

No. 83 October - November 1999

THE SEA CANOEIST NEWSLETTER

The Labour Weekend Sea Kayak Pilgrimage, Pelorus Sound



Dress Standards Inspection pilgrim, Conrad Edwards, awaiting arrivals at Pipi Beach.



Conrad ensuring meticulous dressing standards before the dinner and ceremonial stoning and burning of a jet ski.

**The Journal of the Kiwi Association
of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc. - KASK**

KASK

KASK, the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc., a network of New Zealand sea kayakers, has the objectives of:

1. promoting and encouraging the sport of sea kayaking
2. promoting safety standards
3. developing techniques & equipment
4. dealing with issues of coastal access and protection
5. organizing an annual sea kayak forum
6. publishing a bimonthly newsletter.

The Sea Canoeist Newsletter is published bimonthly as the official newsletter of the Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers (N.Z.) Inc.

Articles, trips reports, book reviews, equipment reviews, new techniques, letter to the editor, and moments when the word 'Bugger!' was said singularly or often {referred to by some as incidents} are sought to enliven the pages of the newsletter.

Send in a plain brown envelope, or via cybermail to:

**Editor: P Caffyn,
RD 1, Runanga,
West Coast .N.Z.
Ph/Fax: (03) 7311806
E Mail address:
kayakpc@xtra.co.nz**

KASK Subscriptions are:

\$20.00 per annum & cheques should be made out to:
K.A.S.K. (NZ) Inc. & sent to the KASK Secretary:
Helen Woodward,
82 Hutcheson St.
Blenheim
Ph: (03) 578 5429.
email: h.woodward@xtra.co.nz

Correspondence to the Secretary:

**Helen Woodward,
82 Hutcheson St.
Blenheim
Ph: (03) 578 5429.
email: h.woodward@xtra.co.nz**

KASKBADGES

Canterbury paddler Rod Banks produced a badge of a paddler and sea kayak from solid sterling silver, with KASK NZ engraved. The badge can be permanently or temporarily affixed to hats T shirts, ties, evening gowns or dress suits but not dry suits. And the badge is appealing to the eye. Size is 23mm long by 11mm high.

Price is \$15 plus \$1 P+P, and available from the KASK Secretary, Helen Woodward.

LRB2 - KASK

HANDBOOK 2nd. Ed.

For a copy of this mother of all sea kayaking handbooks, contact KASK Secretary Helen Woodward:
82 Hutcheson St.
Blenheim

email: h.woodward@xtra.co.nz

COST:

New members: gratis
Existing members: \$10 + \$1 p&p
Non-members: \$18 + \$1 p&p

Make cheques out to KASK (NZ) Inc
Trade enquiries also to Helen.

THE LRB2, or the Little Red Book 2nd. Edition, is a mammoth compilation on all aspects of sea kayaking in New Zealand, by many of the most experienced paddlers in the Universe. Following a brief introduction, the handbook is divided into six sections:

- Kayak, Paddle & Equipment
- Techniques & Equipment
- The Elements
- Trips and Expeditions
- Places to Go
- Resources

Each section contains up to nine separate chapters. The Resources section, for example has chapters on:

- guide to managing a sea kayak symposium
- Paddling Literature
- Author profiles
- Guides and Rental Operators
- Network Addresses
- Sea Kayaks in NZ listing

SEAKAYAKING

NETWORK CONTACT ADDRESSES

Auckland Sea Kayak Network

Vincent Maire
7 Motuora Rd, Manly
Whangaparoa, 1463
Ph: (09) 424 2293
Fax: (09) 424 0385
email: asknet@xtra.co.nz
webpage: nzkayak.co.nz

Canterbury Sea Kayak Network

Andy & Deirdre Sheppard
Ph: (03) 342 7929

Sea Kayak Operators Assoc. of NZ

Bronwyn Duff, Admin. Officer
PO Box 255
Picton
Ph: (03) 573 6505
Fax: (03) 573 8827

Bay of Plenty Sea Kayak Network

Dusty Waddell, Ph: (07) 572 4419
Jean Kirkham, Ph: (07) 552 5982

Wellington Sea Kayak Network

Beverley Burnett
Cellphone: (025) 249 4116
email: beverley.burnett@bswip.co.nz
Web site: <http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/wellseak>

Auckland Canoe Club

PO Box 3523, Auckland.
Newsletter Editor: Julia Thorn
Ph: 09 575 3099

Ruahine Whitewater Club

71 Salisbury St., Ashhurst.
Ph: 06 326 8667
Fax: 06 326 8472

ROTORUA CONTACT

Graeme Muir
36 Buchanan Pl, Rotorua
Ph / Fax: 07 3477106
email: g.muir@clear.net.nz

NEW PLYMOUTH CONTACT

Mark Gardner
153 Seaview Rd,
New Plymouth
Ph/Fax: (06) 753 9881

INDEX

EDITORIAL	P.3
LETTER TO THE EDITOR	
From: Beverley Burnett	p.3
TECHNICAL	
Making & Using a Greenland Paddle by Kerry Howe	p.4
HISTORY	
Nordkapp - 1975 British Expedition by Graham Egarr	p.6
ENVIRONMENT	
Turtle Update from Jenny Edwards	p.8
THE 'BUGGER!' FILE	
Subject: "Was this you ?!" From: Peter Gates	p.8
SAFETY	
Pod Culture A Success by Beverley Burnett	p.9
BOOK REVIEW	
'The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America' reviewed: G. Egarr	p.9
TRIP REPORTS	
Lake Hauroko to Te Waewae Bay by Sue Ware	p.10
Solo around Stewart Island by Darryl Anderson	p.11
OVERSEAS TRIP REPORTS	
Roof of Britain Expedition by Sean Morley & Ian Wilson	p.15
FORUM/SYMPOSIUM CALENDAR	p.14

EDITORIAL

Planning is well advanced for both Coastbusters and the KASK Forum - see calendar on page 14, where contact details and the Coastbuster's website are listed.

Labour Weekend Pilgrimage

The labour weekend pilgrimage was a great success, although the jet ski replica burnt a tad too quickly for a photograph. Gale force headwinds on the first day and torrential rain on Sunday morning in no way dampened enthusiasm of the pilgrims and the paddle back to Havelock on Monday was in glorious conditions. Prior to the stoning and burning, one lass who was resplendent in long gown, gloves, earrings and necklace, fell or gracefully slipped, into a tidal pool. She had the audacity to blame her dunking on a lovely drop of Conrad's muscat. Plans for the 2000 Pilgrimage include an earlier date in June. The Phantom has suggested stoning and burning a Cook Strait ferry, however this may cause a few transport problems for paddlers not from the mainland!

'Bugger!' File!

The story of the Wellington rental paddler passing beneath the twin hulls of the TopCat is disturbing. Busy commercial shipping lanes should be avoided by paddlers and vessels such as ferries and larger ships given a wide berth. Any such incident as this portrays all sea kayak paddlers in poor light. During the paddle back to the Havelock marina, after the pilgrimage, one lass was paddling up the middle of a beaconed shipping lane; not only plugging into the full force of a swiftly flowing ebb tide, but square in the middle of the lane where bow to stern traffic of pleasure boats was returning. Needless to say, she was severely chastised.

Articles

With a dearth of New Zealand articles for this n/1, I have included an account of the 1975 Nordkapp expedition plus a well written account of a recent trip around the top end of Scotland.

Thanks to the production team of Phil Handford, Helen Woodward & David Herrington, & to Malcolm Gunn for sending me the Scottish Article.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Subject: Error in newsletter

Date: Wed, 27 Oct 1999

From: Beverley Burnett

Dear Paul

It is very gratifying to see our safety supplement printed in the national newsletter. Unfortunately I made an error in the June newsletter and had to put a correction into the next newsletter. Cathye Haddock is not employed by the Mountain Safety Council, but by Central Institute of Technology. Could you please make sure this error is corrected (in large print) in your next newsletter so I don't have to grovel again.

Your editorial gave the impression that Cathye compiled the Safety Supplement. This was actually written by me as editor of the newsletter and was the result of input from the members at the mid-winter meeting and the hard work of the eight members comprising the committee. Cathye authored the scenario, presented the topic at the mid-winter meeting and collated the discussion results, a huge task in itself. As Safety Officer for KASK and WRSKN Cathye deserves a huge amount of credit for the work she has done with us but there are a bunch of others who should get some of the credit. You might be interested to know that the safety initiative actually came from

Diane Morgan, who rang up a few people and persuaded us all to get involved.

Cathye and Diane helped me write the applications for Hillary Commission funding - we have funding from two councils and expect to be successful with the third, but won't hear for two or three weeks.

I look forward to seeing you at the KASK forum - my first!

Regards

Beverley Burnett, Secretary, Treasurer, Publications Officer, meeting planner, whatever ...

Wellington Regional Sea Kayak Network

TECHNICAL

**MAKING & USING A
GREENLAND PADDLE**

by **Kerry Howe**

I've always been intrigued by Greenland paddles. This is a rather loose generic term for paddles that were developed and widely used in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions over several thousand years. There are many specific varieties but in general they tend to be made out of a single piece of wood, are usually (but not always) unfeathered, have short looms (handles), and feature longish, thin blades. Such design characteristics probably evolved through the relative ease with which a paddle could be constructed simply out of driftwood, in parts of the world where there are few if any trees. But what has always intrigued me is not just the functionality of such paddles, but their efficiency. Why would such thin blades apparently give such a satisfactory performance that northern peoples used them unchanged over vast periods of time? Modern European paddles, on the contrary, have developed more of a tennis racquet shape - a big wide blade at the end of a handle. Why didn't the ancient founders of our sport do this too? How could they cover such vast distances so quickly with such slim paddles? The answer is simply that they evolved a design to the point of its optimum efficiency.

I found a few Internet sites which give good instructions on how to make and use a Greenland paddle, so I decided to give it a go. I'm afraid that I have turned into one of those funny people who now use an unfeathered wooden paddle with very thin blades, and put up with jibs from friends that I paddle with a lolly-pop stick. But I love it. In my opinion it is superior to the usual European paddle.

My Greenland paddle:

- is extremely cheap and very quick and easy to make
- is easier to use (after you have learnt a few tricks) and is more

- efficient
- is lighter than carbon fibre
- is warm, flexible, and utterly sensuous to use, hold, or just look at
- has no designated left or right, front or back, top or bottom
- makes Pawlata rolling a breeze since it floats rapidly to the surface for initial placement, and doesn't need any wrist-cocking. Just swish it across the surface and hip-flick.
- is superior for bracing and sculling
- allows for amazingly wide sweep strokes such that the kayak can be turned on a dime is great for paddling into the wind, and since it is unfeathered it will not catch any side winds.

CONSTRUCTION

I use cedar since it is traditional, very light and strong, and easy and beautiful to work with. But any pine, including radiata would do, providing the grain is thin and straight. Make sure that the wood is very dry. My basic design is from:

<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/cbrown/pdlemk.htm>
<http://seacano.e.org/grnpadle.htm#THE GREENLAND PADDLE>

I've made a few modifications, especially making the loom much longer since I am used to padding with hands reasonable wide apart (shoulder width +). A reason why traditional Greenland paddles have such short looms is probably because more heat was conserved by keeping hands closer together and elbows tucked closer into the torso, whereas we in temperate climates like the wind under our armpits.

My first paddle was carved out of a lump of 100 by 150 cedar (4x 2"). I felt like I was carving a toothpick out of a log as the shavings piled higher and higher on the garage floor. But the whole house was suffused with the most beautiful cedar scent. So was I. My only tools were a handsaw and a metal plane, plus sandpaper for finishing.

I got much more cunning with my second paddle. At Hardware House I found cedar tongue and groove - per-

fect dimensions of 120 by 20 (or about 5" by 0.5"). This was a breeze to cut into shape with a jigsaw. To get the loom thickness, I laminated a strip of 10 by 40 cedar, sold as skirting board, on each side. Note that the loom has quite a pronounced oval shape for great gripping - when held at the ready, its width is greater than its height. Apart from waiting for the epoxy to dry, it only takes a couple of hours to make a paddle. This time I also used a spokeshave as well as a plane, and an electric sander for finishing.

Final dimensions are up to you. For overall length, a good starting point is your height to outstretched finger tips. But make it a bit longer, try it, and cut it shorter if need be. In part it depends on your strength and paddling rate. It will also depend on the kayak. If you sit fairly high in a double, for example, you may want more length.

As to other dimensions, work from the loom. Place your hands at normal paddling width and make that your loom length. Hands typically touch against the part where the paddle blade starts. Some northern paddlers actually have the outside 2-3 fingers on the blade part.

The length of the blades is what is left. Maximum width at blade tip should be 90mm. The width and height of the loom will be determined by the size of your grip. Most people find it comfortable when the tip of the first finger touches between the tip and the first joint of the thumb. But, again, the beauty of working with wood is that you can get just the size that you feel comfortable with.

With both paddles, I dipped the tips into some epoxy resin for added strength, and covered them with 4 coats of marine spar varnish

All up the wood costs less than \$25, plus you need a small amount of glue and varnish.

USE

The trick is to understand that you have to think about paddling differently. If you just pick up a Greenland paddle and try it you will absolutely

hate it. It will plop and splash and slice and flutter. You need to be prepared mentally (and without scorn or scoff, thank you) to try something different and partially retrain your body for some slightly different paddling skills.

I retrained in two stages. Stage one was to learn to use an unfeathered paddle. I was surprised that after a lifetime of using a feathered paddle, my body almost instantly adjusted. Anyone with wrist problems from using a feathered paddle will just love that lack of wrist action with this one. Bracing and sculling is in my view easier, especially because there is no front or back, or left or right. And thanks to the beautifully smooth shape, you can readily slide a hand down the blade, which is great for big wide sweep strokes. There is also a related 'storm stroke' that you can read about on the Internet sites.

I didn't know that there was a stage two until I read one of these sites. This one studies the paddling technique of an expert indigenous paddler:
<http://www.jacksonville.net/~dldecker/fskaGreenland.htm>

This has been the big breakthrough for me in terms of the paddle's power and efficiency. I finally figured in my slow way that whereas most Euro-

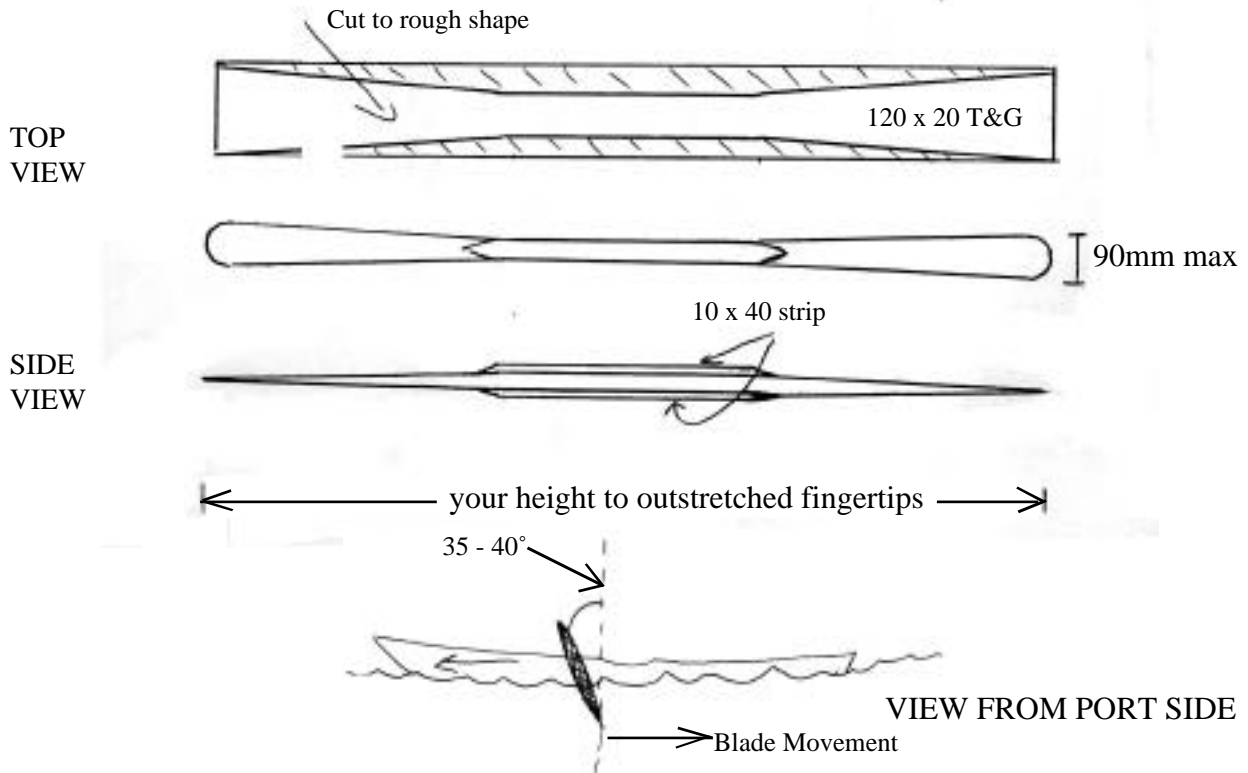
pean paddles use a large surface area basically to push against the water and so gain leverage and hence movement, the thin Greenland paddle acts more like an aerofoil (like an aeroplane wing) and creates 'lift' through the water. If you just drag a Greenland paddle flatly through the water like a European paddle, it will work but it will be relatively inefficient. The trick is to angle the blade such that when it first enters the water, the top edge is ahead of the bottom edge, and this angle is retained through the power part of the stroke. What seems to happen is that the bottom edge moves through the water first, i.e. it is the leading edge, while the top of the blade is the trailing edge. This of course is exactly the opposite to the modern European wing paddle whose designated top edge is the leading edge! Whatever the explanation in physics, and I'm sure that there is one, this angling technique really puts the power into the Greenland paddle stroke. You can actually feel it 'firmer' and seemingly 'gripping' the water and propelling the boat strongly forward. No wrist action is required. Just grip the handle such that the required entry and stroke angle is achieved with wrists in the normal, flat position. This all takes a bit of practice. And a couple of tiny shoulder muscles may need retooling, mainly, I think,

because of the lack of wrist twisting, as well as a flatter paddling style since your hands are not held quite so high. When you get it right, the quietness of the stroke is also notable - no entry splash or plop. It's a physical and aesthetic delight (told you I'd gone funny).

While I now use a paddle that has ancient roots, I also have some super modern toys such as a GPS. What this tells me is that my cruising speed and overall average speed is about the same or sometimes just bit faster with the Greenland paddle. What my body tells me is that this is achieved with much more ease and comfort. I think this comes about through a combination of super lightness, less energy put into each stroke (i.e. a more efficient stroke), a flatter paddling style, and less strain on shoulders. I've used it over distances, in winds gusting to 30 knots, and in surf. No problems. Those old guys knew a thing or two....

I'd be very happy to talk to anyone about these matters, on (09)4789952 or: K.R.Howe@massey.ac.nz

EDITOR'S NOTE: See also 'Sea Kayaker' June 1999 (pp.39-43) for a review of commercially produced Greenland paddles with notes on selection and use.



HISTORY

The following article on the 1975 British Nordkapp Expedition is reprinted from Bulletin 7 (circa 1977) of 'New Zealand Canoeing', which was edited by Graham Egarr. No author is noted so I would assume that Graham penned this article.

NORDKAPP

"Adventure is a state of mine that begins with feelings of uncertainty about the outcome of a journey and always ends with feelings of enjoyment, satisfaction, or elation about the successful completion of that journey," says Colin Mortlock. "The initial feeling of uncertainty of outcome is fear of physical or psychological harm. There can be no adventure in outdoor pursuits without this fear."

Colin Mortlock was head of the department of Adventure Education at Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside and a practitioner of adventure as well as a theorist. In July 1975 he led a team of paddlers across 500 miles of Norwegian coastal waters from the edge of the Arctic Circle to Nordkapp, the North Cape of Norway and the most northerly point in Europe.

The expedition was arguably the longest such ever attempted in kayaks - only arguably because kayaking exploits are ill catalogued and ill defined. Mortlock himself knew that Britain may have been circumnavigated by kayak* and also that some German paddlers had crossed the Atlantic, but they used sails which is perilously close to cheating. It is also a type of paddling that is still in its infancy. Most people think of a kayak as something for shooting rapids or negotiating placid inland waterways, or simply for messing about in. Mortlock contends, and has now proved, that it is suitable, ideal even, for what he calls 'multi-day trips'. After the success of his Nordkapp expedition he is now thinking of something even more ambitious and also hoping that less experienced paddlers

can be persuaded to take to the open sea, if only for the weekend.

A keen mountaineer, with Himalayan experience, Mortlock chose Nordkapp as his target, "because of the analogy with mountaineering. If you like, Nordkapp is the summit of Europe." Once he had made up his mind, he to find experienced paddlers, and through a combination of personal knowledge and recommendation he chose five others, all full-time instructors in outdoor pursuits with good kayaking qualifications. Pete Davis, the oldest at 40, was in the RAF. The others, all at least 10 years younger and civilians, were Sam Cook, Colin Litton, John Anderson and Nigel Matthews. In August 1974, Colin took them on a training trip around the Isle of Sky, a voyage of 180 miles which they accomplished in a highly satisfactory eight days. "That was a fantastic trip," he says. "We hardly saw anybody. There were no midges and the scenery was magnificent. It's a classic journey." Nigel Matthews disagreed. "Skye was hell. The paddling was hard and there were so many midges."

Mortlock had been worried about social compatibility, pointing out that several of the group were total strangers and that, "kayaking breeds individualism to a marked extent," but the group settled down quite adequately. The only serious problem was Colin Litton's shoulder and wrist which gave him considerable pain. One day he had to be towed nine miles. "We learned a lot about towing," says Mortlock laconically. Their fishing tackle proved successful with a regular catch of mackerel, though he was less lucky with birds.

After Skye, each man took on special planning responsibilities. Pete Davis for example looked after all the maps. Each man was to have his own set strapped on deck in front of him so he could refer to it while paddling. Each set contained 30 sheets and each one had to be waterproofed on either side with clear Fablon - a time consuming exercise which proved gratifyingly successful. The only map lost was destroyed by fire at a campsite. Colin

Litton had the inspired idea of living off the expedition rations for a fortnight before departure. In this way he discovered that the manufacturer invariably suggested a minimum rather than an adequate supply of their product. As a result Mortlock says it was the best fed expedition he had ever known, even though the catapult taken to catch wild birds proved sadly ineffectual.

For a long Arctic voyage, they all agreed a new sort of boat was needed, which could take huge quantities of supplies without losing too much manoeuvrability. They took their problem to Frank Goodman, an experienced paddler who ran a kayak building company, Valley Canoe Products, in Nottingham. He eventually came up with a refined version of the kayak which is so successful that he is now marketing it.

By mid-June they were ready. Pete Davis hitched a free lift in an RAF Hercules while the rest followed from Newcastle. After some local arrangements were finalized, they set out from Bodø at 10am on 3 July. Pete Davis's log paints a grim picture: 'The weather was foul, rain and a cold south west wind of force 3-4. In passing squalls the wind strengthened to force 5-6 and the visibility went down to 500 metres.' By 4.30pm they had completed 19 miles and made camp on some sand dunes. The day after, the weather was too bad for paddling and they rested. Davis tried fishing but gave up after 10 minutes. He couldn't let go of his paddle for fear of overturning. The weather continued poor through most of the trip. Indeed it was the worst since local records were kept from 1867.

The early days were the worst. "The first 100 miles were the hardest psychologically," says Mortlock. "You kept thinking what are we doing here? You must be mad! I couldn't think how we were going to manage 500 miles of this, though it didn't bother me too much because my first priority was safety. I didn't worry about North Cape. I lived from day to day, and if we were safe, then that in itself was a success. The worst thing was the sheer bloody hard work and grind of pad-

dling.”

A good paddler uses more than his wrist and shoulders. Each man had a foot bar in approximately the same position as the pedals in a sports car. With feet pressed against this, the paddler brought every muscle into action. Sea kayaking is supposed to be done with a low paddle action, but they soon found a high one perfectly satisfactory.

They would eat supper of soup, stew, if there was no fish, and apple flakes or sweet biscuits. They only had alcohol on the few occasions they stopped in towns and villages. Afterwards everyone would write up his log. They would listen to the weather forecast or on Sunday nights treat themselves to the BBC World Service sports news. The few books, Tolkien, some Alistair Maclean, were passed around from one to the other and sleep came at about 11pm.

Much of the excitement centred on stops when they met Norwegian contacts arranged beforehand, like Mr Hanssen Hammerfest who provided such a gargantuan breakfast of cheese, reindeer, bacon and eggs, that the day was almost ruined by dyspepsia {Ed: I had to look this one up in the dictionary - it means indigestion}. Another time, a suspicious Norwegian Navy helicopter called twice after reports of unidentified submarines offshore. And then there was the old woman of Finnlandsness who spoke no English but insisted on inviting them all into her farmhouse kitchen, feeding them on waffles and coffee, while removing and washing the entire expedition's filthy socks.

Gradually a routine was established. Pete Davis worked out a schedule based on 20 miles a day, resting on every fourth day. To keep to that they got up at 7.30am and spent the first half hour just getting warm. Over breakfast of Alpen, some biscuits with jam, and tea or coffee, they listened to the weather forecast. The two tents were packed back into the kayaks together with the primus stoves, food, sleeping bags and spare clothing.

Fully loaded the kayaks weighed about two hundredweight {224 pounds} and in choppy water it sometimes seemed like, 'paddling a pregnant cow'. They paddled from 9am to 1pm at roughly four miles per hour. Sometimes they were close enough to talk, usually about technical problems. More often they would be immersed in their own private worlds.

Before long, Colin Litton's wrist and shoulder began to play up again. Possibly it was teno-synovitis, an inflammation of the wrist tendons peculiar to paddlers who have to tense their wrists and exert them simultaneously. Inevitably it slowed him down and one of the others stayed behind to keep him company, a chore which Mortlock suggests, paradoxically, helped to keep the expedition together by forcing its members to think beyond their own hardships. Occasionally the two smokers, Matthews and Mortlock, would pause for a quick smoke, but otherwise their progress was constant until lunch at 1pm. Then they would paddle on for another four hours.

Just before 6pm they would stop to fish, catching innumerable cod and three salmon. In the last days of the journey however they became too tired to bother. By the end of the day, even getting the boats out of the water and above the high tide mark was a real chore. Once the tents were up, "one person would get a brew on and we'd strip off our horrible wetsuits. This suit is, as its name suggests, always wet. It is a bit like living in a hotwater bottle," said Nigel Matthews. "It is all right when you are on the move, but it is hell getting on first thing in the morning." Other clothing, particularly sweaters, became very damp and only really dried out on rest days.

Progress continued, hard but steady and well within schedule. After eight day's paddling they had covered 164 miles; after 10 days, 222 miles. Then on 16 July, they came nearest to disaster, not with a gale or shipwreck but with something altogether more mundane - a boil on Nigel Matthew's bottom. The doctor in Tromso didn't lance it but instead cut out a huge

chunk of flesh leaving his patient in considerable pain. It was obvious that he must rest or give up, but in his absence the rest of the men agreed that they would wait for him to recover. "I was really touched," says Matthews. The social compatibility which had worried Mortlock had evidently been achieved. Unfortunately the only way Matthews could continue, even after two day's rest, was with a six inch foam rubber cushion under his bottom. This disturbed the delicate equilibrium of the kayak and the next day as they were surfing down a fiord before a heavy wind, he overbalanced and capsized. "We were having a whale of a time," he says, "and generally enjoying ourselves then suddenly I went over." As an experienced paddler he executed an Eskimo roll. His wet suit and laborious waterproofing of boat and equipment prevented damage to anything but his uncovered face and hands. The hatches prevented water entering the fore and aft hatches. Only a little got into the cockpit. One refinement on the kayaks was a pump which could get rid of 20 gallons of water in less than five minutes.

"The water was terrible," says Matthew. "Probably about 3°. When I came up my face felt as if someone had put it in a vice and screwed it up really tight. It was the only time that anyone fell in, except when they were launching or disembarking, and they only suffered one piece of damage to a boat, when Mortlock's kayak was holed by a rock on a beach. They sealed it easily and it gave no further trouble.

On 29 July they reached the North Cape to find someone flashing a mirror down at them from the top of the rocky headland. It was their boatbuilder Frank Goodman, who had flown up with his family to greet them. They rafted the boats together for photographs and passed around two miniatures of Scotch by way of celebration. They then spent an anticlimactic day paddling to Honningsvagg for final disembarkation and the journey home. They had kayaked 469 miles through the Arctic in 20 days of paddling.

ENVIRONMENT

TURTLE UPDATE from Jenny Edwards

You will recall my previous articles about turtles, including the one found by John Cook at Onerahi in Whangarei Harbour early last year. Well since then we have continued to get the odd call about turtles found around the Northland coastline. Those found alive are generally sent to either Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World in Auckland or the Paihia Aquarium to improve their condition before sending them back out to the offshore islands (e.g.. Poor Knights) for release into the warm East Auckland current.

In mid-October, the schoolchildren at Parua Bay Primary School (Whangarei Harbour) found what we thought to be a Hawksbill turtle washed up on the mudflats below the school - just along from my place! One of the teachers placed the turtle in the harbour waters hoping it would swim away, but although alive it was too weak to swim against the strong SW wind. He then removed the turtle, placing it in a fishbin, which he brought into work for a DOC worker to deliver to the Paihia Aquarium.

Once 'reconditioned' it is planned to release this turtle at the Poor Knights Islands off Tutukaka, where live turtles are occasionally found swimming. The turtle was about one to two feet across, and would have been difficult to distinguish on the shore because its shell was covered in green algae and it also had some barnacles attached. Unfortunately this turtle died, and has been frozen pending a decision on its future - which is divided between museum and Maori interests.

SUNFISH

Recent incidents with a sunfish in Whangarei Harbour prompted me to write a little about these curious creatures. Dave Probert advised that 2 weeks before Labour Weekend, he and his brother encountered a sunfish whilst paddling around Taurikura.

They got so close that they were able to touch the dorsal fin. At the end of that week DOC received a call from Parua Bay to advise that a sunfish had died among the mangroves, and would someone come and remove it! Well we had to advise that was not our responsibility - but it would have provided a great feed for gulls in the area, and a great stink too probably! For those of you into deep sea or offshore fishing or diving, you have probably seen these unusual creatures flopping about on or near the sea surface out in deeper waters offshore or around the Poor Knights Islands.

Sunfish are widely distributed oceanic fish, present in most tropical to warm temperate oceans and seas. There are 3 recorded species of sunfish, all of which have been recorded in NZ. They come south into NZ's northern waters during summer, when the sea temperature is warmer, and may reach as far south as Otago. They are normally seen singly at the surface, sometimes in loose schools. They feed on small pelagic (swimming) animals, although surprisingly little is known of their biology, behaviour and food. They are harmless.

They are very deep bodied but only moderately thick, and have long dorsal and anal fins, but lack a normal tail. They swim in a sculling motion, and are often slow moving, relying in part on wind and currents for movement. They are grey brown above and paler below, with white markings on the head. The average length is recorded as 150cm but the maximum is twice this, and the average weight is 100-200 kg, with larger fish weighing up to 1 tonne!

Jenny Edwards

THEBUGGER!FILE

**From: Peter Gates
Subject: "Was this you ?!"**

Navigational Incident Sunday 24th October 1999

Reported by Wharf Police that as INCAT 050 (TopCat) was reversing into her Wellington berth on midday arrival on Sunday 24th October 1999, a kayaker who had hired a single kayak from Ferg's Kayaks, paddled between the hulls and through the wash as she was approaching the berth. Unseen by skipper, but noticed by crewman who reported it to the bridge. Police located him in Oriental Bay. He stated it was an "impulsive" action because "that's the sort of guy I am" Clearly!!

EDITORS NOTE:

This is a situation where no doubt the word 'Bugger' or worse was used, not by a paddler but by the skipper of the TopCat and the Wharf Police. This irresponsible act by a macho wanker (forgive my choice of words here, but wibble is inadequate) reflects poorly on all sea kayakers and Ferg's Kayaks. Commercial shipping should be given all courtesy, as passenger's safety can be compromised, with a wide berth given to busy commercial shipping areas and avoidance of main shipping lanes. If you come across this wanker boasting about his macho feat, please pass on suitable chastisement in the form of a severe admonishment plus a kick up the place where he sits down (polite choice of words here!).

Rental companies need to emphasize to clients the need to respect commercial shipping lanes and to keep away from congested areas. And the commercial operator noted above still does not stock, sell or promote the KASK Handbook, despite many approaches and requests!

**WELLINGTON
REGIONAL SEA KAYAK
NETWORK
October 1999
SAFETY UPDATE**

**POD CULTURE A
SUCCESS
by Beverley Burnett**

We have been promoting our new ipodî culture for safety, and so far it has been a great success. The paddle from Island Bay to Scorching bay was our first official attempt at following the new paddling procedures, and the cooperation from all network members on the paddle was tremendous. Some paddlers were so concerned to be on time that they showed up half an hour early! Paddlers made an effort to keep together and support each other, and trip leader Diane Morgan received support from all the experienced paddlers on the trip. The weather was calm with little swell, so the conditions weren't too challenging for our first try.

Our second experience was not a network paddle, but an impromptu paddle organised at the last network meeting. Twelve paddlers, including an inexperienced new member and a novice non-member showed up at Days Bay and huddled on the beach for a briefing. The forecast was good, for sunny weather and light northeasterlies of 10-15 knots. The paddlers really made an effort to look out for each other on the trip across to Somes Island and to keep with their pod. After a short morning tea at Somes we paddled down the east side of the island, heading for Ward. We knew we'd have the wind at our backs, but it wasn't until we cleared the shelter of Somes that we realised that the wind had strengthened and a swell developed. Both pods stuck really close together, keeping an eye on everyone and nursing the new members along in the lively following sea. Because of the effort to be aware of other paddlers and stay close, it became immediately apparent when one paddler got into a little difficulty with a cross-sea caused by combined ferry

wake from both Top Cat and InterIslander, and the situation was sorted out without delay.

By the time we were ready to leave Ward Island at 12:30, the wind speed had increased to at least 25 knots. After serious discussion taking into account paddling ability, distance and weather, we decided to head back to Days Bay, setting a course which would take us almost straight into the wind. Factors which led to that decision were the large number of experienced paddlers, low swell, and the wind being steady rather than gusty. Paddlers were split up into pods so that each pod had a fair share of rescue equipment and experienced paddlers. The two pods did not stay particularly close together, but the members within each pod stuck like glue, not an easy task in strong winds. It was a tough slog back to Days Bay against the wind, but the experienced paddlers encouraged the novices, and what could have been an unpleasant, scary trip turned out to be a positive experience for everyone involved. At the briefing on the beach afterwards, Cathye congratulated everyone for their successful efforts to paddle safely together, and our new paddlers remarked on how pleased they were at their first experience paddling in rough conditions.

BOOKREVIEW

**Title: 'The Bark Canoes
and Skin Boats of North
America'**

Authors: Edwin Tappan Adney & Howard I. Chapelle

Published: 1964

Reprinted: 1983

Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Press, USA

ISBN: nil

Size: A4, Hardback

Contents: 242pp, index, 224 b&w photos, line drawings & illustrations

Reviewed: Graham Egarr

The following review is reprinted from Bulletin 7 of 'New Zealand Canoe-

ing', which was edited by Graham Egarr. Graham had a long association with paddling in New Zealand, both whitewater and sea kayaking, and edited the 'Sea Canoeist Newsletter' until his untimely death from melanoma in 1991. If unable to access this classic tome from your local library, and you are desperate for a copy, get in touch with the editor for North American second-hand bookshop contacts. Price will range from US\$40 for the '83 reprint and up to US\$ for the first edition.

Edwin Tappan Adney died in 1950, aged 82, after a lifetime spent among the Indians of North America studying their culture and recording it for posterity. Throughout his life, Adney was particularly interested in the birch-bark canoe, and it will give some idea of the depth of treatment when it is realized that at his death his researches were incomplete and his collection of papers was not yet organized for publication. These papers were deposited at the Mariner's Museum, Virginia, and it was Chapelle's job to prepare from them, a description of bark canoes, their history, construction and use.

The result is this volume - profusely illustrated with diagrams and photographs and it is a most comprehensive survey of the many varieties of birch-bark canoe built to meet to differing needs of the various Indian tribes.

The second and smaller portion of the book is concerned with Arctic skin boats, both umiaks and kayaks, and is largely the work of Howard Chapelle. Here again, the result is a most comprehensive study. The latter part on its own would deserve high praise and it is perhaps unfortunate that readers will compare it with Adney's work. But it must be remembered that in one case we are seeing the result of a lifetime's observations in the field whilst in the other we are seeing a study of specimen's mainly in the museums of Eastern America. Even so, we have been given an analysis of the Eskimo craft which is unequalled in English literature. It is the second portion of the books that most New Zealand kayakers will be interested in

because of the links between the Greenland kayak and the sea kayaks used here, whilst the 'Canadian' open canoe derived from birch-bark is relatively uncommon here. Consequently, New Zealand readers will be disappointed that Chappelle makes no mention of the Eskimo craft in museums outside Eastern America - that is in the Soviet Union, Denmark and United Kingdom. But this is a minor complaint as 'Canoeing' magazine did, in the early 1960's, carry out a survey of kayaks in British museums and their work can be used to complement Chappelle's work.

This is a book that ought to be at least read, if not owned, by all paddlers and deserves a place, along with Eldson Best's volume on the Maori canoe, in a paddler's library.

TRIPREPORTS

OF DOLPHINS & SANDFLIES & BIG BARS by Sue Ware

Summer is fast zooming our way, time to dream of new trips to attempt, new adventures to plan and then get at them.

Sea kayaking Lake Hauroko to Blue Cliffs is a great South Coast trip for any one heading that far south.

"Graeme here ... how about a lake to sea trip in the sea yaks for a long weekend's paddling?" My paddling buddy was on the phone looking for adventure.

Friday was a long shuttle - leaving one car at Blue Cliff - It's on your map on the south coast at Te WaeWae Bay - the South Island's most southern and then western road - then driving back to Lake Hauroko. Meant a late start to paddling - enough time to paddle the 10 kms to the lake outlet - the Wairaurahere River and set up camp. We'd just set up the tent when the

local (there ain't too many of them way out there) arrived in his home built jet boat to, "welcome you to my lake. You aren't going down there in those are you?" (Graeme was in his Nordkapp, I was still a bus driver in my puffin). "Well, I'll watch out for you," after he'd given us a few gruesome stories of rescues, smashed boats, cold people miles from anywhere. It's a grade three fast little number, there is one eddy in the entire river and it is lined with trees - beautiful but keep on your toes.

The trout were elusive in the twilight, but the bugs sure weren't, while we fished away the evening, the only sound was of fast moving water, crashing ominously around the next bend. About the least soothing sound I could think of as I drifted off to sleep.

We launched into the river early am and were off - no stopping in this eddiless river. Trying frantically to think drive this boat like a raft, lots of back ferrying to slow down and set up. Can't pull into micro eddies in a puffin, the logs are prettv numerous and have a boat munching look about them. Graeme and I work to stay within sight, but it sure is stunning. Trees hang right into the water, green green colours.

Stop at the one place we find it possible to for lunch and meet up with last nights greeting party. He is in his late 60's, deer hunting in here every week-end on his own. He's part of the place. Make the river mouth late afternoon and camp behind the bar. The bugs are furious, the sunset worth five movies at least and the waves on the bar pretty damned exciting.

Sunrise dawns with two eager paddlers - or one eager paddler and the other working hard to find a way of getting out of here without having to paddle up the 22 foot waves that are having fun on the bar. I'm still scouting when I lose Graeme, then spot him, practically vertical on the uphill face of a wave with a few feet below and above him - making it an impressive attempt in my books. Then he's over and on the downhill side and it's completion. Thanks for that, as my

rescue attempt for a miss cued wave wouldn't be worth considering. I find a space -with few waves to launch into and we're out there, paddling the south coast minus bugs. The southerly swell is rolling slowly, the wind is thankfully quiet, a nice rhythm to paddle into. Staying as close as possible to the coast gives us views of podocarp forest, untouched beaches. bull kelp beds. We find a small beach to land on (the choice is limited to one) for lunch and a scout. Beachcombing turns up a long length of a line off a cray pot, washed up on the beach, so it goes on mv back deck.

Paddling further round rock outcrops to Port Craig for a look at the hut that was the Port Craig school house in days gone by. A short stretch to complete the '30km coastal section, two Hectors dolphins find us so we play in the waves with them until it's time to get dry and fed.

We're locked and loaded and ready to go... and my car has a flat battery. The baches are empty bar one teenager tearing round on a 4 wheeler - as they do. The collecting beach garbage habit pays off when I get to use the new tow rope.

STATISTICS - Two half days paddling for those into cruising and exploring.

- Lake Hauroko road end to Blue Cliffs road end.

- Lake level needs to be average (locally thats judged by the water level being up to the second stage of the jetty on Hauroko) so that there is enough water in the river to have a whole boat at the end of the trip.

Sue Ware

**SOLO TRIP AROUND
RAKIURA
(STEWART ISLAND)
by Darryl Anderson**

20/7/99.

Well the seed was planted when I read Paul Caffyn's account of their gripping adventure (with co-paddler Max Reynolds). Then in the winter of 1997, myself and Jane Newman paddled from Bluff to somewhere north of Halfmoon Bay (which I later discovered was Sawyers Beach). We had an amazing time, but that's another story. It was as we were standing on the ferry, homeward bound, that I thought to myself "I'll be back!". And so I was at Bluff, overcast and raining, on the winter equinox, 21 June. The next morning the weather was reasonably stable so I followed my judgment and went for it. It was a six hour grind into an opposing tide but slowly and surely I pulled into Halfmoon Bay, relieved to be stretching my legs. The weather turned out to be sunny and a tail wind was welcomed so all in all it was a successful crossing. After a very relaxing rest day jibbing around town, I departed full of praise for the Gods' had smiled to bring me to this point.

24/6/99: Halfmoon Bay to Bungaree Hut

It was rainy sou-west and blowing 10-15 knots so I hugged the shore marvelling at the huge Rimus, the first of many. That night I made landfall at Bungaree hut with 13 other dudes (hunters and fishermen) talking about wild animals and shaved pussies. It was a very raucous evening.

25/6/99: Bungaree Hut to Xmas Village Hut

Another day of overcast, sometimes sunny, rainy, blustery south-west weather. The sea was very calm except for the occasional gentle surge. It was magnificent hugging the coast and basking in the reflection of water stories on rocks and bark. I arrived at Xmas village with a lovely couple of cod and a few hunters, but definitely a much more toned-down version of the previous evening.

26/6/99: Xmas Village Hut to Long Harry Hut

It was one of those overcast, warmish sun not getting through kind of days but extremely pleasant to be on the water heading in a westerly direction checking out all the nooks and crannies (and there were lots of these). As soon as I rounded Black Rock Point, I could start to feel hints of what lay in store on the west coast. The wind picked up in intensity to 5-10 knots and the swell picked up to a lazy two metre roll. I arrived mid-afternoon and discovered Long Harry's hut after a scramble up the bank. What a primo site. Big wide open seascape for a view (especially from the long-drop). I threw a couple of containers of cold water over myself as a free-standing shower - it was rather invigorating.

27/6/99: Weather Day

I did see a HoiHo Yellow Eyed Penguin shuffle up the beach as I blundered onto the beach to see if my kayak was still with me.

28/6/99: Long Harry Hut to Codfish Island

This morning dawned with the brilliant orange glow of sunrise over Te Wai Pounamu (South Island). Once I rounded Cave Point I was paddling into an oncoming tide, wind and swell, just to make it a hat-trick. It was awesome paddling along formidable west coastline all sharp and stark with white and blue columns, row upon row of breakers pounding and grounding the rocks into sand. I stayed a half kilometre offshore and worked my way up to the Ruggedly passage that was surging tumultuously with a two metre plus swell. I beat into the wind all the way to Codfish. What a wonderful day.

29/6/99: Codfish Island to Mason Bay

When I left the beach it was sunny and blustery 15-20 knot westerly with a 2-3 metre westerly swell. Instead of heading over to the coast and following the Hellfire and Mason stretch, I hugged the inside of Codfish Island then made a beeline for the Ernest Islands as in these conditions deep water was my friend. I guess I was a couple of k's offshore. I didn't have many chances to have long lingering

glances at the coastline which was ruggedly astounding. I was mainly gazing at the oncoming swells and especially the ones that were cresting off the top, one to two feet. The westerly wind intensified to about 25 knots and was whipping spray, cleaning all the dead skin off my face, being the only exposed skin. It was very very invigorating and hellishly challenging, especially as I neared the shelter of the Ernest Islands. The weather seemed to intensify as I neared the shelter of the headland. Finally I made it after 3-4 hours of awesome paddling. I made landfall at the southern end of Mason Bay and thankfully the verandah of Kilbride Homestead gave me great shelter from the full on south-wester.

30/6/99: Rest and Weather Day

1/7/99: Mason Bay to Easy Harbour

This morning dawned blowing westerly but it wasn't too fierce so I made a tentative depends-on-what-it-looks-like-around-the-headland decision to pack up and go. It was blowing 20-25 knots but steady, so I poked my nose around the corner and Whoah! it was still just as big as the other day. I sat with my nose pointing into it for five minutes or so after which it appeared to remain steady. I decided to go for it. For the next four hours it was big, roly-poly, cresty-lippy. It seemed to flatten out going across Doughboy, which I didn't really get in close enough to in order to have a good look. Around both of the headlands, especially South Red Head Point, freshening winds whipped up huge choppy seas which crashed in a myriad of blue, green and white. The coast was again steep and impenetrable but, thankfully, it calmed off as I got into the lee of Kundy Island and the Boat group. I rounded the head into Easy Harbour just inside a semi-submerged reef that was literally exploding with the full force of the westerly swell. I caught a couple of grand fish and made camp at the head of the bay.

2/7/99: Weather Day, Easy Harbour

I awoke to the sound of blustery north-west and rain and so I did my usual morning things and decided to have a day just tenting. As I was settling

down singing, "Happy Birthday to Me", I felt that the floor had become extremely spongy. Kind of like a waterbed. I peered outside the tent and was aghast at the lake that only 20 minutes previous was nowhere to be seen. I quickly bailed and looked around for a dry spot that at least had reasonable drainage. But alas, alack, there were none to be found in the reasonably immediate vicinity. Except, that is, for the mound which was the tent-sized lump with the rugged slope. However, it was the only drained lump around and so that's where I spent my 30th birthday. I had a grand day.

3/7/99: Easy Harbour to Flour Cask Bay

This morning dawned overcast but calm and settled so I made a hasty pack-up and was on the water early to catch the tide surging around the bottom Cape. After a while the cloud burned off and it turned into one of those crystal-blue days and bright sun. It was so calm that I could paddle to within only a few metres of most of the reefs and rocks. Gog and Magog were protruding in all their phallic glory like two huge southern sentinels. It didn't take long to get washed down through Southwest Passage between Big South Cape Island and Southwest Cape. There was an enormous southerly swell, but it was huge, green and glassy. They were the biggest swells I've ever experienced, especially when one beholds the awesome power of Mother Nature in true thunderous revelry. It was the best possible combination of weather and tide to attempt the rounding of such an unfathomably happening headland. It was grand to make landfall at Flour Cask Bay and say hello to the Hookers!

4/7/99: Flour Cask Bay, Rest Day

I spent the day just jibbing around on the beach and combing for beautiful shells and stones and watching the amazing mob of Hookers Sea Lions do their thing. I think I may have camped in their favourite sleeping spot as while I was having lunch one of the males came ambling up the beach bellowing and growling and showing me his huge gaping pink

maw and big teeth. He came to within about ten feet which is when it became apparent that if I didn't suddenly become very large then I was going to be sharing my tent with an incredibly smelly breath. I purchased myself a long thick pole that I had set aside for just such an occasion, raised myself up and screamed and growled, even giving him a gentle nudge back in the direction of the sea. But he didn't budge. Not one flipper, I asserted my stick as high as it would go and made lot's of strange Neanderthal type noises. Eventually I succeeded in scaring him off and he slowly ambled off down the beach. It was wickedly exciting, so fun was had by all at Flour Cask Bay.

5/7/99: Flour Cask Bay to Broad Bay
This day didn't dawn crystal-blue and calm. It dawned overcast souwest 15-25 knots, rain and swell 3+ metres. It was great to have the normal weather back. I headed out of Flour Cask and paddled inside Murphy Islands very southern rock. The swell was heaving and huge but I just stayed in the green stuff and hugged the shore on rounding into Broad Bay and seeing for the first time the huge old growth Rimu forests. I camped up in Burial Cove for two days.

6/7/99: Burial Cove, Weather & Rest day.

Well I nearly didn't pull my boat up high enough, luckily I had lassoed it to a tree. I had two hailstorms and lots of sun and rainbow patches. A beautiful spot to camp right in under the trees.

7/7/99: Broad Bay to South Passage

This morning dawned blustery norwest so I packed up and left about mid-morning and paddled only a short distance hugging the coast around to South Passage. I took shelter in a lovely tidal side cleft of golden sand and pristine bush and scored a yummy couple of fish. Delicious fresh blue cod for dinner. Bliss.

8/7/99: South Passage & 'Kiri Lee'

This morning dawned thinly overcast but within the hour it had burnt off and the sun was shining. I hugged the shore checking out all the nooks and

crannys! As I was about half way to the end of south arm, the vessel 'Kiri Lee' with Brett and the boys chugged up alongside, resulting in me jumping on board and towing the kayak around south arm. We stopped in a sheltered corner and proceeded to pick mussels, oysters, scallops for dinner. I spent a lot of time sightseeing and standing beside the warm diesel heater. They graced my stomach with a lovely plate full of potatoes which were incredibly filling, all covered in salt and butter, and I felt untold warmer. We tiki-toured around and eventually ended up in Kelly Bay almost in Islet Cove. We parked up next to another fishing boat from Bluff and proceeded to gorge ourselves on seafare of the most delicious kind all fresh as can be. I tried raw fish [Trumpeter] marinated in cider vinegar, onions. Food of the gods!

9-7-99: 'Kiri Lee' to Top of Cooks Inlet

After a choice cup of coffee I was lowering myself into 'Kingi' at about one hour before daylight. The boys were off fishing down at the South Cape. So I set myself adrift to a calm sheltered little nook and sat and awaited the dawn. It was extremely clear and crisp, the stars were exquisitely bright and poignant. Slowly they traversed the sky and dawn arrived. The first part of sunrise I spent catching a few fish. Then on the ingoing tide I drifted and paddled up to the end of Cooks Inlet which was a real maze of intricately sprawling islets and backwaters, some silent and brooding, whereas others were all light and mossy, delicate just around corners. It turned into head high tea tree and various other low scrub. Gog and Magog were standing proud as can be out of the landscape. I managed to scramble myself out a campsite. I even had an extremely primo little fire. It was blowing a fairly constant westerly with squally rain periodically. It was fun watching the triple coloured tent fly billowing in the breeze. I vaguely had an attempt at walking to the gogs but due to inclement weather I decided to save it for next time. I preferred to keep my one set of dry clothes dry. As you do! It felt absolutely choice parked up all

dry and warm with the glow of the fire and beautiful fish digesting away. Life is peachey!

10-7-99: Cooks Inlet to Pegasus Passage.

The day dawned windy and overcast but no rain so I had a leisurely pack up waiting for the tide. Once in my boat I coasted out along the left bank of the inlet and it felt really good to get back into the big old trees, all resplendent in the occasional rays of sunlight that would pierce the thick bank of clouds. There was mist on both the gogs but occasionally the clouds would part and give me sneaky little peaks at the peaks. I sifted my way along the coast around into Pegasus Passage which was quite a different scene all together, between the islands. There was lots of moss and plant covered rocks. I pulled into a beautiful golden sand beach with a great plastic hunter's shelter/cookhouse with a lovely flat space for my tent. I was sussed!!

11-7-99: Pegasus Passage to Bulling Bay.

This day dawned overcast and a bit rainy but by mid morning it was a nice warm hazy day. I cruised over to anchorage is and caught a few fish. It was wonderful sitting and soaking in the warm reflection of rebounded heat and light off the rocks. After a long while I headed back to the mainland and followed the edge around marveling at the elaborate granite sculptures and

secluded little bays. I ended up at Belltopper Falls if my map reads right which was a monumental gushing of waters. I kept on going around the edge to Whale Passage but found no campsite although I did see a white tailed deer scoot off into the bushes. I crossed over to Pearl Island and followed the inside coast till I caught sight of Bulling bay and saw it forming out of the dusk. It was only two bays around from where I started but it was definitely one of the more desirable campsights, BBQ table and everything!

12-7-99: Bulling Bay to Rest and Rain day.

The day dawned windy and rainy so I had an awesome breakfast of por-

ridge. I spent half the day cruising out by Pearl Island, catching some lovely terakihi and cod. The rest of my day was consumed in watching the tide rushing in and out and seriously soaking up the atmosphere.

13-7-99: Bulling Bay to Toitoti Bay. The morning dawned south-westerly and drizzly so I packed up anyway and made a beeline for Whale Passage then out onto the coast. Once I reached The Sisters and Seal Point the swell was rolling through at about 3m+ with the odd big one rolling through. The swells were enormous and heaving and pitching especially on Seal Point. Once I rounded the headland I had the wind and swell and tide at my back - a huge day along the coast. About half way along to Toitoti Bay I met up with the 'Kiri Lee' on her way down to the South Cape. We had a brief chat about the price of fish.

I ambled along my way to Toitoti Bay in a following sea. It was a spectacular day along the south-east coast, all huge and towering and covered in primeval forest. I stayed about half a km offshore just to make sure I didn't have any chance meetings with hidden reefs. Eventually I rounded the point inside of White Rock and eased into a lovely campsite at the head of Toitoti Bay and the mouth of the Toitoti river. A grand elevated mossy rocky outcrop.

17-7-99: Tikotitahi Rest & Weather day.

This morning dawned with a high volume flap of loose canvas in the wind which was a sign to stay in bed which I did till midmorning. I spent a very leisurely day cruising out on the beach and reading 'Readers Digests.' It was a most informative day! I also ate the massivest rice pudding and lots of fish.

18-7-99: Tikotitahi to Port Adventure.

This morning again dawned with the familiar flap of canvas from the easterly quarter so I packed up anyway and hugged the shoreline out to the Breaksea Island and Shelter Point then as I left the shelter of Shelter Point, I was given a damn good look at by a

steady 20knt easterly wind, also a 2+ to 3m swell. It was very grounding stuff. After a couple of hour of that I managed to escape the main flow of tidal current around the headland. Then it was just the constant wind which was quite soothing after a while. One aspect of Stewart Island was the incredible kelp beds that would sway to and fro with the rhythmic sensation of a womens hair in water. It was extremely sensual. I looked and drifted into most of the nooks and crannies of Port Adventure which was a lot like most of the rest of Rakiura. One of the more unusual spots out the back of North Arm was like a living tree archway with the sea resembling a polished black marble floor. I stayed in the North Arm hut which was very luxurious.

19-7-9: Port Adventure to Halfmoon bay.

This morning I was awakened by an amazing dawn chorus of half a dozen tui's all gallahhing around. I packed up and was on my way mid morningish as I rounded the headland and inside Weka Island, I did a straight run down to East Cape into an oncoming tidal race with the same consistent 20+knts of wind and 3+m swell. Another big bouncy day! After rounding East Cape I pulled into lovely Chew Tobacco Bay for a most welcome rest. I proceeded to chomp my way through a very delicious choc chip cookie. The coast from here on started to change from granity gold sand to more of a greyish sand like Mason Bay. The bush turned back into low tea tree scrub and dunelands which is perfect kiwi country. From Chew Tobacco Bay, I struck out across the bay cutting in on the inside of the small island in the middle of the bay. It was rather shallow in Chew Tobacco Bay as the swell seemed to steepen and there were more frequent breakers. I picked my way along the coast I felt completely at home in my boat bouncing along in the 'good ole easterly' so I decided to carry on all the way back to town, probably a bit of gethomeitis setting in? Oh well you get that on the big jobs!

Well it all came to a great adrenaline rushing finish as I rounded the neck and Bullers Point. The swell seemed

to get just that little bit choppier; tide, swell and wind all seemed to conspire just to make sure I fully earned my passage. So I picked the best possible line between the rocks just inside the neck. I surged out between crashing breakers and rounded Bullers Point then it was a slow but very satisfying hour long paddle to eventually round Ackers Point and catch sight of Home Bay. I started to paddle a bit slower just to savour the final moments of my journey around Rakiura. With the westering sun slipping down in the horizon giving the sky beautiful pastel shades of apricot, grey, silver, gold all coming together as the third eye of creation.

And ever present we're the birds swooping and diving, caressing wind over the sea. It was about half an hour before dark when I finally touched the kelp and seaweed crowned beach of

Halfmoon bay. A much richer person for having had the privilege and honour of briefly glimpsing the many intricacies and infinite beauties of Rakiura.

Statistics:

Duration of trip: 26 days; 19 days paddling & 7 rest and weather days
Roughly 71 hrs of paddling time
Darryl Anderson

EDITOR'S NOTE:

From my records of trips reports and news clippings, Darryl's trip is the sixth circumnavigation of Stewart Island and the first solo. The fourth circumnavigation featured in an excellent article by Donna Hammond (KASK n/1 No.76). Not long after the April 1998 trip by Donna, Ross Hickey and Kevin Kennedy, mountaineer Paul Coradine with his 19 year old son Brett set off from Lee Bay on June 8

1998 and shot around the island in a fast six day paddle. The 'Southland Times' (20/6/98) clipping of the Coradine's trip notes:

And then there was the wee problem with the shark. In between the rocky sentinel towers of the Ruggedys, a shark cruised by as the pair fought through foaming seas.

Paul spotted the fin of a great white pointer crest the waves close to Brett's kayak.

"I said nothing because I didn't want to worry him," Paul said.

"I saw it and didn't want to tell you unless you got upset," Brett said.

Darryl Anderson's first report of his trip sent to me was a photocopy of illegible scrawl. The second attempt was a computer print out, but has been edited for readability, spelling of place names and grammar.

BLACKHUMOUR
(from 'The Press')

A man devastated by the All Blacks' losses in England decides to commit suicide. Alone in his living room, he prepares to hang himself. At the last moment he decides to wear his All Black kit as his last statement.

A neighbour catching sight of the impending incident informs the police. The police arrive and quickly remove the All Black jersey, and dress him in stockings and suspenders. The confused chap asks why are you doing this? The policeman replies, "It's to avoid embarrassing your family."

FORUM-SYMPOSIUMCALENDAR

COASTBUSTERS 2000

Date: 17 - 19 March 2000

Venue: Puriri Motor Camp, Orewa

Info: Kerry Howe (09) 478 9952

or email: K.R.Howe@massey.ac.nz

or Vincent Maire (09) 424 2293

email: asknet@xtra.co.nz

Website:

<http://members.xoom.com/coastbusters/>

KASKY2CKAYAKFORU1M

Date: Easter 2000, 21 - 24 April

Venue: South Brighton Domain, Christchurch

Info: Peter Sullivan (03) 388 3380

email: dsullivan@xtra.co.nz

'No Reason!' The Roof of Britain Kayak Expedition

By Ian Wilson & Sean Morley

'Those that ask the question will never understand the answer - those that understand the answer will never ask the question'

(with acknowledgement to Wally Herbert and Sir Ranulph Fiennes)

I like circles. Whenever I go for a run, cycle or paddle I will go out of my way to complete a loop rather than an 'out and back' along the same route. A circumnavigation has a sense of completeness about it. There is an inherent satisfaction about going all the way around and finishing where you started. Ever since man discovered how to float he has been circum-

navigating the variously sized lumps of rock on this watery planet. To do this in a kayak, the most simple, yet versatile of watercraft, where the only means of propulsion is the symbiosis of wind, wave and paddle blade, is doubly satisfying.

The idea of a circumnavigation of Northern Scotland came to me whilst paddling around the coast of Devon and Cornwall in the summer of 1997. I started at Lyme Regis on the Devon / Dorset border and finished 9 days and 413 miles later on the Devon / Somerset border at Porlock Weir. Although a bit of an epic in itself the

'circle' could not be completed. I had paddled 'Around the Sharp End', it seemed logical that my next trip should be around the other end of the United Kingdom and this time it would be a true circumnavigation.

The journey would begin at Fort William at the Atlantic entrance to the Great Glen. The route would be initially south west down Loch Linnhe, then north west through the Sound of Mull to the Small Isles and the Isle of Skye. Continuing north through the Inner Sound and along the shores of the Minch to Cape Wrath, the north western tip of Scotland. A traverse of

the north coast, the 'Roof of Britain' to the Pentland Firth and John O'Groats before turning south, down the sheltered east coast to Inverness, the opposite end of the Great Glen. The circle could be completed by following the Caledonian Canal through the Great Glen back to Fort William.

I asked Ian Wilson to join me on the 'Roof of Britain Kayak Expedition'. Wilson, as he likes to be known, is a quiet unassuming character (not!). He has proved that he is one of the toughest endurance kayakers in the country by completing a record breaking crossing of the Irish Sea with Jim Morrissey and myself in just over 11 hours. He has finished three 125 mile Devizes to Westminster Races with his K2 partner Peter Jacks and has come a close second in two Western Isles Challenges. He is a mountaineer and ocean sailor having done the Fastnet and Round Britain. In fact there is not much that Wilson hasn't done and if anyone comes up with a daft idea that involves getting wet, cold and hungry, he is the first to say "Let's do it!"

His ability as an extreme sea kayaker aside, the main reason I asked Wilson is that even in the most testing, uncomfortable conditions imaginable, like in the middle of the night, 90 miles into the D.W. race, when everyone, including the support crew is at their lowest ebb, he will come up with a funny that has everyone in stitches. His ability to laugh at himself and get everyone laughing with him makes him the perfect companion for the journey I had in mind.

My original intention was to again raise money for charity. I approached a national charity that both Wilson and I felt we could support but unfortunately it took them so long to decide that they would indeed like us to raise funds for them that it was too late to do anything about it. Next time perhaps. We wanted to do the journey anyway, but it led to the inevitable conversation with onlookers curious as to why we were putting ourselves through such obvious discomforts, "Why are you doing it?" "No reason.....!" Sir Ranulph Fiennes, whom I have

had the privilege to paddle with, in his book 'Mind over Matter' quotes Wally Herbert, another great British polar explorer, as answering his critics by saying:

"And of what value was this journey? It is as well for those who ask such a question that there are others who feel the answer and never need to ask" (Wilson has adapted it slightly for our title so that even I can understand it!)

An alternative title for this account could have been, 'Rev-heads do Scotland!' The concept of paddling around a stretch of coastline as quickly as possible does not really conform to the stereotypical image of sea kayaking. I would be the first to agree that this mode of travel does not give much opportunity for exploration or for soaking up the atmosphere of a place. But I am impatient by nature. I had never been to the Western Highlands and Islands. I wanted to see as much of it as I could in one go. With my marathon racing background I actually find it less tiring to crack on at a fast pace than to potter along at a slow cruise. I knew from our close battles during several sea kayak races that Wilson and I had identical fast cruise speeds. He shared the same impetuous, youthful (some may say immature) desire to get from A to B as quickly as possible. I also wanted to prove that the Inuk sea kayak, manufactured by Kirton Kayaks, could be used for an extended expedition in what was likely to be fairly serious water. I had already shown that the Inuk is surely the fastest sea kayak on the market by the 65 mile days I was able to put in paddling up the North Coast of Cornwall and Devon and by our Irish Sea record. But could you use such a fast craft on a two week expedition when it would be necessary to be totally self sufficient?

The solution was to utilise all the available space within the kayak and with that in mind I approached First Ascent, a company who import Seal Line Dry Bags and other products designed and produced by the American company Cascade Designs. I had seen a brochure containing their Kodiak tapered dry bags with air release valves to keep their volume to

the absolute minimum. They seemed perfect for getting kit up into the very ends of the Inuk kayak. I was delighted when they replied to a speculative letter informing them of our forthcoming expedition. Not only did they supply us with the dry bags we needed but they also gave us other products from the Cascade Designs range to try out including Ultra-lite ThermaRests, PackTowls, waterproof map cases and Platypus waterbags. We are very grateful to Angela Pendry of First Ascent who put her trust and faith in us to complete our journey without mishap and the products she provided greatly enhanced our comfort during the expedition.

I also approached Arktis, a local company in Exeter. They have been producing a range of specialised products for the Special Forces of the Armed Services and Tactical Firearms Units of various Police Forces around the world for a number of years. They have recently entered the outdoor leisure market and their knowledge and experience of what really works in extreme conditions has enabled them to produce simple, but extremely effective products that will soon be recognised as breaking new ground in this growth market. Having said that they were impressed with the kit I already had and only wanted to supply me with items that they knew would out perform it. I already had a wool-mix lined Pertex jacket manufactured by them. I had worn it for all sorts of activities including winter sea trips, sailing and mountain biking. It out-performed anything else I had ever owned. They gave me a couple of super-light weight Pertex jackets and a sleeping bag outer to try out. They also gave me an excellent Pertex fleece-lined hat which I hoped I would not have cause to wear - surely it would not going to be that cold.....it was!

Wilson was not amused. Arktis wanted me to try out the kit to see if I would be more comfortable in the various climatic conditions than he was. He complained that his kit was ancient, that his cag, which certainly looked as if it had been used it for all the 20+ years he had been canoeing,

could not be compared with my brand new kit from Arktis. After several days of constant moaning I gave in and gave him the Pertex jacket which I knew he had been eyeing up with increasing envy. He was like a kid with a new toy and I now bitterly regret giving it to him. It was such a nice jacket!

Our kit worries sorted, Wilson volunteered to organise the food for the journey. I told him that I would eat anything, I wouldn't mind what it was as long as there was lots of it. I had no idea what a task I had given him and I must take this opportunity of apologising to his long suffering wife, Theresa who spent many hours individually bagging two weeks worth of food under Wilson's supervision.

In return I volunteered to get some sort of route plan together and get the boats ready. I had already spent many a happy hour studying the Ordnance Survey 1:250 000 scale maps of Western and Northern Scotland. I now needed to study the route in a bit more detail. The local library has proved an excellent resource for my various trips. I could photocopy and cut into bits the various OS maps and Imray charts of the route and gather all the pilotage and tidal information I needed. I believe in keeping things simple as much as possible and Franco Ferrero's book on Sea Kayak Navigation follows that principle. It was an excellent reference. I knew that weather permitting we would be doing some fairly committed open crossings to some of the islands and across some pretty big bays. Having photocopied and laminated every bit of coastline I could, I set about transferring tidal information relevant to our trip onto the numerous sheets using an indelible pen. Several coastal Guides from back issues of 'Canoeist' magazine also proved useful. The main difficulty was that I could not be precise about when we would get to the various problem points along the route. I resolved to plan each day's paddle the night before. I am glad that I did not bother to plan too much in advance. As it turned out we started half a day early which immediately threw my tidal calculations upside down!

Kirton Kayaks were again fantastic, allowing me to take over an area of their workshop to tinker with the works. Inuk kayaks they were lending us for the expedition. With foot pumps fitted, rudders fine tuned and deck lines renewed where necessary it was then a case of wondering where all the kit was going to go.

Day 1

Friday 11th June 1999 (18 miles, two and a half hours paddling)

As we live at opposite ends of Southern Britain the plan was to meet near Preston where friends of Wilson's had offered (?) to put us up and look after my car whilst we were away. To get me in the right mood I listened to an audio book of Moby Dick on my drive north. Clive and Dorothy were well used to Wilson invasions and seemed completely unfazed as we emptied the contents of two cars on their lawn. We stuffed and packed and re-stuffed and re-packed by the light of our head torches until we were fairly confident that we could at least get the majority of our kit in the kayaks. We headed off again early the next morning sharing the driving on the long journey to Fort William. The journey went quickly, chatting all the way. This set the tone for the rest of the expedition. We have so much in common, not just through our job but our shared outlook on life. Even though we had only met a couple of years before and had seen each other perhaps six or seven times during that period we had established a firm friendship based on healthy competition and a deep respect for each others ability.

The weather was excellent as we entered the Highlands and I saw for the first time the majesty of Glen Coe in all its glory. Patches of ermine-white snow like robes draped regally over the mountain tops reminded us that winter had not long left these lands. We stopped briefly at Bunree to look at the Corran Narrows where the tide sweeps through at up to eight knots. The flooding tide was producing standing waves mid-stream but I was confident that if, for some reason, we ended up paddling against the tide it would definitely be possible to make

ground using the eddies, given a fair wind. Fort William is a busy place. Perhaps not the most beautiful of towns it is functional and a focal point for most activities in the Western Highland region. A look in either direction and you are immediately reminded of its location at the gateway to the Glen. Steep sided mountains falling into lochs with roads clinging to their sides. And of course there is the Ben. The big brother, omnipresent, creating its own cloud which seems to keep the town in permanent shade. I was never to see the summit of Ben Nevis. The days when the summit is free of cloud are rare but that maintains its aura, its mystery and explains why thousands of people trudge to the top every year.

Having arranged to leave Wilson's car in the car park at Fort William police station all that remained was to wait for morning to commence our journey.

"But hang on", I thought, "the wind this evening is blowing straight down Loch Linnhe towards the sea".

Wilson read my mind. Something else that was to follow a pattern during our journey. Whenever I suggested a change in plan Wilson was already on the same wavelength. There was rarely any need for discussion, it really was like we knew what the other was thinking.

"You want to start now?"

"It's a lovely evening and just look at that wind, we'll surf all the way to Mull!"

A quick bite to eat at the local supermarket cafe then we got changed in the car park. The first of many occasions when Wilson exposed his bottom, albeit briefly, to the population of Scotland. Having packed the boats earlier at our selected start point on Fort William Pier, I was somewhat concerned that when we (only just) managed to lift a kayak at either end it sagged horribly in the middle. I had visions of the craft folding in half before we even got them on the water! That would have been a little difficult to explain to our sponsors. We had managed to get 12 days food and all our kit in the boats. Testament to the superb design of the Inuk kayak and the efficiency of the SealLine taper dry bags. We got them onto the water

without mishap and at 4.30pm on Friday 11th June we headed off down Loch Linnhe towards the sea. The proprietor of the sea food restaurant on Fort William Pier, Lorna Finlayson, who had shown considerable interest and some concern at our intended journey enthusiastically waved us off, entering into the spirit of adventure by taking a photo of us then hanging precariously off the end of the Pier to give Wilson his camera back!

Conditions could not have been better. A Force 4 on our backs we surfed down through the Corran Narrows into the long expanse of Loch Linnhe, the warm evening sunshine on our faces. With Ben Nevis as a back drop and the summit silhouettes of Mull in the distance it was the perfect start to our adventure. We covered some eighteen miles in two and a half hours! The Inuks were able to accelerate down the waves despite their massive burden, allowing us to easily keep up with the wind blown chop. Wilson had badly injured his shoulder last November in a 50 metre fall off Sharp Edge on Blencathra. It had caused him some concern leading up to the start of our expedition but it seemed to sort itself out during this 'warm-up' paddle. We spotted an ideal campsite in the small bay of Camas Chì-Mhalieu (your guess is as good as mine on the pronunciation!). The gently shelving beach meant a fairly long carry up to the high water mark on a grassy bank. We were approaching spring tides and would have to be mindful of this in our selection of suitable stopping places.

We met a German couple who had parked their camper van on the raised storm beach. They only had a limited supply of drinking water so despite their generous offer Wilson went and saw the local farmer who had just driven his tractor and trailer onto the beach. He offered to give us a lift on his trailer back to the farm where, he said, we would find "the best water in the Highlands". It probably was but unfortunately it had acquired the taste of the hosepipe through which it was delivered. Still it was good enough for cooking and Wilson soon had the first of many excellent meals under-

way. We immediately adopted a routine without discussion whereby Wilson would cook whilst I planned the next days paddle and took photos of our campsite. I would then do the washing up and we would both settle down to writing our diaries. We had resolved to keep independent diaries throughout the journey to see how our perceptions varied. We were both aware that friendships can be put to the test during this type of expedition. Myself, I had never before slept in a tent with another male for such a long period of time. Wilson was quite used to it - which was even more worrying! Peter Jacks had very generously lent us his Terra Nova Quasar ETC. Apparently he rarely had the opportunity to use it as it was permanently on loan to Wilson. It proved to be the perfect expedition tent, the extra tent canopy (ETC) giving Wilson sufficient space to create his culinary masterpieces whilst I admired the view out the back. It very soon became our home, a haven not just from the midges but also from the wind-chill that seemed to be a permanent feature however warm the evening sun.

It was my first opportunity to try out my ThermaRest. We had opted for the Ultra-lite, willing to sacrifice a little comfort to save weight. We need not have worried. The Ultra-lite was unbelievable compared to a normal foam sleeping mat. It took seconds to inflate and once it was, you couldn't get me off it! It was a revelation for me. I had always been put off by their price. Believe me they are worth every penny! Having enjoyed a sunset over Mull we were soon asleep. Almost mid-summer the sun was setting at about 10.45pm.

Day 2

Saturday 12th June 1999 (39 miles, nine hours paddling)

I awoke at 4.30am. It was well and truly daylight. I dozed until 7.30am whilst Wilson slept soundly. I'm a 'mornings' person and will always wake at daybreak. I'd have to adjust to the short nights if I was not to become over-tired through lack of sleep. Breakfast of ReadyBrek mixed with powdered milk and sugar was quickly consumed. Wilson, bless him,

was fastidious about ensuring we got equal quantities of grub. I pointed out that with his high metabolic rate and low body fat he could not afford to lose too much weight. I reassured him that I would not be upset if he gave himself a little extra. I had deliberately pigged out in the fortnight leading up to the trip, so much so that I was keen to re-discover my abdominals! It was certainly my experience during the South West peninsular challenge that it was impossible to eat enough during such a prolonged journey. I had visited just about every bun shop and fish and chip take away on the coast of Devon and Cornwall and still I had lost half a stone in 9 days. This expedition was likely to be even more demanding of calories as the weather was considerably cooler. It took us two hours to get breakfasted, packed and the boats to shore. The gently shelving beach had been transformed overnight by the falling tide into a painful trial of strength as we carried each boat in turn over the two hundred metres of rotting seaweed, sharp rocks and slippery pebbles to the soft sand at the waters edge. We resolved to be more selective with our choice of campsite; the steeper the beach the shorter the carry. Good in theory, in reality we were not able to be that choosy.

The wind of the previous evening had died away and we had our first topless paddle! It is an odd tan one acquires whilst sea kayaking. It ends somewhere above the navel. Indeed I have various banding according to the garments worn. At least the backs of my hands were brown! I am in favour of wearing a hat to shield the sun from my eyes. I find the salt water soon crystallises on any sunglasses worn making them completely opaque. Wilson disliked hats and would resemble some monster from the deep by the end of the day with large deposits of salt around his eyes. He was already weather beaten by the considerable sea mileage accomplished earlier in the year during other exploits. With his short, dark, curly hair and rugged looks, he looked more Gaelic than many of the locals.

We were reminded that this was most definitely the sea when thousands of

jelly fish appeared near the surface. We also met our first seals. These inquisitive creatures make an exaggerated fuss as you approach, diving as if their lives depend on it, only for them to resurface just a few feet behind you as their curiosity gets the better of them. As we approached Rubha an Ridire, where Loch Linnhe emptied into the Sound of Mull, the wind died altogether. This heralded a change in wind and tide. As soon as we turned the corner and started to head north west up the Sound the wind was right on our nose. Blowing a steady Force 4 it was enough to get us wet as the chop broke over our decks. It did occur to me that it was going to be a very hard paddle up the west coast if the wind remained in this quarter. Our first porpoise cheered us as we bashed across to Fishnish Bay where we hid in the lee of a low headland during lunch. It had become overcast and before long we were shivering with cold. I found it almost impossible to keep warm in salt-water soaked clothes, despite the best efforts of my Nookie Aquatex Sea Cag and Helly Hannsen trousers. Wilson donned his favoured Palm dry cag but he too was uncomfortably cold. We hurriedly got back into our boats to get warm. This proved to be a continual problem. The paddling kit we had was excellent for paddling in, the dry kit we had was lovely once we had got it on. It was that period in between when we would get very cold, often doubling up in uncontrollable shivers. As soon as we were paddling we quickly got warm and had to shed clothing. There is not a simple solution, especially when weight is such a crucial factor.

The afternoon paddle was tough. Again a Force 4 bang on the nose. We measured our progress by passing close to the lighthouse on Dearg Sgeir. It was a shame; the wind was all but cancelling out the benefit of a flooding tide. Once we had rounded the aptly named Rubh' an t-Sean Chaisteil ('Headland with Sean's castle on' as I chose to call it) we tucked under the heavily wooded cliffs of Gualan Dubh, out of the wind. The area reminded me of one of the most dramatic stretches of cliff scenery on the North

Devon coast between Ilfracombe and Porlock weir - a 'must' for any sea kayaker. We sneaked between Calve Island and the 'mainland' of Mull and into the picture postcard harbour of Tobermory. It is a prosperous, busy wee town although little is left of its once significant fishing fleet. Its continuing prosperity relies on tourism and the affluence of the visiting yachtsmen. It was nearly 6.00pm so they were unlikely to get much out of us. I was surprised to see several shops were still open, including a bakery. The temptation was too much and we sat scoffing Scotch Pies, caramel slices and iced doughnuts until even I felt quite sick.

I rang the coastguard at Oban informing them of our progress so far. I had written to them some time ago and had promised to keep them informed of our plans. The provisional route plan I had sent them was already superfluous but they seemed happy enough so long as we rang them at least once a day. We chatted to a girl working behind the counter in the bakery. Her other occupation was whale research. She informed us that we could expect to see minkie whale the next day. Our energy levels restored we prepared to put to sea again. However we first had to explain, in some detail, our journey and the different bits of kit on our kayaks to some interested local boys. Wilson was tolerance personified. He has a special ability to 'chat' with people on their level. His skill in developing an immediate rapport with anyone he meets was used to good effect on several occasions during the trip.

We hugged the north east coast of Mull avoiding the worst of the now opposing tide. Our destination was Kilchoan on the south side of the Ardnamurchan peninsular. It involved a four mile crossing from the lighthouse at Rubha nan Gall. I kept checking our transits as we made excellent ground into the small bay, protected by the mountains from the north westerly breeze. We had covered about thirty nine miles in our first full day of paddling. Most of it into a head wind. We could have gone on but it was 7.30pm and there was no suitable land-

fall between Kilchoan and Point of Ardnamurchan, our first big obstacle. We chose our campsite carefully finding the perfect spot. A steeply shelving beach backed by a grassy field with a suitable level area for the tent. The short cropped grass was perfect and we soon had the tent erected and our wet clothes hung out to dry on the barbed wire fence. The only problem was that we were overlooked by several crofts. On our way to the telephone kiosk a short way down the single track road we passed the first croft. I saw the occupants staring at us with just a little hostility. I waved at them and mouthed the question, "Is it okay to camp there?"

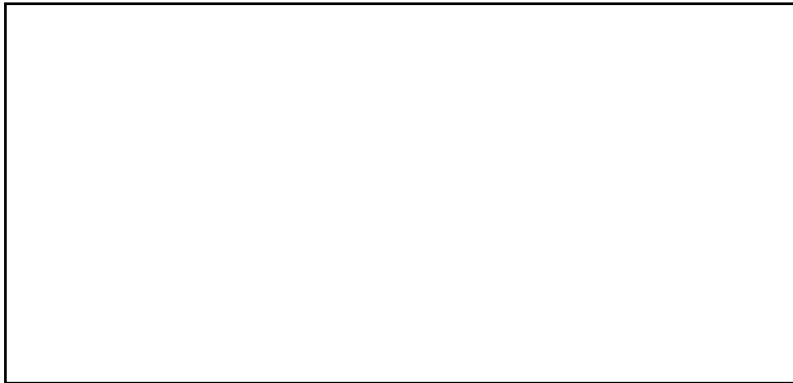
The elderly couple came out to speak to us. It would have been more polite to ask first but then we might have been refused. The old man explained how he put his sheep on the land every day during the summer. When we explained what we were about and that we would be gone first thing in the morning they seemed pleased to help. Again another trend was set. Whenever we had cause to ask for assistance from the local inhabitants, be it fresh water or the use of their phone, we were met with a warmth and generosity that re-established our faith in human nature.

Probably because of the job we do both Wilson and I had a pretty low opinion of the human race in general. We met so many people on our journey who understood completely what we were about and wanted to help in any way they could. My theory is that this wild and untamed landscape attracts or keeps a hold of anyone with an appreciation for natural beauty. That common thread runs through both the resident population and the many tourists who return to the Western Highlands and Islands year after year.

A four cheese ravioli with garlic and mushroom sauce mopped up with nan bread, followed by rice pudding consumed to the sound of Gaelic music on the radio, with a view of the impressive 528 metre Ben Hiant, finished the day off nicely.

(to be continued in n/l No.84)

MAILED TO



If undelivered, please return to: Helen Woodward, 82 Hutcheson St. Blenheim.

