

White Water



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EDITORIAL

With the reduced number of races over the autumn and winter period, the Bulletin has been keeping a low profile. For the Great Britain squads however, it has been business as usual. The period was highlighted by a number of successful training weekends at diverse venues - Kingston, Windermere & Nottingham. The Nottingham weekend, using the newly opened Holiday Inn hotel for both junior & senior squads, gained an extensive report in Canoe Focus along with the Poly Champs race on the Upper Wye.

The winter is traditionally for fireside reading - and the latest Focus format with its competition sections heralds a major improvement - thanks to editor Caroline Tombs & the other BCU staff. Let's hope this is a considered response to the pressure exerted over the past 5 years by this publication, by Stuart Fisher & by Joe Lyons. If we are to keep WWR prominent in those pages (biggest UK canoesport circulation) we must provide the articles and the photos. Do not hesitate to contact John Handyside (0602 892313) if you have a potential contribution.

Another welcome publication is Alan Fox's book of UK river guides - 'Run River Run' (£7.95). It is just the job for WWR paddlers & clubs. It covers many of our competition rivers and includes sections above and below the traditional race courses. The descriptions seem sensible and accurate throughout with good gradings and clear indications of danger points (such as the Dart tree - as was). It is very refreshing to see a wild water canoeing book that aims to help 'normal' paddlers without encouraging undue risk to life or limb.

Racing rivers covered include most Div 'A' sites - Dart, Dee, Eden, Tay, Tees, Tryweryn, Tyne. Other rivers of high training potential are Lune, Findhorn & Spey. For the pacid water paddler there are the Trent & Wye, whilst the truly adventurous can sample the Conwy or Garry. Perhaps my only reservation is a description of the Tay that ignores the dangers of the whirlpools at Invercannie. Superb value - and readily available by post from either Canoeist or Windermere Wind & Water.

DIV 'A' & SELECTION EVENTS

* Grandtully Div 'A' & Selection - March 10th

After the traditional Washburn & Wharfe warm up weekend (just as windy as the preceding two months), we were treated to a most memorable Div 'A' at Grandtully on the Tay. Typically the Div 'A' level has been between 2 & 4 on the gauge at Aberfeldy. The 1990 race took place at around 10, with the fields flooded and all the rapids looking like the very best continental water (compare perhaps the Inn below Imst). The event surpassed even the 1986 Dart weekend (when the water went down for the race) and Tees race, and also the 1980 Tryweryn/Dee double header (which no one except Melvin & Nig can remember).

It is a tribute to the standard of our wild water paddling that there were hardly any capsizes and even fewer swims - when Fraser Gormal back-looped on the main fall he casually rolled up and paddled to the bank. Belbin & Lyons proved it could be survived with Wings - and if only Jimmy Butler had remembered his K1.

For the Kayaks the winning margins for Alan Tordoff & Gill Berrow were relatively narrow, whilst boat skills appeared to give Steve Wells & Clough/Clough clear superiority in the Canadians. The competition for the subsequent places was very close - with especial credit going to Gareth Jones (1st Junior), Paul Mercer (a strong comeback as 6th kayak) and Karen Porter (holding off a mass Nottingham challenge to get ladies silver).

The consistency of winners throughout the season meant that this 4th Div 'A' put all but the Mixed Team & Junior championships beyond doubt. The national team selection, in which this was the first of three events (Tees & Washburn to follow), was however a live issue. With most places based on points (best 2 out of 3 results) with ties resolved on MS, the Tully results inaugurated a titanic struggle - especially for Ladies & C1 places....

* Tees Selection - March 17th

From the sublime to the ridiculous - one week after Tully and the Tees was (almost) rock bottom. The Team Management ruled that the selection race must go ahead - a decision that was sweetened by the sunny weather and justified by the consistency of results with the preceding weekend. The winners remained the same and the top 5 boats in each class merely changed positions. Neil Blackman overhauled Ian Tordoff to take 4th MK1, Tina Parsons moved from 4th to 2nd in LK1 and James Wingfield gained a most impressive 2nd place margin in C1 - undoubtedly man of the match.

Moving into the final selection at the Washburn, MK1 & C2 places seemed almost certain. In LK1, Clayton' Parsons & Porter were separated by only one point - and likewise Pearton, Pink, Singh & Wingfield in C1.

* Washburn Div 'A' & Selection - April 7th

Despite a late bid from Adrian Trickett (7th), there were no surprises in MK1 results. In the absence of Gill Berrow, Tina Parsons achieved an outstanding LK1 win, coming through from 3rd place in the last third. Macon Singh showed a return to form in C1 and Simpson/Twigger creditably closed the gap on the Cloughs. Perhaps most encouraging were the performances of Tim Suggett (best Junior - 13th) and Will Smith (best Under 21 having taken up WWR only recently - 14th).

The Regional championships followed on the Sunday involving a close battle between the North West (led by Phil Dean) and the East Midlands (under John Handyside). East Midlands narrowly emerged victors - not least due to sterling efforts in Men's K1 (potentially their weakest class) by Howard Blackman.

GREAT BRITAIN TEAM

The following paddlers are to represent Great Britain at senior level in 1990 based on the results of the three races - listed in selection order :

	'A' TEAM	'B' TEAM
MK1	Neil Stamps (Royal) Alan Tordoff (Leeds) Robin Murray (Leeds) Wayne Boss (Lichfield) Ian Tordoff (Chester) Neil Blackman (RAFCA)	Paul Mercer (Shoreham) Guy Sellwood (Royal) Jeff Parker (Notts) Andy Tomlinson (Birm Univ)
LK1	Julie Ashton (Notts) Gill Berrow (Firbush) Tina Parsons (Notts) Karen Porter (Leeds)	Andrea Clayton (Notts) Nicki Weaver (Staffs Stone) Katie Watt (Notts)
C1	Steve Wells (Notts) Mackon Singh (Leaside) James Wingfield(Notts)	Tony Jones (Notts) Colin Smith (Mersey)
C2	Clough/Clough (Leeds/ICI) Simpson/Twigger(Notts)	

WWR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1990 AGM was held after the February Washburn race. There were no major items of business other than the election of committee members :

Chairman - Brian Tipper

Secretary - Joe Lyons

Executive Members - Matt Caunt, Dave Kay, Nigel Morley & Dave Williams

The open discussion that traditionally follows the formal AGM business was particularly helpful this year. The following issues were commended to the Exec for further investigation :

- * Notification of Regional Reps in time to attend Exec meetings and possibility of focusing specifically on their attendance at one meeting per year. The meeting at Bala in May has since been targetted.
- * Possibility of moving both Div 'B' & Team rankings over to the MS system (as opposed to points). The Exec have since asked Bill Fraser to address this issue in his 1991 calendar proposals for the May meeting.
- * Rotation of Club & Regional Championships (having been at Washburn for some years). Also being covered by Bill Fraser's calendar proposals.
- * Introducing a more relevant approach to the Schools championship and to the Under 14 / 16 rankings. The Exec are approaching Mr Froggatt to prepare proposals.

CALENDAR PROPOSALS

Bill Fraser & Dave Kay have been invited by the Exec (27 March meeting) to formalise their proposals to change the orientation of the domestic WWR calendar. Your comments are invited in advance of the May 12th Exec meeting either addressed to Exec members, Regional reps or direct to Bill Fraser. In summary the proposals are as follows :

- * The new focus will be on the calendar year (January to December) like the other canoesport disciplines.
- * All the Div 'A' events will take place between March & May using guaranteed releases where possible. 1991 possibilities are Tay, Tees, Washburn, Tryweryn, North Tyne, Awe, Tryweryn - all currently on the calendar. The British Open to be at the final Div 'A'.
- * All other championship events (English, Welsh, Regional, Club and possibly Schools, Polys & Universities) to be in the Autumn between September & December. Venues to be chosen from such as Dart, Dee, Eden, Tees, Trent, Usk, & Washburn.
- * All the autumn championships to be ranking Div 'B' status.
- * The National Team Championship (MK1 & Mixed) to be at those autumn events and not at the Div 'A's. It is therefore hoped that an open team event at the Div 'A's would be a focus for national team combinations.
- * Gaps in the calendar to accommodate key races of wider interest such as : Ardeche Marathon (France - Nov), Exe Descent (doubled with Dart), Nottingham Slalom Course Marathon, Monschau (Germany - April).

FOR SALE

Obsession Kayak - Epoxy Kevlar Carbon - MIDI BIP manufactured - Excellent weight & pristine condition - £500 ono - contact Adrian Trickett on 0831 405743 or 0225 833007.

Paddles - Stop press announcement from CANOESPORT UK that they now have the 'RAPID PLUS' design. All varieties of shaft and an epoxy blade option are available. This shape and the durable construction will be of interest to anyone who has been trying to get hold of Schlegel paddles.