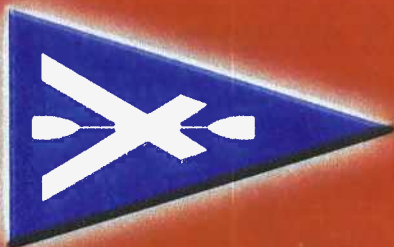


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THE MAGAZINE OF THE SCOTTISH CANOE ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 68 - SUMMER 2005



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- **Paddling in Patagonia**

- Coaching Conference info.
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**COACHING AROUND THE COUNTRY ACCESS UPDATE
ON TOUR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION APPROVED CENTRES**

www.CanoeScotland.com

The 7th Scottish Sea Kayaking Symposium

SLEAT, ISLE OF SKYE - MAY 27-30, 2005 SIMON WILLIS

'ALMOST OVERWHELMING', was the first reaction of many delegates arriving at the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig on Skye. Not only because of the sheer number of sea kayakers assembled in one place, but also because of the range of sessions on offer. Is it possible to have too much choice?

I was taught that lists are lazy journalism, but just listen to the selection which faced delegates on the first session of day one: 'Reflections' slide show with Franco Ferrero; or two seminars - 'Introduction to Tides' with Paul Mills; or 'Science of Maps & Charts' with Donald Thomson.

These could be followed by either 'Channel Island & Near Coasts of France' slide show with Kevin Mansell; 'Gathering Tidal Information' with Paul Mills; or 'Making a Map or Chart' with Donald Thomson.

It sounds a full morning, but wait a moment - that's just for those who wanted to stay dry! For those of a practical leaning, there was even greater choice; 'Global Positioning Systems' with Andy Stamp; 'Introduction to Folding Kayaks' with Mike McClure and Brian Wilson; 'Foundation Skills' with Jas Hepburn and George Reid; 'Forward Paddling' with Sean Morley and Nigel Robinson; or 'Greenland Skills' with Soren Rasmussen.

And still we're not finished. Delegates who wanted to explore some of the spectacular Skye coastline (there were visitors from Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands) could choose between three separate full day paddles. By anyone's standards, that was a lot of choice. And bear in mind, this was just the selection for the first morning of the first day - there were three days like that, morning and afternoon! You see what I mean by this event being 'almost overwhelming'?

Look at the names in that list and you'll see you know. The contributors hosting the sessions were all top notch. Of the 26 Level Five sea coaches in the UK, only three were not present, according to the organisers. This symposium has a reputation for attracting the best, which perhaps explains why the 160 delegate places sold out months ahead of time.

That's a lot of sea-kayakers, and when the exhibitors were included, plus all the partners, relatives and children who tagged along, it added up to 260 people in one place, all focused on sea kayaking. Rarely have I been among so many friendly, like-minded people. It says a lot that we all could leave wet kit out overnight, hanging from roof racks, and not a thing went missing.

The Gaelic College proved once again to be an excellent venue, providing hearty meals for hungry paddlers, and excellent learning facilities. More on-site accommodation would have been nice, but the campsite or 'swamp' as it became known, was not as bad as it sounds. The beach access was awkward, down a steep track that became churned, slippery mud. And there was the inevitable delay when 50 sea kayakers attempt to launch from the same, small rocky beach at the same time. But no one to whom I spoke felt these minor complaints detracted from the overall success of the weekend.

Experts always make it look easy, and by now the organisers of this event really are experts. Somehow they manage to create an informal, casual atmosphere, and yet keep events running to a complex timetable. Don't underestimate this. If things were too laid back, then nothing would ever happen. People who had to spend a long time hanging about, waiting for sessions to start, would grumble and push off to do their own thing. Alternatively, had the organisers gone around with blowing whistles and ringing bells, demanding people went to their session NOW, then the result would probably have been the same - delegates would have grumbled, pushed off and gone paddling. Achieving this balance is the hidden, yet fundamental success of the whole event.

What's more, they created an environment in which everyone could learn something. For some people it was rolling; others picked up subtle boat handling skills; but best of all were the absolutely priceless 'nuggets' of knowledge you could pick up almost without trying.

I'll give you an example. On a multi-day trip many people take a frozen dinner for the first day or two. Howard Jeffs just

happened to mention he froze his meals in a poly bag, packed inside the pan in which they'll be used. So they fit the pan perfectly. He stores them in an insulated tube, shaped around the pan from a roll of sleeping mat to which ends have been attached. A simple and effective expedition technique.

The highlight of my weekend was having a re-entry roll demonstrated to me for the first time, by Franco Ferrero, and then after several attempts, succeeding in performing the manoeuvre. Probably even more useful was learning his 'absolutely bomb proof way' of getting himself back in his kayak, using a water-bag (or inflatable paddle-float). This he slipped onto his split paddle which he wedged under deck-lines just behind the cockpit, where it sat at right-angles to the boat as an outrigger. The water bag, slightly inflated, provided buoyancy and a counterbalance weight. Now that is something I'm going to go away and practice.

The other aspect I enjoyed was meeting so many people who share the same interest. We drive past each other, and we know folk in clubs, but with more than 200 sea kayakers in one place you're bound to make friends. Chances are, you'll bump into old friends too, and I shared my first practical session with four people I hadn't seen for more than a year.

Families were well provided for, with a 'floating crèche' run by the team from White Wave. On the first day they looked after 17 youngsters, whose ages ranged from five to 12, taking them open boating on a sheltered loch, and bringing them back soaked but deliriously happy.

The weekend was rounded off with a chance to experience the scenario we all hope will never happen, firing a flare and having the coast-guard helicopter swoop down and hover overhead. This was a chance for the brave to experience the full force of a downdraft from rotor blades, and the opportunity for the pilot to play blow-football with kayakers. In short, it was a great weekend. Huge thanks to organisers Gordon and Morag Brown, Duncan Winning OBE and Ken Nicol for a fantastic event.

RECREATIONAL NEWS ROUND-UP

Ron Mather
Sea Access Rep

TOURING PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Entries are invited for the 2005 Touring Photographic Competition using the Entry Form which appears in this issue (see Page 22) and which gives full details.

Budding photographers should note that there are some changes from last year with the maximum picture or frame size being the same at 13" by 9". This year, entrants are also asked to label the front of the picture with the Title, Locale & Date Taken while the Entry Form now includes 6 entry slips for attaching your name and details to the back of the picture and a box to tick if you want your entries returned.

As always each photo must have a canoe/kayak in it and can either be entered in the Arduaine competition for a picture taken from a canoe/kayak or the Word and Image competition for a picture taken other than from a canoe/kayak. As a fun addition this year one photograph from the two competitions will be awarded a prize for being the most humorous or unusual.

Photographs should be sent to Hugh Kerr by September 30. These will form the centrepiece of the Touring Stand at the Paddle 2005 Exhibition in Perth, so please help to publicise Touring by supporting the competition. The photographs will be judged by visitors to the exhibition.

ULVA CAR PARKING & CAMPING

Comments have been made to the SCA in a constructive fashion about paddling groups parking at Ulva Ferry and wild camping on the Island of Ulva. During the last week of May, five groups with as many as 10 paddlers in a group have parked and camped in the area.

There are two private car parks at Ulva Ferry. The one nearest the Ferry at MR 446398 is for day visitors using the passenger ferry and is not for kayakers parking cars overnight. This problem is compounded by the recent publication of the 'Scottish Sea Kayaking, 50 Great Sea kayak Voyages' which unfortunately suggests paddlers park in this car park. During the week in question cars were left spread out for several nights in this car park.

The new Access Code requires you to park your car with due regard to the interests of others. It is inconsiderate to park cars for several nights in the parking spaces nearest the ferry. It would also be more considerate to park cars close together. The other car park at MR 448400 is operated by Morrisons who run the boat trips to the Treshnish Isles. Till such time as the position is resolved and local notices are erected please use this car park and contribute for parking using the honesty box. When parking for several nights please park cars as far from the ferry as possible and keep cars close together.

I suspect paddlers cars are concentrated at Ulva Ferry and would suggest that we could reduce the problem by using alternative launch sites on Loch na Keal. It should be noted that the authors of 'Scottish Sea Kayaking' deliberately avoided suggesting that people should camp on Ulva due to the fact that it is a small island recognised as a AONB.

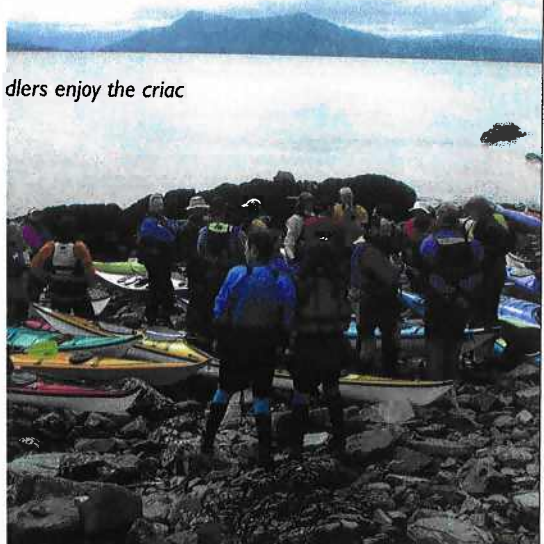
There were three groups with 13 tents camped on the south side of Ulva and who had two large bonfires going. Again I would draw paddlers attention to the section in the Access Code which states that wild camping is for small numbers. If there is already a group on a campsite please consider moving on to an alternative site. Again the Access Code recommends that when fires are lit they should be small, under control, supervised at all times and all traces should be removed. For sea paddlers it is usually easy to light it on the shore and rake it over afterwards.

For further information on the Access Code look at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com For specific information on Ulva www.ulva.mull.com/camping.html and look at the SCA website for updates. I should stress that Paddlers are welcome on the island provided they act responsibly. The SCA supports responsible access to the outdoors and also suggest paddlers put something back into the local economy by visiting the local tearoom on Ulva (its worth a visit for the homebaking and fresh seafood!) as suggested in the additional information section of 'Scottish Sea Kayaking'.

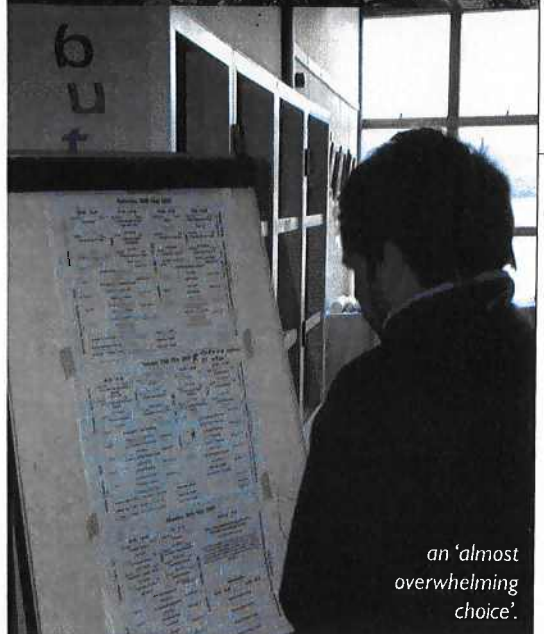
If anyone knows who was paddling in the area I would be happy to write to them or get feedback from them.



The learning experience at the Symposium was not confined to the lecture theatre



Paddlers enjoy the picnic



an 'almost overwhelming choice'.

	Division 1					Goals			
	P	W	D	L	For	Against	Diff.	Pts	
CANOE	Linthgow	16	12	1	3	78	31	47	41
	Woodmill B	16	12	1	3	76	29	47	41
	West Lothian Z	16	11	1	4	63	32	31	39
	Woodmill A	16	10	3	3	57	31	26	39
	Selkirk	16	10	0	6	47	36	11	36
POLO	West Lothian A	16	6	0	10	45	48	-3	28
	Kirkcaldy	16	5	1	10	47	53	-6	27
	Partick	16	2	0	14	12	103	-91	20
	Glatthclyde	16	0	1	15	5	64	-59	11
	Division 2					Goals			
	P	W	D	L	For	Against	Diff.	Pts	
LEAGUE TABLES	Stirling B	16	15	0	1	76	17	59	46
	Stirling A	16	13	1	2	64	19	45	43
	FCAG Black	16	13	0	3	63	14	49	42
	Glasgow Men	16	9	2	5	47	29	18	36
	FCAG Red	16	9	1	6	50	28	22	35
	Napier	16	5	0	11	31	72	-41	26
	Glasgow Ladies	16	4	0	12	37	44	-7	24
	Dundee Men	16	3	0	13	24	77	-53	22
	Dundee Ladies	16	0	0	16	3	106	-103	16

SEE STORY ON P13