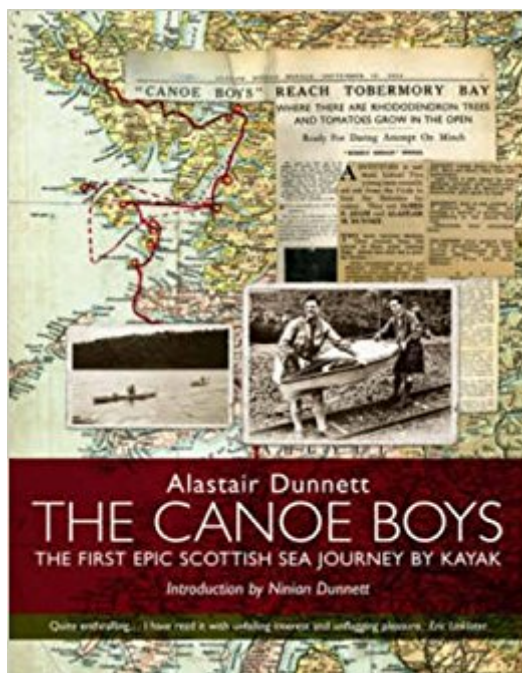


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# The Canoe Boys: The First Epic Scottish Sea Journey By Kayak



## Synopsis

"It's too late in the year!" they were advised, but they still did it. By canoe from Bowling to Kyle of Lochalsh with numerous stops along the way, Alastair Dunnett and Seamas Adam spent a heady Autumn in the 1934 meandering up the glorious West Coast of Scotland. On their way they sent reports back to the Daily Record informing the readers of their progress and the people they met along the way. Their account makes fascinating reading as they were hailed by onlookers and bystanders wherever they went as 'The Canoe Boys'. Escapades as varied as running the infamous tide-rush of the Dorus Mhor to a balmy harvest working on Calve Island off Mull, quenching their thirst with a mug of drammach (oats and water) are related in superb, lyrical style by Dunnett. This is an adventure story of youthful exuberance and of how life once was lived before the war changed everything for ever. Fully illustrated with archival material and contemporary press cuttings, this cult travelogue will find a new market among the growing number of adventure kayakers taking to Scotland's coastal waters. This new illustrated edition has an introduction by Dunnett's son, Ninian who has also supplied a full glossary and notes on each chapter.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'Quite enthralling. I have read it with unflinching interest and unflagging pleasure.' Eric Linklater 'One of the most unusual travel books published in a long time - Only those who have sailed among the Western Isles in substantial craft can realise the full implication of a trip there in a frail canoe. Such a method of voyaging in these waters seems fantastic. Yet it was done - absorbing reading.' Glasgow

Herald 'A daring feat.' Sunday Times ' - spacious, humorous, penetrating log-book - the observant eye as well as the racy pen. New Books 'Adventure surely was part of the story, and that aspect of it is given full prominence. But there was more to it than adventure; there was a purposeful determination to discover personally the causes contributing to the depopulation of the Highlands.' Sunday Mail 'The purpose and spirit of the book stand forth inspiringly.' Daily Record 'A memorable cruise - he hotly denies that Highlanders are sly ne'er-do-weels; he rails at authority for its neglect of Gaeldom.' Evening Dispatch 'As a record of what must have been a very hazardous voyage, this is first-rate and exciting reading. It is, in the highest sense, a fine travel book.' Evening Citizen 'The charm of the book as a record of experience does not obscure the value inherent in its assessment of conditions and potentialities in a beautiful but long neglected area.' Scotsman

Alastair Dunnnett was one of the foremost Scots of the 20th century and was a key public figure in the Scottish Office after WWII. He married novelist Dorothy Dunnnett in 1946 and later edited The Daily Record and The Scotsman before being instrumental in the evolution of the oil industry in the North Sea in the 1970s. He died, aged 89, in 1998.

A nice updated tail of an old heroic journey. I would recommend this as a historic writing of two young men who set out on an adventure. Note: This is the kind of adventure that now a day wouldn't happen...or would be over hyped. Nice

I couldn't even rest well, not until I finished reading it. What kept me going? Joy, optimism, adventure, a dash of history, and a paddleful of passion.

In part, this book is about a sea kayaking trip undertaken by Alastair Dunnnett and James Adam during the 1930s when both were young men. The trip was proposed by them to earn enough money to repay debts incurred during the brief life of an adventure magazine known as 'The Claymore'. The proposal involved them canoeing north from the Clyde via the West Coast to the Hebrides and earning money by writing for the 'Daily Record' along the way. This book was written by Mr Dunnnett about that three month journey and is perhaps one of the most unusual travel books written about Scotland. This book was first published in 1950 as 'Quest by Canoe', and this edition has been edited and introduced by Ninian Dunnnett. This book is worth reading for a number of reasons: the adventure itself; the observations of life in the distant and diverse communities visited; and as an example of the wonderful descriptive prose used by Alastair Dunnnett during his long and

distinguished career. As the trip commenced, Alastair's Great Aunt Mary (then aged 80, and blind) asked: 'Could you get nothing better to do?' I am pleased that he and James did not take her advice. Alastair Dunnett himself went on from this journey to make an outstanding contribution to Scottish culture and public life. To read this book is to simultaneously step back some 70 years in time while recognising that the adventuring spirit for many is constant. I am delighted that this work has been republished for a new generation to enjoy. 'Opportunities abound, and all things are possible, even to those who may not wait for calm weather.' Jennifer Cameron-Smith

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