

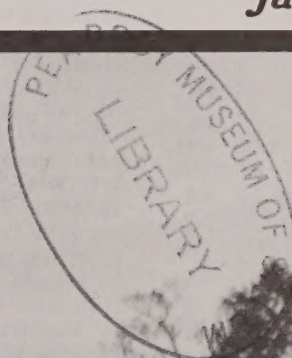


messing about in BOATS

Twice a Month!

Volume 8 - Number 17

January 15, 1991





messing about in BOATS

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR: BOB HICKS

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Our Next Issue...

Will be rushed to press in my continuing effort to get caught up to date after the fallback over the Christmas holidays. My report on the Chelsea Creek Rowing Race and Tom's tale of a "Sunday Sail" promised for this issue will be in the next, along with Guy de Puyjalon's "First Solo". I'll bring in more design stuff at last, with Barry Buchanan's stitch-and-glue sea kayak, Doug Goldhirsch's "Piece Boat" double paddle take-apart craft, and Tom Page's "Solo Cruiser" performance canoe. Greg Pike will offer up his "Confessions of a Woodbutcher", hard won know-how on getting the job done in the boatshop. And there's lots, lots more I won't even mention here I can draw on to fill any space left. Adventures, building projects, dream designs, oh boy.

On the Cover...

Betsy Woodward sails her own designed and built geodesic boat at last October's rained out "Mess-about" during the two hours of no rain just before noon that day in central Massachusetts. Some interesting little homebuilts did show up, more in this issue.

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Commentary

**BOB
HICKS**

Amongst the many encouraging notes that arrive with subscription renewals was one recent comment describing our little magazine as "real". The reader felt we provided information about real people doing real things with small boats, in contrast to what he viewed as the hyped up world of the major boating press promoting the consumption of ever more exotica connected with boating. I agree with this. Much of the content of this magazine now comes from amongst you readers, and you certainly are "real" people dealing with the "real" world of messing about in boats. I count myself amongst you in this respect since my projects are budget limited requiring ingenuity and adaptability to be realized.

What's "unreal" to me in much of the boating press are the articles all about the latest in available consumer products, be they trinkets, gear or complete boats. A favorite format seems to be "test" reports in which magazine staffers or hired gun "experts" take various new production boats or gear out to find out how good they are. This is standard fare in any enthusiast publication focussed on a type of product with an industry behind it looking for consumers. And all these tests tend to read about the same. As a journalist I tend to see the basic structure beneath each one, a narrative in which blanks are left for each successive product tested, blanks for specific numbers, colors, dimensions, equipment names, even the names of the test pilots. Sort of a "boilerplate" into which one can stuff the pertinent specifics.

Forgive me for my mild cynicism but I know quite well that such reports, while not dishonest, are hardly "real" evaluations, as the press of the need for ever more advertising support influences attitudes on the staffs of such publications. While editorial staffs deny any influence from the advertising departments, it's still there. So the fault finding, if any, tends to be of the nit picking variety, to show objectivity.

The purpose of a magazine full of articles on "We try the ..." is to sell those products. Yes, editorially, it is to inform the readers. Such readers are apparently new consumers in need of such "expert" guidance. The whole recreational boating industry has expanded enormously to sell its products to an expanded market of "new" people who are in need of guidance from the appropriate publications. Hence all the promotional periodicals full

of publicity puffs and advertiser support features.

Well, maybe that world of boating wasn't perceived as an unreal one during those booming '80's when one could buy any new boat on the never-never of a token down and forever to pay in easy monthly payments. But now reality is looming over the horizon. You may have heard how the boating industry is sinking fast. Sailboats, after a brief boomlet during the oil crunch of the late '70's, have been slipping under for the past several years. Today an enormous number of very good used fiberglass sailboats are out there looking for new owners. And now many of the firms that build them find few new customers and are closed up or imminently going too. Even some of the better known yacht yards are struggling to find work.

The motor boat market held up longer since motor boats have been designed to resemble cars so the prospect need not feel he needs to know anything about boating before turning the key and blasting off over the waves. But now they too are badly slumping and this coming spring is likely to be the moment of truth for many of these, manufacturers and dealers.

The "unreality" of the consumer boating world is being revealed by the economic troubles of the times. It should be interesting from our perch over here in the real world of boating to watch it all happen. Perhaps some of the major complaints that real boat folks have with the state of affairs on the water today will have cause to fade away with the reduction in consumer boating that is upon us.

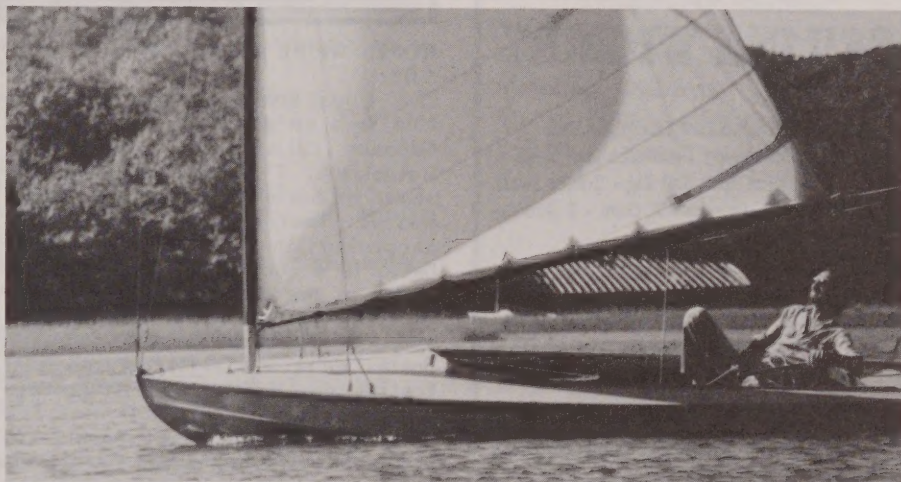
So, what do I mean by "real" boating? I mean boating activities of any sort pursued by people who truly love their boats, whatever they may be, and are acquiring the knowledge and skills to use them and care for them, even build or restore them. "Real" boat people have strong emotional attachments to their craft and regardless of economic hard times will continue to pursue their boating within whatever financial constraints may arise. During the "Great Depression" of the 1930's, recreational boating went right on happening, and not just amongst the wealthy yachtsmen. That was a time when all sorts of useful articles appeared in boating publications, and other "how-to" magazines, on building, repairing, restoring and enjoying affordable boating. The sort of thing you see today in "Messing About in Boats" as it happens.



Annisquam River Row

The golden autumn weather on October 6th for the Gerrish Island Race featured in our December 1st issue carried over into Sunday, October 7th, for the local Cape Ann Rowing Club Annisquam River Row, and about 30 small oar and paddle powered boats turned out for the pleasant five mile outing on this tidal estuary that separates the "island" of Gloucester, Massachusetts, from the rest of the country. Herewith a few photos that caught the essence of the occasion.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks



Left above: Forrest Dillon sets his Windspeed Designs spinnaker in his Dirigo kayak, easy drifting. Right above from the top: An Annisquam "Fish" class catboat, built locally at the Montgomery Boatyard since the early 1900's, giving its skipper a pleasant ride. Motorized canoe complete with center cockpit steering, a novel outfit.



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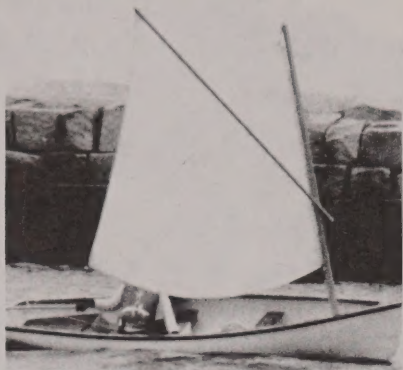
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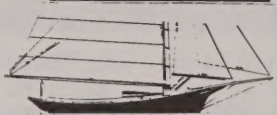
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Your Commentary

HOPES WE'RE WHAT HE THINKS WE
ARE

I just learned of your publica-
tion from an article I received from
Gardner Callanen of Indian Point
Guideboat. I have been messing
about in boats for 34 years, since I
was 15. Learning about all that is
happening in the world of small
boats is a source of satisfaction to
those of us impassioned by small
boat rowing, paddling, and sailing,
and low-powered motor driven
boats. We're a minority of the total
boating population and will probab-
ly always be so.

Because small boat people are
not usually big spenders on all the
bells and whistles, I suspect the
only workable solution to keeping
us informed, other than specialty
magazines such as "Sea Kayaker"
and "Canoe" is some sort of publi-
cation in newsletter format that's
more a labor of love than for prof-
it. I'm hoping that "Messing About
in Boats" is what I think it is, but
before I spend \$20 to find out, I'd
really like to see a sample. I've
enclosed a buck for postage in
hopes you wouldn't mind sending
me a copy.

John Myers, Monmouth Beach,
NJ.

NEXT BEST THING

I really enjoy "Messing About
in Boats". I'm a graduate student
up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of
Virginia, far from my favorite sea
kayaking haunts on the Chesape-
apeake. Reading "Boats" is the next
best thing to being on the water.
It has even gotten me interested in
other types of boats. I've got plans
for a Monfort Classic 12 I hope to
build some day for my Mom, who
loves to fish. She's an independent
sort and this design is light
enough for her to handle herself. I
guess I need this kind of practical
project because I've had just about
enough of the theory I get in my
classes. "Boats" is a great escape.

Chuck Dietz, Pulaski, VA.

ACCURATE REPORTING

One of the things I appreciate
about "Messing About in Boats" is
the accuracy of your reports on ev-
ents. When I've been to one and
then read the report, I can tell you
were really there.

I could have borne the disap-
pointment had you missed my cul-
vert debacle at the Gerrish Island
adventure (December 1st issue). I
did get myself into that awkward
situation, it was doubtful from the
start that my boat would fit under
the culvert, but I could see no
other way to get over to the proper
side unaided. This attitude was un-
kind to the other participants in
that splendid event, they are real-
ly nice people and didn't hesitate
to help. Whilst one kindly re-
trieved the oar that had escaped in
the confusion, what seemed to be
about twenty others came and
seized "Wit & Pluck", whipping her
across the road in no time and
putting us back into the game. My
thanks to all who were so kind.
One quibble on your report. You
said it was about 4 miles along that
coast against the wind, whereas I
was quite sure it was 40!

Loud and prolonged applause
for the article "The Oarmaster
Trials" in that same issue, for all
involved in that very interesting
experiment. It seemed to be a very
scientific try at isolating the boat
as a factor in performance under
oars. I wonder if it is entirely fair
to treat a gunning dory as in the
same class as a banks dory?

Frank Durham, Hollis, NH.

GOOD RESPONSE

I wanted to thank you for
publishing Ron Denman's ad this
past year, we had very good re-
sponse to it and plan to resume in
the spring. Ron is spending the
winter rebuilding his 1896 Huxford
catboat. The new keel was finished
just before Thanksgiving when we
paused to put new plastic on her
shed. Then Ron fell off the ladder
in the rain while fastening on the
final battens and broke his left
hand. Well, he got a lot of reading
done for a while after that, thanks
for the twice a month inspiration,
especially in such a time.

Bobbie Kenyon, Lyme, CT.

A NICE OLD ALDEN

My old/new Alden single is
now ready for a row in some of
this winter's mild weather. After
searching for about a year I found
a nice old '74 model that was use-
able. At the time it was built they
did not install bulkheads as they
do now. Since I am relatively new
to this sort of messing about in
boats I thought it prudent to fabri-
cate bulkheads to make the ends
watertight before sculling in cold
waters. Over the winter I will com-
plete the cosmetic work on the boat.

Lenny Lipton, White Plains,
NY



HAVE YOU TRIED A SUNSET LATELY?

It wasn't the clothes...
I was wearing a bleached shirt
found hanging in the bush,
And what's left of the Bean shoes.

It wasn't the company...
She was going to join me,
But didn't.

It wasn't the place...
My mind had been in west coast
waters all day.
This was three thousand miles
away.

It wasn't the canoe, which was a
barge...
And it wasn't the paddle,
Too rough and too large.

It was...the paddling -
Straight into the sunset.
Entering a kaleidoscope of raging
color,
Fixated like a moth to bright hope,
An ecstasy of being.

Paddling into the sunset -
Tired cliché -
"Have you tried a sunset lately?
It'll make your day."
Herb Klinger

FINALLY STARTING

Last year I signed on for a local furniture building course and built two Shaker end tables. This brought forth a deep seated interest in woodworking that I never knew I had. I then went to the Newport Classic Boat Regatta and the sight of the huge J-boats on one side of the point and the tiny Nutshell prams on the other brought back a love for boats I have had since I was a child. But living in southern Ohio, I had little opportunity to foster this love of boats.

Now I live in New England where there is lots of water and lots of boats. I'm combining my new found love for woodworking and my old love of boats into the building of a 14' geodesic Whitehall. I know its fabric covered, not all wood, however I felt I was not yet up to attempting a lapstrake boat yet. Next time. So far it's going well.

"Messing About in Boats" is great, I read it cover to cover and look forward to its arrival every other week. It has already put me in touch with another geodesic builder who has helped me over many of my questions. Thanks to Platt Monfort for introducing me to "Boats". I have always dreamed of messing about in boats and now I have finally begun.

Mark Helton, Hudson, MA.

SHOW AND TELL

Thank you for the extra copies of the November 15th issue with our "Journal of the Matthews-Wetherell Party". For those in the party still in school, the magazine will be something they can show their classmates and teachers. Not often is a student able to state, "A national magazine published an article I helped write about something I did."

"Messing About in Boats" does a great job for those of us who do such messing about. It talks of things that interest us and we do not have to wade through a lot of "slick" ads. Thank you and keep it up.

C.S. Wetherell, Vancouver, WA.

RIGGING A FLAT BOTTOM SKIFF

I am interested in fitting lee-boards to a flat bottomed 10' long skiff, very much like a sharpie. I would like to use a sprit sail on her and I think there is some formula for sail shape/size/mast & sprit length that eludes me. Any help from readers would be appreciated.

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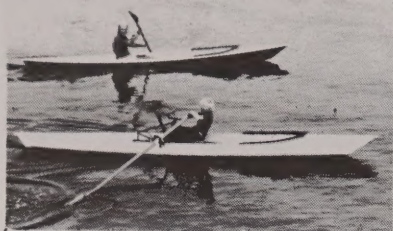


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HAPPENINGS

KAYAK ROLLING & RESCUE COURSES

Avid sea kayaker Mark Blaquiere of Ipswich, MA, will be offering classes in eskimo rolling and sea kayak rescues this winter. A \$40 fee covers six classes, twice a week over a three week period. The classes will be held in Danvers, MA. For details, Mark Blaquiere, 100 Mitchell Rd. Ipswich, MA 01938, (508) 356-1697.

SCHOONER "ADVENTURE" COURSE

The North Shore Community College Gloucester, MA, Extension Center will hold a 6 session class on the schooner "Adventure", beginning April 2nd at the Gloucester High School and on board the schooner. Further information at (508) 922-NSCC.

DODGE MORGAN TO SPEAK AT CONNECTICUT RIVER MUSEUM

Solo circumnavigator Dodge Morgan will be the featured speaker at the Connecticut River Museum's winter lecture series fundraiser on February 1st, at the John Winthrop Junior High School in Deep River, CT. Admission of \$7.50 is for the benefit of the Museum. Further information or tickets from the Museum at (203) 767-8269.

WOODEN BOAT SCHOOL

The 1991 Wooden Boat School doesn't begin until June 9th, but if you might be interested in what's offered this summer, request a catalog from them at P.O. Box 78, Brooklin, ME 04616, (207) 359-4651. Director Rich Hilsinger reports that they've extended some courses from one to two weeks for added in-depth instruction and added several new ones, on the water and in the shop.

SPIRIT OF MASSACHUSETTS "EDVENTURES"

The 125' schooner replica, "Spirit of Massachusetts" will be in the Caribbean through February doing weekly "Adventure" cruises. The shipboard cost is \$700 per person, up to 20 "edventurers" can be accommodated on each cruise. Further information from New England Historic Seaport at (617) 242-1414.

K.C. CRUMP ANTIQUE BOAT FESTIVAL

The Third annual Antique & Classic Boat Festival at the K.C. Crump Restaurant in Homosassa Springs, Florida, takes place February 8-10th, sponsored by the Florida Sunnyland Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society. Further information from Ron Hicks at (813) 923-8684.

SHIP MODELS AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

"The Age of Sail: Ship Models and Marine Arts" is the title of an exhibition of superb ship models and related marine art and wood carvings that is now running, through March 10th, at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The models date from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth, with merchant vessels from the nineteenth century, such as Donald McKay's famed "Flying Cloud" featured. Further information from the Publicity Department at (617) 267-9300, ext. 446.

CONSTITUTION MODEL SHIP SHOW

The U.S.S. Constitution Model Shipwright Guild has scheduled its annual juried show from February 11th through March 17th, at the Hull Room on the second deck of the Constitution Museum in the old Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston. Further information from Ed Arini at (617) 776-8359.

NEW NAME AT CLAYTON

The Thousand Islands Shipyard Museum in Clayton, NY, has changed its name to the Antique Boat Museum, to establish in name what it has become in fact, a national, not just eastern, museum of antique boats. No longer should its name confuse anyone as to its purpose.

Several new boats have been added to the collection. "This" and "That", two old launches originally built for George Boldt and later owned by Ed Noble, were donated by Jim Lewis ("This") and Bob Cox ("That"). Paul Schoellkopf presented the Museum with his very rare 1928 Chris Craft 30' triple cockpit runabout. Frank and June Augsburg donated "Minnie", a 1905 Lozier torpedo stern 5hp motor launch. And Robert O'Brien presented us with his 1905 X-Cello 26' runabout, one of only three left extant.

Information on our 1991 schedule of events and exhibits is available on request. The Antique Boat Museum, 750 Mary St., Clayton, NY 13624.

THE STEAMBOATER'S HANDBOOK

Bill Mueller of "Steamboating" magazine has just announced the publication of "The Steamboater's Handbook", a 500 page, 8-1/2"x11" book described as the "most comprehensive manual ever assembled for the live steamboat enthusiast." The 2-1/2 pound tome sells for \$38.50 plus shipping. Detailed flyer from "Steamboating", Rt. 1, Box 262, Middlebourne, WV 26149, (304) 386-4434.



NEW DIRECTOR FOR MAINE ISLAND TRAIL

The Maine Island Trail will go into 1991 under new direction, with the resignation at the end of 1990 of Trail founder and organizer Dave Getchell, Sr. Cate Cronin of Kennebunkport has been appointed Director and Karen Stimpson of Portland assumes the newly created position of Trail Keeper. Cate was the captain and program director of the Hudson River sloop "Clearwater" for five years, followed by a stint as program director for the schooner "Bowdoin". Karen will operate from her live-aboard motor vessel "Juniata" out of Portland.

Founder Dave Getchell, Sr. has the following commentary about the changes facing MITA:

"This is a significant time for the Maine Island Trail Association. A new Trail Director, Cate Cronin, will be taking over an expanded operation at the beginning of the new year, and she will be assured of additional field support by a full-time Trail Keeper next summer, Karen Stimpson. And they will have plenty to do. There are solid indications that we will have access to 40 or more private islands in 1991 in addition to about the same number of publicly owned islands. The increasing opportunities and responsibilities place a sizeable stewardship commitment on the MITA staff and members, and it is our obligation in this respect that prompts my comments.

During the first year of MITA's existence, all of the field work was done with my boat, motor and trailer. Our second and third seasons saw the addition of a boat obtained through a very generous purchase agreement with Lund America, a big Minnesota boat manufacturer. In effect, Lund loaned us a new boat each season with the understanding we would sell it in the autumn and pay for it at that time. We did this for two seasons,

but it gave me the added duty of becoming a boat salesman. It also meant that when a second boat was needed, I had to bring my own into service again.

Among the key recommendations I made to the Island Institute Board of Directors at the end of my work as Trail Director was that two complete boat rigs be purchased outright so that MITA could be assured of having these critical tools always at hand. I also said I believed the membership would go a long way in helping to raise the \$10,000 needed to buy and equip with motors and trailers two 18' Lund Alaskans, a boat model that has proven ideal for Maine island work.

All of which is to ask if you will join Dorrie and me in contributing to the MITA Boat Fund. If all of us kick in with a generous donation, the MITA boat problem will be solved, and we will be able to admire as "ours" these two handsome boats in action during the 1991 season. Send your donation to the MITA Boat Fund, 60 Ocean St., Rockland, ME 04841.

Many thanks for your continuing support. It has meant a great deal to me and our unusual Association during these important building years."

David R. Getchell, Sr., MITA Advisory Committee.

STRAWBERRY BANKE BOATBUILDING CLASS

Construction of the flat iron skiff "Susan" will be the focus for a 10 week boatbuilding course at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH, starting February 2nd, on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ned Toll, the Museum's resident boatbuilder will instruct up to seven students working on two boats. Tuition is \$340. Further information from the Museum at (603) 433-1100.

AREY'S POND BOATBUILDING COURSES

Tony Davis, who operated the boatshop for New England Historic Seaport in the old Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, and taught boatbuilding courses there, has purchased the Arey's Pond Boatyard in South Orleans, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. He is offering one course at his new shop this coming March.

"Building a 9' Arno Day Skiff" starts in March, and runs for 8 Saturdays at a cost of \$500, with the completed skiff offered to a class member for an additional \$500.

Information at (508) 255-0994.

MYSTIC NAVIGATION CLASSES

Mystic Seaport Museum's winter/spring navigation classes have already begun in January, but go on into April with a variety of courses at various individual fees ranging from \$25 to \$220. The January Basic Celestial Navigation Course repeats in February starting on the 19th, so you haven't actually missed out on any. Other courses include Coastal Navigation, Loran-C, Applied Meteorology, Nav-Star GPS, and Radar. An intensive three-day seminar on Basic Celestial Navigation is scheduled for April 19-21. Information from Mystic Seaport Planetarium at (203) 572-0711, ext. 397.

MAINE MARITIME'S WINTER SEASON

Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, Maine, will present several series of lectures and workshops throughout the coming winter. Details and prices charged on all are available from the Museum, 243 Washington St., Bath, ME 04530, (207) 443-1316. Remaining programs are the following:

February 13. Sounds of the Sea Concert with Dick Swain.

February 20. "You Can tell a Sailmaker by the Cut of His Jib" with Nat Wilson.

February 26. "Maine Islands" with Philip Conklin.

February 27 & 28. Marine Carving Workshop with Greg Fisher.

March 2. "Our Future is Now" with Governor John McKernan, Jr.

March 23. Boat Design & Theory Workshop with Carroll Lowell.

March 27. "Tea & Trade" with Jean Weber.

April 24. "Sounds of the Sea" concert with Tom Callinan and Don Sineti.

May 15. "Lighthouses Come in All Different Shapes and Sizes" with Kenneth Black.



Blue Mountain Lake Camp-Cruise

Bob Booth was right. That island was a great place to camp, away from rumble of a neighboring Winnebago's generator or, worse yet, the noise of his TV set. That's the stuff we were trying to get away from.

Instead we got the lonesome cry of a loon wafting across a still mountain lake, echoing off the tall, still mountains that loomed a pale blue-gray in the mist.

I called Bob right after the park ranger told me yes, we would need a reservation to camp there, and no, there were no spaces left. After that, I figured that I had better reserve a canoe, too, if we planned on paddling like Elizabeth, the 11-year-old, had requested. Bob said yes, we'd need to reserve a canoe, and yes, he had a nice big one for us and where were we going to stay? Didn't know, I said, we'd just look around once we got up there.

Well, Bob explained, Long Island (one without expressways), out in the middle of Blue Mountain lake was a great place to camp. It is on a canoe trail on the way to another camp on Raquette Lake. Privately owned, the owner allows overnight camping because he's either crazy, just plain nice, or a real traditionalist, since there has been a canoe trail there for a long, long time. He was right. It even had a pit toilet, to be a little civilized for the girls. It is well policed, too. We stayed two nights, and I was politely reminded that the policy is to allow only overnight camping, this year.

We wanted to be sure of a space, so we came up Friday and had our choice of sites. We chose one with a giant 6' rock right behind the fire (Look-Out Rock, it was dubbed). One had to be a junior mountain climber to make it to the top, but that's just what Susan, the 7-year-old, did. A canoeing couple came in and

camped on the other side of the point just before dark, but we didn't even know they were there until we saw them the next morning. They had come the nine miles from Raquette Lake, an "easy paddle" for them.

Thursday had been a beautiful day in Jersey, sunny and warm with a clearness to the air. The forecast for the weekend was excellent, with only the "possibility" of a storm. One of the fellows I work with is a Saranac Laker. He said, "better get up there tomorrow and enjoy that good weather" and "summer only comes once a year, better take advantage of it." I was thinking, my girls are only young once, and I better take advantage of it. Leaving work at 5:00 PM, I got to bed in Plymouth, NY by midnight. Up at 6:30, I picked up the girls at Grandma's for breakfast. Their mom was visiting her mom in California, so it was just us three. Well, actually four, the girls' cousin (an in-between 9-year-old) joined us. She had gone camping with us last year and was willing to come back for more.

We quickly got mobilized, rolling out of town just before noon. We rolled past houses, farms and fields, just like the song says, as we sang our way up through the hills into the real mountains of the north woods. Not breathtakingly high (literally), like the ones out west, but still pretty presentable ones when you are down in the valley looking up. I negotiated my way past the water slides in Old Forge (just like they showed on TV, Daddy), into the wild stuff up Route 28.

The boat livery was easy to find, it being right at the curve of the lake where the road dips down to touch the water. Bob is a jolly, fun sort that cheered up the girls as he matched paddles to people sizes. And it sure helped

that he also owned the general store (that his brother-in-law runs for him). We stocked up on natural juices and enjoyed a deli sandwich while sitting on their back porch, perched high above the sky-blue mountain lake. Not blue blue, but sky blue, the way a western mountain bluebird is blue when it lands in a tuft of wildflowers high in a mountain meadow.

You can tell truly experienced canoe campers like us by our bedrolls and drygoods scientifically wrapped in dark brown garbage sacks. We must have made quite a sight as we crossed to the island, what with mounds of brown lumps heaped around blonde little Susan sitting queen-like in her center canoe chair and two of us flailing away with paddles at the ends of her canoe.

Elizabeth was the smart one of the bunch as she easily cruised atop the waves in her light white, double paddle canoe. Steve Wilce out in Winters, CA would have been surprised to see the prototype of his "moon-beam" canoe on that eastern mountain lake. At less than 20 pounds, it seemed perfectly matched to Elizabeth's size and weight. What is it that our friend, John DeLapp, says is the secret of success to his light rowing boats? Match the size and weight of the boat to the person using it (see last quarter's Traditional Small Craft Association's Quarterly for his daughter, Lauren, in an 11 1/2 footer of about the same weight).

Suffice it to say that we found the island, made camp and paddled right back the next morning to go climb the Blue Mountain itself. Bob promised not to rent our canoes while we were gone, so we parked them there, hopped in our Jeep wagon and drove to the trailhead, just up from the Adirondack Museum. We

climbed out of the Jeep and squished around in our wet boat shoes amongst all the trendies getting out of their Saabs and Preludes. They all had L.L. Bean outfits on, complete with lug soled boots. I asked, "how long a walk is this?" "The trail guide calls it out as a four-hour climb," was the reply. "Oh, best take lunch," says I, as I picked up our six-pack cooler filled with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and squished on up the trail behind my crew, which had scampered off ahead of me.

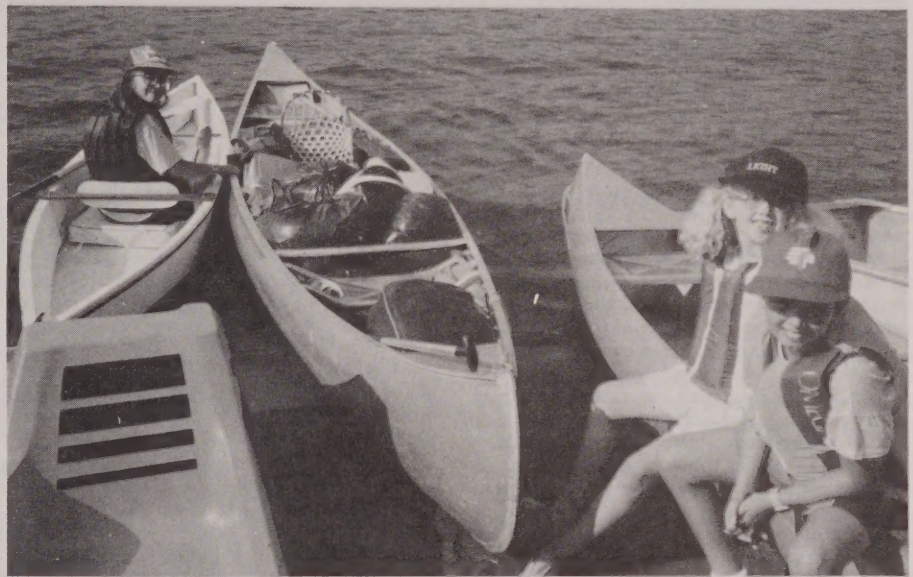
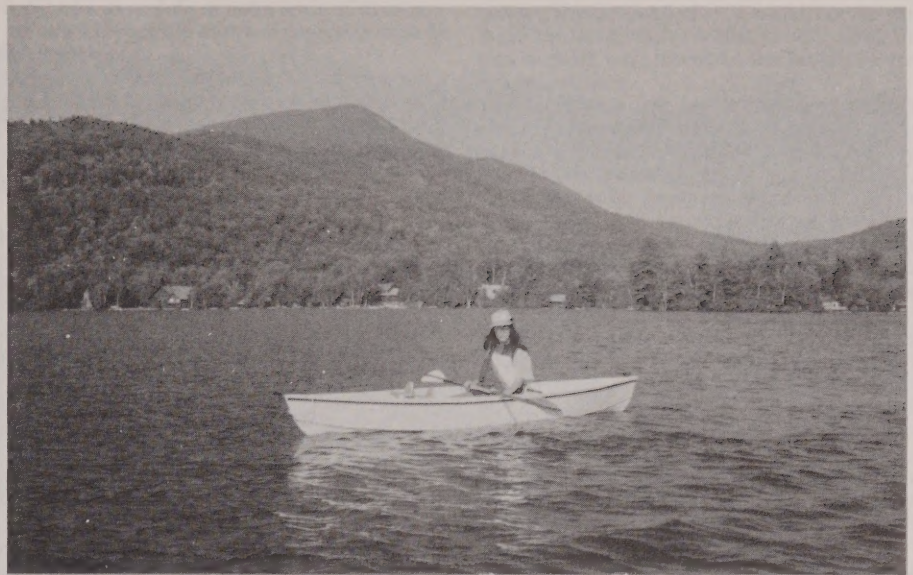
That trail guide was right. It was a good two hours up that mountain, and the operative word was "up." We wheezed our way up, the girls' little legs just making it, and my old ones getting wobbly. If I did it again, I think I'd leave that cooler in the Jeep. It did get mighty heavy before the summit. But those sandwiches and cool juices did taste mighty good when we made it to the top.

Once there we climbed the fire tower. It was hazy, so the view was limited, but we were above the tree line. We thought we'd really done something, but when we got to talking to the Fire Warden, we found that he hikes up that mountain every day to get to work, from late May to October. It was tough getting down, too. We wore out two pairs of old boat shoes, and we all slept pretty soundly that night, storm or no storm.

The paddle back against a breeze was stiff, but we made it. Cousin Chery did a great job of bow paddling us into the wind. On the point of the island, the girls found long, black tailfeathers the sentry crows had shed. They immediately stuck a few in their braids and I in my hat. With due apologies to geography and the Iroquis, we called ourselves the Crow tribe, and cruised the area for dry sticks for our evening fire. The supper of hot dogs and macaroni and cheese was a hit for the second straight night and the fire cozy as it reflected back off that big rock. We read our chapter of "The Curlytops at Cherry Hill Farm" and all dozed off, hearing the loons call in the night.

We broke camp in the morning after coffee, cereal and milk, accent on the coffee. We packed again in our now holey garbage sacks and paddled off. Fortunately, Elizabeth tipped over in the Moonbeam (we call ours "Egret") before we left, so we could change her into dry clothes. She then did a great job of stern paddling/steering the big canoe back across the lake. I had a great time in the tiddly, but fast, double paddle canoe.

Sunday, the last day, was museum day. If you go, see the movie. It was great. It is current, topical and a great introduction to the rest of the museum. The shots of the modern guide rowing a guideboat as he talks of the mountains is great. The guideboat collection is excellent. Of course, that is its native territory. Three passed us out on the lake as



we were coming in. Passed us like we were standing still, that is. One guy is going to row the intercoastal to Florida, starting in September. He tried to sell us a tee shirt to sponsor him. I hope he knows about the gnats in Georgia.

After inspecting the locomotives, old log hotels and my favorite, an old diner made from a trolley car, we collapsed into our own car and headed downhill. It was a great weekend in a great place. The clear mountain air after the night's storm made the ride home a treat, but I couldn't convince the girls to climb back up that mountain for the view.

For your canoe, call Bob Booth at the

Blue Mountain Canoe Lake Livery at (518) 352-7351 and don't miss his root beer floats at the general store. For information about the museum, call (518) 352-7650. If you want to stay in something other than a tent, call the Potter's Resort and stay in a cabin just across the road from the lake. They even serve meals for the totally relaxed. There's a Center for the Arts, too. We passed by when a cellist was practicing for the night's performance. For information on this and other items, like the nearby State Parks, write the Blue Mountain Lake Association, Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812. Great fun.

Bill Rutherford

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Hull Goes to Holland

By Ed McCabe, Director
Hull Lifesaving Museum rowing program

At the request of the management of *The Times*, this writer will try to recount some of the adventures of the Lifesaving Museum's globe-trotting rowing crews as they took American culture and style to the people of Holland.

The sheer volume of experiences on this last trip, taken in mid-August, demands a serialized version, but by dissecting the various moments, and by encouraging the other crew members to do a bit of writing themselves, we can perhaps bring a bit of the scope of this last trip back home for those people who have supported Hull crews over the last decade.

To put the trip in a historical perspective, we met the Dutch crews two years ago in France during the Douarnenez '88 Festival, where we were representing the U.S. at the 2nd Atlantic Challenge. The Dutch rowers were there for the larger rowing events and had nothing to do with Atlantic Challenge itself. As we plugged into races in the smaller boats—such as the D'Aboville and Scilly Island gigs—we found that the recurring opponents were always groups of big, blond, robust young men and women from various cities in Holland.

If you are like many of us, your concept of Holland and the Dutch is fairly myopic. Visions of windmills and quaint Campbell-soup kids in weird wooden shoes, fields of tulips and other equally vague images are the sum total of the your view.

Picture our surprise when groups of 20- and 21-year-old "hard-bodies" in flashy uniforms beat us up badly over a race course and then rushed up to whisk us away to their post-race party so they could try out their near-perfect English on us and catch up on the most modern American idiom.

Perhaps what was the most impressive aspect of these young men and women was their sportsmanship and sense of fair play. Of all of the people that we encountered in France in 1988, the Dutch were some of the the most memorable.

Since that time, we have received numerous invitations from them to journey to Holland and join them in one or more of their races. They ranged from inner city events in the canals of

Amsterdam to wilderness races off the coast. Funding and organizational problems always prevented us taking them up on these offers, but we developed a rather strong long-distance relationship with them which culminated in our taking them up on the opportunity to race and row during their tall ship event, SAIL90.

With that in mind, we gathered together two crews, one men's, one women's, to make the trip. We entered into the effort with a clear picture in our minds of those young people we met in 1988. In essence, they were not the high-school-age crews from the museum's various programs, nor were they the collection of geezers that tend to come out of the adult crews. The closest analogy would be a big, healthy, college-age type rower, coming off their normal season and gearing up for a national event in which they would figure prominently.

Never a group to be daunted, and quite frankly being interested in learning firsthand how they run their version of the sport, we began the process of gathering together representative rowers from this area who could bring the lessons learned in Holland back to greater Boston.

The women's crew was a collaboration between the crews from Chelsea who row out of the Museum's Navy Yard site and the crews from Hull. Midway through the season, as they shuttled back and forth between the two sites to accommodate each others' schedules, they became the "Chullsea" crew. The ages of that crew ranged from 14 to 32 with a core of teenaged women of incredible national diversity. Patty and Elena Magana, age 14 and 16, who grew up in El Salvador and Din Din Lo, 18, who came from mainland China, and Miriam Wolfe, 16, from Hull, rounded out the youth segment, bringing their enthusiasm and chutzpa to the older women's strength.

The men's crew was a conglomerate of decrepit seniors in their 40s trying desperately to regain their lost youth, and doing so with the help of people like Paul Noonan of Cambridge, 15, Frank Townsend and Lou Keating of Hull, age 18 and 23 respectively, and Leno Melo from the Azores and Somerville, veteran of two such ventures, New York in '86 and France in '88, age 22.

The problem with these disparate crews is always how to gather together to practice often

enough to meld together into a working unit. The crucible for both groups was the Blackburn Challenge this year in Gloucester. Both crews used that monstrous race to hone themselves to the point that they could travel to a foreign land and a strange batch of cultural traditions, to different boats and different rules, to unusual waters and strange faces, and to be as adaptable as possible. The idea was not so much to be a championship-winning crew—there were few illusions about breaking the "home court advantage"—but rather to offer to the Dutch a respectable view of American rowers and what they are capable of doing under duress.

We went to learn the Dutch way of doing things and to bring it back home and weave it into our systems.

Upon walking out of the Central Station, direct from the plane, we were confronted by familiar, if a bit older, faces from the Dutch crews of '88.

Kees (pronounced case), the coach and mentor of the Amsterdam crews, is the athletic director of ETS, a national technical school vaguely similar to MIT. He was our host and the coordinator of the entire event in Amsterdam. He brought René and Erna, each a member of the men's and women's team from France. They took their respective crews under their wings and traveled to the sites where they would live. The men's team went to an inner city campsite, "Jimi's," built on a lake on the edge of the city. It had a swimming beach, kayaks, sailboats and boards and a small restaurant and was a short tram ride from downtown.

The women's crew traveled by bus to a village just outside of the city, on the edge of an enormous dyke called Monnikadam. They lived in two apartments in the midst of homes built on reclaimed land.

We met that evening and were presented with two lovely old rowing boats, purported to be well over 100 years old. To say they were antiques was to take nothing from them.

Though their scantlings or dimensions were from a different age than modern fiberglass boats, they were well founded and as seaworthy a boat as we were ever in. The very first thing we did was to take off into the star-lit canal to "eat Chinese." Amsterdam is all man-made. It is a

series of concentric half circles, three streets and a canal, three more streets and another canal, ad infinitum, ad nauseam. There are a maze of interconnecting canals that allow you to travel by water as easily as by land, if you know the way.

Both our boats had a guide, but we still had to learn how to fit through tiny—and we do mean tiny—arched bridges that spanned the canals constantly. The boats with oars extended could only occasionally fit between the walls of the arches and so we had to learn to “slip” or draw the oars parallel to the sides of the boat on one or both sides, slide under the bridge and swing them back out to regain momentum.

It was a matter of great honor for the coxswain to call for a slip at the very last moment to assure maximum momentum through the bridge. This was not a big issue until we were racing through the canals, side by side with another crew, but the pressure from the “bow oar” or first person through the bridge to the cox began right away.

A cocky bow oar would continue rowing as many strokes as possible if the cox called a slip too soon and then would look back with total contempt to the conservative cox. Of course, the same or worse would result if the cox called the slip too late as both sides would smash the walls of the bridge arch, whacking themselves and slewing the boat around.

For a cox with only the wide-open spaces of Boston Harbor to contend with before, this was a nightmare. It was not mitigated by the absolute lack of sympathy from the Amsterdam crews, who roared off into the night laughing at the klutzy Americans who thought they were so hot.

Miles later and much wiser, we limped into a superb Chinese restaurant to share a 40-person feast that healed all wounds. Then on full stomachs we retraced our steps to watch the fireworks from the boats in the shadow of the national Maritime Museum.

It became fairly clear to us that our hosts, the folks from ETS, the *Electrotechnische School* of Amsterdam, would be superbly hospitable right up to, but not including, the loan of their fast boat, the bright yellow *Trochdriuer*.

They treated that boat like it was their collective eldest child, and putting it in the hands of a bunch of New-World barbarians was simply not in the cards. We were often invited to row it with them, but never to drive. In turn, the twelve-oared cutter that we did use was more than adequate, particularly when we saw some of the other boats in the circuit.

The Dutch have made a very definite decision to go the extra distance to preserve the traditional designs of their boats. This was fairly indicative of their attitudes in general. I only began to make sense of the Dutch as I flew over Holland on my way home. At 10,000 feet, it became very clear that every square inch of that country was created from a well thought out scheme. There is not a single bit of extraneous land, no waste, nothing that was not thought out well in advance.

From the air you can see how they wrested the land from the sea, square yard by square yard. Since everything was thought out consciously, it stands to reason that the original design, if still standing, must be correct. Thus, why change it?

The same held true for boat design. If it was good enough for the mariners of long ago, then let it be. As the whole experience played out, there certainly was some very sound logic to this.

We forget, with our never-ending “pioneer spirit,” that we are an embryonic society. These people go back, as a nation, 1,000 years and as a race, much further. Basically, they have done everything and need only maintain the status quo. This is a long-winded way of explaining why they don’t have hot-shot, carbon-fibre boats, but

it did take us a while to make sense of them giving us a 125-year-old boat and expecting us to be thrilled about it.

At any rate, as we roared through the night racing head to head down the Amster River through tiny bridge arches and long-abandoned locks, we soon found that although the ETS boat had a decided advantage over us, we could, with a full measure of “chutzpa” and a lot of wiliness, give them a run for their money.

The Dutch have a rather somber approach to the racing game. They row steadily, with few commands and a sort of teeth-gritting determination. Our approach was much more passionate. The cox in the American boat plays upon the come from behind, underdog sort of temperament that appeals to us so much, squeezing out little victories and hanging on to an opponent like a terrier on a tiger.

Their team and ours would get to a particular bridge at the same time and as we entered different arches, we’d power up to appear on the

other side first and shake up the Dutch, who continually had to respond to a never-ending series of new challenges. It was somewhat akin to the Burch Cassidy/Sundance Kid quandary when each time they looked around, the guy with the straw hat was still there. I picture the perplexed Dutch saying, “Are they still there? Row harder.”

At least I hope they felt that way. Inevitably, the extra high gear of the ETS boat would squeak out the win, but Lord knows, we had ‘em worried.

On the first day of official competition, our men’s crew was slated to race a series of “sprint” races. The women’s crew had only eight rowers and we were unable to come up with five extra women for the race, so theoretically, this was a men’s crew event. Moments before the start, a mixed crew of men and women from Rotterdam showed up, and since another crew had backed out at the last moment, they jumped in. We knew this would tick off the women’s crew, but by then it was a *fait accompli*.

We raced in simply enormous Navy cutters that I am sure were used as a form of corporal punishment for recalcitrant sailors in lieu of getting lashed at the gratings, but having the advantage of being equally miserable to all competitors. In addition, we switched boats and oars at each of three races to assure that if there was a particular dog, no one crew would get stuck with it.

The course was a straight line, about 300 meters from a bridge near the central station to the National Maritime Museum.

Since we had only an even dozen rowers and needed all our strength just to move the beast, we enlisted Erna, the women’s coxswain, to drive our boat. Erna was one of Kees’ (pronounced *case*, coach of the Amsterdam teams) old rowers who had never really coxed before the last couple of nights with the women, and who certainly had never coxed a high-octane race like a sprint.

For the first we lined up in between the two Dutch boats and when the gun went off, we noticed that we were drifting into Kees’ boat. That struck us as weird as he certainly would steer a straight course and we queried Erna if perhaps she was moving diagonally across lanes. It occurred to us that perhaps the finish line was staggered and that we were rowing too far but she assured us that was not the case. It was quite academic, for the ETS crew beat us quite soundly by a boatlength of open water over that short course.

The idea that Kees was outfoxing us persisted, but the margin of victory in the first round was such that we were fairly discouraged.

The second round put us on the outside with Kees in the middle lane and we tried to talk Erna into steering at an angle to shorten the course in response to the perceived stagger of the

course. She persisted that it could not be true that Kees was trying to outfox us but I think the seed of doubt was planted. In this round, we very nearly took them.

I am not sure who was more surprised, us or them, as we were in the fight—but for a momentary stumble or “crab” that lost us a few feet. The trick with any boat is to get it up to “hull speed”—its maximum speed—and keep it there without mistakes. Any crew can get a boat moving to its maximum. It takes a mature crew to hold it there under duress. To see us within a few feet at the finish energized us and seemed to shake up the “hard-bodies” of the Dutch crew.

After the second round, Erna came to me and allowed that she thought that maybe we were right about the course and asked what we would suggest. Since, officially, the Dutch boys already had their best two out of three, the final round was simply for pride.

We gave Erna a new heading to shoot for and told her not to worry, but to only think of outfoxing the fox. I noticed a good deal of quiet determination among our crew members as we waited for the last race, with the normally boisterous group quietly working on their equipment, in now the third boat of the series. They knew that they could take this one.

Personally, as a rower, I tend to block out and detach from pain. In an endurance sport it helps to be able to rise out of your body and look down dispassionately at the poor bugger suffering in that seat. My own memories of the last race are quite foggy, but I do remember out of my peripheral vision the ETS boat getting off to a good start, with a seat or two lead in the first 100 meters, and then seeing them drop slowly and quite inexorably backwards to where I, in the sternmost seat in the boat, could see most of their crew beside or behind me.

There was no time to gloat or even enjoy that as the race proceeded, for the tiniest mistake would spell disaster and I was quite certain that if anyone screwed up, it would not be me. I guess everyone else was thinking the same sort of thing. As we rowed well past the finish line, the skewed finish line, to assure we didn’t make any mistakes, the first question was “Did they give that one to us?” No one could believe that we squeaked one out on them. My only response was to point to the faces of the Dutch rowers and ask if they looked like they gave that one up.

The celebration ensued.

As I mentioned in last week’s article, we had no illusions about the potential of going over to the unusual waters of Holland and walking away with some sort of TV-movie victory. The odds were altogether too much in the home team’s favor. What the Hull crew did was pound out a good deal of respect from these fine young Dutchmen, and that was sufficient.

The next test would be the 31-kilometer race from Marken. Here also the young women’s team, who came to Holland expecting a whole other sort of competition, would find themselves tested well beyond what they ever could have imagined.

But that would be tomorrow and the delights of Amsterdam awaited tonight.

Before the most recent dyke was constructed within the last 50 years, Marken was an island populated by fishermen who plied the inland waters of Holland and probably fed much of the nearby city of Amsterdam. The operational word here is “nearby.” When one has to row that distance against the wind in a 2000-lb., 100-year-old boat, the distance takes on new relevance.

Marken today, like everything else about Holland, is meticulously laid out with a keyhole harbor, cafés facing the brick quay, a small, red-tile-roofed Lifesaving Station and a population of people wearing *exactly* the clothing that your long-ago fantasy of Dutch people wore—broad,

short pants and weskits for the men, multiple-layered skirts and aprons with a lace wimple for the women.

Although I saw no wooden shoes, which are incredibly uncomfortable, they did wear brogues of sorts. The impression I got was very upsetting, because these people took their formerly isolated and appropriate lifestyle totally seriously. They are no less dignified than the Amish or the Hassidim. The sight of tourists in Reeboks and Vauernets putting their arms around these lovely people in their 60s and 70s was quite upsetting, as was the midnight raucous songfests from the ancient taverns now populated by visiting sailboats. The incongruity, coupled with the community's need to make a living, was quite striking.

Kees, our host (and coach of the Amsterdam rowers) moved to Marken 10 years ago and restored one of the homes. Formerly, before the control of the inland sea, the wooden houses were up on pilings. When the threat of inundation ceased, the practical Dutch bricked in the foundation, leaving the pilings in place, and created three-storied homes out of two.

Kees restored an old house, married and begat two beautiful girls, Nynke Lotte and Anne Karlijn. The natives still are cool to Kees and his wife, Monique, for they are from the world, but they easily accept the little girls, for they are native-born Markeners.

It was into this compelling town that 15 traditional rowing boats and 150 rowers descended on a brilliant windy morning in August.

As mentioned before in this series, the Dutch rowing world has made a decision to actively protect the traditions and designs—as well as the actual boats—that make up their rich maritime history. In the rapidly burgeoning world of “fixed seat/open water” rowing, this could put them at a distinct disadvantage as epoxy-and-cedar pilot gigs and carbon-fibre oars begin to proliferate. Never a group to fall behind technologically, the Dutch maritime-academy folks tank-tested their boats, created a handicapping system not unlike modern yacht racing, and we found out that it worked.

By working out the physics of the hull length, number of oars and shape of the bow, they found that they could fairly accurately send boats off in staggered starts, with the slower boats first and the faster ones later, and have the faster ones make up the difference over the course of the race so that at the finish it would come out even.

With that in mind, the two greater-Boston crews, men's and women's, lined up to race 31 kilometers—or about 15 miles—to the lock that protected Amsterdam from the sea.

Start with a few assumptions. Our women's crew had trained long and hard for short, high-intensity-skills races that the SAIL'90 people disallowed with one day's notice.

Aced out by a scheduling foul-up from the one sprint event, the very best opportunity to get their competitive time in was the Marken race.

The analogy runs something like this, the two-mile relay team goes to the Olympics only to find that they can only race in the marathon. Quite a dilemma, particularly when half the crew is under 18 years of age and, quite frankly, freaked out by the prospect of three hours of unrelenting pain.

We went to this event with very open minds, crews in any format, and to squeeze a vacation in among these plans.

The pain part hovered in the background always, but leapt out when the morning of the Marken Race arrived. Those of us who have done such memorable rows as the Blackburn Challenge, and incidentally sworn off that race for life, understand that one seldom dies in those 12

endeavors, but often relishes the possibility.

Nevertheless, the two crews boarded their respective boats with as good an attitude as possible. The women's eight-oared boat with Erna (a Dutch woman) coxing, was in the first wave, indicating that it was one of the slowest.

The men's crew was in the third of five waves. What follows is the men's perspective.

We sat in the shallows watching and cheering for the women's crew as they lined up next to an enormous old lifeboat and watched with horror as the lifeboat proceeded to ram into the women on the first stroke. It's tough to start off such an undertaking in anything other than a smooth, flawless manner, and as we watched an oar shatter and the boats lurch apart, our crew was speechless.

We picked up the blade of the oar and were sure that it was one of the women's, then remembered they had no spare aboard. As we watched the heading out to the first mark, we began to formulate plans to make a flying pass of our spare oar if and when we passed them. The race course was quite similar to a race from the bayside of Hull out around the fist of the peninsula and down the length of the “arm” to the shoulder. Since there is little or no tide in the inland sea, the only issue we dealt with was wind. The major psychological hurdle was that most of the course was out in open water with no landmarks to give a feel for progress or speed.

We lined up in our wave next to an enormous, ten-oared boat, the “Kromhout,” which meant something like “driftwood.” Off we went with a vengeance and we immediately began to “walk” a bit on the other boats. That helped a lot, but the feeling was short-lived.

With a boat length or so lead, the race committee started signalling about a changed turning mark. By a complicated series of bilingual hand signals with the Kromhout's cox, we determined a mutually satisfying turn, only to have the race committee change its mind. Suddenly we both turned and our hard-won two-length lead became a two-length deficit.

Then the true nature of the Dutch athlete showed itself. The Kromhout stopped rowing long enough to let us pull up next to them and the race began again. There was much cheering among the crews and then off we went to cut each other's throats.

We made a long passage out to a lighthouse at the knuckle of the peninsula and found out the incredible drag of the long seaweed beds in the brackish inland water. Your oar would get sucked in and you would very nearly get sucked out. The Kromhout picked a somewhat better route and we were side by side for a mile or more.

As we hit the light, the wind came around behind us for a while, our crew skated out about a hundred yards and we began to overtake a few of the first boats. In among us were a whole spate of the most luscious traditional Dutch sailboats, with their enormous russet gaff sails and the ubiquitous leeboards that allow Dutch sailors to travel in the very-most shallow water. Off in the haze behind us we saw the dreaded ETS crew in their yellow boat, meaning the last and fastest wave was off, and nowhere to be seen was our wounded sister crew.

It was a very high-octane moment, that perhaps I, as coxswain, was the only one taking in. Part of the coxswain's job is to relieve the rowers' pain by constantly informing, entertaining and totally honestly keeping them abreast of what is going on all around them so that they can stick to the business of pulling the boat along with full concentration.

If you'll remember the “out-of-body” analogy of the sprint race, picture twelve disembodied spirits floating above twelve deeply hurting carcasses. That is the cox's job, to create that free-

dom for the crew.

After the lighthouse turn, all landmarks disappeared and all that remained was the spectre of the Kromhout, holding the space between us and occasionally surging to which we needed to respond to hold what felt like a very tenuous lead. It became a strange sort of a pain nightmare where one knew that you had to keep pushing as hard as possible, period.

One of the images that stands out is Chad Wolfe, 14 years old, who came on the trip as a tourist. Now, Chad is a Hull Youth rower along with his sisters Miriam, in the women's boat and Dieckmann in the chase boat, but he was not prepared to be informed with a half an hour to go before the race that he was now the youngest rower in the men's crew and to suit up. Perhaps that was the best way because he never had a chance to think about it.

It was only five miles out as I looked at the chalky consistency of his face that I began to doubt our wisdom. It was then that I began to harp on everyone to start drinking water and juice and to be thinking dehydration. Chad continued throughout that whole race to “soldier” with the best without so much as a flinch.

Dehydration was beginning to take its toll among the whole crew. The first real victim was the starboard stroke oar, Matt. You must be aware that there are various roles in a crew, the most crucial being the stroke oar (the sternmost rower). Since that is the person that the whole crew can all see, the stroke by definition is the person who sets the pace and really leads the crew.

We are fortunate in having a young man who, in my 25 years of rowing, is the toughest, often most heroic stroke oar I've ever seen. He has great physical strength that allows him to push ten or twelve others with impunity, but it is the grit inside, the mental toughness that makes him the spiritual leader when you could care less about winning or losing. If you don't live up to his standards, you don't belong there.

Matt was sitting beside this guy and after 12 hours, I could see the 60 lbs. of muscle that Matt gave up to him was beginning to show. Rather than doing a less-than-sterling job, Matt had the self esteem to give me a wink and say he was losing it, did I want to sit in for a while?

As the elder statesman of the crew and with great guilt about not rowing, I was glad and the presence of fresh blood taking up the load, even for a while, would help. The problem was that it was virtually impossible to tell Matt, as he took the helm, where to steer as all that presented itself was haze and the dubious tracks of those crews ahead of us.

It was a simple, “dead reckoning” guess at what a straight line was. Nevertheless, I threw my creaking bones in the seat beside the stroke oar and took up my job of matching his pace exactly to pass the timing message back to the starboard side.

As the lactose began burning off in my arms and legs and the blisters began, I could only wonder at how all the rest of the crew got this far. Off we went for a couple of miles until I could see the doubt creeping into Matt's eyes, brought up on the broad plains of the Midwest, where the silos were constant landmarks.

He was guessing and looked like he wanted another shot at the seat. He'd been sucking down water and looked immeasurably more human than when he had left, and frankly, I was worried that we might be on a bad tack. I could take the administrative pressure of a poor course better than Matt, so once again we switched.

The crew felt okay and the issue of “where in God's name is the finish line?” was crucial now.

In the interim, we'd been passed by ETS and I extrapolated off Kees, but was beginning to have

some doubts about his strategy. His main opponent in the open water was an unimpressive crew from Harlingen, who nevertheless looked like they were better positioned and heading for what looked like a lighthouse in the drifting haze. Just then I realized that a gritty little boat that we had been "reeling in" for a mile or more was the women. Now we could concern ourselves about how to pass off an oar without giving up an inch, 50 yards off our stern.

Suddenly the problem disappeared as it became clear that it wasn't their oar that broke and not only were they at full-strength, but they were giving us a run for our money! The physics of the boat made a pass inevitable, but it took three-quarters of a mile to pull it off, during which time strangled cheers and yells passed halfheartedly between.

The women looked great and I could only hope that their "psyche" kept up, for there were many miles to go.

After a couple more miles, I could see that Matt's dehydration was coming back, no small part of it being the pressure his partner put on him. The landmark was now pretty clear. We switched again, and I knew I was in for the last few miles.

Then Matt made the boner that will stick with him as long as he rows. The game is psychology. The crew, since it is sitting with its back to the course, must trust the coxswain for data and must trust the data as scrupulously true. If a crew thinks a cox is feeding them bull, the cox at best gets a lot of flack, at worst learns to swim. There is no officer in a rowing boat, or if there is, it's the stroke oar and seldom the cox. It's a true democracy built on shared pain and everyone has a voice.

Matt called the distance to the lighthouse as two miles and we knew that the finish line was not terribly far behind. The crew had been at it for the better part of three hours and mentally factored in the reserves it would take to finish.

Off we went, grinding out mileage and dreaming of what we would do when we passed the lighthouse. Unwittingly, Matt's depth perception of the actual distance improved as the haze began to clear and he realized that his original estimate was off. He quite blithely announced that the lighthouse was now two miles away when we knew damn well we'd just knocked down that same two miles.

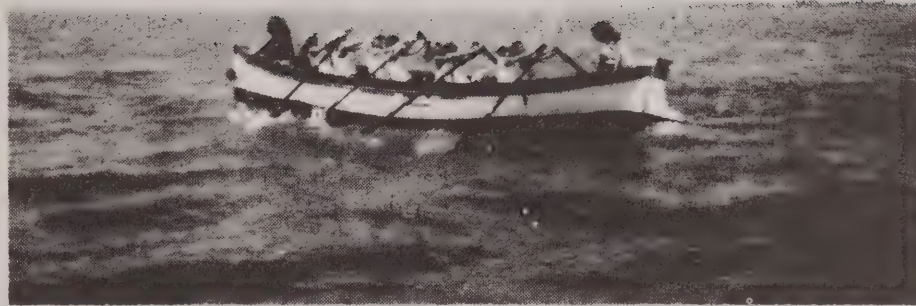
Well, Matt is alive to laugh at that blunder now and the vast majority of people are talking to him, and he became a much better coxswain in that race.

I stopped wondering how one would ship a body back to the U.S., but just barely.

As we rounded the lighthouse, we had reeled in two boats from the first wave, among other things proving the Dutch handicapping system. We thought that there was about a mile to go and that at our current progress, we could catch and pass two more boats.

One of them we recognized as a women's crew from Harlingen and the shards of testosterone left in our depleted systems demanded that we knock them off—and perhaps even the boat that led them by a boat-length. Suddenly, we recognized the committee boat on a slightly different bearing less than a quarter mile off, representing the finish.

All pain left in a moment of horror in the realization that a women's crew might beat us. There is a saying that, "The longest distance in the world is one boat length," or if you have a boat-length lead, you ought to be able to keep it. The psychological burden of gaining that distance and then, after giving 110 percent, having the other crew take it back is gargantuan. Those women had seen us creeping up on them and



The Hull women's crew underway.

simply decided that their only goal in life was to hold us off. It really is remarkable what the human body can endure and when I heard the whole crew of relatively high-pitched voices croaking in unison, I knew in my heart of hearts that there was "no way."

As we lay draped over the seats or peeling our butts of their blisters and watched the wind pipe up, the question of the women's boat was foremost. Are they okay, can they beat the stiffening breeze? Suddenly a committee boat came around the corner. We had a time limit to catch the opening of the main lock into Amsterdam and the last boats were swept off the race course, tacked onto the end of a line of 15 boats.

Off we all went toward the city. I knew all of the last crews would have rowed the remaining mile or so to get across under their own power, but after arguing with themselves silently about keeping on, when a race official gives you a legitimate and kosher "out," the decision to ride rather than row is not too hard.

It was over, everybody won, we'd be standing and not shaking hands for a long time but it felt so good once it stopped hurting.

Your faithful editor informed me that the last installment in this series, which outlined the race from the Dutch village of Marken, had a major flaw in that I never mentioned who won the race.

I think that this omission very aptly reflects the inner feeling of much of open-water racing. A crew only occasionally gets to go head to head with its opponent over the course of a race. More often, crews will spread out over a race course and lose contact with the field, matching up with a particular boat and crew and there appears a very intense race within the race, a subplot to the whole story.

In the Marken race, the ETS crew and the strange little eight-oared boat from Harlingen both passed us at about the 10-mile mark and proceeded to beat each other up, with the Harlingen crew taking first place overall.

We both anticipated this and easily accepted that reality and spent our race holding the ever-present "Kromhout" at bay. The fact that we also overtook a number of other crews up to, but not including the women from Harlingen and the unknown boat that beat them by a boat length, assured us a sixth place out of about 15 crews.

Where the number-three boat snuck in we never determined, but the efficacy of the Dutch handicapping system proved itself as three of the first six boats finished within seconds of each other over many miles and hours.

As we mentioned, the Hull women and a couple of other crews in smaller boats were swept off the course and linked up to a long line of boats being towed by an enormous tug up through the main lock that protected Amsterdam. This lock

was like an entrance through the last protective barrier, over the moat and into the castle that was the city.

Due to the rather intense beating all of the rowers took, we simply allowed ourselves to be passively dragged past monumental engineering efforts that were the dykes and locks. Tiny villages were spread about the area as well as giant power lines and facilities that had some mysterious purpose, well beyond the comprehension of napping rowers.

Since we were separated from Kees (the coach and mentor of the Dutch rowing crew) in the tow line, we kibitzed with the other crews or snacked on the remains of our supplies and enjoyed the countryside while trying to ignore a variety of blisters, the worst of which were our rear ends.

The ancient *thwarts* (seats) may have been worn down by generations of Dutch rowers, but they definitely had a different profile, tushy-wise, than the New World crew's. We knew that we would be standing a lot in the near future.

Into the giant lock squeezed 15 rowing boats, assorted spectator boats and quite a number of other local craft. Slowly we were pumped up to the appropriate level and unceremoniously dumped out onto the other side. We hadn't seen

Too tired to row back, the gigs await a tow.



the women's crew for quite a while, and just as we began to sort ourselves out, Kees and the ETS crew and a number of other boats took off.

Some perhaps misplaced pride kicked in and we followed under oar as other crews linked up and began another tow. Frankly, we had little or no idea what was up but were damned if anyone would row away and leave us to be towed. We seemed to be in some sort of industrial area and weaved painfully behind Kees, who would alternately surge ahead and then slow to a snail's pace.

Suddenly, Kees hopped of the stern of his boat into an *Ijsspolizei*, or sea police boat, looking remarkably like a Boston Whaler Outrage, and off he roared into the traffic, leaving the ETS boys and us to fend for ourselves, along with half of the other crews.

Back he came and off the ETS boat went with a vengeance, followed now by most of the crews. We bobbed and wove our way up to the tiniest foot-bridge we had yet seen and under it like the Seven Dwarfs going into the mine. Imagine our surprise when, emerging on the other side, we saw the entire SAIL'90 tall-ship fleet spread out before us.

By now the uncertainty of what we were doing was making a mutiny possible but suddenly it became clear that a parade of the rowing crews and boats of Holland was in process and we were directly behind the "home team." Blisters and pain began to be replaced by looks of awe as masts and rigging towered over us to a height of 10 to 12 stories. Even as we gaped at the ships—and the crews and spectators gaped back—there was a good deal of jockeying for position in line and a miniature race ensued up the ship basin along the edge of the inner city.

Perhaps the best part of the rowers' parade was a strange moment when first Kees' crew and then ours, followed by each crew in turn, "tossed oars" at a three-masted replica, true to form, of a Dutch Eastindiaman. It was somewhere between the *Mayflower* and the *Constitution* in scale, but with a grandeur not seen in any of the Class A square riggers.

We called to Kees, asking what was going on and he replied, "We're saluting the queen." Later I came to realize that Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands was not aboard, but that this was the respect in which this lovely vessel was held.

By now the pain was reasserting itself with a vengeance and we headed for the berths that would protect the boats overnight and then into the bowels of the city to eat and repair.

The next day, our last official tasks as representatives of the U.S. began with sunny, wind-blown skies and the crews gathering at the docks and mixing themselves for the last grand tour of the city. Crews made up of rowers from all the teams formed up and grabbed boats to weave in and out of the canals with a particular quayside café as the first destination.

Fortunately for us, there was a group of aging graduates of the National Maritime School who made up a boat crew and we followed them through the incredible maze of canals that we had begun to get good at traversing if not navigating.

Had we not had one of Kees' crew members with us, had Erna not been coxing the other boat, I'm quite sure we'd still be wandering there today. It was hard to decide who was having more fun, the people in the endless throngs of houseboats crowding the canals, the people hanging off the bridges watching, or us.

I'm quite sure that the city had never seen so many rowing boats made up of so many different and strange people, all flashing through the narrow canals at top speed. Despite the now partially healed blisters, there was never a serious respite. This was Sunday traffic in the canals

and one true sign of a local was never to back off or loose weigh as we came to seemingly impossible impasses.

There was a distinct advantage to looking like a group of mad Vikings in that when eight or ten boats met at a canal junction, each sure of their own right of way, our numbers almost always prevailed. The concept of gridlock takes on new meaning when floating in the midst of two 60'-long tour boats, half a dozen power craft, and a couple of rowing gigs.

You may remember the concept of "slipping," or swinging one or both banks of oars parallel to the sides to be able to fit into a tiny bridge opening while keeping enough momentum to carry through. Often the bridges were so wide, or our momentum had been so slowed by a boat confrontation, that we had to push hand over hand along the roof of the bridge and pop out into the next section under our own power.

Often too, the houseboats and barges along the side were so close that we'd have to squeeze down the middle of the canal looking into peoples' windows as we ghosted by. Finally, as if by some miracle, we came up to the host café to the cheers of the local crews who had preceded us by quite a bit. Like anywhere, there were fast and slow routes and the local knowledge paid off for some.

As our crews spread out over the quay and made the waiters crazy with orders, the magnitude of the fleet became clear. We filled the street and spilled over in both directions with about 100 or more rowers and families. The locals tended to indulge with a vengeance and the American concept of a "designated driver" took on new relevance. We ultimately were on our way to "Jimi's," the campsite for the men's crew which was located in a relatively suburban area still well away from where we currently were. There we were due to have a picnic, but it took quite a bit of over-the-crowd eye contact to make sure that we had navigators and drivers who could find Jimi's before nightfall.

The concept of underage drinkers with Cokes and Pepsi probably was a bit anachronistic to these folks and I'm afraid we appeared a bit stuffy at times, but we did have the only truly youth crew in the entire gathering and I, for one, had no interest in going one-on-one with the crews off the tall ships, anyway.

As the day wound down, we finally found our way into the campsite where the real person, Jimi, had chickens and ribs and a whole host of other goodies on the fire and where we could finally wind down the process.

Gifts and prizes were exchanged. There are quite a number of Hull Lifesaving Museum garments floating around Holland these days. I was quite unceremoniously dunked into the pond, perhaps as apt punishment for not garnering my fair share of "Amsterdam tattoos" on my butt.

The final official act of the American crews was to mention that we had rowed and raced in New York, San Francisco and France, but had never enjoyed a place like Amsterdam. Further, we'd competed against crews from the West Coast, Eire, Brittany, Cornwall but had never met athletes quite like the Dutch. And finally, that we intended to hold a series of international rowing events during the SAIL'92 celebration in Boston and wanted to repay their hospitality.

So keep the spare room open for the 11-16 of July 1992 and don't worry about your Dutch, they speak better English than most of us.

This is the final entry from the travels of the rowing crews of the Hull Lifesaving Museum to Holland. I would like to thank the readers for bearing with this often wandering discourse on the esoterica of modern fixed seat/open water rowing. I hope that it brought our many sup-

porters a bit closer to the experience of being athletic ambassadors from our communities, and that perhaps as you see the many crews rowing in and around Boston Harbor, the articles made you more aware of the nuances of the people and the crews. Hopefully, it enhances what might otherwise simply be a strange sight.

This particular article is not really about rowing. Rather, it is an explanation of how we accidentally stumbled upon some rather intriguing questions.

But I digress (h.g. surprise).

To wash away the accumulated debris of a week in the hubbub of Amsterdam, a large percentage of the crews boarded a train for the inland seaport of Harlingen.

Kees, our host and the Dutch crews' coach, was off to a silvan cottage in Friesland, which had no means of communication, to recoup before the start of school.

Rene and Erna and all of the young rowers were doing their own version of "unravelling," and we opted for something similar.

Meeting us at the train station were two of the women from the Harlingen crew that nipped us at the end of the Marken race. You can bet they were all over me about the possibility of traveling to the U.S. in 1992 and I could only tell them that so far, it was just talk and we were only laying the groundwork for an international event. Nevertheless, they were adamant that they wanted "in" and we accepted their guidance to the ferry to Terschelling, all the while trading garments and addresses and assurances that we would follow through on the idea and not forget them in the process.

The ferry was as large as any you have ever seen, bigger than the Provincetown ferry and similar to that which runs from Maine to Nova Scotia.

Since you could see the wispy outline of the outer islands of Holland, the vessel seemed like overkill. Wrong! The only thing between the raging, murky waters of the North Sea and the mainland of Holland is a line of major-league barrier islands.

There are five large islands with breaches or "guts" between each: Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. Our only picture of them was that they were like giant versions of Cape Cod, with windswept dunes and wild water.

Also, the National Maritime College was on Terschelling, where a legend in Dutch ocean rowing, Mr. Harms, resided as principal. He had been the other person with whom we had corresponded over the last few years when he invited us to the famous Harlingen-to-Terschelling race.

Now, as we wove our way over seemingly open water, I for one was quite glad we had never taken him up on the invitation.

I say "wove" for, despite the endless, shimmering stretches of water that greeted us, close beneath lay the treacherous "sands of Terschelling," shallow shoals that dried out at low water (incidentally, the only place we saw tidal action in Holland). We were forced to weave a buoyed course-out past the entrance to the harbor and back-to stay in the constantly changing channel.

While we powered out in this enormous ferry, we constantly dodged the famous North Sea barges or "clippers." These were 80'-long, flat-bottomed sailing barges with giant wooden "leeboards" in lieu of keels or centerboards.

The leeboards looked like whales' flippers hanging off the midships of the steel barges and were alternately raised or lowered on the leeward side of the vessel to provide lateral stability, or to prevent leeway while sailing into the wind.

The barges, usually ketches with a small

steering sail, were slipping through the short chop of the force 7+ wind with little or no bounce—due probably to their great weight. They flashed about us with impunity, traveling nearly the same course as the power vessel and only a bit slower.

They did not tack, or sail up into the wind like sailboats that we are familiar with, but rather “wore” or came before the wind in a maneuver that would have caused a terrifying “jibe” as their sail crashed across the wind had they not performed a fascinating little move. As soon as they had committed themselves, “wearing ship,” they dipped the peak of their russet sails and raised or scandalized the tack, effectively spilling all of the wind from the sail, easily coasting through the wind, switching their leeboards while the momentum of their vessel carried them onto their new course.

To the uninitiated, this may seem very confusing, and as a lifetime rower, my description is perhaps fraught with sailing *faux pas*. What was clear to all eyes was that here was a sweet and seamanlike maneuver, accomplished by one person at the helm and a couple of kids handling all the gear. As with everything else that we saw throughout the Netherlands, the system was totally thought out and executed smartly.

We docked on a small municipal dock and an unassuming man walked out of the crowd, recognizing the Americans in an otherwise boatload of Dutch people. He was Mr. Harms, the principal—or really the college president—of the biggest maritime college in the country. He and a gentleman from the tourist office led us to a large pension and made us comfortable. We made plans to meet after dinner and suddenly we entered another world. Please turn to page 20

Although it took a while to sink in, we had left one very distinct part of Holland and entered another. We were now in Friesland. The people spoke a language much more Teutonic than our friends in Amsterdam and we began to realize that these people were of a much more ancient stock than the mainlanders.

Actually, Friesland encompassed much of the mainland area inland from Harlingen and northward. There were vast tracts of wilderness with marsh and lowland somewhat like our bayous but infinitely colder. In the history of the Dutch resistance to the Nazis—a history steeped in stories of resistance, partisans and rescues of Jews—the stories of the ferocity of the Frisians stand out. There were areas that were simply left alone as they were viewed as certain death for German troops.

We recognized that these were a brand-new type of Dutchmen and we nearly had to start from scratch. Fortunately, as with the Amsterdamers, their hospitality was universal. We wanted to try out the local waters and the college's rowing boats, just in a recreational sense. We were too rowed-out to think in any other terms.

In the evening, as we walked on the quay admiring not only the rowing boats but also the barges, we happened upon the local lifesaving boats, those of the private contract rescue and towing boats, as well as those of the *Koninklijke Noorden-Zuid Hollandische Redding Maatschappij*, or the KNZHRM. These are the modern equivalent of the volunteer lifesavers of Holland. There is a tradition along the North Atlantic and the North Sea of these sorts of volunteer rescue units. In England and Eire, they are known as the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI), the only group in modern Eire still carrying the appellation “royal.”

The tradition translated to the New World as the Massachusetts Humane Society, first funded by shippers in Boston to help local coastal people as they went out to rescue mariners in

danger in the treacherous waters of Massachusetts Bay.

The most famous of these were the people of Hull and Cohasset and the best known was Joshua Jaames. The federal government took the Mass. Humane Society model and then created the U.S. Lifesaving Service, which became one of the roots of the modern Coast Guard.

The tradition of volunteer lifesaving ran so deep locally that even when there was a crew of paid surfmen at the Point Allerton Station, the volunteer crews remained active and continued to use the surfboat *Nantasket* even into this century. This was indicative of the tradition that the mariners routinely put themselves in harm's way when they saw the need—for the next time, the victim could be you. This law of the sea was very much in evidence in the Frisian coastal villages.

The danger of the North Sea was very evident as the largest “Avon” we had ever seen demonstrated—coming in from a rescue on the evening we arrived, and taking off for another the next morning while we rowed around the harbor. As we surveyed some of the other KNZHRM craft, we came upon a 60-foot steel-hulled vessel, very obviously having seen some hard use up against the hulls of other vessels with a large net hung from stanchions amidships. It is only speculation, but we figured this net was a last resort, there to catch crewmen in a desperate leap in pitching seas.

To be frank, the idea of trying to hit that net from another ship under duress is a longshot, at best. In addition to this very high-tech equipment, some of the older, tried-and-true methods are still in readiness.

On the next island, Ameland, there is a 36-foot motorized lifeboat, drawn by a team of eight horses, still capable of being drawn across the vast dunes and being launched into the surf. They have a fascinating beachcart arrangement that has the horses pulling the surfboat in four pairs up to the edge of the water, then the double poles of the cart split to either side of the cart, the horse teams reverse their direction and draw the cart and the boat out into the surf up to the heads of the horses and to the point where the surfboat floats free.

The horses reverse again and draw the empty cart ashore to await the return of the boat. Dutch ingenuity and seamanship at work again, all manned by highly skilled and motivated volunteers.

The next couple of days were the antithesis of the wild downtown days in Amsterdam. Terschelling stretches for 15 miles, pine barrens and dunes, endless bike paths and wildlife reserves that made Matt Tobin, our resident naturalist, giddy.

An interesting undercurrent to this, almost surreal by comparison, was the Dutch Air Force gunnery range on the eastern end of the island. You could take a picnic lunch to a blueberry covered dune and watch wave after wave of supersonic fighters strafe and bomb an area the size of Wellfleet. The cannons would bark and the gatling-type machine guns would fire with the sound of ripping canvas.

As bizarre as it seemed, it was intriguing, particularly in light of the fact that we were by then about eight days into the invasion of Kuwait and the concept of warfare in the sand dunes was not terribly farfetched.

We watched videos of the H-T races and wandered the cafés and flea markets. We visited Mr Harms' school with its integrated windmill and photovoltaic array that covered the school's needs and fed back into the island's power grid as well. They were creating the basis for a electrically self-sufficient community.

Slowly, the realization dawned that our days

in Holland were numbered. We had talked with everyone about some sort of reciprocal series of races during the Tall Ships' visit in 1992 and promised everyone involved that we would do our best and get word back to all.

We had learned a vast new array of skills, and done so in boats that spanned the last century of Dutch maritime technology. We had seen a land and a society wrested from the sea, seen it in a way that no textbook could communicate. We had been bathed in Dutch hospitality and history, all there for the taking, and there remained only this nagging question about that famous resident of Hull.

As we rode back on the ferry, retracing our steps to Amsterdam, one of the Hull kids kept asking, “Wasn't Joshua Jaames Dutch?”

Well, his name was anglicized to James, but even the restaurant named after him in Hull uses the *Jaames* spelling. A little research after we got back revealed that his father was born in 1782 in a town called Dokkum. I looked at a modern map, and sure enough, Dokkum was inland in Friesland, along a canal southeast of Ameland.

It still did not ring totally true.

I have an old, pre-WWI atlas with all of the strange geopolitical vagaries of that time. As I flipped open to turn-of-the-century Holland, there were all of the familiar spots. Amsterdam was hard up against the Zuider Zee, which was tidal and right up to the gates of the city. There was no inner dike from Enkhuizen to the mainland, no outer dike from Harlingen to the north of Holland. Marken was still an isolated island. Texel and Vlieland and Terschelling seemed further out in the North Sea but Ameland was tied to the mainland of Frisia by a thin dike, tenuously connecting it to the coastal port of Dokkum.

Thus, there seem to be some pretty exciting threads that some enterprising historian might trace from the long-standing traditions of the Dutch mariners to the greatest lifesaver and most famous resident of Hull, Joshua Jaames. ∞

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Rebuilding the Bottomless Boat

Dad had always said we could rebuild my bottomless boat when I learned to swim. Well, at age 11 I returned from Boy Scout Camp with a First Class swimming achievement and a rowing merit badge in hand, determined not to waste any more time.

Three years earlier our family had moved to Indiana from Chicago's North Shore, where the derelict had been found. Utterly unchanged, the hulk hung from the rafters in our garage. Even the two beams we had once nailed across the bottom to support the boat atop a Radio Flyer wagon were still in place.

I had already collected a small library for the study of boatbuilding. Included were current issues of Popular Mechanix magazine containing boat plans and Boats Anyone Can Build, published hardbound in 1949 by Popular Science. There was also a wonderful old book Dad gave me titled 101 Things a Boy Can Build. Its musty yellowed pages showed how to ski on barrel staves, how to sail a bicycle, how to make stilts or a crystal radio receiver and how to build an iceboat starting with some old skates; in fact, just about anything a kid might want, including watercraft.

This literature, seasoned with advice from Dad and details remembered from the sailing prams at camp, just about covered all I needed to know. One chapter in Boats Anyone Can Build detailed a flat-bottomed 91/2" "Plywood Sailing Dinghy," which became my focal point.

One Saturday soon after my return from camp, we hitched the utility trailer behind our old Chevy and went to the lumberyard. Topping our list was a sheet of 1/4" marine plywood. We needed a 2x4 for a mast and in a stack of 16-footers found a nice one having only a few small knots. Other items on our list were clear and #2 white pine in various widths to be used for frames, keel, thwarts and rudder.

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The hulk was unlashed from the rafters and set inverted on grocery crates under the shade of our backyard maple.

The old fasteners were extracted from the chine and the surfaces planned down to better wood. I found our two carpenter's planes to be unwieldy beasts and resorted to wood rasps for the most part.

Bottom frames were cut from 1x2 pine and fitted between the original topsides frames. Then we applied a generous trickle of some tarlike gunk all around the chine and across the frames. The man at the boat shop had said it was just the thing for sealing a new bottom. The stuff sure smelled strong. I hoped it would make up for the less-than-true surfaces I had obtained with the rasps. My library showed oakum cord used in seams like this, but Dad had seen lots of roughly planked skiffs and john boats on the Tippycanoe River where he grew up, and apparently none of them had oaken in the seams.

We set the rough-cut plywood in place, weighted with large rocks so it would conform with the rocker, and secured it with brass screws at stem and stern. Fortunately, the goop did not harden quickly because driving the rest of the screws took a few days. Finally, the plywood was trimmed closer with a coping saw and sanded flush.

All the tools we used were elbow powered, and I discovered that building boats required lots more of it than any project attempted up to that time, including the tree house Dad helped us put up the year before. Our saws were two old Disstons, a crosscut and a rip, which had belonged to my grandfather. There was a keyhole saw, too, which came in handy for cutting the daggerboard slot.

There were several wood rasps, including a really hairy one once used for shoeing horses "down home." Down home was where

all of Dad's old tools had originally come from. He's given some of them to my brothers and me over the years since. We've all got table saws, band saws, saber saws, routers and multi-speed reversible electric drills now, but it's good to have those old things around.

Of course we had pliers and screw drivers of various types and sizes. Then there was a ball-peen hammer for finishing rivets as well as both curved and straight-claw carpenter's hammers.

Fine fits could be shaved with any of three mortise chisels struck with our choice of rustic wooden mallets, heavy and not-so-heavy, that Dad liked to make himself.

But the neatest tools were those for drilling, boring and countersinking holes. This boat needed about a hundred times more holes than anything I'd ever made before. Dad had a nice bit brace along with all the screw-tipped double-spur auger bits from 1/4" to 1 1/4" diameter one might want. And if those weren't enough, there was an auger he kept wrapped in oiled paper that had an adjustable spur so we could bore holes up to about 3" diameter. The brace had wooden handles worn smooth as anything, and a reversible ratchet, too, so we could bore holes and drive or extract screws in quarters too tight for a full swing around.

Then there was the Stanley drill, with an intriguing iron frame and wooden handle and crank knob even nicer than those on the brace. There was a threaded wood cap on the handle so we could keep drill bits right there inside. We never did, though, because Dad liked to have a wood block in which a hole had been drilled for each bit. The Stanley's gears made such a pleasant sound when spinning that it was easy to drill too deep.

After my friend Joey and I had broken off several brass screws fastening the bottom, Dad said we probably weren't drilling the

pilot holes correctly; that if we took time to drill a hole matching the unthreaded shank through plywood and a little into the chine, then a smaller deeper hole for the threads, finishing with a countersink for the head, the screws wouldn't break. I had a cheaper drill of my own whose gears clattered instead of purred, so we set ourselves up to drill the big hole with the Stanley, the little hole with mine, and the counter with the brace, completely eliminating time required for changing bits.

The Nipper's mast (by now she had acquired a name) was carved from 2x4 framing lumber. Knowing that wouldn't match the spruce spars on the prams at camp, we increased the cross-section somewhat. With the full stock dimension extending upward to a little above the gooseneck, we laid out a faintly convex line which tapered to 11/2" square at the head. We had studied the wood carefully so the line passed all the knots by a fair margin. Then we began sawing with the well-worn six-point ripper. With promises of fine sailing, my next younger brother and two of my friends were recruited for help. Before we finished, Dad bought a new and considerably sharper saw which was appreciated by all hands. Still, the cut took almost a week.

Rip sawing most of a 13' board was hard work. Sometimes Dad would do a foot or so in the evening after supper. Left to ourselves we could be distracted by almost anything that sounded like more fun, such as a softball game or a ride over to the gravel pit to climb around on the abandoned machinery.

For rounding the spar, Dad presented me with a brand new drawknife. He had often said it would be just the thing for shaping the mast. He seemed to have a special regard for drawknives, and their cousin the spokeshave; influenced I supposed by memories of his father taking rough planks from his steam sawmill and paring them down to make something useful. In fact, our collection of family treasures includes a rude sauerkraut masher carved from a hardwood board with a drawknife.

Boy! Could that thing whack off wood! I practiced on scrap lumber to develop some control over the powerful blade. For a long time that drawknife was the classiest tool in my possession. I still have it, and though it's used from time to time to whap bark off green stuff, it looks as good as new.

Our boatbuilding skills may have been rather rough, but my brothers and I learned to respect tools. Anything left out all night where the dew might get on it was sure to bring a stern lecture from Dad at supper because he was sure to have spotted it when he'd left for the office early that morning. Each evening we covered the boat with a tattered old canvas tarp, weighted with rocks to withstand wind, and it was OK to leave ordinary tools such as screwdrivers underneath.

After two coats of spar varnish had dried we went back to the boat shop for some bronze sail track and slides. At about \$12, it was the most expensive item of gear on the boat. The little brass screws for fastening the track were easy to drive just by poking a starter hole with an awl, so that didn't take long.

A daggerboard trunk was made from leftover plywood and odds and ends of one-by-pine. It was simple enough to build, however, the installation was a moment of truth. Taking a deep breath, we bored a row



of 1" diameter holes through the new keel and bottom, then cut a straight slot with the pointy keyhole saw. The trunk was sealed with more of our sticky goop and drawn down tight with ordinary zinc-plated steel carriage bolts. It was my first exposure to these clever bolts, which Dad said were used to fasten wagon boxes so you wouldn't snag a shovel unloading grain. Here they would keep the Nipper from snagging gravel on the shore.

The daggerboard was a solid oak extension leaf from a massive old table, also from down home, that Mom used with her Cub Scout den. She had four such leaves, but never needed more than two. Since the oak was plenty long, I decided that our board should extend a foot deeper than those in the prams at camp. The forward edge was rounded and the after edge tapered with the drawknife, but it didn't just walk right through like it did on pine.

The rudder profile on the plans for the 91/2' dinghy had pleasing curves, even though it had been designed to fit the dimensions of a single wide plank. Our widest board wouldn't stretch, so we added a strip of one-by with long slender screws and more of the goopy gunk. The shape was painstakingly enlarged to full size and laid out on the wood. Cutting was done with the coping saw, then I rounded and tapered the blade with my drawknife.

What to use for a tiller? Dad had kept a cracked hickory handle from a garden hoe and said that the good portion would be plenty strong. The years would prove him right. Nothing on the Nipper ever broke.

We bought a pair of galvanized pintles at the boat shop, one a bit longer than the other, but only one gudgeon because we already had one on the boat. Amazingly, after years of abuse there was still one article of bronze hardware that hadn't been lost.

A crisis arose when I discovered the hole in the original gudgeon was much too large for the new pintles, but Dad had another trick up his sleeve. He said we could fill the hole with solder and drill a smaller one, the same way machinists make babbitt bearings. I was skeptical, and would much preferred to have bought a proper pair of gudgeons.

Well, we melted part of a bar of solder in an iron ladle, heated the gudgeon, wiped the hole with flux, set it on a bed of sand on a brick, and poured in the solder. His idea proved worthwhile because the solder never wore out.

This was typical of our approach. The boat books would tell about proper methods

and hardware, and we would discuss these things at supper. Then Dad would show me how to make something that would serve as well, at little or no cost.

"Down home" had been rural Indiana where making do with what was on hand had been a way of life. Conspicuously apart from my boat books, *101 Things*—seemed to reflect much of Dad's resourcefulness. Or maybe it's the other way around. The Boy Scouts put a lot of stock in self-reliance, too, but they had to get up pretty early in the morning to teach more of that than I could get at home.

For new bow, middle, and stern thwarts we used 1x10 No. 2 white pine. The knots never fell out. In fact, finished with spar varnish, the knots and swirling grain looked nice.

The remains of many coats of paint in various colors were laboriously sanded off a pair of knees joining gunwales to transom, revealing stout oak. A hole was drilled in each for the mainsheet traveler, then varnished.

A small foredeck was made of leftover fir plywood and this too was finished bright.

Dad maintained that we shouldn't walk around right on the bottom and frames, insisting that I add floor boards. We discussed this a lot because all of the rowing skiffs did not seem to need floors; in fact, we braced our heels on the frames. In the end I had to admit he had a point because the Lightening at camp had cedar floor boards and the prams had squares of plywood fastened over the frames. Our floor boards were half-by-four clear pine door casing. From the same section of the lumberyard, the new outwales and inwales were clear pine door stop.

Everything that hadn't been varnished was painted white with two coats of Interlux boat enamel. Brushed on thick in an attempt to seal up the badly checked topsides, it took forever to dry; but once hard, it never peeled off.

By golly, the Nipper now looked like a pretty fine sailboat! Even Judy, the girl next door, said so.

Well, our intention had been to enjoy a good part of summer vacation out sailing. As it turned out, Labor Day passed and school resumed with the Nipper still lying under the tarp. How we finished the rig, lofted a sail, and finally, how it all performed, will be another story.

Moby Nick



Rained Out Messabout

I couldn't have picked a worst weekend for weather for our little initial attempt at a homebuilt small boat "messabout" last October. A tropical storm was moving past New England not far offshore and high winds and heavy rains were predicted. But, on the Saturday morning it was not yet raining here on the Massachusetts north shore and the rain was predicted for later on in the day and mostly in coastal areas, so we decided to go ahead with our plans for gathering at inland Webster, Massachusetts on Webster Lake near Worcester.

By the time we got there we had passed through torrential rainfall, but at the Lake it was not raining, just very threatening. Obviously the weather had discouraged many who had indicated an interest in bringing their homebuilt boats to the meet, for ultimately during the two hours free of rain from 10 a.m. to noon, a half dozen of us comprised the entire assembled multitude. Then at noon serious rain returned, and since nobody else had turned up in over an hour, we packed it in. Later phone calls revealed that several others had arrived there later in the afternoon and wondered where we were.

One who tried to come and decided to retire in the face of the weather was Bob Whittier of Duxbury, MA. His experience was as follows:

"We can't control the weather so the Webster gathering was rained out. You may be wondering what various would-be attendees did, so here's what happened to me.

The night before, we called the "after 6 p.m." phone number to find out if it would be held, as the weather forecast was unpromising. It turned out to be your number and on the basis of your optimism I decided to get ready to shove off early on Saturday morning.

Saturday morning dawned foggy and rainy here in Duxbury on the coast, but as the forecast was for better weather inland I decided to at least shove off. By the time I got to Middleboro the rain had stopped, the clouds had lifted appreciably and I kept on with increased optimism. But by the time I got to Foxboro it was again raining just as hard as it had been in Duxbury. So I detoured to my son's house in Norwood and we called you to check. Getting no response, we assumed you had left, and while we were calling, the rain stopped and the clouds lightened appreciably.

ly. We called the police in Webster to find out about the weather there. They said it was raining hard and was supposed to continue through much of the day.

This put me in a quandary as I was then about halfway to Webster. My son remarked, "Well the more enthusiastic types of boat men won't let the rain stop them, and some of them will probably be there." So, unsure if the event had been cancelled or not, I decided to continue on. All the way the weather improved, the clouds lifting and the skies brightening. Then when I arrived in Webster, the rain came down again and really poured. I missed the entrance sign to the beach as it is set back about 50 feet from the highway, and with the rain streaming down my windshield, visibility was poor. After travelling south into Connecticut a few miles, I realized I had missed it, and returned. This time I located it, but found nobody there when I pulled up at the beach. I must have just missed those of you who had been there until midday.

The beach and parking lot on the Lake were very impressive and you sure found an excellent spot for the gathering. I look forward to your planned event there in early Spring."

We do plan to try in the Spring, with an improved last minute information phone to deal with the vagaries of our New England weather.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks



Above from the top: Dick Willis built this Bolger Cartopper, it was by far the largest vessel at the Messabout. Jane Hicks enjoying her very own Cockleshell, designed and built by the Editor.

Opposite page from the top: Betsy Woodward's geodesic canoe looks like a Platt Monfort design, but Betsy designed and built it herself, using Platt's technique. "I was covering aircraft like this back in the '50's," Betsy explained (she's a former test pilot). Robert Sparks designed and built this light double paddle canoe, and sported a straw boater for the occasion. Jim Heter designed and built his "Pak-Yak", (featured in the July 15, 1990 issue). Griff Venator designed and built this kayak, one of several small boats he has created.



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CHAPTER VI

THE BIRCH-BARK

How to Build a Real Birch-Bark Canoe or a Canvas Canoe on a "Birch-Bark" Frame—How to Mend a Birch-Bark

ALTHOUGH the Indian was the first to build these simple little boats, some of his white brothers are quite as expert in the work. But the red man can outdo his white brother in navigating the craft. The only tools required in building a canoe are a knife and awl, a draw-shave and a hammer. An Indian can do all of his work with a knife.

Several years ago canvas began to be used extensively in canoe-building, instead of birch bark, and it will eventually entirely supersede birch, although nothing can be found that bends so gracefully. There are several canvas-canoe factories in Maine, and the canoes made of canvas have both the symmetry and the durability of the birches. They are also a trifle cheaper, but if the real thing and sentiment are wanted, one should never have anything but a bark craft.

If properly handled, a good canoe will safely hold four men. Canoes intended for deep water should have considerable depth. Those intended for shoal water, such as trout-fishers use, are made as flat as possible. Up to the time when canoeing was introduced the materials for building craft of this kind could be found all along the rivers. Big birch-trees grew in countless numbers, and clear, straight cedar was quite as plentiful within a few feet of the water's edge. Now one must go miles back into the dense forests for such materials, and even then seldom does it happen that two suitable trees are found within sight of one or the other. Cedar is more difficult of the two to find.

The Tree

The tree is selected, first, for straightness; second, smoothness; third, freedom from knots or limbs; fourth, toughness of bark; fifth, small size of eyes; sixth, length (the last is not so important, as two trees can be put together), and, seventh, size (which is also not so important, as the sides can be pieced out).

Dimensions

The average length of canoe is about 19 feet over all, running, generally, from 18 to 22 feet for a boat to be used on inland waters, the sea-going canoes being larger, with relatively higher bows. The average width is about 30 inches inside, measured along the middle cross-bar; the greatest width inside is several inches below the middle cross-bar, and is several inches greater than the width measured along said cross-bar.

The measurements given below are those of a canoe 19 feet over all: 16 feet long inside, measured along the curve of the gunwale; 30 inches wide inside. The actual length inside is less than 16 feet, but the measurement along the gunwales is the most important.

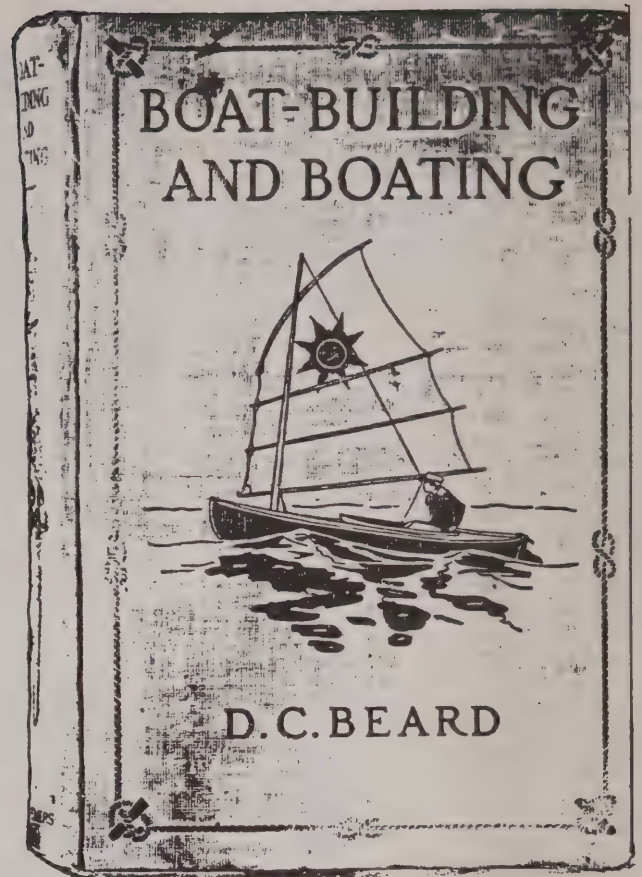
Bark

Bark can be peeled when the sap is flowing or when the tree is not frozen—at any time in late spring, summer, and early fall (called summer bark); in winter during a thaw, when the tree is not frozen, and when the sap may have begun to flow.

Difference in the Bark

Summer bark peels readily, is smooth inside, of a yellow color, which turns reddish upon exposure to the sun, and is chalky-gray in very old canoes. Winter bark adheres closely, and forcibly brings up part of the inner bark, which on exposure turns dark red. This rough surface may be moistened and scraped away. All winter-bark canoes must be thus scraped and made smooth. Sometimes the dark red is left in the form of a decorative pattern extending around the upper edge of the canoe, the rest of the surface being scraped smooth.

Process of Peeling



The tree should be cut down so that the bark can be removed more easily.

A log called a skid (Fig. 79) is laid on the ground a few feet from the base of the tree, which will keep the butt of the tree off the ground when the tree is felled. The limbs at the top will

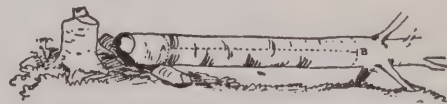


Fig. 79.—Showing how the butt is kept off the ground.



Fig. 80.



Fig. 81.

keep the other end off the ground. A space is cleared of bushes and obstructions where the tree is to fall.

After the tree has been cut down, a cut is made in a straight line (A, B, Fig. 79), splitting the bark from top to bottom, and a ring cut at A and B (Fig. 79). When sap is flowing, the bark is readily removed; but in winter the edges of the cut are raised with a knife, and a thin, pliant hard-wood knife or "spud" is pushed around under the bark.

Toasting

After the bark has dropped upon the ground the inside surface is warmed with a torch, which softens and straightens it out flat. The torch is made of a bundle of birch bark held in a split stick (Fig. 81).

It is then rolled up like a carpet, with inside surface out, and tightly bound, generally with cedar bark when the latter can be procured (Fig. 80).

If the tree is long enough, a piece is taken off at least nineteen feet in length, so that the ends of the canoe may not be pieced

out. A few shorter pieces are wrapped up with the bundle for piecing out the sides.

The Roll

is taken on the back in an upright position, and is carried by a broad band of cedar bark, passing under the lower end of the roll and around in front of the breast and shoulders (Fig. 82).

Effects of Heat

It is laid where the sun will not shine on it and harden it. The first effect of heat is to make it pliant. Long exposure to heat or to dry atmosphere makes it hard and brittle.

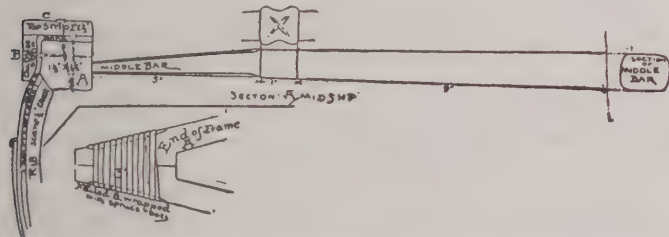
The Woodwork

is as follows:

Five cross-bars of rock-maple (Figs. 83, 85, and 91). All the rest is of white cedar, taken from the heart. The sap-wood absorbs water, and would make the canoe too heavy, so it is rejected. The wood requires to be straight and clear, and it is best to use perfectly green wood for the ribs.

Two strips 16½ feet long, 1½ inch square, tapering toward either end, the ends being notched (Fig. 83 A) is a section of the 16½ foot strip. Each strip is mortised for the cross-bars (see Fig. 85). The lower outside edge is bevelled off to receive the ends of the ribs.

The dimensions of the cross-bars (Fig. 85) are 12 x 2 x ½ inch, 22½ x 2 x ¾ inch, and 30 x 2 x ¾ inch. The cross-bars are placed in position, and the ends of the gunwales are tied with spruce



Figs. 83 and 83½.—Showing section of canoe amidship and section and shape of gunwale and top view.

roots after being nailed together to prevent splitting. Each bar is held in place by a peg of hard wood.

For stitching and wrapping, long, slender roots of spruce, or sometimes of elm, are peeled and split in two. Black ash splits are rarely used except for repairing (Figs. 86, 87, 88).

Next we need (B, Fig. 83) two strips 1 or 1½ inch by ½ inch, a little over 19 feet long, to go outside of gunwales, and (C, Fig. 83) two top strips, same length, 2 inches wide in middle, tapering to 1 inch at either end, 1½ inch thick.

Ribs

About fifty in number (Figs. 91, 92) are split with the grain (F, Fig. 92), so that the heart side of the wood will be on the inner side when the rib is bent. The wood bends better this way. They must be perfectly straight-grained and free from knots. Ribs for the middle are four inches wide, ribs for the ends about three inches wide (Fig. 91 and G, Fig. 92), and are whittled down to a scant half an inch (Fig. 93). Green wood is generally used, and before it has had any time to season. The ribs may be softened by pouring hot water on them, and should be bent in pairs to prevent breaking (Fig. 90). They are held in shape by a band of cedar bark passed around outside.

The ribs are of importance in the shaping of the canoe. The

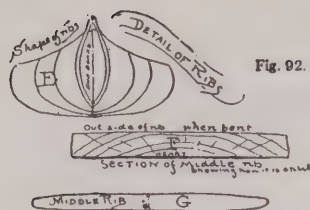
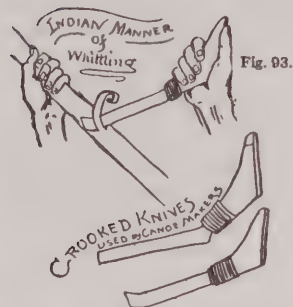


Fig. 82.—Mode of carrying roll.



Details of ribs, Indian knives and method of using them.

sides bulge out (Figs. 91, 92). The shape of the ribs determines the depth and stability of the canoe.

Lining Strips

Other strips, an eighth of an inch thick, are carefully whittled out, with straight edges. They are a little over eight feet long, and are designed to be laid inside on the bark, edge to edge, between the bark and the ribs. These strips lap an inch or two where they meet, in the middle of the canoe, and are wider here than at the ends, owing to the greater circumference of the canoe in the middle.

Seasoning

All the timber is carefully tied up before building and laid away. The ribs are allowed to season perfectly, so that they will keep their shape and not spring back.

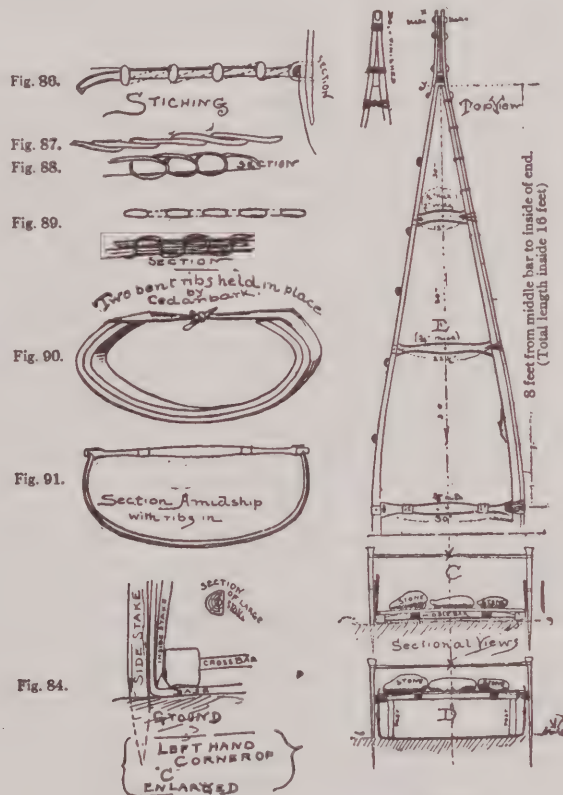


Fig. 85.

Details of sticking and framework of canoe.

The Bed

Next the bed is prepared on a level spot, if possible shaded from the sun. A space is levelled about three and a half feet wide and a little longer than the canoe. The surface is made perfectly smooth. The middle is one or two inches higher than either end.

Building

The frame is laid exactly in the middle of the bed. A small post is driven in the ground (Fig. 94), on which each end of the frame will rest. Stakes, two or three feet long and about two inches in diameter, are whittled flat on one side, and are driven with the flat side toward the frame at the following points, leav-

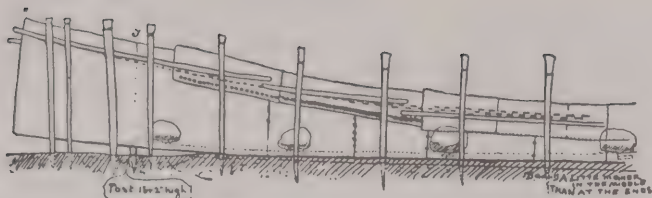


Fig. 94.—Showing stakes supporting bark sides; note stones on the bottom.

ing a space of about a quarter of an inch between the stake and the frame (Fig. 94): One stake an inch or two on either side of each cross-bar, and another stake half way between each cross-bar. This makes eleven stakes on each side of the frame. Twelve additional stakes are driven as follows: One pair facing each other, at the end of the frame; another pair, an inch apart, about six inches from the last pair, measuring toward the ends of the canoe; and another pair, an inch apart, a foot from these. These last stakes will be nine and a half feet from the middle of the frame, and nineteen feet from the corresponding stakes at the other end. Next, these stakes are all taken up, and the frame laid aside.

To Soften the Bark

Next the bark is unrolled. If it has laid until it has become a little hardened, it is placed in the river or stream for a day or two. It is spread out flat, and laid upon the bed with the gray or outside surface up. The inside surface is placed downward, and becomes the outside of the canoe.

The frame is replaced upon the bark, so that it will be at the same distance from each side and end of the bed that it was before. At each cross-bar boards are laid across the frame, and heavy stones are laid upon them to keep the frame solid and immovable upon the bark (Fig. 85, C). The edges of the bark are next bent up in a perpendicular position, and in order that it may bend smoothly slits are made in the bark in an outward direction, at right angles to the frame. A cut is made close to the end of each cross-bar, and one half way between each bar, which is generally sufficient to allow the bark to be bent up smoothly. As the bark is bent up, the large stakes are slipped back in the holes which they occupied before, and the tops of each opposite pair are connected with a strip of cedar bark which keeps the stakes perfectly perpendicular. At each end it is necessary to take out a small triangular piece or gore, so that the edges may come together without overlapping.

Next twenty-two pieces of cedar, one to two feet long, and about $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, are split out, and whittled thin and flat at one end. This sharpened edge is inserted between the outside edge of the frame and the bent-up bark, opposite each large stake. The other end of the chisel-shaped piece is tightly tied to the large stake outside. By means of the *large outside stake* and the inside "stake," so-called, the bark is held in a perfectly upright position; and in order to keep the bent-up part more perfectly flat and smooth, the strips of cedar are pushed in lengthwise between the stakes and the bark, on each side of the bark, as shown in sectional views (Fig. 85, C, D).

Sometimes, in place of having temporary strips to go on outside of the bark, the long outside strip (B, Fig. 83), is slipped in place instead.

It may now be seen if the bark is not wide enough. If it is not, the sides must be pieced out with a narrow piece, cut in such a way that the eyes in the bark will run in the same direction as those of the large piece.

As a general rule, from the middle to the next bar the strip for piecing is placed on the inside of the large piece, whose upper edge has previously been trimmed straight, and the two are sewed together by the stitch shown in Fig. 86, the spruce root being passed over another root laid along the trimmed-off edge of the large piece of bark to prevent the stitches from tearing out. From the second bar to the end of the canoe, or as far as may be necessary, the strip is placed outside the large piece, and from the

second to the end bar is sewed as in Fig. 87, and from the end bar to the end of the canoe is stitched as in Fig. 88.

Next, the weights are taken off the frame, which is raised up as follows, the bark remaining flat on the bed as before:

A post eight inches long is set up under each end of middle cross-bar (Fig. 85, D), one end resting on the bark and the other end supporting either end of the middle cross-bar. Another post, nine inches long, is similarly placed under each end of the next cross-bar. Another, twelve inches long, is placed under each end of the end cross-bar; and another, sixteen and a half or seventeen inches, supports each end of the frame.

As the posts are placed under each cross-bar, the weights are replaced; and as these posts are higher at the ends than in the middle, the proper curve is obtained for the gunwales. The temporary strips, that have been placed outside the bent-up portion of the bark, are removed, and the long outside strip before mentioned (B, Fig. 83) is slipped in place between the outside stakes and the bark. This strip is next nailed to the frame with wrought-iron nails that pass through the bark and are clinched on the inside. This outside strip has taken exactly the curve of the frame, but its upper edge, before nailing, was raised so as to be out an eighth of an inch (or the thickness of the bark) higher than the top surface of the frame, so that when the edges of the bark have been bent down, and tacked flat to the frame, a level surface will be presented, upon which the wide top strip will eventually be nailed. Formerly the outer strip was bound to the frame with roots every few inches, but now it is nailed.

The cross-bars are now lashed to the frame, having previously been held only by a peg. The roots are passed through holes in the end of the bars, around the outside strip (see right-hand side of Fig. 85). A two-inch piece of the bark, which has been tacked



Fig. 95.—Shows how to describe arc of circle for bow, also ornamentation of winter bark.

down upon the frame, is removed at the ends by the cross-bars, where the spruce roots are to pass around, and the outside strip is cut away to a corresponding extent, so that the roots, when wrapped around, will be flush with the surface above.

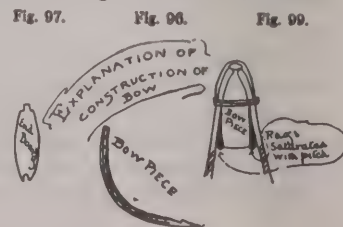
All the stakes are now removed, and laid away to be ready for the next canoe that may be built, and the canoe taken upside down upon two horses or benches, that will keep the craft clear of the ground.

The shape of the bow is now marked out, either by the eye or with mechanical aid, according to the following rule: An arc of a circle, with a radius of seventeen inches, is described (Fig. 95) having as a centre a point shown in diagram. The bark is then cut away to this line.

Bow-piece

To stiffen the bow, a bow-piece of cedar, nearly three feet long (Fig. 96), an inch and a half wide, and half an inch thick on one edge, bevelled and rounded off toward the other edge, is needed. To facilitate bending edgewise it is split into four or five sections (as in Fig. 98) for about thirty inches. The end that remains unsplit is notched on its thicker edge (Fig. 96) to receive the lower end of an oval cedar board (Fig. 97) that is placed upright in the bow underneath the tip of the frame. It is bent to correspond with the curve of the boat, with the thin edge toward the outside of the circle, and wrapped with twine, so that it will keep its shape. The bow-piece is placed between the edges of the bark, which are then sewed together by an over-and-over stitch, which passes through the bow-piece.

A pitch is prepared of rosin and grease, in such proportions that it will



neither readily crack in cold water nor melt in the sun. One or the other ingredient is added until by test it is found just right.

Patching and Pitching

The canoe is now placed on the ground, right side up, and all holes are covered on the inside with thin birch bark that is pasted down with hot pitch. A strip of cloth is saturated with hot pitch, and pressed into the cracks on either side of the bow-piece inside, between the bark and the bow-piece (Fig. 99).

The thin longitudinal strips are next laid in position, edge to edge, lapping several inches by the middle; they are whittled thin here so as to lap evenly.

The ribs are next tightly driven in place, commencing at the small end ones and working toward the middle. The end ribs may be two or three inches apart, being closer toward the middle, where, in many cases, they touch. Usually, they are about half an inch apart in the middle. Each rib is driven into place with a square-ended stick and a mallet.

The ends are stuffed with shavings (Fig. 100 and "Section" Fig. 100½), and an oval cedar board is put in the place formerly occupied by the post that supported the end of the frame. The lower end rests in the notch of the bow-piece, while the upper is cut with two shoulders that fit underneath each side of the frame; Fig. 97 shows the cedar board.

The top strip is next nailed on to the frame. Almost always a piece of bark, a foot or more long, and nine or ten inches wide, is bent and slipped under, between both top and side strips and the bark. The ends of this piece hang down about three inches below the side strips. The loose ends of the strips are bound together, as in diagram, and the projecting tips of both strips and bow-piece are trimmed off close.

Next the canoe is turned upside down. If winter bark has been used, the surface is moistened and the roughness scraped off with a knife. Generally the

red rough surface is left in the form of a decorative pattern several inches wide around the upper edge (Fig. 95). Sometimes the maker's name and date are left in this way.

Finally, a strip of stout canvas, three or four inches wide, is dipped in the melted pitch and laid on the stitching at the ends, extending up sufficiently far above the water-line. All cracks and seams are covered with pitch, laid on with a small wooden paddle. While still soft, a wet finger or the palm of the hand is rubbed over the pitch to smooth it down before it hardens.

Leaks

Water is placed inside, and the leaky places marked, to be stopped when dry. A can of rosin is usually carried in the canoe, and when a leak occurs, the canoe is taken out of the water, the leak discovered by sucking, the place dried with a torch of wood or birch bark, and the pitch applied.

Paddles are made of rock maple, and sometimes of birch and even cedar. Bow paddles are usually longer and narrower in the blade than stern paddles (Fig. 101).

Bottom Protection

Sometimes the canoe is shod with "shoes," or strips of cedar, laid lengthwise and tied to the outside of the bark with ash splits

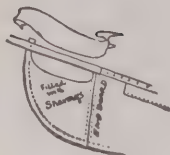


Fig. 98.

Fig. 100.

Figs. 97-100.—Show details of canoe bow.



Fig. 101½.—From photograph of Indian building a birch-bark canoe.

that pass through holes in the cedar shoes, and are brought up around the sides of the canoe and tied to each cross-bar. This protects the bottom of the boat from the sharp rocks that abound in some rapid streams.

All canoes are of the general shape of the one described, though this is considerably varied in different localities, some being built with high rolling bows, some slender, some wider, some nearly straight on the bottom, others decidedly curved.

Besides the two paddles the canoe should carry a pole ten feet long, made of a slender spruce, whittled so as to be about one and three-fourths inch in diameter in the middle and smaller at either end, and having at one end either a ring and a spike or else a pointed cap of iron. The pole is used for propelling the canoe up swift streams. This, says Tappan Adney, "is absolutely indispensable." The person using the pole stands in one end, or nearer the middle if alone, and pushes the canoe along close to the bank, so as to take advantage of the eddies, guiding the canoe with one motion, only to be learned by practice, and keeping the pole usually on the side next the bank. Where the streams have rocky and pebbly bottoms poling is easy, but in muddy or soft bottoms it is tiresome work; muddy bottoms, however, are not usually found in rapid waters.

A Canvas Canoe

can be made by substituting canvas in the place of birch bark; and if it is kept well painted it makes not only a durable but a very beautiful boat. The writer once owned a canvas canoe that was at least fifteen years old and still in good condition.

About six yards of ten-ounce cotton canvas, fifty inches wide, will be sufficient to cover a canoe, and it will require two papers of four-ounce copper tacks to secure the canvas on the frame.

The boat should be placed, deck down, upon two "horses" or wooden supports, such as you see carpenters and builders use.

Fold the canvas lengthwise, so as to find the centre, then tack the centre of one end of the cloth to top of bow-piece, or stem, using two or three tacks to hold it securely. Stretch the cloth the length of the boat, pull it taut, with the centre line of the canvas over the keel line of the canoe, and tack the centre of the other end of the cloth to the top of the stern-piece.

If care has been taken thus far, an equal portion of the covering will lap the gunwale on each side of the boat.

Begin amidships and drive the tacks, about two inches apart, along the gunwale and an inch below the deck (on the outside). Tack about two feet on one side, pull the cloth tightly across, and tack it about three feet on the other side. Continue to alternate, tacking on one side and then the other, until finished.

With the hands and fingers knead the cloth so as to thicken or "full" it where it would otherwise wrinkle, and it will be possible to stretch the canvas without cutting it over the frame.

The cloth that projects beyond the gunwale may be used for the deck, or it may be cut off after bringing it over and tacking upon the inside of the gunwale, leaving the canoe open like a birch-bark.

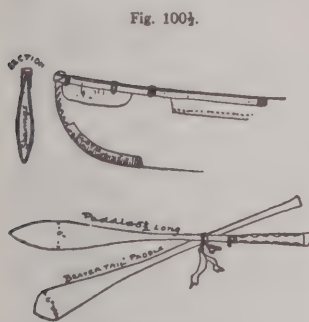


Fig. 101.

Canoe paddles.

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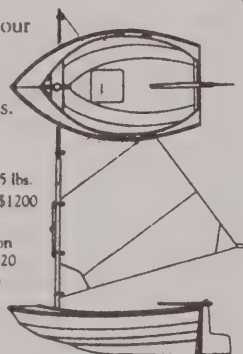
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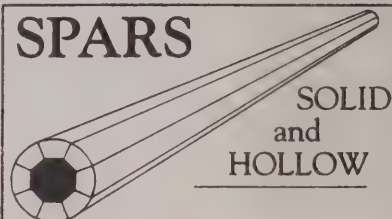


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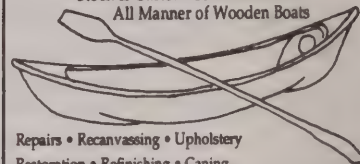


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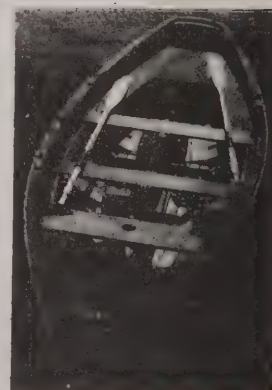
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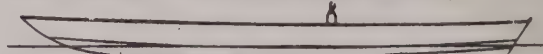


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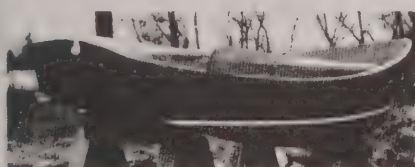
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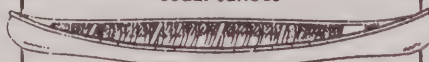
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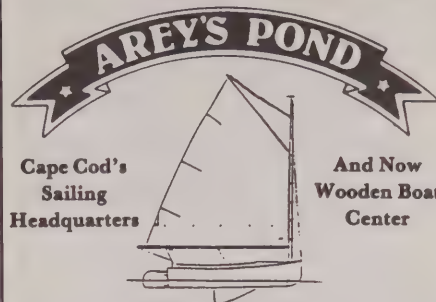
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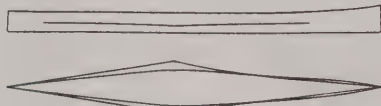
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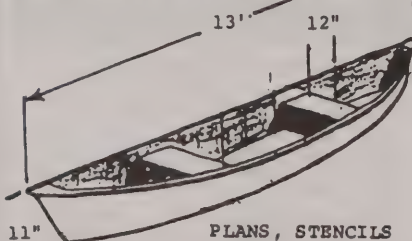
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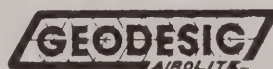
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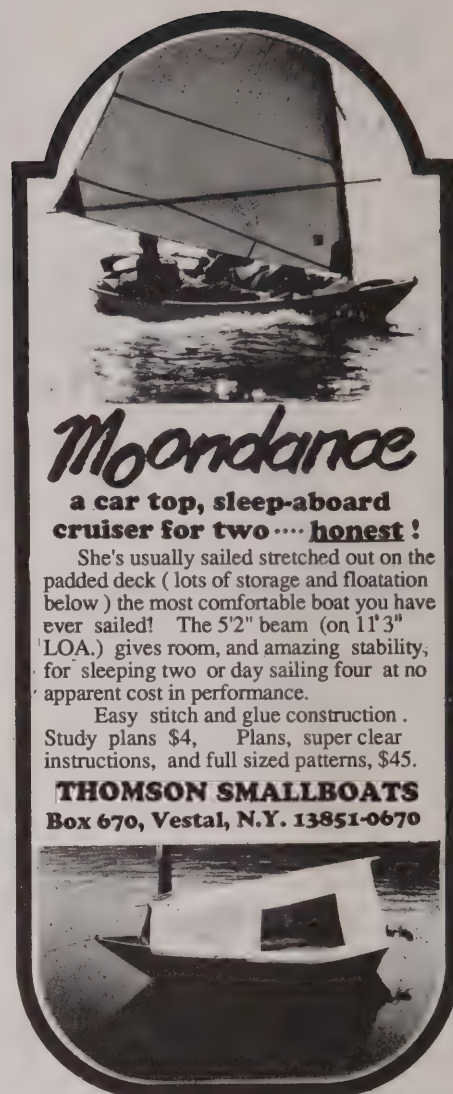
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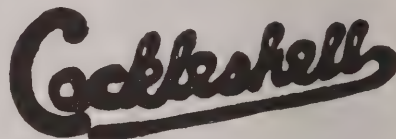
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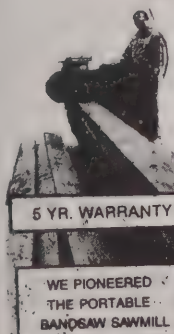
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From this information I have been able to determine a number of facts which enable me to divide the types of wrecks into three categories:

Those that resulted in the wreck being washed up on shore.

Those that sank close to

shore.

Those that sank far offshore.

In addition, I have been able to determine where vessels had stranded. These strandings indicate locations where artifacts may be found, due to the practice of throwing cargo overboard in order to lighten the vessel to refloat it.

The following article is typical of the information I have on file. Taken directly from the wreck reports. I have a computer file of over 1,100 such reports. Readers may be interested who enjoy walking the shores or hunting for remnants of old shipwrecks.

Gary Carogelli, 2000 Bay St.
82E, Fall River, MA 02724.

Wreck of the "Giovanni"

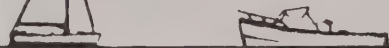
This shipwreck occurred on Thursday, March 4, 1875. The vessel was an Italian bark of 575 tons, home ported at Palermo, Italy. Her owner was Guiseppe Peraine, Lagana & Pogino, et al.

The vessel was enroute from Palermo to Boston with a main cargo of sulphur. The value of the cargo in 1875 was \$70,000 and the value of the vessel was \$25,000. Heavily laden with sulphur, sumac, filberts and rags, she encountered an easterly gale with heavy snow fall, and first struck the outer bar at Truro, Massachusetts, which resulted in loss of the rudder. She then was forced up onto the lee shore two miles northwest of Highland Lighthouse in Truro, where she broke up.

There is a very good possibility of locating the remains of this wreck, both up on the shoreline and in the water close to shore. She was a large heavily constructed vessel, built of heavy timbers that would survive the ravages of time. What makes this wreck interesting, and possibly profitable, is the fact that she was a foreign vessel engaged in trade and therefore would have been carrying some type of specie in the form of gold or silver coins. These coins would have been used to pay for supplies and other needs in foreign ports of call.

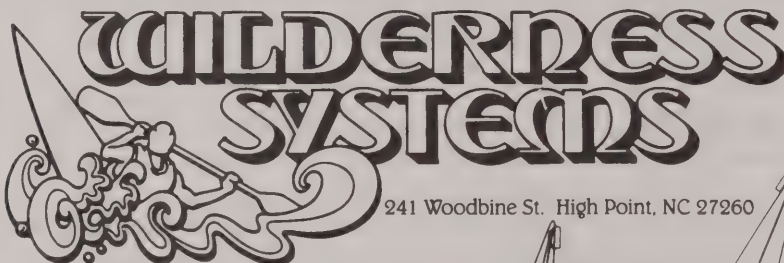
While remnants of this wreck should be visible on the shore without any tools other than a good pair of eyes, the use of a metal detector and snorkeling gear would make the job of discovery much easier. An authentic piece of a shipwreck of over 100 years ago would make a nice conversation piece on a New Englander's coffee table.

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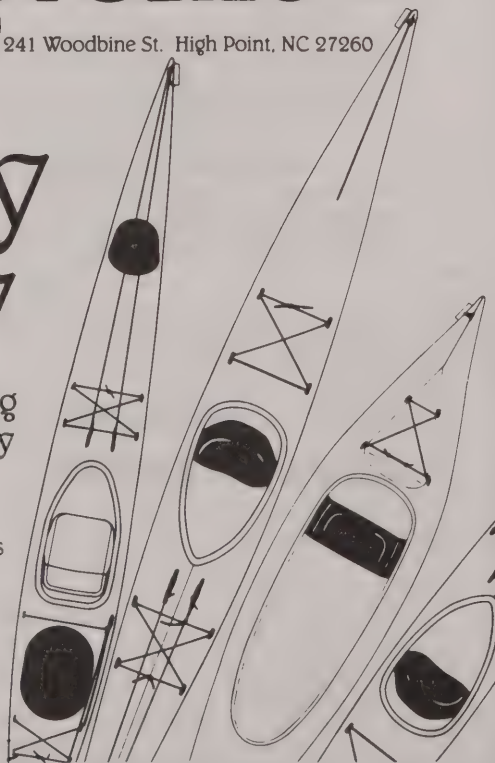
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LENNY LIPTON, White Plains, NY, (914) 949-2927. (17)

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GREGORY NORMAN, Founders School, E. Haddam, CT, (203) 873-1489. (17)

RARE BOOKS. "The Venturesome Voyages of Captain Voss", blue cloth hard cover, published 1926, EC, \$35. "Practical Motor Boat Handling, Seamanship & Piloting" by C.F. Chapman, published 1917, VGC, \$10.00.

G.W. SPOTTS, 1247 Beech Haven Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30324. (17)

WANTED. Good condition ctr/sloop 27'-34', prefer two cabin, including head, maximum draft 3', minimum headroom 5'. MUST BE FAST! Your ideas?

FRANK O'BRIEN, 22 Hancock Rd., Brookline, MA 02146. (17)

WANTED. 110 parts, pieces and sails! I am rebuilding hull # 618. Does anyone remember it? TOM PERKINS, Ipswich, MA, (508) 356-7726. (17)

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GEORGE DUNBAR, Groton, CT, (203) 448-1152. (17)

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CANOE WANTED. Looking for 17' but will consider others. Also would consider double kayak. DONALD SWOPE, 15 Buttonball Ln., Madison, CT 06443, (203) 245-3114. (17)

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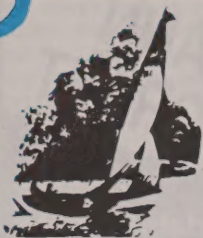
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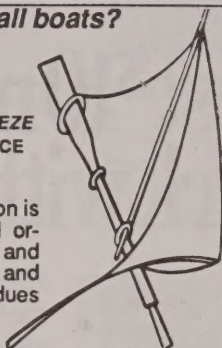
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