the implication that only member of the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards is capable of resolving a problem at sea is less laughable than when the film was shot.

There are demonstrations of the relative effects of different flares, smoke and dye as seen from water level and from the helicopter, the dye being particularly enlightening. The helicopter makes a number of different approaches to scattered groups, rafts and a lone paddler and the effects of downdraughts from a Wessex are clearly shown.

If you paddle on open water and do not know the finer details of what is involved in a helicopter rescue you should give this video a viewing, for your interest in the future as much as for the historical perspective. Despite the fact that it does not cover such topics as the need to let the strop earth before being touched, it is the only film available on the subject as far as I know.

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ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

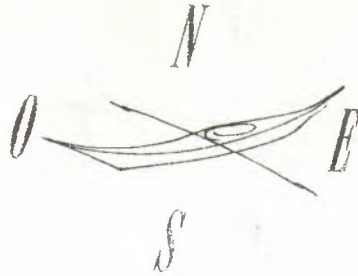
December 23, 1993

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Dear John,

following our conversation at Calshot, my first letter of last October on this subject and your request of more ideas about the CODE OF SAFE PRACTICE in the last ASKC newsletter #101, I would like to remark the following points:

- 1) The practice of sea kayaking is expanding tremendously in almost all Western European countries.
- 2) There is still too little connection between European clubs and associations and, even if the paddling and navigation techniques are the same and there is a common ground concerning safety standards and procedures, unfortunately there is absolutely no co-ordination between different countries concerning the essentials for a safe practice of sea kayaking.
- 3) There is no common European legislation concerning our sport. Even the distance that we should keep from the coast in a kayak is very different in each country. Not to speak of the safety requirements!
- 4) Consequently, the attitude of each national maritime authority towards sea kayaking varies from country to country and could also vary even in different areas of the same country. The result of this confusing pot of approaches is a chaotic mess that ranges from an attitude of benevolence and ignorance to one of evil thinking and stupidity. There are honourable exceptions indeed but they are always the consequence of years of efforts done by the leaders of single federations, clubs and associations in few countries to be listened and understood by the maritime authorities and to find together with them a set of reasonable solutions for the N°1 problem: SAFETY.
- 5) Obviously the point here is not that of enforcing a complex legislation that could limit our freedom to paddle, but to start working towards a future in which we could be able to paddle in every country in Europe



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

knowing that following specific safety procedures, possibly common to all European countries, we would be paddling more safely and freely. It would also be reassuring to know that all European maritime authorities share the same views about sea kayaking and that, in the event of trouble, they would be really helpful and well trained for an emergency.

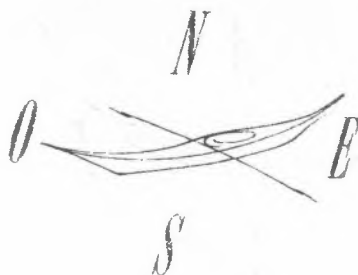
5) In the actual situation our priority should be that of strengthen the international network of European kayakers and start discussing, in the small but efficient arena of the ASKC newsletter, different possible suggestions for a EUROPEAN CODE OF SAFE PRACTICE. The very first thing could be, in my opinion, that of creating a very simple check-list of safety procedures & equipment, together with some good hints & sound advice.

In other words: if we agree on which should be the minimum safety procedures to be adopted by sea kayakers and we spread the check-list through most clubs in Europe, stimulating the discussion about this subject and sharing all the possible info, then we would be actively supporting the growth of a stronger sense of responsibility among us. Last but not least, to share a basic EUROPEAN CODE OF SAFE PRACTICE would mean to have a strong tool to deal with the different national maritime authorities and to begin "thinking globally", when acting locally.

A common starting point?

During its last meeting, the Board of Directors of the A.I.K.M. decided to emphasize all safety procedures during our gatherings and paddles. One of the interesting points was that of arranging the constant presence of one or more experienced sea kayakers that will carefully check all the safety gear and boats in every meeting from now on. This means that those without the right equipment and fit boat will not be allowed to take part to the events. Do you think that we are becoming too rigid concerning safety matters? Personally, I don't think so...

Probably, to most readers of the ASKC newsletter the small list enclosed here will sound obvious and basic but from experience all of us, in Europe and in the U.S., have learned very sadly that nothing is obvious enough concerning safety procedures!



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA KAYAK DA MARE

This is the basic check-list for A.I.K.M. meetings:

- a) *The sea kayak must have real water tight compartments.*
- b) *The kayak must have an efficient pump.*
- c) *The kayak must have appropriate deck and tow lines.*
- d) *Name, address and telephone must be clearly marked inside the kayak.*
- e) *To wear a good spray skirt.*
- f) *The buoyancy jacket must have a minimum inherent buoyancy of 6Kg.*
- g) *To have a whistle or other sound signal.*
- h) *To carry a spare paddle.*
- i) *To have a set of flares.*
- j) *To be dressed accordingly with the weather and to carry a set of dry clothing and towel (including shoes).*

Naturally, we are not suggesting that this is the ideal list of equipment to carry in all situations but it should be a sufficient standard to go out with other kayakers in a guided group. An extended list, including a paddle float, first aid and repair kits and useful suggestions on safety procedures (like always informing a third party about you intentions and expected time of arrival and so on...), could be a practical idea to start with.

Obviously, such a list should be diffused as much as possible through associations and clubs all over Europe and it could become the first step towards a more extensive interchange among sea paddlers.

Why not?

After all, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a step..."

Sincerely,

Daniel De'Angeli

-Secretary-

Associazione Italiana Kayak da Mare

I recently came across what I considered to be a particularly interesting article in the recent issue of THE GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNAL. I have condensed it and added a little. Yes, I know it is not directly related to sea kayaking.....but we all have an interest in our environment and so here it comes.

"Rhesus - they're monkeys! I've not come here to be insulted by some legalised vampire." This was Tony Hancock's reaction to being told that his blood group was rhesus positive by the doctor in the famous 'blood donors scene'.

In fact we are of the genus 'homo' which we share with chimpanzees. Only 1.6% of our DNA is different from that of the chimpanzee.

In terms of measuring success by population we have done rather well. When the Ice Age ended 10K years ago there were 10M of us. In 1930 we were 2B; today we are 5.4B, increasing by about 93M each year. Half the population growth comes from Africa and S.E. Asia. To put this growth into perspective, we are producing a new China every ten years.

A prime reason for our success is our flexibility as a switcher predator and scavenger. We are consummately adaptable, able to switch from one resource base - grasslands, forests or estuaries - to another, as each is exploited to its maximum tolerance or used up. Like other successful species we have learned to adapt ourselves to new environments. But, unlike other animals, we made a jump from being successful to being a runaway success. We have made this jump because of our ability to adapt environments for our own uses in ways that no other animal can match. We now consume - or abuse - 40 % of total photosynthetic production on land. We live in all climates from the jungles to the poles, and we have changed the face of the land. We have coped with most infectious diseases, thereby greatly increasing life expectancy, even in poor countries. We have changed the genetic inheritance of other animals and plants to meet our food tastes. We face no challenge from other animal predators except for bacteria, viruses and retroviruses.

Since the Industrial Revolution began 250 years ago, those who have benefited from it have amazingly increased their living standards. Economic wealth on the normal - highly misleading - definition has risen at an almost incredible rate during this century. Global gross net product was around US\$ 600 billion in 1900. By 1960 it was US\$ 5 trillion and by 1988 US\$ 17 trillion (of which 14.7 trillion came from the industrial countries, accounting for less than a quarter of the world's population, and 2.3 trillion from the rest of the world, accounting for over three-quarters of it). This imbalance is becoming more marked. In industrial countries per capita income rose by 2.4 per cent in the 1980s. Elsewhere it rose by 1.5 per cent.

To what should we attribute our success in population growth? How are we able to circumvent the restraints which limit the increase of other species? The answer is simply that we have evolved faster than the biological systems on which they depend.

At the end of the 18th century it was predicted that, without population control, we were in danger of famine. These predictions failed to take into account advancing technology which would allow greater land productivity.

The Industrial Revolution is the prime reason for the current huge growth in population. It is probably true that we are the first generation in which the magnitude of the global price to be paid is becoming clear.

Ten per cent of the vegetation-bearing surface of the earth is suffering from moderate to extreme degradation - an area the size of China and India combined. Deforestation, with accompanying loss of species is on a scale to change global ecosystems. Enough productive soil to cover the whole of France washes away or degrades beyond use every year. Air pollution has reduced US crop production by between 5 to 10 %, probably more in Eastern Europe and China.

Unfortunately there are indications that some new technology has been at the cost of future growth. The penalties of using fertilizers and pesticides as well as our dependence on them is well known.

Fresh water is a particular problem. The global demand for water doubled between 1940 and 1980 and will double again by 2000.

Then there are the direct effects of the industrial revolution. The fall out from Chernobyl was 50 times that of Hiroshima. No country is exempt from the water produced by industrial activity. Our own North Sea is a prime example. Next comes the atmosphere. The effects of ozone depletion with resultant increase to exposure to short wave ultraviolet radiation, particularly to sensitive but essential organisms such as phytoplankton in the oceans is far from clear. Global warming will affect every aspect of human society. Current predictions are for a likely rise in global mean temperature of about 1 degree C by 2025 and 3 degrees C by 2100. Compare this with a drop of around 5 degrees C during the last glacial period.

But then it is argued that we are supremely adaptable and that if our brains get us into trouble, our brains will get us out. But our brains have to recognise what is happening and what will happen. Our eyes must begin to see.

What is the sustainable human carrying capacity of our planet? We can only guess.

One calculation is:-

Given that we are all vegetarians the biosphere could support 5.5B; given 15% of our calories come from animal products, about 3.7B; 25% of our calories from animal products, about 2.8B and if 35% comes from animal products as is the case currently in North America then the biosphere could probably sustain only 2B. As we are already 5.5B and likely to be 8B in the next 25 years, this calculation is hardly cheering!!

There is clearly a relationship between the three variables - Environment, Population and Resources. In mathematical terms it could look like this: $E(d)I = P (C) X D$ (environmental damage) = Population X consumption per capita X environmental damage per unit of consumption = Catastrophe.

But then nothing is certain.

We need a value system which enshrines principles of sustainability over time, i.e. a population in broad balance with resources and the environment.

Sooner or later nature will of course take care of us. Lack of resources, environmental degradation, famine and disease will, in the painful fashion experienced by our ancestors, cut our species back (AIDS is an obvious example).

Maybe we should simply rely on nature taking its courses, but I would argue that this is a doctrine of despair and is profoundly irresponsible. We can take some control. China is already limiting population. Open persuasion, education, propaganda can effect the birth rate. Family planning programmes in Thailand reduced the average fertility rate from 6.5 in 1969 to 2.1 in 1989.

We can and should do something but whatever we do will require arrangements from a centre. Bertrand Russell in his book written in the 1950s "Has Man a Future" advocated a world government; democratically elected on a global basis, this government to have control over resources, population growth and environmental protection. When one considers the current move towards nationalism around the world it seems we could not be further away from such a situation.

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From Dave Youren, Pontefract, Yorkshire.

Dear John,

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Please find enclosed my renewal for 1994. (I don't mind the increase, it's always value for money and you've done well to keep the costs down consistently to the minimum, thanks). My recent copies of the Newsletter have had a good readership. I've taken a post working at Tirabad Outdoor Residential Centre in South Wales and we get lots of kids coming through who we introduce mostly to river canoeing but a few who we get the chance to take on the sea - anyway, after reading the Newsletter myself, it does the rounds of the other centre staff and I take a number of kids; especially after I've explained the ins and outs of my Iceflow to them and the idea of canoe camping which we do along the Pembrokeshire and Anglesey coasts. Home is still in Pontefract but you could add my works address to the membership list (Ed: done) please as well as home as I may get the chance to share some coastal trips with people Pembrokeshire way. It is: Tirabad Outdoor Residential Centre, Llangammarch Wells, Powys, Wales, LD4 4DF.

All the best, Dave Youren.

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From David Jones, Malvern, Worcs.

Dear John,

I would be very interested to know if anyone has seen a sunfish whilst sea canoeing. I saw one this summer near Ramsey Island. It was a slow swimmer and I was able to paddle along side it for about ten minutes. It had a silver disc like body about 2 and 1/2 feet long by 2 feet deep. Its long dorsal fin protruded from the water and flapped slowly from side to side as it swam. Occasionally the fish would turn over onto its side as if it were trying to catch the sun. It held a fixed course, only deviating when I crossed its path. Is this normal behaviour for a sunfish?

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From Adrian Allsop, 2, Harcourt Way, Abingdon, Oxon.

Dear John

I enclose membership renewal for ASKC. After several years of failing to get to sea in a kayak I think the time has come to admit to myself that I am likely to remain a theoretical rather than a practical sea canoeist. However the ASKC newsletter is still always welcome and my heart is in it even if a dodgy shoulder and other ailments and lack of time prevent me from actively sea kayaking. I still get then urge to go paddling when I get to visit the Hebrides, but this is not the place for the occasional canoeist. Please would you advertise my kayak through the newsletter:- North Shore 'SHORELINE' Hardly used #275. Phone 0235 525158.

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Flares: Necessary fireworks?

Peter Carter

When sea kayaking began in earnest in South Australia in the mid 1970s we equipped our kayaks in line with the requirements for power and sail boats of the same length, except for things like anchors and fire extinguishers. That meant we carried flares: two red and two smoke, with the occasional rocket on trips to remoter areas. The pyrotechnics were usually carried in containers made of PVC pipe, since the flares' own waterproofing was definitely suspect.

On several occasions, with official permission, we even had flare practices and demonstrations. These were not without incident: one day we managed to set fire to the hill at Second Valley. Another was less strenuous but perhaps more telling. While we fired flares on the beach at Victor Harbor on a dull overcast morning Ben Knobben observed from atop The Bluff. He saw nothing.

As the original batches of flares reached their expiry dates few people replaced them. There was the obvious expense, there was also the realisation, prompted by criticism from the Tasmanians, that flares did not solve problems at sea, they simply drew attention to them (assuming that someone was watching). Better to resolve the difficulties than call for help that may not come: the 'You got yourself into this, you get yourself out of it' principle.

After the Scout accident in 1987 the Minister of Marine of the time suggested that all small craft should carry EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons). He was given the message that any such regulation would be deliberately ignored, and nothing ever came of the idea.

In an item in the most recent issue of Sea Trek, John Hyndman debates the issue again, following informal discussion among paddlers. In his research he spoke with a representative of Pains-Wessex, the flare manufacturers, and a member of the Victorian Water Police. In turn, I spoke with a member of the Firearms section of the SA Police, since one type of flare is restricted in some states, and checked availability and prices locally.

What's around

In brief, this is what's available:

Orange Handsmoke Mk 3. For day use only. Visibility 4 km, duration 60 seconds. \$23.75

Red Handflare Mk 2: Visibility 10 km at night, 60 seconds. \$18.50

Inshore Distress Kit: Two each of the above. \$59.95

Para Red Mk 3 Distress Rocket: Visibility 15 km (day) 40 km (night), 40 seconds. \$49.50

Day/Night Flare: A combination smoke (18 seconds)/red (20 seconds) flare. Compact (about 14 by 4 cm) and waterproof, but expensive (\$75 + 20%). It's to a NATO specification, does not appear in the brochures, and is available only to special order.

Miniflare 3 Kit: A set of 8 cartridges and a projector. Visibility 8km (day), 20 km (night), 60 seconds at up to 80 m. c\$70

In the past there were the Skyblazer and Res-Q-Star flares. The former was a very small red star projector fired by a pull lanyard. It was strictly short range, and not very reliable; the firing mechanism tended to corrode. The Res-Q-Star was bigger and more effective. From the UK there was also the Schermuly Handsmoke Mk 2 in a plastics casing and with single handed operation by a firing mechanism in the base rather than the usual stupid match type striker.

Flares have a rated life of three years, although in practice they do last longer. The rocket fired (with another device in place of its red flare) on the June long weekend expedition had an expiry date of July 1976. Outdated flares are supposed to be handed in for disposal.

Other options

The first is a strobe beacon. At around \$60 you get the electronics in a waterproof case, visibility over many kilometres depending on the unit's power, and a flashing duration of many hours. They are standard equipment for divers.

Second option is an EPIRB. The cost is in the \$200...\$300 range. With the modern satellite type your location can be fixed to within a couple of kilometres in less than an hour and help sent on its way. There have been overseas cases of kayakers rescued, and one in Torres Strait in 1991, through the use of these beacons.

Another possibility, only in daylight, is a signal mirror. Power and sail craft also carry V sheets. Mine has spent most of its working time as a groundsheet, and did make a useful sail one day.

Which?

What would I recommend? For the average afternoon outing in good conditions, none of the above. All the likely eventualities can be dealt with by the group itself. On the other hand, for the serious paddler out in less than ideal conditions I'd suggest a personal kit of Miniflare 3 Kit and a strobe beacon. For an expedition to areas like the south coast of Kangaroo Island I'd add an EPIRB.

A couple of points need to be kept in mind. Flares are not safety devices, they are signals and position indicators, and carry with them the danger of a false sense of security. There is also the question whether we have the right, after making some error of judgement, to place others' lives at risk by calling them out to pick up our pieces.

Should the club buy an EPIRB and/or a flare kit? Something that might be discussed at some stage. In the meantime, pick up a Pains-Wessex brochure at a boating shop.

LEAPING DOLPHINS - THE DAY BEFORE WINTER

THE MORAY FIRTH IN NOVEMBER

The idea of a week-end on Scotland's Black Isle was first mentioned and kicked around in mid-summer, but the first week-end we could all manage was November 20/21. The obvious course of action to take would have been to forget one or two members and plan the trip for a suitable date in late summer, or leave it until 1994.

Instead, we chose to wait until the third week-end in November, and then see what the weather would allow us to do. As it turned out, it allowed us to enjoy one of the most memorable days paddling that any of us have ever experienced.

The team, comprising Alan Dobie, Ian Fuller, Mark Jennison, Dave Ross and myself travelled up to Inverness on the Friday evening. On the Saturday morning we drove out to Cromarty, where we loaded our kayaks and left the cars. From Cromarty we paddled out to the mouth of the Cromarty Firth where we were soon joined by the main reason for the trip to this area; a pod of about 20 bottlenose dolphins.

The Moray Firth is one of the most important areas in UK waters for dolphins, porpoises and Minke whales. The bottlenose dolphins in the Firth represent one of only two truly resident populations known to exist in UK waters (the other location being Cardigan Bay in Wales) and probably the only one in the North Sea. There are thought to be over 100 bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth. The dolphins in the Firth are some of the largest in the world, because they require the extra insulation to survive in the cold northern waters, well away from the warm and temperate waters where they are more common, and also much smaller.

For fifteen minutes a pod of about 20 dolphins put on an amazing show all around us, with the occasional dolphin leaping up to 6 feet out of the water. One animal performed such a feat in the very centre of our square shape formation, leaving us all completely astounded at being able to see these marvellous creatures at such close proximity. Through the course of the day we were to see another two pods of dolphins, but from much greater distances.

After the excitement in the mouth of the Cromarty Firth, it was eventually time to turn the corner and paddle up the Moray Firth. Dave started singing at this point, and we found ourselves paddling faster to try and escape the noise. The south side of the Black Isle is a very beautiful coastline, with remote sections of cliffs and picturesque villages. The low autumn sun and thin veil of mist provided the perfect atmosphere for getting to know the Firth. The neap tide was pushing us gently up the Firth, and after a lunch stop near Ethie, we headed across to Fort George, the peninsula on the south side of the Firth, and the boundary between the Outer and Inner Firths. From Fort George we paddled the short distance to Chanonry Point, the peninsula on the northern side. We rested here for a few minutes

and in doing so met up with Naomi Lloyd, a local sea paddler who had seen us and came over to have a chat, and to complain about the howling coming from one of our number. A few people on the Black Isle paddle quite regularly, so it was great to meet up with Naomi and find out about the network of paddlers in the area. Another local paddler is Mike Armitage, the coastguard for the Black Isle. We had seen Mike at the start of the day, and given him details of our intended route.

We eventually left Chanonry Point behind and put in a spurt to get as far as possible before dark. The sea was so calm that we didn't mind finishing the last 3 or 4 miles in the dark, so a final rest stop was made just before the entrance to Munloch Bay. Flasks and packed lunch contents were finished, an extra layer or two were donned and torches were taken from the hatches. The final paddle under Kessock bridge, with the lights of Inverness reflecting on the water, was the perfect end to the perfect day. As we pulled the kayaks out of the water and onto the slipway at North Kessock, we were able to reflect on how fortunate we were to have picked one of the best days of the year.

On the Sunday we again paddled out of Cromarty, but this time the conditions were more like you would expect for the time of year. The wind was up to a force 4, gusting 5, although it did drop a little as the day went on. A shorter paddle was planned and we spent about three hours just within the entrance to the Cromarty Firth, heading over to North Soutar, and playing on the waves coming in from the North Sea. On the way back over to Cromarty we took a close look at one of the many North Sea oil rigs moored in the Firth and being re-fitted at the Invergordon yard.

On the way back to Perth we drove into the beginning of winter. The cold air had arrived from Siberia and we were soon unloading kayaks amidst 6 inches of snow. The neighbours must have thought that I had totally flipped this time. Still, the memory of that dolphin leaping out of the water, just 30 yards away from our boats, will ensure that this is one week-end that stays in my memory for a long time to come. The moral of the story is: don't put your sea kayak away in October and forget about it until April; pick your days in winter and the sea will reward you.

I'm hoping to plan another trip to the Black Isle in 1994, probably in August. If anyone is interested in joining us, then please get in touch.

Mike Dales

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EXERCISE DELTA 1993

In the last ASKC Newsletter, John mentioned the need for us all to be prepared for all emergencies. The following is my experience and comments on an exercise carried out by a County Council. The actual names have been changed to prevent embarrassment.

Exercise Delta was a live exercise around the evacuation of survivors from a cross-channel ferry accident and the subsequent aftercare. The control was in the hands of the Coastguard but involved many groups including the Police, Ambulance, Health Service, RAF air-sea rescue, Charlie County Council, Able & Baker District Councils and most voluntary organisations.

~~About a hundred adults~~ of all ages boarded a vehicle ferry at Able harbour with cards giving our assumed names and addresses for the day with notes of the injuries we would assume to receive in the incident. We sailed soon after 0830 into a force 6 to 7 wind but when the engines "failed" off the Delta sandbank soon after 1030, the sea was not as rough as I had expected.

The ferry was under a flag of convenience which probably explains the shortage of deck crew. At least two could not converse in English. After the alarm signal we were issued with life-jackets of Australian origin which were very difficult to don. Only the Chief Officer could help us to get dressed properly.

It took over an hour to get a ship's lifeboat loaded and away. Some of the delay was due to the Chief Officer helping us to get dressed. I could see no way of swinging the boat's davits out manually. In a real situation I cannot believe that the electric motors would have had power. I understand that the first lifeboat transferred its survivors to the Able RNLI boat and were taken back to Able.

~~It was decided that it was too rough to launch the second ship's boat so the RNLI boat from Baker came alongside so that we could board it down a Jacobs ladder. For many people this was a frightening experience and difficult for the lifeboat was rising and falling six feet or more. One had to wait near the bottom of the ladder until told to let go by the RNLI chaps who then caught you. I feel that we should have had a line around us for safety, controlled by a competent crew member. This would have speeded up the transfer. At least one capable young lady had to hang on for several minutes when the sea took the lifeboat away completely and until the coxswain could get it back again. After the elderly males were next. I was relieved to find that since the last time I used such a ladder nearly fifty years ago that they have fitted long horizontal timbers to prevent the ladder twisting. In my sea-time one sometimes found oneself between the ladder and the ship's side.~~

A few of the survivors and I were in the forward space of the lifeboat where most of the survivors were sick with the boat bouncing about violently. During the evacuation a RAF helicopter landed some fireman to deal with the engine-room "fire". I believe that it also took off the stretcher cases. The noise and downdraught made communication difficult.

I'm sorry to say the enthusiastic first-aid given by the lifeboat crew to our assumed injuries would not have passed a St. John's Public First Aid Test.

We set off back to Baker, a very rough ride made worse by having to turn into wind so that a helicopter could collect two lifelike dummies which had been thrown off the ship. These bodies should have been picked up from the sea but the chopper could not see them. A reminder to us to stay with our kayaks so that we can be seen more easily.

The lifeboat had picked up the dummies on its way to the ferry.

After landing at Baker, we were assessed by ambulance staff to determine the priorities for carriage to hospital for treatment. Since the exercise was as realistic as possible, I was surprised that two of us, at least, were not stopped from eating our packed lunches. We were due to go to hospital to have anaesthetics to set our broken bones.

From then on things got worse. Most of the injured never got to the temporary hospital, those that were found themselves dumped, not attended to and hitched lifts back. I and the lesser injured were taken to a Police Centre so that all the paperwork could be completed. The efficiency there was excellent. We were then taken to a rest centre where we hoping to get our promised hot meal, but we did get coffee.

After a long ^{wait} we were loaded onto coaches for the return journey to Able and our own parked cars. Since our injuries had not been treated, we removed our slings and bandages on the way.

A very interesting and long day. (I left home at 0530 and returned at 2100.) I personally was surprised how portable radios were used for every purpose even where a handsignal sufficed in the past. I hope that their reliability is adequate or that spares are available.

Since originally writing this, I've learnt that the hospital faux pas was due to a lack of communication because of uncharged batteries.

A 70+ paddler

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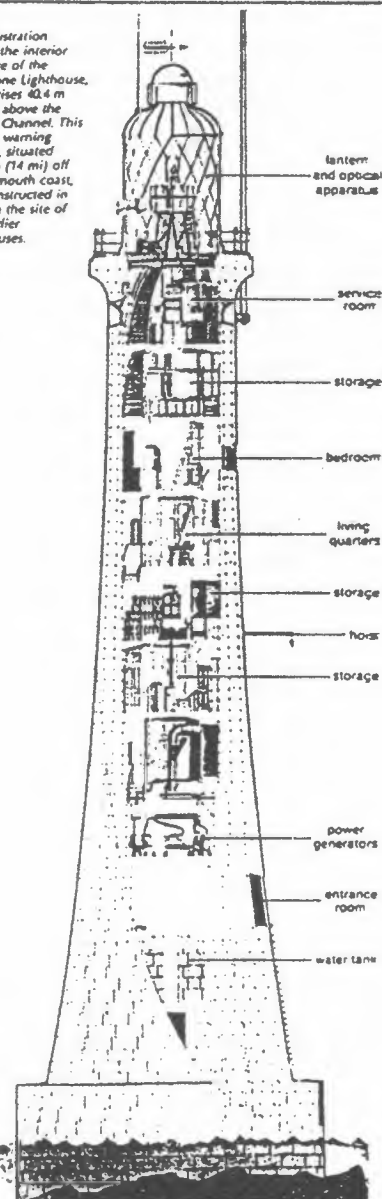
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NATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION (SOUTH)

This illustration reveals the interior structure of the Eddystone Lighthouse, which rises 40.4 m (133 ft) above the English Channel. This famous warning beacon, situated 22.5 km (14 mi) off the Plymouth coast, was constructed in 1882 on the site of two earlier lighthouses.



LIGHTHOUSES.

Although the Phoenicians and Egyptians are thought to have built lighthouses, there are no records of their having done so.

The first lighthouse for which a detailed account remains was the great Pharos of Alexandria, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. A stone structure about 350 feet (107 m.) high with a wood fire at the top, the Pharos built about 280 B.C. took its name from the island on which it was built. After withstanding winds and waves for many centuries, it was toppled by an earthquake in the 14th century. The Romans built lighthouses along the European coastline, sometimes fortifying them for military use, Roman lighthouses still stand inside the walls of Dover Castle, and at Coruna, Spain.

Among noteworthy medieval lighthouses were two on the commercially important Tyrrhenian Sea, the famous Lanterna of Genoa (built c. 1161), and the slightly later tower on the island of Meloria. Rebuilt in 1544 the Lanterna still stands today.

An engineering feat of the late Middle Ages was the massive lighthouse built in 1584 by Louis de Foix on a half submerged rock on the Gironde estuary, France, (scene of the 'Cockleshell Heroes' of the Second World War). This was the first lighthouse built on the open sea.

It was not until the 17th century that guiding lights were used around our coasts, when a number of fire beacons appeared, a typical example being on St. Bees Head in Cumbria. At that time coal cost 3s (15p) per cart load, delivered. The keeper was paid 7s (35p) per week.

Early in the 18th century rapid advances were made in equipment and construction and the first towers completely exposed to the sea were built. The Eddystone Light off Plymouth, was an example, in its successive forms, increasingly scientific principles of design. The massive wooden tower built there in 1699 by Henry Winstanley stood 120 feet high and had a solid base anchored to the rock by 12 iron stanchions.

Destroyed by a storm in November 1703, it was rebuilt in 1708 by John Rudyard in the form of a slender and tapering wooden structure around a central timber mast. When this tower burned in 1755 it was replaced by a masonry tower built by John Smeaton who dovetailed the masonry blocks together and developed a curved, hyperbolic profile for wind and wave resistance that became standard for lighthouses. Smeaton's tower was in turn

Lighthouses (continued).

replaced in 1882 by the one that still stands. This last structure is nearly twice as high as Smeaton's and rests on a solid masonry base with the foundation stones dovetailed not only into each other but also into the reef. The Eddystone Light was the forerunner of many towers in similar isolated spots.

Such inventions as prismatic lenses, mercury floats providing frictionless drives, multi wick lamps with incandescent mantles and petroleum-vapour lamps followed, to be superseded by electric power in the 1920s, and from then onwards the tendency towards smaller lenses and more powerful lamps took place. A five million candle power has now been achieved with a consequent reduction in the weight of lenses from seven tons to 12 cwts. (600 Kg.).

In the 1960s the U.S. Coast Guard built a number of towers consisting of open steelwork, which resemble off-shore oil-rigs. These towers were constructed by the template method, in which a tubular steel-braced framework, or template, was positioned on the sea-bed, piles were driven through the hollow legs to bedrock, and the annular space between the pile and the jacket tube in each leg was filled with concrete grout.

New developments in automated and electronic equipment have marked the 1960s and '70s and have made possible the monitoring of untended lights. New illuminants have also been investigated, including the xenon high-pressure arc lamp, which incorporates a powerful electric arc in a quartz bulb filled with the inert xenon gas. New horizons in lighthouse power include solar batteries and nuclear batteries. Sound signals have been developed that have ranges of from 4 to 8 miles. At the same time radio and radar beacons help identify stations and give bearings. Buoys and lightships, used where stationary towers are impractical, carry distinctive markings and sometimes beacons.

Eric B. Totty.

(Compiled from notes taken at a talk to Rotarians and augmented by reference to Macmillans Family Encyclopedia.)

I was chastised by Martin Meling for not being more aware of access agreements recently when I was talking about some exploits around the Farne Islands. I was giving a presentation to the B.C.U. Sea Touring Symposium at Calshot. To make amends I agreed to publish the agreement we have for landing on the Farnes.

In essence it is as follows:

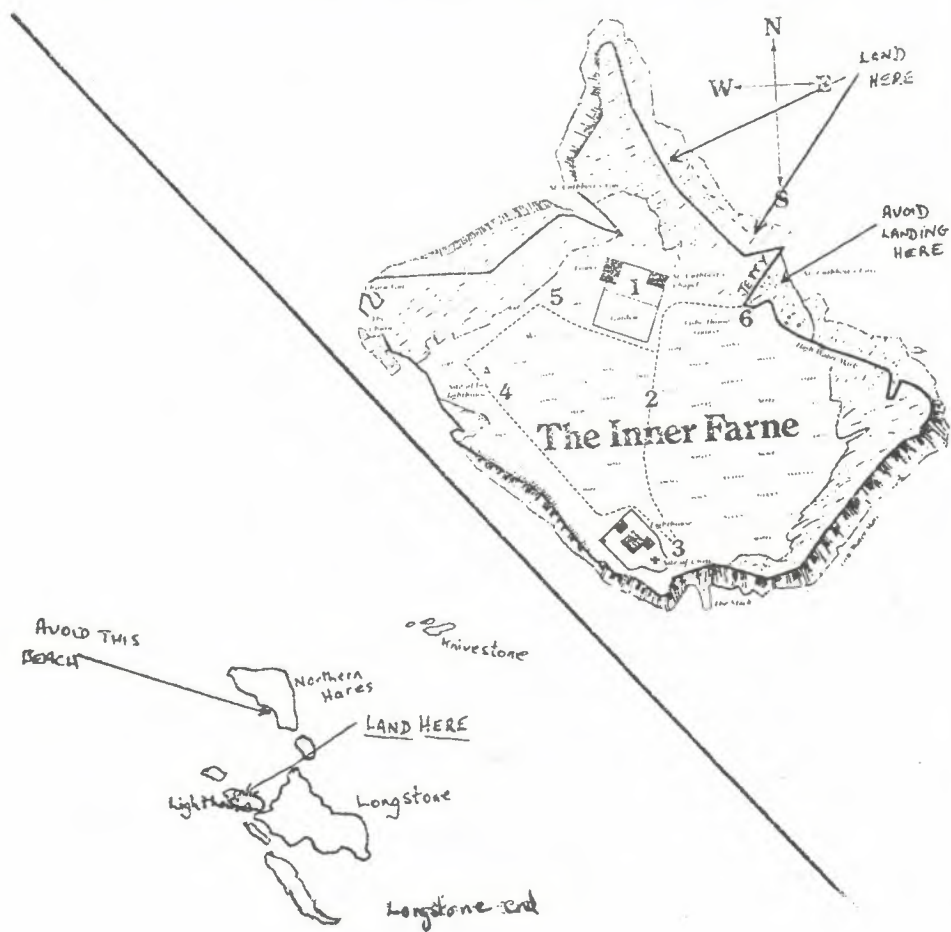
There are two agreed landing places on the Farnes.

1. At Inner Farne on the slabs on the north side of the boat jetty, please avoid landing on the little beach to the south of the jetty known as St. Cuthbert's Cove.
2. At Longstone in the inlet immediately beside the concrete jetty by the lighthouse. Avoid landing on the beach to the north of this area.

Landing in emergencies would be acceptable on Staple Island and Brownsman.

We have, as far as I am aware, always found the Wardens on the Farnes to be pleasant and friendly. They have always allowed us to use the facilities on the Inner Farnes.

At the recent AGM of the Sea Touring Committee it was obvious that the problems of access on the sea is now becoming a cause for concern. We (the BCU STC) would be grateful for any information relating to problems of access sea canoeists have experienced. Please send your incidents to Martin Meling (Chairperson of the Sea Touring Committee, 20, Windermere; Cleadon Village; Sunderland; SR6 7QQ) so that records can be kept.



From Phil Daligan, Leicester.

Dear John,

Please find enclosed renewal for 1994.

It has been a good year! The Shetland Meet in July followed by a weeks paddling around the Islands with Chris Bolton.

A trip to Norway in an Aleut Sea II on it's inaugral voyage wonderful boat!

Three months in Southern Chile/ Patagonia as Sea Kayak Project manager with Operation Raleigh. In fact it was such a successful expedition that they've asked me to return for the next one. Girlfriend, taxman and mortgage not withstanding, I leave on the 6th January, 1994/

Feliz Navidad! Y Feliz Ano Nuevo!

30 WAYS TO TELL IF YOU'VE BEEN SEA KAYAKING TOO LONG.

1. You forget the name of the bay your paddling across.
2. You think you recognise someone on the street and ask what kayak club their from.
3. You describe your house as back bearings from two off-shore islands.
4. You sit on the floor with your legs straight out while watching television.
5. You cant associate the word "swell" with a feeling.
6. "Roll" is not a type of bread.
7. A "brace" is not a piece of medical equipment.
8. Your paddle has a name.
9. Your late for your wedding and find yourself in dress clothes standing on a cliff watching the swell.
10. You don't think five day old thermal underwear smells bad.
11. A gourmet meal consists of rice cooked in sea water..
12. You get a good deal on a used car, but don't buy it because the colour clashes with your canoe.
13. You think of garbage bags as something warm and dry to wear.
14. Someone compliments you on your new suit and you wonder whether they're referring to the wet one or the dry one.
15. You have more money invested in Admiralty Charts than furniture.
16. You pick out a new car solely because the model still has rain gutters.
17. You never worry about getting your feet wet in a rain storm.
18. Your vacuum cleaner picks up mainly chop-strand.
19. Your washing machine smells of the ocean.
20. You finish a trip and have no idea what day it is.
21. You actually like the smell of neoprene.
22. You want to try on clothes at the local store and you strip off next to the clothes rack.
23. You have no doubt anything can be fixed with gaffa tape.
24. Your doormat says, "Leave your booties here".
25. You carefully arrange your garage to fit more kayaks.
26. You sleep next to your bang stick.
27. You start repairing parts of your house with fibreglass.
28. At 2 am, at a party, pissed, with a thunder storm outside, you decide to go paddling.
29. You cant understand why someone would went an air bag in a car, or how it would fit in.
30. You see nothing strange about carrying a kayak up a cliff face you wouldn't even consider rappelling down.

Marine Protected Areas - where next?

The waters around Skomer and the Marloes peninsula have just become Britain's second Marine Nature Reserve, but who knows about it? People with a special interest in marine conservation, and those who live in the area will have heard the news, but for the public at large it is still early days. There was a lack of press interest in the declaration but, hopefully, the 'official' opening of the reserve later this year will spread the news.

Unfortunately the same is not about to happen for Lundy Island. This was the first Marine Nature Reserve in the country when it was declared back in 1986. Today, nearly four years later, most people seem unaware of the special status of the waters around Lundy or even that Britain has Marine Nature Reserves. But lack of publicity is only one of the difficulties facing Marine Nature Reserves.

Protecting areas of sea as Marine Nature Reserves (MNRs) became possible under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act. This allowed the Nature Conservancy Council

(NCC) to identify potential sites and to prepare a case for each one for approval by the Secretary of State. They were seen as areas which should be set up for the conservation of marine wildlife, geological or physiographical features, as well as providing special opportunities for study and research.

Once the Act became law the NCC put forward seven sites; the waters around Lundy Island, Skomer Island, the Isles of Scilly, Bardsey Island, Loch Sween, the Menai Straits and off the coast of St. Abbs. Two sites are now fully fledged MNRs, Lundy (declared in 1986) and Skomer (declared this year). Progress has been mixed

at the other sites. The public consultation stage is underway for the Menai Straits, the idea of a MNR around the Isle of Scilly has been abandoned by the NCC, and proposals for a St. Abbs MNR have not even reached the drawing board! In Northern Ireland where the Department of the Environment (N. Ireland) propose and prepare the case for MNRs, there has been virtually no progress. It is three years since the DoE(NI) announced its

intention to make the waters of Strangford Lough a Marine Nature Reserve but still no proposals, or even tentative boundaries for a reserve, have been put forward for discussion.

The problems

With only two Marine Nature Reserves in nine years it is hardly surprising that people are starting to wonder what is going wrong. Part of the problem has undoubtedly been an apparent lack of political will and support for the idea of MNRs but the reality of trying to set up these reserves has also revealed practical problems with the legislation. Probably the most significant of these is the very limited powers which were given to NCC to protect and manage the reserves. They can only introduce by-laws for a reserve if they do not interfere with the functions of some eleven "relevant authorities" such as local authorities and sea fisheries committees. The NCC must persuade these bodies to introduce by-laws that will benefit the reserve but, ironically, some have responded by saying that it is not in their remit to introduce by-laws for nature conservation!

Another problem is that the NCC carry out all the negotiations before presenting the case to the Secretary of State for final declaration of a reserve. In practice we have seen that the case for a MNR will only get approval if there is complete agreement before NCC present the case. Although laudable this does have its problems. For example a single objection can halt the whole process indefinitely as the Secretary of State will not arbitrate. This also makes it inevitable that the NCC proposals are a compromise rather than what they would ideally like to see happening in a Marine Nature Reserve.

These and other problems have led the Marine Conservation Society to the view that the legislation is seriously flawed.

The declaration of each new MNR will inevitably take a long time under this system and, even then, their ability to provide the protection they were intended to give must be questioned.

Time to move on

The Marine Conservation Society has been examining the problems of Marine Nature Reserves for some time now. In February we prepared a discussion document on options for the future. The Society is also drafting proposals for Marine Protected Areas on behalf of an informal working group of conservation organisations.

There is undoubtedly scope for protecting areas through voluntary initiatives and the MCS has been involved with the setting up of a number of voluntary marine conservation areas. However, with the possibility of changes to the legislation on the horizon, we have been concentrating on the legal options.

The wider remit

One simple step we could take is to get used to talking about 'Marine Protected Areas' rather than Marine Nature Reserves. This is a small but important point. Thinking in terms of 'reserves' gives a very limited view of the possibilities. If we are to manage or set aside areas of sea for special protection then why should we restrict ourselves to the plants, animals and habitats of nature conservation importance? There is scope to protect landscapes, cultural resources and conserve commercial fish stocks in a Marine Protected Area without compromising the nature conservation interest. It is also important to tie them in with protection given to the adjacent land. Surprisingly this view has not been promoted despite having a lot of potential. Nursery grounds for fish stocks, 'Areas to be Avoided' by shipping and important nautical archaeology

sites are just some examples of what could be brought together in a wider view of Marine Protected Areas.

Ad hoc or planned?

Up to now there has not been a systematic approach to the protection of sea areas for their nature conservation interest. The idea of Marine Nature Reserves was proposed in isolation from any other measures which might be used for marine nature conservation. The latest proposals, in the Environment Bill, are for 'Marine Consultation Areas', which already operate in Scotland, to be used in England and Wales. Unfortunately this is yet another example of a piecemeal approach and is leading us down the road of having lots of different types of protected areas, some overlapping, with complex and confusing legislation to protect them. There is a coherent system for nature conservation on land, with National Nature Reserves, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, amongst others. Surely we should have the same for the marine environment?

Some new ideas

The success of Marine Protected Areas is very dependent on sensitive use of all marine areas and maintaining the quality of the marine environment as a whole. Against this background MPAs would complement general conservation measures by giving additional protection to some areas.

A simple approach would be to have two types of MPA giving different levels of protection, having legal backing, and being relevant to many more people with an interest in the sea.

The first type could cover large areas of sea, and activities taking place in the MPA would be managed in a way that ensures that the conservation interest is not damaged. Use of these areas should not be restricted unless potentially damaging, and the emphasis would be on creating a 'lived in seascape' in the same way that National Parks on land are very much 'the lived in landscape'. Because of the similarities with National Parks

the MCS did indeed put these ideas to the Countryside Commission in a submission to the National Parks Review earlier this year. The potential and scope for these areas would be much wider than with our current Marine Nature Reserves. They could benefit the conservation of landscapes, features of archaeological interest, commercial fisheries as well as the other wildlife and habitats. This is an important difference from the approach which has been taken in Marine Nature Reserves.

The second type of Marine Protected Area should give much greater protection. The presumption in these areas would be for activities to be restricted unless given specific exemption. These types of MPAs would ideally be within the larger managed sea areas mentioned above which would act as a buffer for protecting these most important sites but, if appropriate, they could be outside these areas. An important feature of these ideas is that they would allow us to implement both our national and international conservation obligations. For example, Wetlands of International Importance, Special Protection Areas for Birds, and intertidal Sites of Special Scientific Interest could all be catered for within this system rather than creating yet another tier. Not only is it a coherent system but it deals with the interests of many more people.

We are hopeful of progress. During a recent debate in the House of Lords, Lord Hesketh said "it would be wrong to introduce further piecemeal legislative changes which are not founded on any clear idea of what needs to be done or what overall is the best way forward." The ideas outlined above do present an overall view as well as starting more constructive discussion and exploring some of the untapped potential of Marine Protected Areas. Hopefully this will be the mark of the Marine Protected Areas of the future in the U.K.

Susan Gubbay, MCS.