

# Treasna na dTonnta

“Across the Waves”

Newsletter of the Irish Sea Kayaking Association

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## Ballyvaughan Symposium 2002

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May

**Burren Outdoor Education Centre, Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare.**

The premier event of the ISKA Calendar is not to be missed in Ballyvaughan in May. Marc Jegou and his team have promised memorable sea-kayaking, excellent on shore programmes and mighty crack. Paddle Galway Bay, Aran Islands, Cliffs of Moher, surf at Fanore with the dolphin, workshops, lectures, Gerry's infamous pub quiz, flea market, gear displays, BBQ – fun and frolics guaranteed. Full details overleaf and on ISKA and River Ocean web site.

### Symposium Programme of Events

#### Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup>

- 16:00 Registration.  
Soup and sandwiches will be available.
- 20:00 Welcome. Slide show and movie.  
Mike Horn's Latitude zero expedition around the world.
- 21:00 Expedition to local pubs.

#### Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup>

- 08:00 Breakfast.
- 09:00 Briefing followed by Activities.

#### *Seadogs:*

**Advanced day trip.** Cliffs of Moher.

**Easy day trip.** Ballyvaughan, Eddy Island, Kinvara. **Ballyvaughan.** Beginners ½ day trip.  
Ballyvaughan bay.  
Rolling and rescue clinic.

#### *Landlubbers:*

Boat building, 1/2 day.  
Lectures.  
OEC activities.  
Gear swapping flea market.

#### Evening activities at Whitethorn Restaurant

- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:00 ISKA AGM
- 21:00 Pub quiz and raffle in aid of RNLI

## Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>

### *Seadogs:*

Coast guard rescue demo

**Advanced day trip.** Fanore-Black Head-Ballyvaughan

Easy day trip.

Beginners ½ day trip.

Surfing in Fanore.

Rolling and rescue clinic.

Tidal race and rescue.

### *Landlubbers:*

Boat building, 1/2 day.

Hooker trip.

Lectures:

Fishing tips.

Coast guard lecture.

Flare demo. (Old flares will be taken for disposal)

OEC activities

### Evening activities.

18:00 Everyone on the water at Ballyvaughan for memorial photo

20:00 BBQ at Monks Pub

## Monday May 6<sup>th</sup>

### *Seadogs:*

½ day trip. Bell Harbour to Bishops Quarter.

Rolling and rescue clinic.

Surfing in Fanore.

*Landlubbers:* OEC activities

### Prices €

3 day Full board Dorm €180

3 days Camping €150

2 day Full board Dorm €160

2 days Camping €130

1 day Symposium only €55

# Winter Kayaking

## Old men go west for winter sea and sun!

David Hughes

As Christmas approaches and the collective blood pressure of the population rises ACKC has traditionally gone for a canoeing winter break! This weekend is seen as essential therapy to allow the oxygen thieves in the club to quietly reflect on the trip during

the trying Christmas festivities while around them Granny breaks wind discreetly in the corner and children scream, cry and vomit on the excesses of the season.

Usually this has been a weekend of river padding in Wicklow or more lately surfing on the West Coast. This winter was different, some result of climate change no doubt, the rivers were dry and there was no low pressure in the Atlantic pushing swells onto the West Coast. Instead a high pressure was building over Rockall and the forecast promised calm seas and clear skies. After the usual round of midweek phone calls the trip fell into place, what might have been a problem turned out to be a rare opportunity, flexibility is a wonderful thing! The sea kayaks were dusted off and arrangements were made to meet at Bunbeg in Donegal at 10am on Saturday morning to explore the offshore islands in the area.

All seven of us made an early start, Team Alpha (Phil, Cuan and David) in the campervan and Team Omega (Peter, Adrian, Chris & Bart) in two cars. We were parked on the pier at Bunbeg on time after a healthy Ulster fry in Letterkenny. The sky was blue and the sea was calm as the forecast predicted. The well oiled team (but more of this later!) slipped out of the harbour as some rare choughs circled overhead. After some initial confusion we threaded our way out of the channel and headed over to the South of Gola. The cliffs on the South and West of Gola are impressive and hold a large number of recognised climbing routes and boast a guidebook. The sea cliffs are clean and

the granite rock is hard and sound. We passed in between Torglass and the main Island and headed on North across the Torragoun Sound and around the West side of Umfin and landed in the little gut on the North East side with a storm beach. Lunchtime had arrived and the teams immediately headed off to their separate lunch spots. We are such a stubborn independent and individual bunch that a silent standoff arose over the best lunch spot. Of course eventually everyone recognised that Team Alpha rock was the best and reluctantly came over to share our shelter. We had a low winter sun and a beautiful view south over Gola and beyond to Owey. The Muckish - Errigal ridge set the scene to the East and all was well in the world again!

After lunch we landed at Pollboy on Gola. The last Islanders left Gola in 1968 and we found it deserted. Nowadays Gola supports only a small summer population and a few of the houses are being repaired. Gola even boasts a few signposts - which we thought unusual on such a small Island. Who could possibly get lost? We tramped around the Island and tried hunting down a herd of goats but it must have been relatively easy to smell us coming and they legged it off to a far corner of the Island!

The short paddle back to Bunbeg with the backdrop of the mountains was just the tonic required and Bart who was presumably the thirstiest, sprinted off to get the Guinness shimmering in Bunbeg!

The major disadvantage, hazard even, of winter touring is of course the long nights! Too much time to do damage in the local bars! Seven pints of Guinness at 4.30pm is a recipe for disaster and imagination was needed to hold back the tide of drink! We headed off to Dunglow and 4 booked onto the excellent hostel while we 3 parked the camper van up on the street. ACKC members certainly know how to live it up in style! After a cordon blue feast worthy of the Naked Chef (fish and chips) we succumbed to the warmth of a small bar on the main street and paced ourselves by playing pool until the band arrived. 'The Jury's Out' livened up things considerably and Cuan struck a cord with the lead singer as he sucked and blew on his organ to the tune of Lay down Sally! We had a sweepstake on the first song the band would sing, Phil to everyone's surprise guessed correctly - Texas! Unable to contain his glee he soon admitted that in the melee as the bets were being collected he had sneaked up and asked the singer what her opening gambit was to be. A heated argument followed as to the legitimacy of his win only subdued by the purchase of another seven pints of porter! The evening degenerated further and Adrian our token Englishman staggered out if the pub to empty his bilge and assume a horizontal position!

The evening smeared out to a conclusion and the following morning after a desperately slow start, a bacon sandwich in the van for us hard campers, and another full hotel breakfast at Austin's for the hostellers we headed South to Ardara. We put in at a beautiful little slipway on the South side of the Loughros Point looking across at Maghera caves. This south facing slip would make a beautiful wild campsite as the soft green grass faces south and the views across to the Cliffs of Slievetooye are fantastic.

Although between us we have notched up the entire Irish coast in sea kayaks none of us had closely scrutinised this section of coast. The cliffs of Slievetooye fall dramatically to the sea between Ardara and Glencolumbkille over a length of almost 20kms. Although not as high as the cliffs of Slieve League a few miles further south this section must rank as one of the most spectacular coastal trips in Ireland (Photos 4 & 5). We paddled through caves, under arches and around stacks for almost 5kms. In fact things were going too smoothly.

We rounded a headland and glided towards a remote storm beach backed by steep unclimbable cliffs. Incredibly the beach was host to a very large colony of Atlantic grey seals, perhaps over 200 seals relaxed on the shingle. We drifted towards them until one seal more vigilant than the rest blinked and raised the panic alarm. We might as well have been padding around South Georgia, excepting that there were no Killer whales cruising off shore. All hands on the beach slid and skidded towards the sea and many angry seals splashed and grunted around us. We got the distinct impression we weren't welcome at this party and were retreating when Bart raised our alarm. The sleeping sea had seemingly come to the rescue of the seals and a very large set on waves started to break over us. Pandemonium broke out, and the club motto 'every man for himself' came to the fore as we braced, ducked and rolled back out the safety of deeper water! Only Bart lost his bottle, in the literal sense that is, as it was washed off his deck.

We lunched at a grand little beach about a kilometre further on from the seals and headed back at top speed to the cars. Peter got an ignominious swamping as he tried to launch from the beach and fit his spray deck at the same time. He was saved the discomfort of a wet paddle back by a stirrup pump! All in all a great weekend snatched in midwinter on the west coast, and the paddling was good too!

# Hocus Pocus

Sara Spencer

Harry Potter, eat your heart out. Rat's heads, yellow-eyed owls, white horses, and dead men were all features of the ISKA meet in Skerries on December 15th.

As I scrapped ice off my windscreen that morning, I thought of how cold it would be on the water. The notion of getting into a small boat and paddling out to sea seemed ludicrous. I was sorely tempted to abscond - a day in a Grafton Street cafe drinking in the carol singers and Christmas shoppers made much more sense.

In an effort to resist, I questioned my motives for sea kayaking. I reminded myself I do this for fun, but for the life of me I could not figure out how it would be.

In defiance of the frigid air there was a strong sense of event around the pier in Skerries. As kayakers drove into the harbour area, they were greeted with good natured rebukes and copious amounts of slagging. Cars were unloaded. Wetsuits, fleeces, booties, cags, hats, mitts, spraydecks and buoyancy aids were donned. The merits of one brand or feature above another debated.

Chris Schnabel impressed us all with his folding sea-kayak. The vessel compresses to a tidy twenty kilos and comes in its own ruck sack so it can be carried and stored with ease.

Gear and boats sorted, Sean Pierce, the organiser of the meet, let us know the plan for the day. We would travel to Shenick Island, for a short stop and some bird watching and

We piled into the boats and set off. Des Keaney and Moira Creedon booted ahead in a double kayak. Des at the back supervising the paddling and occasionally putting his own in the water. When we stopped off at Shenick Island, Sean produced a telescope complete with tripod, and invited us to join him in his part of the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-webs).

The I-webs scheme monitors the numbers of waterfowl from ducks to divers, geese, waders and gulls. It enables population sizes and trends to be identified and understood. This data gives conservationists, planners and developers the basis for informed decision making regarding wetland and estuary areas. Happy to be associated with such a worthy endeavour, and in the absence of a warm cafe, we followed Sean.

The ground was pack-marked with little holes. 'What are they?' I asked the resident wild-life expert, half knowing the answer but hoping it was something more pleasant. 'Rat holes' came Sean's reply. I was afraid of that. 'Apparently the ground heaves here at night', he added, unnecessarily. I tip-toed and prayed the little buggers didn't wake up. I considered singing lullabies but the others might have thought me strange.

We stumbled across a severed rat head - no point in singing to that fellow. We speculated as to what caused his demise and concluded it was probably an owl.

We saw four Short-eared owls in total. Sean set up the telescope and it was possible to get a look at their yellow eyes. Or so he said, I didn't look because I was on rat guard. Sean estimated the number of Brent Geese, Oystercatchers, Lapwings, Turnstone and Purple Sandpipers. Duty done, we headed back to the boats.

We set off for Saint Patrick's Island. I found it a tough crossing. The waves rolled in from the right pushing the boat off course. Too nervous to edge, I sweep-stroked my way across. I noticed some of the better kayakers hung back with me and I was grateful for their reassuring presence.

It was exhilarating. I saw Mervyn Picken being swept up on a wave in front of me. As he rose into the air I sank in to a trough, there must have been at least eight feet in the difference. Mervyn's ride broke just as he hit its peak, submerging his boat momentarily. I held my breath for him. He paddled through. Thankfully, the giant wave had lost its power by the time it got to me.

I was not the only one having a difficult time. One kayaker learned not to brace on to the trough of a wave when you are sitting on the crest - capsizing is inevitable.

As we approached the island the water quietened and we were greeted by a herd of smelly and curious seals. I was told they were a 'group of sub-adult males' the seals that is, not the kayakers. When we had beached the kayaks

someone pointed out that you could see an outline of Saint Patrick in a window of a ruin that stands on the island's west side and so you can. Under the watchful gaze of the dead Saint we settled down for lunch in the shelter of a nearby ruin.

In an impressive display of forethought and organisation, Sean, Des and Paul, conjured up stoves, bottles of wine and lemons and proceeded to brew pots mulled wine. We ate our sandwiches enchanted by the aroma of cinnamon and nutmeg. It felt like Christmas. I was very glad I had not succumbed to the allure of Grafton Street earlier that day.

As we headed for Skerries harbour the conditions were kinder. This time the waves were heading in our direction so we surfed our way home. In fact it was so good I was beginning to think maybe we had a few wizards or warlocks in the bunch who had cast spells and jimmerhickied the ocean. Okay, perhaps they just knew the tides, still, it was magic.

# News Snippets

## *Oileáin: Photographic Appeal Update*

**Oileáin** has reached a stage of transition. The decision to publish it in the conventional sense has been made. There are included not only 268 islands but the mainland coasts in part of at least of 8 counties. It has always been available as it developed on the www, in very plain form. **Oileáin** as a book on your shelf like any other book is now a distinct possibility, and coming your way. The text is being reorganised. There will be maps. There will be photos.

Needless to say there will be one for everyone in the audience. **Oileáin** has its genesis in the same factory as has the **ISKA**. The development of the two has been inseparable for some. Now at this seminal moment you can help.

**Oileáin** has the text, and the maps are being made. **From you, Oileáin needs photos.**

**Oileáin** is not a replacement for the Pilot or the Directions. **Oileáin** is distinct. Its mission is to reflect the experience of very very small boats at sea on a very big ocean. Kayaks do not paddle through sounds with or against the tide, they go across them. Kayaks land everywhere, rarely at busy harbours, but often in very obscure places. Kayakers do not anchor off, they camp on. Landing a kayak can be altogether a different experience to landing from a dinghy.

We need photos that demonstrate all this. We need lots of them. We need photos of waterfalls and sea stacks and landing places and camping spots and rainbows and headlands close in. We need them from the eye of a kayak. We need shots that typify paddling, in close, silent, remote, seeing what no yachtie ever sees.

We need them now.

**David Walsh**

# Sea Training

**Stephen Hannon**

The Training Review Group recently completed a five-year review of the Irish Canoe Unions Sea Kayak Training Scheme. The completion of this review has presented an opportunity to highlight some of the benefits of sea proficiency training and explain how the training scheme is organised and delivered.

Formal training for sea kayaking is relatively new in Ireland. It complements rather than replaces the less formal training methods of trial and error, reading manuals and learning from your friends. Formal training identifies clear and relevant training goals for the participant. With intensive coaching the participant learns and practices the important aspects of a skill and receives feedback on progress. This type of training doesn't replace learning through experience it adds to it by helping you learn from the accumulated experiences of others. You get the opportunity to progress quickly in an enjoyable, safe and focussed training environment.

The Sea Proficiency Training Scheme, which has been included along with this addition of Treasna na dTonnta, is divided into five levels. Each level of training consists of clear aims and organised under the headings of techniques, strokes, rescues and theory.

The main focus of the Level 1 Proficiency Award is as an encouragement or introductory award. In the Level 2 award, manoeuvring and basic safety skills are addressed.

The Level 3 Sea Proficiency award is a good starting point for those who have paddled before but are new to the sea or for those who have attended a number of sea meets and "Come and Try it Sessions" and now want to get some formal training. The training course focuses on introducing all the important aspects of the sport at an introductory level helping the participant reach a standard where they will be able to Kayak safely and competently on the sea as a member of a group being led. This is a very important level of training for those who wish to build their start developing their paddling skills and their basic trip planning skills. This course is usually delivered in the form of a weekend's training.

The Level 4 Sea Proficiency is intended for confident group paddlers who want to build the on the skills and knowledge necessary to plan their own trips with peers. The purpose of the Level 5 Sea Proficiency course and assessment is to encourage, train and qualify sea kayakers wishing to paddle and lead others on advanced sea journeys.

Training opportunities available and they are listed in the training section.

The Training Review Group: were Mary Butler, Paul Butcher, Des Keaney, Jim Kennedy, Stephen Hannon, Kevin O Callaghan, Sean Pierce and David Walsh.

# Surf Paddling!

**Bruce Fisher**

*Article Courtesy of NSW Sea Kayakers Website*

## **When is the best surfing?**

Generally the days following storms provide the best (largest) waves. Winds blowing from the ocean to the shore also can add to a wave's strength, whereas wind moving from land to ocean will diminish a wave's strength.

If the wave is small, the wind will reduce its effect, making it less surfable. If the wave is large, the winds can hold the waves up before they break, providing a steeper wave face and more exciting ride.

Additionally, low tide usually offers the best surfing because the angle of the beach at low tide is usually less steep than at high tide. This makes it important to look at tide charts for your area before surfing.

## **Do I need any gear like life jackets?**

It is important to wear life jackets for flotation purposes (except in areas like Hawaii where you want to avoid being washed over coral reefs) - currents can easily take you out if you flip. It also makes rescue more successful if you are knocked unconscious.

Life jackets make good cushions for your body when you slam into and slide at high speeds on the sand. If you are there to surf for sport, as opposed to just landing or launching, it is also wise to wear a helmet.

Some type of sandal or shoe also helps the feet absorb the impact if you should pirouette into the sand!

## **How do I launch into the surf?**

If launching by yourself, or if you are the last person in a group to launch, try to set your kayak on the beach in such a manner that it faces directly straight into the waves. Launch in an area that you can push yourself off, yet not be knocked about by waves as you are securing your spray-skirt.

This will be in an area somewhere below where the highest waves are washing up, and above the smaller sets. Knuckle -walk your boat into the surf using one of the larger waves to partially support your boat.

Watch your paddle. If you have assistance, you can launch slightly further out as your friend steadies the boat. As you are getting ready, be studying the wave sets coming in. Once you launch, paddle hard.

I have received comments supporting two different schools of thought for making progress through large waves. One maintains that when a good size wave comes at you, paddle fast directly toward it, then quickly lean forward in tucked ready -to-roll position and "needle it" when wave hits.

This presents the absolutely smallest area of resistance and eliminates a direct face and chest hit by the wave or paddle (and places your paddle in a rolling position in the event that this relatively unstable position results in being flipped).

The other school of thought suggests that one should keep paddling very hard and try to time the strokes so that at the last minute you can bend forward. Instead of going into a roll position, reach forward with the paddle into the wave with the paddle shaft at a downward angle in relation to the axis of the boat so that if the wave catches the paddle, it will be pushed downward instead of up - and over. This way you can keep paddling, and can maintain thrust while the wave hits.

In either case, once it has passed, resume paddling out. It is very important to stay perpendicular to the waves, so that you don't get turned sideways (broached). It is also necessary to have sufficient (maximum) forward speed as the wave arrives so that you don't start surfing backwards!

If your roll is completely reliable, and there are no rocks, you have the option of turning upside down and dragging deeper water with your paddle to avoid the wave's impact,

Practice this with smaller waves first because of the unusual ways that the currents can pull on your arms - injury is possible. Also be aware of the fact that the first exposure of the eyes to salt water when rolling can be very distracting.

There is often a "soup" zone between the waves crashing on the beach and the breaking waves further out which can be used to check spray skirts, catch a breath, etc.

As you are going out, start glancing back at the beach for landmarks to establish your drift and / or your return area.

## **What about when I get out there past the breakers?**

As opposed to the deliberate gunwale lifting while surfing, when out in the swells it is important to have very relaxed and loose hips. Be flexible as the waves pass underneath you.

Waves can and do collapse and explode unpredictably, and staying loose is a big help. Use short strokes with a lot of quick braces thrown in. This is where your rounded bottom boats are actually more stable than the more flat bottom boats, (as opposed to the reverse in calm flat water).

And use common sense; It is a good idea to keep some distance from Jellyfish. Keep a lot of distance from Portuguese Man-of-War. Don't do rescue / roll practice over a school of Blues. Paddling with dolphins is fun, but if you see two pods meeting clear out fast.

### **How do I paddle my loaded boat back in through the surf to land safely ?**

First analyse the waves. Are they dumping, spilling, or surging? If they just lose energy as they wash up on the beach, no problem.

If they are dumping on the beach, you will hear a crashing or booming kind of sound. The waves will have a streaking pattern to them and often display water splashing into the air. Avoid landing through these waves. They can do some serious damage.

If the waves are spilling, that is, if the wave has a nice crest which gradually breaks further down the wave as it comes in, the wave is considered to be a spilling wave and should have manageable surfing characteristics. Those waves are typically wide and have a continual rather than booming sound.

### **54% of the waves in the world are dumping waves, so beware .**

Observe the wave sets, try to anticipate the beginning of a relatively calm period. Many people like to catch the last wave of a set, so that when they lose the wave, they will not be clobbered by the next waves as much.

While paddling in, try to stay "between" the sets if possible. When approaching the area where waves are breaking on the shore, pick a wave and paddle in behind it, following as closely as possible. Some waves will catch you though, so try to surf them in, "**ruddering**" with your paddle to maintain control. It is important to lean towards the wave, and raise the knee (and that side of the boat) which is further from the wave, since the wave wants to lift on the side of the boat closest to it and roll the boat. If you are exactly perpendicular to a large wave, you may find yourself doing an inadvertent **ender**, so using your paddle to maintain a slight angle to the perpendicular is important.

If you lose your angle and find yourself broaching the wave, you can surf the wave sideways by leaning into it fairly hard and bracing on the wave with your paddle. You may be able to avoid obstacles by paddling forward or backward while on / in the wave. If you fail to lift the shore-side knee or don't lean into the wave you will get **window-shaded**.

It is extremely important to tuck forward into a roll-setup position if you **ender or flip** -you will be in a much safer position should you impact on the sand

Another way (safe and conservative method) to approach the beach is to paddle backwards. When a big wave approaches start paddling forward in time to contact it with speed, then tuck forward and "needle" the wave, presenting as small an area of resistance as possible. After it passes by, resume paddling backward toward the shore

*Note: Some folks like to practice with a plastic non-loaded river kayak to pick up skills (experience the ender / pirouette phenomenon and such) before landing a fully loaded sea kayak.*

### **How do I exit the boat (gracefully) when landing?**

With fibreglass kayaks, as your depth approaches a foot or less, observe the last wave passing by (the one you just followed in), and immediately pop the spray skirt off and hop out quickly and smoothly on the ocean side of the boat.

Getting out on the beach side can result in the next wave driving the boat into your legs. Quickly grab the boat to carry / drag it onto the shore in a controlled manner. You may want to lift the ocean side of the cockpit rim upward momentarily to keep water from entering as the next wave comes along.

If you are paddling a plastic kayak you will probably prefer to just paddle hard up onto the shore, and alternately drive your fists into the sand to hold your position as the wave recedes with permitting each new wave to push you up further onto the beach. Then remove spray skirt and exit the boat.

### **How do I catch waves to surf for sport (as opposed to trying to just get in safely)?**

Establish a position in the waves where you desire to catch the waves, making sure that it is clear of other surfers and that swimmers aren't going to be slain in your path. Note relevant rocks, piers, and coral reef formations.

Start counting waves in each set and get a feel for the pattern. When you see one you like, paddle hard to acquire maximum speed and lean forward as the wave arrives. You will have to use a ruddering action with your paddle to maintain your desired direction or angle to the wave. Keep the beach-side of your gunwale raised and lean into the wave.

You will find your paddle being used for steering control and bracing simultaneously. Next is the tricky part.

The best rides are right at or in the edge of where the spilling wave is spilling, while aiming the boat slightly away from the breaking area, maintaining that relative position to the sliding spilling crest of the wave. Executing good boat control and style while there is what separates the surfers from the landlubbers.

While paddling back out to catch the next wave, be wary of other boaters or surfboards coming at you at a high rate of speed. Be prepared to dodge far out of their way and even turn upside down if a collision is imminent.

Better yet, stay far away from what you perceive could be their path before such actions are necessary

#### **What kind boat is best for surfing?**

Strictly personal preference. What represents easy turning / sweet carving / high manoeuvrability for one person may be thought of as a total lack of challenge for another. I've seen open canoeists surfing the same challenging waves as sit-on-tops with equal success and fun.

One quick maintenance note though; If you use a river kayak with those sliding metal foot peg mechanisms it is wise to spray the mechanicals with WD40 or something like that.

After your done surfing, alternate more lubricant with a good strong garden hose to get the sand out and the pegs moving freely. Otherwise the foot pegs will lock permanently in position due to the sand and salt.

#### **What are some of the safety concerns?**

Again, always paddle in areas that have spilling waves as opposed to dumping waves. You can get hurt there, as well as damage gear. Also don't hang out in the waves breaking on the shore for the same reasons.

A life jacket and helmet is most highly recommended, but if this document doesn't convince you, a short period of time in decent waves will! Sand abrasion with a kayak on top of you is serious stuff.

Water shoes or something on you feet will give some protection against metal / plastic foot pegs when you experience the sudden impact of pirouetting in the sand - the ankles will still be sore though. Wet or dry suits are highly recommended, not as much for comfort, but rather to assist in vital heat retention should you exit the boat some distance from shore.

If you flip, tuck forward quickly. Face plants are no fun in either rocks or sand.

Ask local surfers about nasty tides and currents. Be aware of high vs. low tide effects and what it is now. Be aware of low - pressure systems coming in on the backs of high -pressure systems (wind direction and wave characteristic change).

Paddling with a friend is recommended, both for the camaraderie and the support should you find yourself in trouble.

#### **What about surfing with other surfers?**

When you join the crowd, consider yourself at the back of the line. When a good wave comes, several people may start, but the one closest to the edge of the breaking part of the wave is considered to have the right of way (and is indeed in the best position to surf that wave).

Don't try to drop in on a wave. - If someone is already on a wave, never try to ride it. Never.

Be cognisant of the fact that folks with surf boards usually have to work a little harder to get on a wave, and will be starting out a few seconds earlier - if you see that, don't try to "out-race" them for the wave and create a conflict

**- Be cool.**

Boat control around other surfers is critical. If you don't have boat control, find an empty beach and get it.

When paddling out through the waves, watch out for incoming surfers. Paddle out through the white stuff (yes, it is harder than the smoother areas) as you approach people surfing in, so that you do not position yourself in such a manner as to cut the surfer off or cause him or her to modify his line to avoid you.

#### **Additional reading**

*Sea Kayaker Magazine*

Understanding Tides - Issue # 43, Playing in Tide Rips - Issue # 34, Surf Zone Techniques - Issue # 29, Tide Rips, Issue # 9.

**Photos/Sketches courtesy of Derek Hutchinson and Alan Bye**

# Napoleonic Era Batteries on the Shannon Estuary

Matt Corbett

The following article will be of interest for sea-kayakers visiting the Shannon Estuary /Kilkee ISKA Meet on 23 -24 March 2002.

In 1793 war broke out between Revolutionary France and England. In 1796 General Hoche started to hatch a complex plan for the co-ordinated invasion of England, Wales and Ireland. Wolfe Tone met Hoche and promised popular support if the French landed. The Shannon Estuary was one of three invasion areas included in the French Government's instructions to Vice-Admiral Villaret de Joyeuse in October 1796 during the preparations for the expedition to Ireland. The suggested landing places in order of preference were Galway Bay, Bantry Bay, and the mouth of the Shannon. A program of watchtower and fortification building was undertaken. The Martello tower appeared at this time in Ireland. The design was modelled on a gun tower at Martella in Corsica, which the Royal Navy had come up against in 1794. These (along with other types of towers) were erected all around the coast, the most famous probably being Joyce's Tower in Sandycove, Dublin.

However, at the points considered most vulnerable to landings, a defensive Military installation was the preferred option. On the Shannon Estuary this took the form of a series of Batteries:

Kilcredaun Head near Carrigaholt,  
Doonaha,  
Carrig Island (across from Scattery),  
Scattery Island,  
Tarbert Island,  
Kilkerin Head (across from Tarbert),  
Foynes Island.

These batteries were D-shaped with the exception of Tarbert.

The battery at Doonaha is smaller than the others, the Tarbert Battery was blown up for the construction of the Power Station there, and at Foynes Island little remains.

## Construction:

The Batteries are of a similar layout consisting of a large Blockhouse and a D-shaped, stone-built Balustrade with six 24 pounder heavy guns, (four in Doonaha). This is surrounded by a dry moat. Entry was via a Drawbridge. Construction on Kilkerin began in 1811. A workforce of 600 people including stonemasons, carpenters, builders and labourers were employed in the construction, which took about one and a half years.

The blockhouse was designed to be bombproof, with seven feet thick walls supporting a barrel vaulted roof. On the roof at both ends were either carronades or howitzers, mounted on traversing platforms. These allowed the guns to be trained through 270 degrees, protecting the flanks and rear. The walls of the blockhouse are sloped towards the top at an angle of about 1:12.

This is found in many of the fortifications and Martello towers of the time. The lower level of the blockhouse looks out on the moat itself and has musket loops on either end wall for close defence. It was divided into rooms for stores including a slate 79-gallon water tank and a magazine with access from above.

The first floor is of a level with the inner yard, and access to the blockhouse itself was at this level, from the inner courtyard via a smaller drawbridge, which was slightly wider than the doorway. This is where the Officers and Soldiers lived.

The roof was the main lookout area. Access was via a round staircase at the landward side within the thick stone wall, from the first floor.

Within the Battery enclosure is a small semi-basement vaulted structure covered with earth. These were marked as 'shell filling room'. A latrine was situated at the south-east corner.

A sentry hut was situated 12 ft in front of the main Drawbridge.

There was a well/shaft with pump within the courtyard.

The Construction was with stonework and two types of stone were used:

- Limestone ferried from Foynes
- Blue coloured shale quarried from Moneypoint.

The shale was also transported by boat. Red bricks were also used. Mortar is related to have consisted of a mixture of ground granite, lime, ash, hot wax, and ox-blood. These impressive structures were completed in 1814. Napoleon was defeated the following year at Waterloo. Up to twenty soldiers/artillery men could be billeted in a Battery, but records show that in Kilkerin in 1864, there were seven N.C.O.s, one being married.

#### **Today:**

The Battery at Kilkerin has been restored, complete with a new timber floor. It is in very good condition. Here on a quiet summer evening it is very easy to imagine what it was like when occupied and ready for battle. Scattery Island is also in good condition. The Battery at Corran Point on Carrig Island has lost a lot of its stone over the years. Kilcredaun Point has suffered from cattle grazing the soft ground. Doonaha is not as easily accessible from the shore.

#### **Access:**

Scattery Island Battery is completely accessible. The others are on private land but access is generally not a problem. They are really well worth a trip and the Estuary is a lovely place to Kayak. The shipping lane is quite narrow and currents are easily avoided.

Also worth visiting are the Second World War fortifications at Ardmore Point opposite Moneypoint, and Carrigafoyle Castle south of Carrig Island.

# Natural History

## File

### **Common Dolphin**

*Delphinus delphis*

(Linnaeus 1758)

**Derivation:** From the Latin *delphinus* for “dolphin, porpoise”; from the Greek *delphis* for “dolphin”.

#### **Description:**

Body length ranges to about 2.5m, but most adults are 2.3m or less, with males slightly larger than females. Conspicuous white thoracic patch; V-shaped black or dark-grey saddle with downward-oriented apex on sides below dorsal fin. Hourglass effect on side, with tan or yellow region towards front, light grey toward tail stock.

The common dolphin is, as its scientific name implies, the archetypal dolphin. In appearance and behaviour it is everything a dolphin is supposed to be. The body is slender, streamlined, and elegant. The long, well defined beak is generally black but often tipped with white. The prominent dorsal fin, situated at midback and triangular or falcate in shape, ranges in colour from all black to mostly white with a dark border.

#### **Natural History:**

Common Dolphins are amongst the most gregarious of cetaceans. They can occur in herds numbering many hundreds. They bowride both vessels and large whales and are extremely playful aerial acrobats. Although pelagic, offshore creatures they can be encountered regularly off the Irish coastal islands and headlands. Cape Clear to Mizen Head is a regular haunt for this species in late summer/early autumn. Common Dolphins occur throughout the world's oceans and seas including the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

# Book Review

## **Pat Diamond**

A book review from a book in the ISKA library. This a free (E10 admin charge) and comprehensive resource available to all members and apparently under used. Any of the books I've picked up have been interesting and easy to read; and there isn't much else to do on a winter's evening

## **Sea Kayaker - Deep Trouble**

*True Stories and Their Lessons from Sea Kayaker Magazine*

**Matt Broze and George Gronseth**

*Edited by Christopher Cunningham*

Don't be put off by the title; this is an excellent, easy and probably essential read for serious kayakers.

The book contains detailed analysis of a wide range of incidents, fatal and near misses. Although all of the incidents occurred in the Seattle/Vancouver area, the water conditions are similar to Irish and there is much to be learned - except, probably, the dangers of icebergs. What is particularly valuable is that each incident also contains a section dealing with preventative tips and hints.

What is amazing about most of the stories is that the vast majority happened close to shore and could have been easily prevented. It is clear that we need to pay attention to the 3 P's - it's hard to take the consultant out of me - Practice, Planning and Protection.

The book makes clear that practising skills is essential - on a frequent basis and in controlled realistic conditions. An incredible number of the incidents involved no or minimal planning, for example, getting a one day forecast for a multi-day trip. Ignorance of the effects of wind, in particular, fetch, with often disastrous consequences. Many of the problems were caused by inadequate protection - no cags, no wetsuits in cold water, buoyancy aids being used as back rests and getting lost in a capsized. In general there was a lack of understanding of the ease with which hypothermia can occur - either in the boat or after a capsized - and its disastrous consequences.

We all invest a lot of time in training - this book makes clear why it is invaluable - and a special thanks to those who take the time to provide it.

## **ISKA NEWS**

**Moira Creedon**

We are delighted to have Moira Creedon on board as Treasurer of the Association. The recent appeal failed to attract any hoards of applicants for the job and she kindly 'volunteered' later! Moira has a wealth of financial experience which will see us in good shape for the future. She will also look after subscriptions and the membership database .

**Ciaran Clissman**

Ciaran has taken on the role of webmaster of the ISKA site. The site has had good support and has been praised for the degree of information available within it. Ciaran will take over the maintenance and control of the site and progress its future development .

**Paul Smith**

Paul is a professional website developer and has agreed to develop an on-line library facility on a voluntary basis. This is a significant benefit for ISKA members as it will allow for viewing availability and ordering of titles online

**Alan Horner**

Alan Horner has kindly consented to do the unenviable job of packing and posting Treasna Na dTonnta. This has been the bane of Des Keane's life for the last number of years and he is delighted to have Alan's very efficient help .

## **Kayaking Skills**

### **Trip leader's Responsibilities**

**Ross Winters**

*from the NSW Sea Kayaker Vol. 35*

To lead a group of paddlers on a day or weekend trip is one of the great thrills you can experience as others in the group put their faith in your skills and expertise. With this faith comes a responsibility. I have been paddling whitewater and sea kayaking for about 15 years now and in the last 5 years I have been leading trips regularly. Over time, I have learnt a lot (and am still learning) and it is only now that I really appreciate the dangerous nature of the sport which I love. Please don't be fooled in thinking that sea kayaking is safe, I believe it is much more dangerous than white water kayaking as the dangers are better disguised (but that's another article).

One of the reasons I paddle with a club, rather than by myself, is the safety margin that a group provides. But if you don't stay together, or work together as a group, then you may as well save your money and not be a member of the club. Leading the group

can be broken into two parts - One who co-ordinates all the land arrangements i.e. boat loans, car shuffles etc. - and on the water Trip Leader.

The on the water trip leader is normally the person in the group who has the most experience and has the ability to ensure that group works. Learning to lead trips is a similar evolutionary process to learning to kayak - you start out timidly and then slowly master the basics (paddling strokes, bracing, and balance), before progressing to advanced skill like rolling.

The following It is not designed as a rule book, but as a list of things that I have found that I tend to do when I am leading trips so please use it as a guide only. Every one can lead trips and I hope this article will help you to take the next step and start leading trips.

### **Preparation**

1. The leader acquires some basic knowledge of the area, including likely hazards as well as exit points. There is nothing more disheartening than to be paddling along and waves start to break straight ahead on a bombora you knew nothing about. Basic information can be gained from coastal maps and sea charts.

Another good information source is the local fishing shop or co-op. Always identify possible landing sites that can be used if things don't go as planned - before starting out - as it is nearly impossible to have a detailed look at a map in big seas

2. The leader checks that people on the trip have the paddling ability to complete it safely. For people new to the club it is best to determine this well before the trip as it can be difficult to tell someone they can't do the trip after a 5 am start and 4 hours of driving to the put in point.

All trips that are advertised have a level grading and at the difficult end of the scale, it is vitally important to determine paddlers capability. If in any doubt about new paddlers' abilities ask them to do an easier trip first to see how they perform.

3. Details of the trip and expected finish time should be left with someone responsible who can notify authorities if serious problems are encountered. This could be a partner or other member. Don't forget to contact them after the trip!

Spending an unplanned night on a beach (or river) is a common occurrence and, I believe, part of the adventure of paddling in remote areas, so this should be no cause for alarm. Callout time should be left with the responsible home person, but as a guide call out times are a day for overnight trips and 4hrs for daytrips.

If you have a portable marine radio, then a further precaution can be to notify the Coast Guard. But don't rely on them as only limited details can be left and reception is not guaranteed.

4. The leader checks that paddlers have the right clothing for safety. This is especially important for beginners. Buoyancy vest, correct fitting spraydeck, helmet or hat, secure footwear and appropriate clothing (i.e. thermal underwear, woollens, spray jacket, wetsuit) to stay warm in all anticipated conditions or the reverse for hot days, sunhat cream, spare water etc. Less experienced paddlers will often get colder than more experienced paddlers because they often timidly wait around while others play and explore, plus they tend to swim more often. Spare dry clothing should also be carried to increase warmth, or if a walk out is necessary. Beaches become very cold and windy places when you have to wait for a car shuffle. Most canoeing books detail appropriate clothing for paddling.

5. The leader checks that paddlers have the basic personal safety gear. Boats should be up to scratch with decklines front & rear, grab loops and positive buoyancy (i.e. bulkheads and waterproof hatches and/or foam or airbags), and whistle. Should any delays be encountered, spare clothing, basic shelter such as a large plastic bag or reflective foil blanket and food make waiting more enjoyable.

I never use to take basic survival gear on whitewater day or sea trip until about three years ago when I did a day trip on the Nymboida River. We were given some bad information about an access point that didn't exist and spent a cold night sleeping by the river. I still laugh when I think of 12 hungry people dividing up a cherry ripe in 12 even portions as lunch on the second day. Since then I carry in my first aid kit (goes on every paddle) basic survival gear (thermal blanket, compass duck tape) and when I pack for a day trip, I always throw in extra food.

6. The Leader ensures that group safety equipment is carried. Tow ropes, first aid kit, matches & metho, spare paddles, tarp, map and compass, watch, whistle. These are only really needed when you don't have them! These items should be easily accessible for quick use.

7. Check the weather. Nearly every accident report I have read, I find that the weather or change in weather had a part to play in the accident. CHECK the weather report each day before leaving and if required alter your trip accordingly (let the responsible home leader know).

8. Before getting on the water the leader briefs the paddlers on what to expect on the trip and his/her decisions about safety should be respected. This is the most important part of trip planning. As the leader, you have done all the above planning and know of problems you are likely to encounter - but know one else in the group knows unless you communicate it to them. Also identify where the safety gear is and the front and last person.

### **On the water**

1. The leader takes into account the slowest or least experienced paddler and then sets this pace for the group. Some people may need more time to adjust to the conditions and approach a tossing sea with a degree of trepidation (read fear!). It is important to allow people to paddle the conditions at their own pace, ensuring they are not pushed into paddling conditions that are bigger than they can handle. It can be hard to keep the faster paddlers with the group but it needs to be explained to "speed demons" that if the paddle is advertised as a beginners trip, then everyone should be paddling at beginners pace and not at racing pace. Another way is to pair up a "speed demon" with a beginner and get them to teach basic skills to them.

2. The leader nominates a back person and keeps an eye out for him/her. The leader is normally in the lead and the last person (back person) is the second best paddler, then your other good paddlers spread throughout the group. The rest of the group keep within co-ee of the two. If any problems occur then help is close at hand. When conditions become bad, the distance between paddlers reduces, so as to maintain contact. If the distance reduces to a state where there is a possibility of collision, then it's about time to think "should we be here".

I have found that group size of 4-10 people is manageable, If there is more than this number of paddlers, then split into small individual groups with each group having a leader and backperson.

3. The leader ensures that no dangerous area like a gauntlet, tidal rip or surf break is run "blind". Take at least 5 min to watch a "set" come through and see what is happening. It is easier to wait and see what is happening rather than trying to do a rescue. This is vital for when there is a big range of skills in the group. A plan of attack needs to be worked out and communicated to every one in the group. You would never paddle a grade 4-5 rapid without looking at it, but people don't even pause to check out a nasty gauntlet or surf zone, when both can have the same level of danger! After a hard days paddle and the surf landing is all that is left between you and a cold beer, it is tempting to run things blind - But remember, the beer tastes horrible if you are doing fibreglass repairs at the same time!

Remember when you are a leader, it is because you have the most experience and skills. If you get in trouble who's going to help you? Play it safe. Last year while enjoying the sea caves at Jervis Bay, I went straight into a cave that I had been in many times before. I didn't realise it at the time but the next set followed me in. A fair bit of scraping and bashing of the boat and me resulted, and I left that cave shaken but wiser.

4. When the group is running a difficult or dangerous gauntlet or beach landing /exit, the leader directs proceedings. This includes directing experienced paddlers to a safe "catching" positions, whether it is on the beach waiting to catch boats and swimmers or if it is a good paddler who is waiting in the lee of rocks so he can help if things go wrong. Photography should be the third priority!

While most experienced paddlers love surfing and running gauntlets, beginners are afraid of these zones. By taking precautions it not only means that rescues can be done quickly and easily, but it also allows beginners to try more difficult situations knowing that if they make a mistake they will have help close at hand. Remember, swimming in the surf or in gauntlets is dangerous and even can be life threatening, so take precautions before the group is committed and always look after a swimmer first, then gear. If the surf is great you can always come back later.

5. If rescue is necessary, the leader directs this quickly and safely, mobilising other members of the group into swift action. It is important for rescues to be effected quickly and someone must take charge to ensure everyone knows what they should be doing. Communication is the key. Two good friends I know, owe their life to their paddling friends quick action after they became trapped under water and stopped breathing. Team work saved their lives.

Remember the whitewater rescue rule - when a person is underwater they will be of help for 30 seconds - after 2min you will need to resuscitate then up to 10 min when major brain damage has occurred. SO BE QUICK Hypothermia can be a problem when rescues occur for both the rescued person and the group if they have to wait around.

6. The leader keeps an eye on all members of the group and ensures they stay together as a group. On a trip to Montague Island I remember about 30? people charging down the beach and leaving for the 10km sea crossing. To this day I have no idea of how many people went on this trip, it might as well been an individual paddle not a club paddle. One paddler became very sea sick and required one paddler to support him while both paddlers were being towed. The scary part of this story was that over half the group didn't know anything had gone wrong until they saw them land an hour latter. What would have happened if the sick paddler was the last in the group? The point is that you paddle with a group to reduce the dangers. It is very hard to keep track of a group bigger than 8-10, so when there are a lot of people, break up into smaller groups (target number is 6) with a leader and back person.

7. The leader knows when to quit. Gauntlets and beach landings should not be paddled in the dark when there are non experienced paddlers as it is difficult to see and judge the waves & other hazards. In addition, if someone gets into trouble you just won't see them. Night paddling has a whole new set of safety rules and is not for intermediate paddlers. If you want an idea of what it can be like, blindfold yourself (quick release) and do a surf landing.

If sea conditions become such that it can no longer be paddled safely due to wind swell or chop, the party should take the quickest and safest method out of there including finding some where to land quickly, then either walk out or camp the night. Hopefully everyone has the necessary gear for this -. Unexpected walk outs or bivouacs are part of the fun and adventure of kaya king, if you are properly prepared!

8. The leader also has the responsibility to direct someone to land and walk out (or turn back) if it becomes clear that they will be unable to complete the trip in safety.

This is one of the hardest things you will have to do as a leader, but remember, the safety of the group is only as strong as it's, weakest link. Of course it is better to ascertain someone's skill level well before they get on the water.

9. The leader sets the example and helps with moving gear & boats. We are lucky in Australia and we always tend to land on sandy beaches. But when you land on rocks or boat ramps with boat, paddle & wobbly feet at the end of a long day you are more likely to slip on rocks (could mean a injury), A helping hand reduces the chances of injury, especially when people are cold and tired. Many hands make light work.

10. The leader lets someone know the group is safe. As the leader has already let someone responsible know the details of the days trip he or she should give this person a call. The purpose of this is not just to gloat over what a great trip they missed (don't hold back, though, still do this!) but rather, to simply let know the trip finished safely.

This not an exhaustive list so if you have any additions or comments please submit these to the editor so we can continue our focus on safety.

This article is based on an article that Danny Davis wrote for *SPLASH*, the monthly journal of the River Canoe Club of NSW about safety aspects for white water paddling, my experiences, and other NSWK club members experiences. still attend a proficiency course. The safety principals for white water are the same for sea kayaking, just different challenges & methods of adaptation.

# A Lesson in Leadership

Des Keaney

Fourteen boats set off on a midwinter day trip around a few islands. There are three leaders in the group, one of them in a double. The morning went grand, a nice paddle in conditions challenging to most of the group. It was well organised, a good paddler in front, another doing sweep at the back and the third roaming the middle. A peaceful lunch was followed by a stroll around the island.

Off to sea afterwards, everyone relaxed, for a while at least. There were bumpy conditions on the outside of the island where the tide was running hard. Three of the group decided to go the safe way round the inside. The rest took the challenge and headed for the rough stuff. "Yeeehhaaa!" and onto the roller coaster. Marvellous, it was leapin'!

One leader was first through into calmer water and the other two also emerged near the front, grins all over their faces.

"That was great!"

"Yeah..... how many did you say went around the inside?"

"Three" says the first.

"Then how come we've only ten?"

"Oh shite! Who was at the back?"

"Dunno..."

The result? The lads sharpened up and got organised. One continued around with the rest of the group, dealing with a swimmer on the way and met up with the three who had gone on the inside. The other two hightailed it back the way they'd come, checking for the missing paddler. As expected, he'd taken one look at the rough stuff, said "no thanks" and gone around the inside. As there had been nobody looking after the back, it hadn't been spotted and there was no one for him to tell. He was fine, other than having to put up with an unjustified bollocking from a worried leader.

The message?

Never take your eye off the ball and never assume someone else is doing the business.

## Kilrush v Kilkee

*ISKA March Meet Changes HQ Base*

The meet to Kilrush on the weekend of 23rd / 24th March, 2002 will be based in Kilkee. Accommodation is self catering in the "Spanish Cove" complex attached to the Ocean Cove Hotel in Kilkee. Apparently this is a new development, quite posh, and very convenient for launching. Self catering in cottages and apartments of different sizes has its own complexities compared to hosting or camping so I set out the full details below. People can choose whatever option they want and make their booking direct with the operators by ringing John Dwyer at Dublin 01 6775682, or making e-mail contact with him at [john@irelandexplored.com](mailto:john@irelandexplored.com)

There are cottages sleeping up to four people in a twin room, a single room and a sofa bed which I am assured is perfectly comfortable and adequate. There are houses sleeping up to five with a double bedroom, a twin bedroom and a single bedroom. People may book in groups organised amongst themselves or individually. If making a booking as a group be clear which type of unit you want. The rent for the weekend inclusive of electricity and everything for the apartment sleeping four is €6.00. That comes to €4.00 each or perhaps more comfortably €2.00 each sharing three to an apartment. Booking individually the charge is €4.00 per person. There is also a security deposit. The security deposit is either €100.00 for the unit or €30.00 per person. Therefore a group pays €196.00 and gets back €100.00 if they leave the place in one piece or €4.00 per person getting €30.00 back per person.

The houses are larger and cost either €120.00 if taken as a unit or €30.00 or €24.00 per person depending on whether four or five go into the unit. Again there is a €100.00 security deposit or €30.00 per person if booking individually.

In the event of their being any damage, the cost will be taken out of the security deposit and the individuals concerned can sort it out amongst themselves as to how to carry the cost.

You can pay by Visa Card, Laser Card or Mastercard.

# Equipment Review

## *Touring and Expedition Cag*

### Sea Yak Cyclone Expedition Cag

#### Don O' Brien

I bought a YAK sea kayaking cag last year and would highly recommend it. It has latex cuffs with a neoprene outer cuff for protection, its breathable, has a double waist for the spraydeck, an ordinary Velcro tightened neck but outside that has a very high fleece collar (the kiddie) and roll away hood. There is also a fleece lined hand warmer. The cag is light but extremely warm with great ventilation scope because of the neck set-up.

One word of warning though, if the hood is loose when you roll be careful pulling it up!

More information at [www.crewsaver.co.uk/yak](http://www.crewsaver.co.uk/yak)

- **Neoprene over cuffs**
- **Sizes: S, M, L, XL**
- **Colour: Red/Navy**
- **Twin waist option [ [detail](#) ]**
- **Breathable rip stop fabric**
- **Hood with wire peak and depth adjustment**
- **Hood packs away into collar**
- **Double collar system**
- **Zipped fleece lined outer collar**
- **Flexible inner collar**
- **Adjustable outer waist system**
- **Zipped hand warming pockets with fleece lining**
- **Deck hook [ [detail](#) ]**
- **Retro-reflective tape on hood**
- **Latex wrist seals**

# Sea Marshall PLB

The basic motivation to produce the present day award winning professional "Sea Marshall" emergency locator beacon finds its roots over 30 years earlier. David Marshall's lifelong quest to invent safety beacons for people in distress at sea who might otherwise be lost goes back to his own experience in 1961 where he himself endured a man overboard situation in shark infested waters for several hours off New Caledonia in the South Pacific Ocean.

Tipped into the sea during a sudden squall from a small yacht whilst on R & R from the mother ship anchored off shore the unpleasant experience of disorientation and helplessness made a lasting impression.

Due to the low horizon and surface spray it was impossible to know where to swim to with the knowledge that any surface activity may sound the dinner gong for the local sharks. Only by the chance of a passing barge that had spotted the small upturned sailboat was David rescued somewhat traumatised and grateful.

David's interest in sea safety began even before he was lost overboard, -when his father Lt. Cmdr. Don Marshall was listed as missing aboard a vessel torpedoed in the Second World War ending up as a P.O.W. . David spent much of his early childhood days in a Navy boarding School, RMNS Bearwood, before embarking on sea going career as a radio officer.

By his twenties David had circumnavigated the globe sailing first through the Panama Canal back through the Suez Canal visiting scores of countries en-route from the Caribbean Islands, North and Central America, Pacific Islands, China, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, India, Africa etc. with a wealth of experience and tales to tell.

David started inventing beacons in his 30's and has two previous exhibits at the Science Museum in London. After the disappearance of the Hull trawler "Gaul" with 36 lives, lost in 1974, David commenced a positive investigation and development of small personal location beacons. Using direct contact with the Fishing Industry and Merchant Fleet a policy of open funded action was commenced within the confines of a small private marine electronics company.

In 1975 as a result of a joint venture with the Royal Radar Establishment and MOD Farnborough a completely novel design of personal beacon was supplied to GB II, Joint services entry in the Financial times Clipper race to Australia, skippered by Mike Gill and Roy Mullender on the return leg.

These were the first prototype personal locator beacons designed for civil use to be worn by the yacht crew. Later versions of this early development were carried by crew on "Heaths Condor" in the 1977 Whitbread race skippered by Sir Robin Knox Johnson.

Throughout the five-year early development, the project received encouragement and technical assistance from the MOD together with the invaluable practical experience gained by field-testing in co-operation with yacht crews.

The Personal Locator Beacon was launched at the London Boat Show in January 1979. One of the first customers, Kenneth Kerr was rescued in Mid-Atlantic. Some 700 miles off Newfoundland, following a capsizing where he managed to activate his PLB, which was picked up by Concorde subsequently located by a C130 despatched from Halifax, Nova Scotia, who diverted a cargo ship to pick up a grateful Kenneth Kerr.

In 1980 the beacon was presented with a Design Council Award by HRH the Duke of Gloucester for an outstanding British product. Later in 1993 David received a Seatrade Award presented by HRH Duke of York for an outstanding contribution to Maritime safety. This highly acclaimed award selected by a panel of prominent shipping personalities included William O'Neal, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation, (IMO).

The interim period saw further improvements and miniaturisation of the personal locator beacon with patentable advances in technology that provided the mariner with the initial goal of a small effective easy to wear lifesaving device that would significantly improve the personal safety of mariners.

The combination of the antenna and an electroluminescent cord provided both electronic homing capability together with a highly visible light. Two of David's early designs including a microprocessor voice model have been displayed in the Science Museum in London for a number of years.

David was nominated for the "Peoples Award 2000" for his lifetime dedication with the Maritime Personal Locator Beacon and in the same year was nominated for a Tomorrows World, "Lone inventor of the Year Award 2000". The device has featured on the BBC's Tomorrows world programme, Sky Discovery Today, and the National Geographic channel. Accreditations for the patented device include Coastguards, Navies, Sea Safety Group, Yachtsmen and professional organisations throughout the world.

The Sea Marshall personal locator is now perceived to be the "Seat-belt of the Sea" to be worn as a matter of routine when on deck.

The rescue services provide a tremendous task when searching for a person or persons lost at sea. It is only reasonable to help them to help you. Without such a device, in daylight, it is like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack, at night or in poor visibility it is almost impossible.

The addition of a monitor receiver, or direction finding receiver, provides a system to immediately alert the crew of a man overboard enabling prompt & effectively managed rescue. By his own experience David learned in a MOB situation unless the alarm is raised very quickly the chances of rescue are left to chance.