

# 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 103

MAY 1994.

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Editorial

I can hear you saying, "these newsletters are getting earlier - he'll be sending out the Christmas issue and we're not into Spring yet!" It's all down to the maxim.. 'if you've got something to say, say it'. I seem to have got quite a lot of interesting material that would be better off in your hands than stuck in my drawer waiting for the scheduled publication date - so here goes:

First:

ILE DE RE 1994.

I first mentioned this at the end of last year and have almost got a full house, just three places left and I have'nt been to the Canoe Exhibition yet where I know I'll fill them several times over. Send #50 deposit to secure your place on the minibus and trailer which leaves Portsmouth on the 0730 hrs ferry for Le Havre on Saturday 4th June and we return on the 0645 hrs ferry from Le Havre to Portsmouth on the following Saturday, the 12th June. You need to pay Christian Gabard for the event itself and for camping fees. Book with Christain by writing to him at 10, Rue Simon Letaille, 92260 Fontenay aux Roses, France. Tel (1)46 60 72 12. A good time is gauranteed; you'll have a great week, lots to do, lots to see, lots of friends to make. A great introduction to the gentle art of sea kayaking and to the European sea kayaking scene. We'll be joined by sea paddlers from all over Europe.

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HISTORY OF SEA KAYAKS AND SEA KAYAKING

I've put together a short history of our sport and bound editions are available from me at #5 (which includes post and pack). It's nothing very pretentious but I have tried to make it interesting.

\* \* \* \* \*

OSCAR, THE UNSINKABLE WHALE

I came across this article in the Sunday Telegraph 23/1/94. It's by Joe Saumerez Smith.

"When a rotting 40 ton sperm whale washes up on your local beach it is not the easiest thing to remove - as crofters on the remote Scottish peninsula of Ardnamurchan can testify.

Oscar, as the whale has been nicknamed, did not float to their coastline naturally. Sometime between the end of November and the middle of December, he washed up at nearby Lochailort on the west coast of Scotland.

Local residents did not greet him with open arms but asked Lochaber District Council to get rid of it.

But the method posed a problem. Burial was dismissed because of the quantity of soil that would have to be removed. Inshore sinking was opposed by fish farmers, while sinking it beyond the continental shelf would have been too expensive.

Easiest of all, it was decided, would be to blow the thing up. Rocklift, a Glasgow based explosive company, was contracted to tow the whale up to Ardnamurchan peninsula and dispose of it properly.

And that, it was hoped, would be that. Local Health Authorities say they were promised the whale would be disintergrated within 48 hours. Coastguards reported a successful operation.

But three weeks later, a rotting lump of whale the size of a Ford Transit van still floats within 20 yards of the high tide mark at

Ardnamurchan".

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A.S.K.C. SHOP

ASKC Ties \$ #6.50 each  
ASKC stickers \$ 50 pence each  
ASKC letter headed paper (A4) \$ 50 pence per ten sheets  
ASKC T shirts - small/med/large/X large \$ #6.00 each (yellow or black)  
ASKC Sweat shirts - small/med/lrge/X lrge \$ #12.00 each (yellow/black)  
ASKC ski hats \$ #3.50 each  
QAJAQ - the book on history of Inuit kayaks by David Zimmerly \$ #12.50

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**Udo Beier**

Stresemannallee 19a - D-22529 Hamburg  
Tel. 040/563727 - 18th Fbr. 1994

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Mr.  
J.J. Ramwell  
5, Osprey Ave.  
Westhoughton  
Bolton,  
Lancs, BL 5 2SL

Großbritannien

Dear John,

I read in Newsletter No. 100 an information about a lost paddler. This is a reason for me to write some comments about the problem to check up the difficulties of sea kayaking.

Though I am a very new member of the ASKC, I do sea kayaking for over 10 years. Within the German sea kayak organization "Salzwasserunion" (Saltwater-Union) I am engaged in safer sea kayaking. That is the reason why I tried to develop a method to estimate the "degree of difficulty for sea kayaking". I discussed this way of determination a measure for difficulty with many friends. Though not everybody will agree with me, because till now they paddled successfully without it, I found plenty of constructive critics and encouragement. Now I am interested in what the English sea kayakers think about such a method and what they mean it must be corrected. Therefore I would be glad, if you would publish my article in the Newsletter.

If you would have some corrections (words, terms, grammar; content) please write it to me. The text of my article is in a computer and it is easy for me to correct it.

Sincerely

*Udo Beier*

## An Experienced Paddler Lost: Could He Really Estimate The Difficulties?

by *Udo Beier, Hamburg (Germany)*

In the Newsletter No. 100 we could read a report about a solo-paddler who got lost when crossing the Chesapeake Bay (Maryland). Ron Casterline wrote in his notice, that it was an experienced paddler. When I read the conditions under which he paddled the 20 miles from Bembe Beach to St. Michaels I doubt that it was an experienced "sea kayaker":

- \* *wind: up to 35 knots with higher gusts;*
- \* *waves: 3 to 5 feet, lengthened fetch, shallows;*
- \* *scattered snow showers, water temperature: 46° Fahrenheit (+8°C);*
- \* *"touring kayak" (= sea kayak?);*
- \* *clad in blue jeans, a shirt and a blue wind breaker;*
- \* *life vest on deck;*
- \* *no friend of him had ever seen him roll.*

I think many experienced sea kayakers will agree with me, that wind, air/water temperature and waves were reasons enough to say: "Don't cross, it is too difficult to make such a long haul in the face of that bad conditions!"

But are there measures, which tell us what is difficult and gives us a scale, which shows us the extent of difficulty? White-water-kayakers have similar problems. They solved that problems by developing a "degree of difficulty for white-water" (DDW). The DDW ranks from degree I (not difficult) till VI (limit of paddling). The basis for the rating are river-bed, water-power and visibility. Though the DDG is only an approximation it became a very important information for all white-water-kayaker.

The question is if it is possible and efficient to develop a "degree of difficulty for salt-water" (DDS)? With the help of my friends, which are sea kayakers since years, I found a way to determine a DDS. I do not think, that the above mentioned paddler would be still alive, when he would have known the DDS, because he made too many mistakes against the "rules" of responsible sea kayaking. But maybe there are other sea kayakers which want to estimate the difficulties, when planning a sea-tour. Besides a DDS could help sea kayak-instructors to explain to sea-beginners the difficulties with which them could be confronted when paddling on the sea.

The methode: The DDS will be determined most of all by the force of wind. The stronger the wind (measured in Beaufort or knots) the larger the problems a sea kayaker can have. But the actual wind speed is not all. There are other factors which will more or less influence the extent of difficulty. The following formula considers the wind and many other factors. With its help you can get an impression of the possible DDS:  $DDS = \text{Beaufort} \text{ minus } (2 - d) \text{ plus } (f)$ .

If there are no other factors (f) and the wind does not yet blow for the whole day than the following assumption makes sense: DDS = Bft.-2, with the rule, that force Bft. 0-3 (till 10 knots) leads to DDS = I and Bft. 8-12 (34 kts. and more) leads to DDS = VI.

If the wind lasts already for more than about 12 hours (= duration of wind (d)) and the fetch is longer than about 55 nm the waves will become bigger (about twice the height as when the the period is 3 h and the fetch 5 nm) you are advised well to set  $p=1$ , i.e. the DDS will rise to one higher degree (see table).

When the tidal stream (t) flows with the wind you will have less problems (the waves are flatter) than when it runs against the wind (the waves are shorter and steeper). The stronger the tide, the more important is the influence of t on the DDS. Runs the tide against shallows (e.g. reefs, sand bars, submerged rocks), obstacles (e.g. rocks, groyne, wreck), narrow passes (= tidal race) or other currents (e.g. river-mouth) you can get additional problems, for example with breakers, horseshoe break, overfalls, "haystacks", stopper waves, eddies, boils, whirlpools, which makes it very difficult for you to steer your kayak in the direction you want to go. Depending of the problems t can reach from about -1 till +3.

Another difficulty arises when waves runs on the beach (surf zone), against cliffs and caps, around islands (reflected waves, calpotis), over shallows (groundwaves), against obstacles (crash) or other waves (crosswaves). The higher the waves, the

steeper the beach; the more narrow you will pass a cliff/cap, or the back side of a small island, the more critical will get the waves for a sea kayaker. The waves can be created by the wind, actually is blowing (windwaves (w)), or/and by the wind hundred of miles away (swell (s)). w and s depend from the windforce or the hight of the swell and the special problems. w can run up to +3 and s up to +5 (dumpers, boomers).

Is the wind blowing from the beach (offshore wind) (o) then nearby the coast the waves create less problems to the sea kayaker. I can run from -1 till -3, because it is easier to paddle. But you must be aware, that when you will capsize by offshore wind you can have trouble very quickly, when you do not manage it to get back in the cockpit of your kayak within a minute. Because you will drift away from the coast and the pressure of the wind will get stronger and the waves larger. An inexperienced or weak sea kayaker can have problems then to paddle against a Bft. 7 wind (28-33 kts.) back to the shoreline. Besides wind from land can create further problems, when the wind suddenly falls over mountains or will be pressed through narrow valleys. In case of these gusty effects I can run up to +2.

At the latest when the temperature (c) of water and/or air lies under +5°C you have to reckon with further problems. A wind force 5 can cause a windchill of -8°C. And if you have to swim in a water, +5°C cold, the average chance to stay alive lies by 30 minutes, when you do not wear a drysuit (3hrs.) or wetsuit (1hrs.). When you paddle against strong and cold wind, you could loose your usual strength, stamina, responsiveness and skill. When you go upside down then, you will have only minutes to go back in your kayak, otherwise no longer you will be able to do it alone. Maybe you will suffer a "cold shock" (a danger at water temperatures below +13°C), which knocks you out within seconds, because of loss of breathing control, hyperventilation, breathlessness, disability to hold the breath, panic. In this conditions you have to wear at least a drysuit with thick underwear, gloves and a neopren cup. Besides your skill to roll must be perfect and you should not paddle alone (because of the cold shock-effect). Otherwise c runs up to +2.

At least things get worse when you will have problems with visibility (v) (e.g. darkness, fog, dense rain). You can loose your sense of direction and will not be able to respond as quickly as when you can see the danger (e.g. waves, obstacles, shallows). If there are windwaves only, you can work with v=+1, when the problems will rise (e.g. coast, rocks) v runs up to +2.

Conclusion: With the help of the table you can imagine the influence of different factors of difficulty on the DDS. The concret datas are the basis of personal considerations. Them must be updated in cooperation with other sea kayakers. Further it is to check if there are other factors of difficulty.

The idea of the DDS is not to label each part of the coast with a special DDS. This will be possible when you work with DDW, but this will give no sense by the DDS, because the different factors change on the sea to often within hours or days. Rather the DDS must be determined by each sea kayaker himself when he plans a tour and must be checked before he starts or changes his tour. The weather forecast, the seamap, the time of high and low tide, its amplitude and speed, etc. give to him important informations to calculate the DDS. Besides he must be aware that because of imponderables difficult parts of the sea could get more difficult. The white-water kayaker can leave his kayak and inspect a critical passage. The sea kayaker can only look around and paddle with caution.

Back to the above mentioned lost paddler: Wind up 30 to 35 kts. with higher gusts means force 7-8. There were shallows on the 20 miles long tour (w=+2). Scattered snow showers means at least air temperature around 0°C and a windchill of -18°C, that is too cold for a paddler, clothed in "blue jeans, a shirt and a blue wind breaker" (c=+1). Besides a water temperature of +8°C could led to "cold shock" or otherwise to death within 45 min. These are enough facts to determine a DDS of VI (= 7(Bft.) + 2+2(w) +1(c)). That means that the DDS comes up to the "limit of paddling", i.e. it is to difficult and risky for every sea kayaker to cross the Chesapeake Bay. An experienced sea kayaker could make the tour up to force 5, when he sits in a real sea kayak (e.g. with two bulkheads and installed pump), wears a drysuit etc. and masters

the roll. The lost "Blue-Jeans-Paddler" would have had a chance to reach the other side of the bay, when the wind went down to force 4, if he was so experienced that he masters the roll, and so lucky not suffering a "cold shock". Otherwise he had to stay at the beach and to wait till summertime and till he would have met an experienced sea kayaker who would be willing to show to him how to handle with the different rescue-techniques and would be ready to accompany him. This is no contradiction to the DDS, for the basis of the DDS is an experienced sea kayaker, who is fit and who sits in a sea kayak. A paddler, who is not able to roll or do not succeed to get back in the cockpit, is not an experienced sea kayaker though he might paddle since years. He will find his "limit" when he will capsize. As this can happen every time, it is not recommendable for him to paddle on the sea solo.

Checklist: Degree of Difficulty for Sea Kayaking (DDS)\*

DDS	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Problem
<b>Effect</b>	not difficult	moderate difficult	difficult	very difficult	extreme difficult	limit of paddling	subjectivity/exactness reproducible
<b>Reason</b>	0-3	4	5	6	7	8-12	
<b>Windforce (Bft.)</b> (speed in: knots) (Description)	(~10) gentle breeze	(11-15) moderate breeze	(16-21) fresh breeze	(22-27) strong breeze	(28-33) near gale	(34-) gale till hurricane	wind-blown waves breaking waves windpressure
+++++							
<b>Windduration(d)</b> since 12 hrs. with 55 nm fetch	-	+1	+1	+1	+1	**	larger windwaves
<b>Tidal Stream(t)</b> (over 1,5kts.) flows:***							
- with the wind:	-	-	-1	-1	-1	**	smaller/flatter or steeper waves
- against the wind:	-	-	+1/+2	+1/+2	+1/+2	**	
flows:***							
- over shallows:	+1/+2	+1/+2	+1/+2	+2	+2	**	"haystacks"/overtalls
- against obstacles:	+1/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	**	breaking waves/crash
- through narrows:	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	**	tidal race/stopper waves
- against stream:	+1/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	**	overtall/plunging waves
<b>Windwaves(w)</b> runs:***							
- on beach:	-	+1/+2	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3	**	landing/launching
- on cliff:	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	**	suit zone/breakers
- on cap:	-	+2	+3	+3	+3	**	crosswaves/clapotis
- around island:	-	-	+1	+2	+2	**	heavy crosswaves
- over shallow/narrow:	-	+1	+1	+2	+2	**	clapotis
- against obstacles:	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	**	groundwaves breaking waves/crash
<b>Swell(s)</b> (over 1ft.) runs on:***							
- waves/tide:	-	-	+1	+1	+1	**	high wave energy landing/launching crosswaves
- beach/island/shallows submerged rocks/reefs obstacles/narrows:	+1/+5	+1/+5	+1/+5	+1/+5	+1/+5	**	suit zone/dampers clapotis/groundwaves/ crosswaves/boomers
<b>Offshore Wind(o)</b> (nearby coastline)							
- without windproblems:	-	-1	-1/-2	-1/-2	-1/-3	**	dangerous drift off (!) small waves, but only nearby the coastline
- with special windproblems:	-	-	+1	+2	+2	**	heavy gusts
<b>Temperature(c)</b> - air/water (under +5°C):****	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	**	"cold shock" hypothermia
<b>Visibility(v)</b> (max. 60 ft.)							
- no problems:	-	-	+1	+1	+1	**	no orientation
- with problem (e.g. coast/shallows)	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	**	late reaction dangerous landing
<b>Notice:</b> (- = e.g. (+1/+2) = +1 till +2, it depends on the speed of the tidal stream, on the slope of the beach, on the height of the swell, on the dangerousness of the obstacles!)							
* = Assumption: an experienced, healthy and fit seakayaker, who paddles in a single seakayak.							
** = There is no further influence on the DDS.							
*** = The difficulties will decrease, when the distance to the danger area will increase.							
**** = Assumption: the sea kayaker do not wear e.g. drysuit, gloves, neopren cap/nose clip.							
<b>Annotation:</b> All datas have an approximate value, which are based on personal experiences. (2/94)							

Calculation (DDS=Bft.-(2-d)-f): a) Determine the force of wind (Bft.). b) Subtract 2. c) Make corrections, if there are special difficulties (d,f; with f-t+w+s+o+c+v).

## THE 2ND SCOTTISH SEA KAYAK SYMPOSIUM

GREAT CUMBRAE - 8 TO 10 OCTOBER 1993

Following on from last years successful first Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium at Lendalfoot on the Ayrshire coast, the Strathclyde West Coaching Panel recently organised the second such event at the National Watersports Centre on the Island of Great Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde.

The Symposium co-ordinator was Bob Johnston, who despite suffering from flu on the actual week-end, managed to put together an interesting programme of practical sessions on the water, lectures and slide shows in the centre buildings, a full evening programme and excellent catering from the centre kitchen. Despite rough conditions on the Saturday morning, the rest of the week-end was held in near perfect weather.

Practical sessions on the water included a paddle to Bute, a circumnavigation of Little Cumbrae, boat demonstrations by Valley Canoe Products staff, forward paddling techniques with Alistair and Marianne Wilson of Lendal Paddles, intermediate and advanced paddling skills, group rescue skills, and a half day expedition to Nardini's ice cream parlour. These sessions were run by Duncan Winning, Dave Marquis, Gordon Clark, Archie Waters, George Kerr and Gordon Brown. Their organisation and the smooth running of a mini-bus shuttle service meant that the sessions made good use of the time available, and the comments that I heard about the practical sessions were all very favourable. I didn't manage to attend the forward paddling techniques session, and by all accounts it proved to be enlightening to paddlers of all standards. If this session is to be included in next years symposium, then I would like to put my name down for it now.

The lecture programme for the week-end included sessions on personal equipment, paddle construction and design, customising your kayak, planning a day trip, maps and charts, tides, weather maps, first aid, drowning and resuscitation, and the history of sea canoeing in Scotland. The lecture on the history of our sport was presented and brought alive by Duncan Winning, who certainly knows this subject more than anyone else. From the amount of material that he brought with him I am sure that he has enough information to make a fascinating book on the subject.

Dave Marquis' session looking at personal equipment was also of great interest to the 20 or so who attended it. In the course of the session Dave unloaded his Baidarka and discussed every item of equipment. Dave is involved in a great deal of instructing with students from Ayr College, so his safety equipment was comprehensive and organised, and his packing methodical. An interesting device which I hadn't seen before was a Laerdal Pocket Mask which is used when giving artificial resuscitation. The use of the mask means that the first aider doesn't make contact with the casualty's mouth or nose. The risk of infection to the first aider is therefore greatly reduced, and a better seal is achieved on the casualty's face, so it should make the act of giving resuscitation more efficient, less hazardous and perhaps less daunting. Laerdal pocket masks can

be difficult to find, but they can be obtained from Willy Porfery of Social Care Recruitment and Training, 7 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh, Scotland. Telephone 031 228 6555 to ask for details or place your order. The cost of the mask is £7.95.

The first part of the Saturday evening programme was devoted to Howard Jeffs' presentation of his recent expedition with Jersey Canoe Club to Greenland. What a brilliant slide show! As Harry Simpson said: 'Slide shows like that don't just happen.' The quality of the slides and the atmosphere of the music combined to give everyone a feel for what an amazing and remote area the paddlers were in.

After Howard's slide show it was time to make the 3 mile expedition of our own to one of the entertainment establishments in Millport, the islands capital and commercial centre. Some chose the soft option of a mini bus ride to Millport, whilst about 30 to 35 intrepid explorers, who had sat through Howard's talk in thermal gear, set off to enjoy an evening paddle to the watering station. What happened next had nothing to do with canoeing, so moving on a couple of hours.

At going home time the number on the water for a late night paddle back to the centre was down to 9. As we set off from the harbour it was suggested that we might paddle back the long way round the island, thereby completing the circumnavigation of Great Cumbrae. No one disagreed, so a 3 mile paddle suddenly became a 6 mile paddle home. It was a very dark and calm night, so the paddling was quite easy and we were able to paddle in close proximity to each other and carry on a conversation. It was in some ways a shame that it was so dark though, because the views from the west coast across to Arran would have been absolutely amazing had it been a moonlit night. We eventually made it back to the centre at about 2 am, so there was just a bit of time for some sleep before breakfast.

Sunday was another day of practical sessions and lectures. The weather was perfect, and the morning paddle around Little (or Wee) Cumbrae was an absolute joy. The views to Arran that we had missed during the night were certainly there to be enjoyed on Sunday.

Overall attendance at the symposium was in the region of 70. People travelled from all corners of Scotland, and beyond for the week-end. Tom Smith and Tam Hilditch from Shetland Canoe Club managed to make it down to Cumbrae, and Adrian and Sylvia Mole from Warrington, who had been on this summer's Shetland trip, made it up to Scotland for the week-end. Tom and Tam, plus the rest of us that have been up to Shetland for the open meet were able to promote next years Shetland open meet which will once again be organised by Dave Gardner in early July. Tom brought a few slides with him and presented a slide show of canoeing in Shetland and Orkney on the Sunday afternoon.

At the end of the week-end those who had paddled to the island on Friday evening were able to just paddle away, whilst those of us who had taken cars over on the Cal Mac ferry had to queue for a place on the return ferry.



Once again a brilliant event, well organised, and a progression from last years symposium. I for one hope that this becomes an annual event on the Scottish sea canoeing calendar. Whether the venue should rotate around several possible sites from year to year, or whether a venue like the Cumbrae Centre should become the home of the event, is a difficult choice. Cumbrae and its facilities were excellent, but I think on balance it might be best, from the point of view of retaining people's interest, to move about and come back to Cumbrae in two or three years time.

Two more events which took place in Scotland in October, and which are worth mentioning here, were the Adventure 93 Exhibition in Glasgow and the Scottish Watersports Exhibition at the Bells Sports Centre in Perth.

Adventure 93 was a 4 day exhibition with a number of trade stands, exhibits, lectures and special guest lectures, all of which were based on the theme of adventure and expeditions. Brian Wilson gave a series of incredibly fascinating lectures on his circumnavigation of Ireland in 1990 and Val Cunningham of Earthwatch gave lectures on her experiences with orca on her expeditions to British Columbia. The exhibition didn't seem to attract the numbers that it could have, which was a pity because there really was plenty there to interest anyone interested in expeditions, whether they be on water or land.

The Scottish Watersports Exhibition at Perth should have been held in March, but as a result of the January floods the Bells Sports Centre was closed until September. Because of this my squash as suffered this year, and the exhibition had to be postponed until the last week-end in October. I went on the Saturday and must say that I was impressed with the turn out. There were a number of people there from the sea canoeing world, and it provided the opportunity to have a chat and buy a couple of bits of gear. One of the reasons I wanted to catch a few people, was to get a team together for a week-end paddle in the Moray and Cromarty Firths for the 20/21 November, hopefully to see the dolphins, porpoises and minke whales. I will write again shortly to report on that trip if it goes ahead.

Mike Dales  
5 James Street, Methven, Perth.

The Nordkapp Trust invites you to  
**The 4th**  
**ANGLESEY SEA SYMPOSIUM**

April 29th - May 6th 1994

A Bank Holiday Weekend of events, or stay on for a week of trips and courses

at  
**ANGLESEY SEA & SURF CENTRE (A.S.S.C.)**  
 Porth Dafarch, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd, N. Wales.

If you are interested in the idea of paddling on the sea then this is the annual event to attend. Everyone from novice to experienced expedition paddler is welcome to enjoy watching, learning, joining in, trying things out, being entertained, socialising, improving skill and having fun. We will be following the successful format of the last three years events - book now to ensure a place on this increasingly popular sea paddling extravaganza!

**THE PLACE:** A.S.S.C. is a watersports based outdoor centre, a few minutes from Holyhead, ideally positioned close to Porth Dafarch Bay, and within easy reach of the wonderful choice of coastal paddling sites that Anglesey offers. The centre has accommodation, plenty of camping and caravan space, lecture rooms, bars, and is close to the local sports centre pool.

After your arrival and registration on Friday afternoon/evening this is the format:

**THE WEEKEND EVENTS:**

**Morning Pool Sessions:** (8.00-9.00) Learn to Roll or improve your technique

**Clinics & Demos:** (9.30-12.00 and 2.00-4.30) A choice of practical sessions on the water (Approximately 2 hours): Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced, Doubles paddling, Fishing from a Kayak, Rescues, Canoe Sailing, Towing

**NEW RODEO WHITewater PLAYBOAT CLINIC**

Anglesey tide races and Stanley Embankment offer excellent Whitewater for trying this growing side of the sport. Demo Rodeo boats from all the major suppliers will be available.

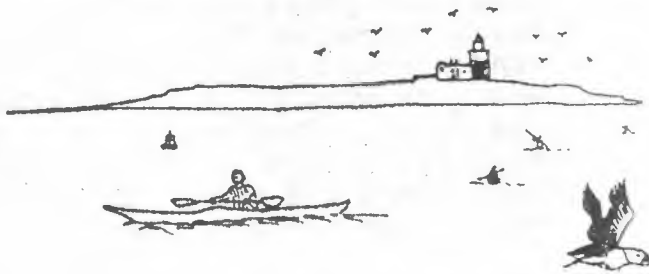
**Lectures:** (9.30-12.00 and 2.00-4.30) In the centre or grounds (Approx. 1 hour each) Choice from 4 each morning and afternoon: Navigation, Weather, Kayak Design, Paddle Design, Tides and Races, Expedition Planning, History of Kayak design, Open Crossings, Wildlife, Buoyage, and others still to be confirmed.

**Slide Shows:** Informal Travelogue slide shows of paddling trips: From all over the world. For a more relaxed time in the bar during morning and afternoon sessions.

**Trade Stands/On the Beach boat trailer:** During morning and afternoon sessions, Sea Kayak Manufacturers will have their demonstration boats available over the weekend on Porth Dafarch for you to evaluate.

**Main Lectures:** SATURDAY - Robin Lloyd Jones - Author of "Argonauts of the Western Isles" will entertain us with slides and tales from Scotland's favourite kayaking sea escapes. SUNDAY - Duncan Wainwright will divulge some of his vast knowledge on the History of Sea Kayaking. Accompanied with excellent slides this is a fascinating and entertaining journey through kayak - time!

**COQUET CANOE CLUB.**  
**"ROUND THE ISLAND RACE"**  
**SUNDAY June 19th 1994 @ 10.30am**



COQUET ISLAND LIES 1 MILE OFFSHORE FROM THE SMALL HARBOUR OF AMBLE ON THE BEAUTIFUL COAST OF NORTHUMBERLAND

THERE ARE 3 RACES OF DIFFERENT LEVELS.

- CLASS 1: SEA KAYAKS ONLY** 13 MILES. WELL OFF SHORE  
MINIMUM AGE: 16
- CLASS 2: ANY KAYAKS** 5.5 MILES  
MINIMUM AGE: 14
- CLASS 3: SLALOM KAYAKS** 3 MILES. MAINLY IN THE HARBOUR  
UNDER 15'S AND NOVICES

PRIZES FOR SENIORS / JUNIORS / LADIES / VETERANS / SUPER VETERANS / SLALOM KAYAKS

ENTRY FEES: £ 2.00, (U16 75p) Age categories are based on age on the day of the race

Lots of prizes from our many sponsors: Watershed, Sharkspurts, Phoenix, Fox & Hounds, Breezes, Ords, Narrowgate Pottery, Braud Marina, etc.

SAE FOR DETAILS: John Rae, 31 Meadow Riggs, Alnwick, Northumberland (0665 603176)

AT THE SAME VENUE.  
 SAT 18th / SUN 19th: THE BCUC SEA TOURING COMMITTEE WEEKEND.  
 SEA TRIPS ORGANISED. BCUC MEMBERS £5, NON MEMBERS £10

THE  
**WEST CORNWALL**  
**SEA KAYAK EXPERIENCE**

SUNDAY JULY 31 1994

**A 12-mile sea race**

from Hayle Harbour, down the Estuary and along the coast past Gwithian, to Godrevy Island; subject to conditions, circumnavigating Godrevy Island, crossing the Bay to St Ives, returning back past Carbis Bay and finally crossing the bar into the Estuary to Hayle Harbour

CLASSES FOR SINGLE AND DOUBLE SEA KAYAK  
 SINGLE AND DOUBLE GENERAL PURPOSE / TOURING KAYAK  
 SINGLE AND DOUBLE RACING SURF-SKI

**Plus a 3-mile fun race**

In sheltered water in the Estuary

PRIZES FOR ALL CLASSES, BOTH RACES

RACES START AT 11.30 AM; CHECK-IN AND SCRUTINEERING FROM 9 AM

ENTRY FORMS FROM RICHARD WREN, TRECROWAN FARM, BONE VALLEY, HELMOR, PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR20 6UJ



**2nd Annual Scottish Sea Kayaking Symposium**

30th Sept. - 2nd Oct. 1994

AFTER THE SUCCESS OF LAST YEARS SCOTTISH SEA KAYAKING SYMPOSIUM, THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR 1994 (DUNCAN WAINWRIGHT, MATT McILROY AND GORDON BROWN) ARE DETERMINED TO ENSURE THAT THIS YEARS EVENT IS EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL IF NOT BETTER.

THE LOCATION FOR THE SEA SYMPOSIUM IS THE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE, ISLAND OF GREATER CUMBRAE, Ayrshire. THIS IS SITUATED IN THE FIRTH OF CLYDE ON THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND AND ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST CANOEING WATERS.

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME**

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO- MAPS AND CHARTS, TIDES, WEATHER-FORECASTS, SEA PAINTING- THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE, WOMAN FORUM, MAKING PADDLES WORK- DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE ALSO FORWARD PADDLING, S&P AND CPR, FIRST AID, SEARCH AND RESCUE SEA WILDS, NAVIGATION-COASTAL CROSSING AND NIGHT, EXPEDITION PLANNING, SEA TOURING WITHIN THE SEA, SAFER SEA PAINTING, THE ENVIRONMENT, ACCESS, KAYAKING TRAVEL LECTURES, KAYAK RACING SKILLS, GROUP RESCUES, SELF RESCUES, ROLLING CLINIC, JUVENILE KAYAK ORIENTEERING, PLANES DEMO, BRLI RESCUE, HAY TRIPS, NIGHT PADDLE, INSTRUCTOR ASSESSMENT, TRADE PARTICIPATION, CHILLI AND KAR. THERE ARE VARIOUS LAND BASED ACTIVITIES FOR NON PADDLERS.

ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE BOTH SELF AND FULLY CATERED. CANOE WITH OR WITHOUT MEALS AND BED AND BREAKFAST IN A 3-BEDD. GUEST HOUSES ON THE ISLAND.

FURTHER DETAILS AND COSTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN A COURSE.

## IRISH SEA CROSSING

My mate Mark lives in Edinburgh; he's getting married in Dublin; well it's obvious! we'll have a stag paddle-from Scotland to Ireland.

As usual such ideas are born of a good infusion of a single malt but this idea didn't disappear with the hangover; it lingered, much to the dismay of wives and parents who equate the Irish sea with shipwrecks, pirates, typhoons, sea monsters and the sea kayaking equivalent of the *Marie Celeste*.

Leaving London with "Come back safely Daddy" still ringing in my ears, it struck me that the M1 and M6 were more likely to present *She who waits and worries* with an early widow's pension than the Irish Sea.

Portpatrick is six hours drive and a world away from London; it's quiet and pollution free with a pretty harbour and several friendly hostelries. We were soon adopted by *Willie Ross*, Portpatrick's answer to Captain Birdseye and the local *raconteur* and *viveur* and lots of other foreigny sounding things but basically a nice eccentric sort of bloke.

Willie ensured that we were adequately fed and watered, introduced us to everybody and came down to the small beach next morning to see us off. At 1030 an Aleut II sea double slipped quietly out of the harbour.....

The Irish Sea was in convivial mood that day with a light breeze and gentle swell. The sun slowly cooked us through the haze which reduced the visibility to about two miles.

Some people don't like being out of sight of land but to me it's one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of making open crossings, engendering a faith in oneself and the compass. The five

and a half hour crossing passed quickly with deep meaningful conversations about the meaning of life and the institution of marriage as well as trying to work out our precise speed with a Dutchman's Log.

Far offshore is the only place you'll see a raft of resting Manx Shearwaters who quickly rose into flight and entertained us with their incredible acrobatics, skimming the water at high speed with wing tip accuracy.

My first ever step on to Irish soil was at Port Muck on the Island Magee just south of the ferryport at Larne and 21 miles from Portpatrick. Having set up camp opposite the Isle of Muck we set off to find a phone and a pub in which to celebrate with copious quantities of Guinness and Bush Mills whisky, the real subjects of our deep and meaningful conversations, not marriage, after all, who wants to live in an institution? (sorry! very old joke)

Shortly after reassuring my wife that she could put down the insurance policies and my last will and testament, not to mention Mark's bride to be that she would have someone to marry in three days time, we came across a shop and had the following conversation;

"Can you tell us where the nearest pub is please?"

*Blank look*

"Well how about somewhere we can buy a few cans?"

*"I'm sorry dear, this is a temperance island, there's no alcohol sold within a day's walk!!"*

Well I know that God works in mysterious ways and we're grateful for Him guiding us safely across the Irish Sea but He's going a bit far trying to save us from the booze; our souls maybe, but our livers are beyond redemption, and somehow a celebratory drink of tea made with long life milk left something to be desired.

We awoke next morning to find that the wind had blown up to a steady force 4 or 5 and the channel between us and the Isle of Muck was a bit like those white water films of the Colorado or Dudh Khosi; a mass of spitting and roaring walls of water as 5 knots of Irish Sea fought the wind for supremacy in a channel less than 100 yards wide.

We paddled out through the race and through the overfalls at the tip of the Isle, expecting to find better conditions away from the shallow waters around the coast.

Plan A failed to materialize and Plan B (turn round and paddle back!), was a desperate struggle, even for two fit paddlers and a kayak with a rudder. The sea rapidly became steeper and ever more ferocious with white tops crashing all over us, living up to the Irish Sea's reputation for roughness. Two hours of slog later we arrived exhausted in Larne ready for the ferry back to Stranraer.

Another tick has been placed on the list of "things to do in a sea kayak; where will it all lead? Hopefully within the next two years to St Kilda but that is another story.

Dick Whitehouse

## INTERNATIONAL SEA KAYAK WEEK

From June 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the Isle of Ré (near La Rochelle) will be once again, and for the sixth time, the key meeting place in France for the European fans of the salted paddle. A touristic encounter every even year, which is ever and ever gaining fame, the 1994 TOUR OF THE ISLE OF RÉ will still allow an increasing number of foreign delegations to join with French sea kayakists on the occasion of the "SEMAINE INTERNATIONALE DU KAYAK DE MER", organized at Les Portes en Ré, by "PARIS-KAYAK International".

This sport event is open to every experienced kayakist. The proposed programme does not consist of all-out raids, nor of competition, but rather of a relaxing sea kayak trip in a pleasant country. Boarding will be in a fixed camping place; navigation will take place in empty boats (picnics only), shuttles available by private busses.

Main activity: discovering the Isle of Ré and its coast, in a complete tour of the island at tourist speed, in five stages. For the fun of changing, in 1994 the touring navigation will be counterclockwise around the island.

Other programme points: kayak surf, elementary lessons and training in rescue techniques (self-protection) and eskimo roll, photo-safaris in the vicinity of a nature protection area, and free time for personal tourism in Ré, fishing, bathing and ... farniente in the sun, as "Ré la Blanche" enjoys an exceptional sunshine rate (2 600 hours / year).

For European paddlers from 8 different countries, this will provide an opportunity to strengthen the FRIENDSHIP ties created during the foregoing encounters and to compare the methods and means used to obtain an ever increasing SECURITY in practising their favourite sport.

Conditions for participation (regulations and programme particulars)  
to be received on simple application sent to:

## Eshaness - 18th July 1993

by Tom Smith, Burra Isle, Shetland.

For those of us who live here and do most of our paddling on days off, Shetland provides a range of day trips within easy travelling distance which would be hard to match. Over the past few years I have been working towards paddling the whole coastline of mainland Shetland, and the closer islands, in this fashion. In the course of this I have managed to log a wide variety of day trips, from one or two long and uneventful solos to the very eventful rounding of Fitful Head recounted in a recent newsletter, and including several memorable days in the company of visiting paddlers, but by far the most of my trips have been with fellow members of Shetland Canoe Club.

In the course of a poor summer Shetland experienced a week or so of dull but quiet weather in mid-July, and as the weekend approached it seemed likely that conditions would be right to go round Eshaness - a major headland in the northwest of the island, and one of only two gaps left on my map at the time. On the Saturday evening my phone was busy, with the result that Tam Hilditch, Mavis Robertson, and I set off from the little beach called the Blade, at Heylor on Ronas Voe, just after 11 a.m. on Sunday 18th July. Tam's car awaited us at Tangwick on the other side of Eshaness so the die was cast.

We headed directly for the headland known as The Faither, at the mouth of Ronas Voe, bypassing one of the best and most accessible areas of cliff scenery in Shetland on our left. We had been there before and would be again, but today we had bigger fish to fry. The sea was initially smooth with a light northerly breeze in our faces, but as we approached the Faither we began to encounter some northwesterly swell. At the headland itself this produced confused and quite lively conditions, but not enough to stop us coming through the narrow passage between the large stack on the western side and the mainland cliffs. However the next few miles of coast offered relatively uninteresting cliffs with the swell generating a considerable amount of confusion close in, so we stayed a couple of hundred yards offshore and made for our planned stop at Hamnavoe. All down this coast the view is dominated by the two large stacks of the Muckle Ossa and Little Ossa a few miles offshore - a testing trip for another day.

Hamnavoe in old Norse means something like "harbour inlet". The name is found all over Shetland and generally indicates a safe harbour for small boats. On this occasion we decided to forgo the safe harbour and landed on the boulder beach just to the north of the entrance for lunch. We had completed about eight miles of a fourteen mile trip.

On our way again we crossed the bay directly for the headland at Stanshi and the start of the Eshaness cliffs proper. The swell was more gentle here, breaking occasionally on submerged skerries. Approaching the headland Tam spotted something on the storm beach we were passing and diverted inshore. It turned out to be the partly decomposed carcass of a whale of some kind. It was around thirty feet long, and being picked over by a large flock of gulls.

Coming around the headland at Stanshi we were able to dodge in and around the numerous low-lying skerries, avoiding a few on grounds of discretion. In the calm conditions it was difficult to see where all the swell was coming from, but it was certainly bouncing back off the cliffs with some force, causing us to again take a generally offshore line. The difference now was that the cliffs here were much more

broken up, and on several occasions one or other of us, usually Tam, would spot an accessible area of calmer water among the stacks and would lead the way inside.

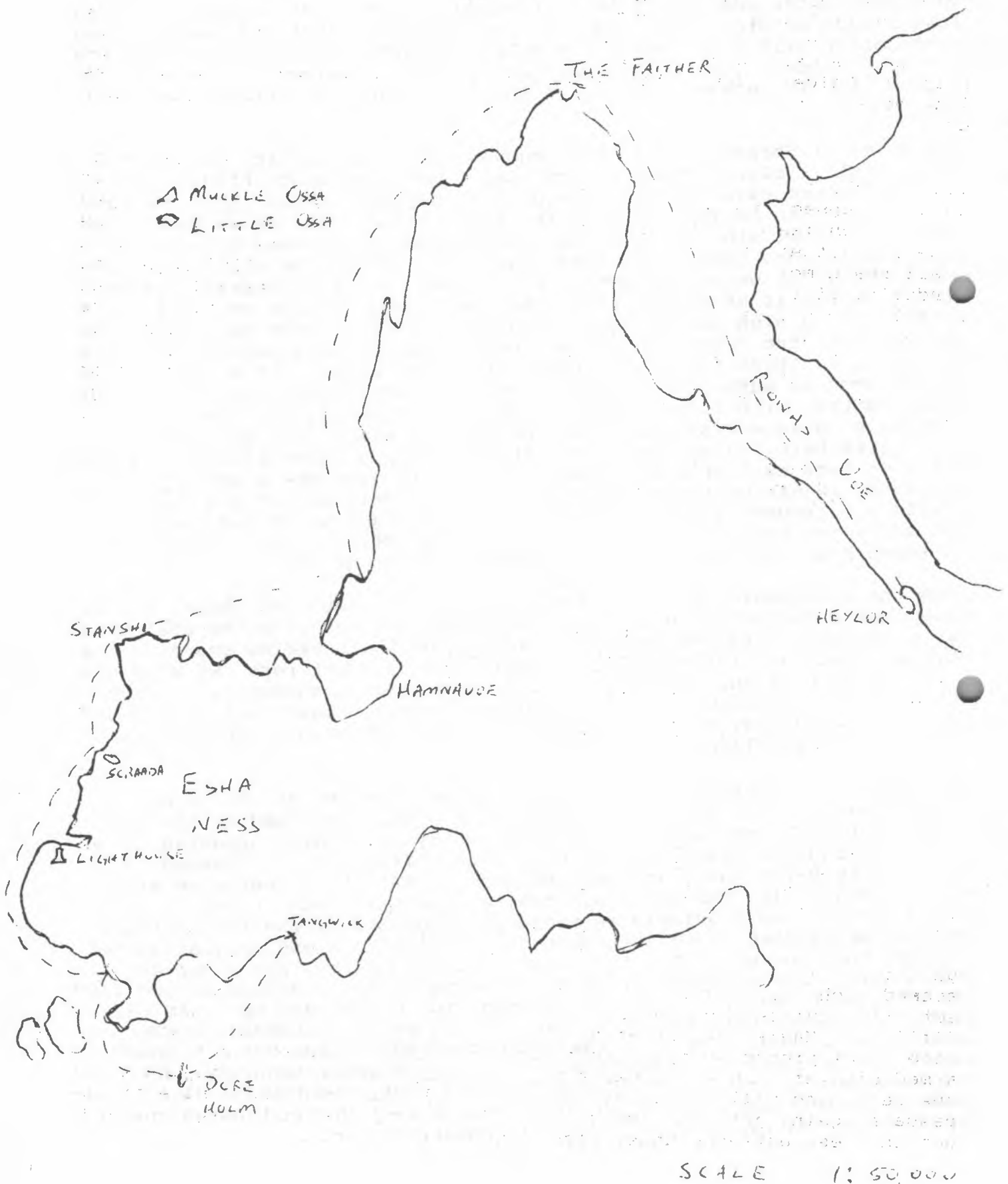
On the first of these occasions we found ourselves playing follow-my-leader through a maze of arches, passages and stacks, before emerging onto open water some distance further south. The last occasion took us into a huge echoing cave, as big as any in Shetland, and with an alternative exit which was blocked by a boulder. This was just to the north of Calders Geo, the deep-cut cleft underneath the Eshaness lighthouse. In between was one of the highlights of this or any other day.

The Holes of Scraada is a well-known tourist attraction in Shetland, being a short clifftop walk from the lighthouse road. Effectively it is a collapsed cave with an underground passage linking it to the open sea, not unlike Christie's Hole in Papa Stour. All of us had at one time or another stood at the top looking down at the sea breaking on a small beach more than a hundred yards in from the cliff edge, and wondering if it would be possible to get in from seaward. We knew roughly where it should be from the sea, and on cue we spotted the entrance to a high narrow cave. Conditions outside were as treacherous as ever but the cave entrance looked quite manageable, narrowing gradually to about ten feet wide, with no break but a fair bit of surge. Soon we were fifty yards in and the cave opened out into a high wide chamber, with light streaming in from a passage at the back. All the while we were rising and falling six to eight feet on the swell - a bit like being in an express lift shuttling between floors! Peering into the back exit from our chamber I could just see a beach in full daylight. Twenty or thirty yards more and we were out in the open with cliffs all around us. Tam thought about a landing on the beach, but the swell was breaking on it and scouring left to right, threatening to smash him into the cliffs. He thought better of it.

From the lighthouse on south the cliffs are high and sheer, and we gave them a respectful distance. We made our way into the sheltered bay at Stenness via some exciting breaks on the skerries guarding its northern end, and landed on the beach for a brief rest. We were now within a mile of our destination, but we decided unanimously to divert out to the Dore Holm, a very prominent stack about half a mile out into St. Magnus Bay, with a huge "giant's leg" arch which is clearly visible from the land.

Approaching the Dore Holm we again became aware of the swell but traversing the arch presented no problems. As I emerged on the south side of it I became aware of a passage on my left which appeared to go right through the stack in an east-west direction. It seemed to be about fifty yards long, and perhaps twenty to thirty feet wide with a slight bend in it. The sea was breaking right through it and it was a mass of white, so I quickly rejected any thoughts of paddling through. Instead we paddled round the south end of the Holm and approached the passage from the east. In the meantime the surge had eased and it seemed much more manageable. After studying it for a minute or two Tam set off confidently. When he seemed to encounter no particular difficulty Mavis set off after him, with me close behind. Almost at once I was picked up by a surge and propelled towards Mavis's boat. I aimed off left and was immediately hit by a swell bouncing back off the left hand wall. I braced and carried out into the centre of the passage again, just in time to be picked up by the next surge and spat out the west entrance under less than total control.

Coming around to the east side for a second time we could see that the passage was again a mass of white breaking seas, and definitely no-go. We set off back across the mile or so of open water to Tangwick with many thoughts to chew over.







Department of Transport  
HM Coastguard  
Maritime Rescue Sub Centre  
Hall Road West Liverpool L23 8SY  
Telephone 051-931 3352

John Ramwell  
5 Osprey Avenue  
The Hoskers  
Westhoughton  
Bolton  
Lancs. BL5 2SL

Please address replies to  
the District Controller  
Your reference

Our reference

Date 13/1/94

Dear John

I enclose the 1993 statistics of HM Coastguard's involvement with canoe incidents.

There may yet have to be an amended version, on two counts.

- (a) The Lyme Bay incident report has not yet been released, and
- (b) There is a suspicion that further reports towards the end of the year may still be in the 'pipe-line'

This statistical return warrants more than the casual glance. 50% of the incidents that were reported by concerned individuals were basically 'False Alarms with Good Intent' as the Coastguard classify them. In other words we respond with rescue resources to genuine reports, only to find the situation has been resolved or there never was a real problem. As with most emergency services this situation is common enough. It demonstrated the ease by which casual observers of canoeing activity can have difficulty in interpreting whether canoeists are in difficulty or not. It also shows the positive response made when concern is expressed for your (canoeists) safety.

The Coastguard, RNLI, SAR helicopters and others who provide maritime SAR response don't mind such false alarms with good intent. As the recipient of a helicopter and/or lifeboat response when not needed, you may well feel inclined to become defensive and claim that the Coastguard over-reacted and wasted effort and resources. The alternative is not so clever. If we only responded to positive red flare sightings, MAYDAY radio calls or emergency beacon transmissions, I suspect those inclined to the former over-reaction claim would now be quietly back-peddling.

The rather long but relevant Coastguard motto "The swift emergencies of the sea call for prompt response." The Coastguard will react promptly where the reported situation is potentially life threatening - that often means making positive decisions on what initially at least, can be very sketchy information.

The explanation seems like it may be appropriate as an article with the statistics if you publish them

Best Wishes.

PP. M H NORTH  
District Controller  
MRSC Liverpool.

## HM COASTGUARD - CANOE INCIDENTS 1993

No.	Date	Wind	Sea/ Swell	Location	Scenario	Outcome	Primary Response
1	07 JAN	S6	3/2	St.Ives, Cornwall	- 999 call waving & calling for help 400yds out	Rescued - OK	St.Ives ILB & CG
2	09 Jan	W7	4/1	Loch Etive, Oban	- Police report woman caught in 'stepper'	Fatality	Oban ALB & CG Preswick helo
3	06 FEB	Calm	3/1	Benone Strand, N.Ireland	- Capsize beyond breaker line	Self help - OK	Aldergrove Helo Portrush ALB & CG
4	15 FEB	W2	2/1	Portmuck, N.Ireland	- 2 boys overdue canoeing	Returned - OK	Portmuck CG
5	22 MAR	W4	3/1	Sandy Bay, Exmouth	- 999, 3 Kayaks in difficulty - group	ILB assisted	Exmouth ILB & CG
6	25 MAR	N1	1/1	Fleet Bay, SW Scotland	- concern expressed possible overdue	Returned - OK	Kirkcudbright CG ILB Helo
7	29 MAR	W4	3/2	Westward Ho! N.Devon	- Abandoned canoe found after capsiz	Occupants OK	Westward Ho! CG
8	03 APR	S6	3/3	St.Abbs Hd.Eyemouth	- concern for party of canoeists	Safe passage made	Eyemouth & Dunbar CG
9	28 APR	NNE4	3/2	Abersoch, N.Wales	- 999 call - concern for canoe party to St.Tudwals	All well	Abersoch ILB Valley Helo CG
10	02 MAY	NW3	3/1	Rhoscolyn, Anglesey	- concern for overdue party of 3	All well	Helo. CG ILBs
11	11 MAY	NE5	3/0	Tremadoc Bay, W.Wales	- 999 call-4surf skiers missing.Shell Is	4 Rescued	2xValley Helo.2x Barmouth ILB
12	16 MAY	SE6	3/2	Barmouth, W.Wales	- 999 3 in difficulty just offshore	Assistance given	Barmouth CG ILB Ambulance
13	18 MAY	S5	2/1	Isle of Skye	- RAF party overdue, conditions separated them	All well	Portree ALB Kyle CG
14	30 MAY	WSW9	4/3	Woolacombe, N.Devon	- 999 2 in difficulty	Assisted ashore	Woolacombe Lifeguards Marthoe CG
15	30 MAY	SW8	3/3	Porthgain, SW Wales	- 999 canoeists & dinghy in difficulty	All recovered	St.Davids LB.Helo Other vessel
16	01 JUN	S3	1/0	Southport Merseyside	- Beach Patrol concern for canoeist on passage	All well	Beach Patrol CG
17	06 JUN	NW2	1/1	Ilfracombe, N.Devon	- CG reports 2 canoeists in difficulties	ILB assisted	CG Ilfracombe ILB
18	06 JUN	SE1	1/1	Worbarrow Bay, Swanage	- yacht reports recovering canoe	Owner safely ashore	6 CG teams.Portland Helo.
19	13 JUN	N5	4/3	Reighton, Flamborough	- report of canoeists in difficulty	L/B escorted	Filey L/B & CG
20	13 JUN	E3	4/2	St.Andrews, Fife	- 999 capsized canoe at West Sands	Made shore unaided	Prestwick Helo & CG
21	13 JUN	ENE4	3/2	Gullane, Firth of Forth	- capsized canoeist, face down in water	ILB rescue	N Berwick ILB.Helo & CG
22	26 JUN	WSW4	3/1	Craster, Northumbelland	- yacht standing by canoeist in difficulties	ILB tow	Yacht, ILB & CG
23	26 Jun	SW4	2/0	St.Abbs Hd	- One of a canoe party reported overdue on passage	Self help	Eyemouth CG
24	27 JUN	W3	2/1	New Brighton, Merseyside	- Ambulance report & shouts for help in choppy seas	ILB rescue	New Brighton ILB & CG
25	04 JUL	W5	3/1	Pittenweem, Firth of Forth	- 999 call reporting canoeist in difficulties	All Well	St.Andrews CG
26	11 JUL	WSW2	1/0	Barry, S.Wales	- 999 husband overdue on canoe trip	All Well	Barry Island LB & CG
27	25 JUL	W3	2/1	Mbelfre, Anglesey	- 999 canoe & Surfboard being carried out	ILB escorted	Mbelfre ILB & CG
28	05 AUG	NW4	2/1	Dunvegan, Isle of Skye	- report of overdue canoeist	Became lost - OK	Portree ALB,CG. CG Helo
29	06 AUG	SE5	2/1	Achiltibuie, NW Scotland	- car with canoe rack - no occupants	All Well	CG Helo, CG
30	22 AUG	N4	1/1	Barmouth, W Wales	- 999 call - canoe stuck under railway bridge	Ambulance attention	Barmouth ILB & CG
31	17 SEP	EXN3	2/1	Exmouth	- 999 call - single canoeist reported in difficulties	Made shore unaided	Exmouth ILB & CG
32	24 SEP	S1	1/1	Plymouth	- Map reported concern for 2 canoeists. PPCC organised trip	MLD launched escorted	MLD/Pilots/CG

From: David Rushfirth

THE NORTH WEST COAST OF ENGLAND -  
SUNDERLAND POINT TO FORMBY POINT

For the whole of this stretch of coast the shoreline, and its immediate hinterland is flat and low lying. In time past much of the area behind the coastline was sea marsh. Extensive areas of this have now been enclosed. Tidal waters flow inland for considerable distances in the three large estuaries of the Rivers Lune, Wyre and Ribble.

Along much of the coastline gently sloping areas of sand extend seawards for long distances and these dry out at low water.

The three main rivers discharge into the sea through deep channels running through the sand banks. In the case of the Ribble the channel has been artificially confined between training walls of furnace slag and other material tipped by barges. This channel down the funnel shaped estuary was formed to allow shipping to enter and leave Preston Dock. Now that the dock is no longer used for this purpose the channel has been allowed to silt up at the seaward end. Yachts and small fishing boats now get in and out of the estuary by a channel leaving the main navigation channel at a point south of St Annes Pier and running approximately south-east in the line of the old Pinfold channel. Historically the Ribble channel has tended to wander about the estuary and it may well start to do this again now that the Preston Navigation Channel is no longer maintained.

The Wyre channel similarly reaches Lune Deeps from Fleetwood by way of a channel through sand banks but maintain its position without artificial restraint. Consequently two lighthouses on the sea front at Fleetwood, erected in the nineteenth century, still line up correctly on the channel.

The Lune channel also stays fairly well in position on its way to the open sea.

All three estuaries can be explored for a considerable distance inland by making intelligent use of the tides. On the Lune it is possible to reach the weir to the east of the main bridges at Lancaster. St Michaels can be reached on the Wyre. The Ribble can be followed to beyond the Dock at Preston. A penetration of the creek at Lytham is interesting as is an exploration of the creek at Freckleton and of the River Asland or Douglas.

There are powerful currents in and out of the estuaries as the tide ebbs and flows. The current on the ebb tide in the Ribble estuary is said to reach seven knots.

The problem in the estuaries from a canoeing point of view at all states of the tide except high water is mud. In some areas this can actually be dangerous but everywhere suitable footwear is advisable. There are points where it is possible to launch and land without too much trouble from this factor. The fishermen's jetty at Lytham allows clean launching for about 2 to 2½ hours on each side of high water and it is possible to launch at all states of the tide off Fairlawn Road if wet suit boots or similar are worn.

Clean launches can be made off the promenade at Fleetwood near the ferry landing at all states of the tide but there is trouble with mud at Stannah, Skippool and Wardleys.

It is possible to launch on the Lune near Glasson Dock but here again mud creates difficulties.

Turning to the coast between the estuaries it is worthy of note that further areas of Cookerham and Pilling marshes have recently been enclosed by an embankment stretching from Pilling to the estuary of the River Cocker. It is unlikely that any canoeist would wish to launch or land on this marshy and inaccessible stretch of coast. Canoeists, however, sometimes make the passage between Fleetwood and Glasson Dock and Lakeland Canoe Club used to organise an annual race across Morecambe Bay

The coastline from Fleetwood to St Annes has vast areas of sand to seaward which uncovers at low water. The writer constructed a canoe trolley with especially wide wheels so as to be able to launch and land at all states of the tide in this area. In its natural state this coast consists of so called cliffs which are really sea eroded glacial moraines as at North Shore Blackpool and shingle banks behind which are vast areas of sandhills as at St Annes.

Now, however, there is a sea wall running from Fleetwood to Starr Gate at the South end of Blackpool and mention must be made here of the very real danger this creates. When the sea is up to the wall even moderate on shore winds stir up unmanageable broken water as the waves hit the wall and are reflected back into later incoming waves. Conditions are such that there are many drownings of people unfortunate enough to get into the sea off the wall. During a recent incident the fully equipped rescue services could not go to the aid of a person in the water and the Police prevented members of the public from attempting rescue as this would have led only to an additional death. If making passage along this coast it is best to do so during the two or three hours before and after low water so the sea will not be up to the wall. Alternatively keep a long way out.

Surfing is possible along the coast. The waves, however, have only the Irish Sea to cross and tend to be small and close together. The best of surf occurs only during windy weather as the sea soon calms down as soon as the wind drops. There is no ocean swell like that found in South West Wales and the South West Peninsular even during calm weather. The beach at Cleveleys and Rossall is used quite extensively for surfing by local canoe clubs, etc. Surfing is also possible at Starr Gate.

The water near the shore in the area is usually cloudy and discoloured due to the mud and sand being stirred up by the currents and wave action. Debris ranging from small objects to large tree trunks comes down from the marshes especially on the highest tides.

The keen Sea Canoeist would not normally travel especially to this area as the coasts of North Wales to the south and Scotland to the north are obviously more interesting. The area, however, has much to offer to those who live within easy reach and there will also of course be those on long passages who come through the area. For these last there are no obvious seaside camp sites but the resourceful paddler would, no doubt, find somewhere to spend the night amongst the marshes or sand dunes. There is much interesting maritime activity by both professionals and amateurs. For the naturalist there is an abundance of sea and estuarine birds, both migratory and otherwise.

Call outs of the rescue services for people who go afloat in small craft are caused mainly by those who having lost control of the situation are swept out to sea either by the strong currents or by off shore winds. Deeper draft craft skippered by professional as well as amateur seamen come to grief from time to time by running aground on the sand banks. It is worthy of note that the Ribble estuary was the scene, in 1886 of the greatest disaster in the history of the RNLi, the wreck of the Mexico.

There are Coastguard Stations at Knott End and St Annes-on-Sea and a lookout at Rossall Point. The telephone contact, however, is at H.M. Coastguard Maritime Rescue Centre at Formby, Liverpool, Tel. 051-931-3341. Helicopter rescue in the area is not immediate as the aircraft usually has to come from RAF Valley, Anglesey. There are Lifeboat Stations at Morecambe, Fleetwood, Blackpool and Lytham.

## A.S.S.C. KAYAKING EXPEDITIONS 1994

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South West Ireland 22 May - 4 June 1994 PRICE: £500:00

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The expedition will leave Holyhead by motor vessel on Sunday 22 May.

The expedition will head for a small harbour near Slea Head on the southern side of the Dingle Peninsula. Once the expedition reaches the Dingle Peninsula the kayaks will be unloaded and we will explore as much of the Kerry and Cork coastline as possible. The area offers excellent sea kayaking, and even in bad weather we should be able to find some sheltered waters for kayaking.

The motor vessel will make its way back slowly towards Cork Harbour, meeting the kayakers as needed. People may board the motor vessel if they do not want to kayak all the time. Whilst the boat is in harbour, expedition members would be free to explore further inland on foot or bicycles should you wish to bring them.

Whilst all expedition members will be fed on the support boat when they are travelling to and from the Dingle Peninsula, people are expected to provide their own food for the kayak expedition. The kayakers need to be self sufficient as we will be camping for most of the time.

All kayakers must be proficient paddlers and should aim to be at the level of the BCU proficiency award. It is not necessary for kayakers to actually hold this award, proficiency tests may be taken during the expedition.

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Circumnavigation of the Isle of Anglesey 22 - 26 August 1994

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A round the Island expedition will leave and return to Porthdafarch, for those of sea proficiency standards (but not necessarily certificated). This expedition may be used to undergo Proficiency and S.L. Training Assessments.

PRICE: £195:00 per person (inclusive of food, camping accommodation and equipment)

## B.C.U. COURSES FOR 1994

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### Instructor Training

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5/ 6 March    16/17 July  
14/15 May    20/21 August  
4/ 5 June    10/11 September

### Instructor Assessment

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2/ 3 April  
4/ 5 June  
10/11 September

Sea Proficiency / S.I. Training / S.I. Assessment 26 - 30 September

S.I. Inland/S.I. (sea) Training 25 - 29 April

Advanced Proficiency 4/5 June & 8/9 October

### S.I. Training

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26/27 March

28/29 May

8/ 9 October

### S.I. Assessment

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23/24 April

25/26 June

29/30 October

Instructor Training/Assessment, S.I. Training/Assessment, and Advanced Proficiency courses will be held during the Anglesey Sea Symposium 3 - 6 May.

Expedition to South/West Coast Ireland May 9 - 20. Advanced Proficiency Assessments will be run on this expedition.

July/August We will be running : Sea Proficiency, Advanced Proficiency Training, Instructor Training and Assessment, S.I. Training and Assessment.

15 - 19 August Circumnavigation of Anglesey : Advanced proficiency can be taken.

Sea Proficiency Training / Assessment can be taken at any time.

A.S.S.C. Expedition Awards and Expedition Leader Awards available at any time.

A.S.S.C. will run any B.C.U. Training/Assessment course at any time for groups of four, (providing R.C.O. approval is granted)

# ARCTIC DOUBLE

## RACE RALLY



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**23.-27.7.1994**



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**30.7.-6.8.1994**

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Arctic Sea Kayak Race and Arctic Canoe Race will offer a new challenge in 1994: the Arctic Double, or ASKR and ACR as consecutive events! ASKR 94 will be held 23.-27.7.1994 and ACR 94 30.7.-6.8.1994, leaving two days between them as rest days. The Arctic Double can be paddled as either a race or a tour.

ACR 94 will also offer touring paddlers an alternative new route: ACR Expedition. Starting from Lake Torneå in Sweden, those choosing this route will paddle as a self-sufficient group, down the Torneå River to Pajala. From there they will be transported to Muonio to join the ACR paddlers who left from Kilpisjärvi.

(Note: ACR Race will be held only along the route Kilpisjärvi-Tornio)

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**NORWAY**  
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**For more information, please contact:**

Arctic Sea Kayak Race  
c/o Vesterålen Travel Association  
P.O.Box 243  
8401 Sortland  
Norway  
Tel +47-76-12 15 55  
+47-76-12 19 35  
Fax +47-76-12 36 66

Arctic Canoe Race  
c/o Heikki Kivinen  
P.O.Box 25  
99300 Muonio  
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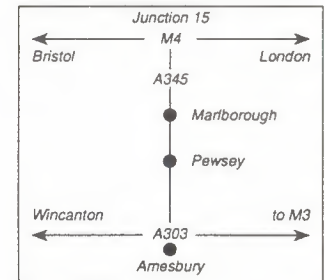
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