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CANOE FOCUS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH CANOE UNION



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COVER STORY

Pete Montgomery shooting Overlander Falls on the Fraser River Kayak Expedition.

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Editorial

The end of an era

The early years of the eighties have seen the departure from the active canoeing scene of not a few illustrious patriarchs of our sport, and with their passing has come the end of an era. The most recent of our elder statesmen to seek the pleasures of retirement is Oliver Jestie Cock MBE, past Director of Coaching, presently the Union's National Access Officer. The range of Oliver's interests and activities during almost half a century of involvement with canoe sport is astonishing. A summary of his service to the Union is contained on Page 5 of this issue of *Focus*. Like others of his generation, Oliver has witnessed the most profound changes in the world which he knew as a young man, and not the least of these have taken place in his chosen sport.

Oliver is almost the last of that small band of enthusiasts who together reestablished canoeing as a popular water activity after the 1939/45 war, and who have remained as an integral part of the Union until the present day. He has given his life to the development of canoeing, and our sport will be the poorer for his going. We wish him a long and happy retirement, and sufficient spare time to complete all those unfinished projects which his commitment to canoeing has prevented in the past.



Oliver Cock MBE

Canoe Focus

This largest ever issue of *Canoe Focus* marks the end of the second year of publication by the existing Editorial Board. Whilst the response from readers to the Board's endeavours to improve the qualitative content of *Focus* has been reasonably encouraging, there remains a feeling that we haven't yet quite got it right. Unlimited, or even more generous financial support would of course solve most of the Board's problems, and it is perhaps interesting to observe that whereas in 1978 *Canoe Focus* was costing the Union approximately £10,000.00 per annum, in 1981 it cost only £9,000.00. With inflationary adjustments what this really means, is that in 1978 124 pages of *Canoe Focus* were produced at a cost of £1.40 per member, and in 1981 136 pages were produced at a cost of 80p per member. In management terms the Board has clearly achieved tremendous success for they are now publishing larger issues of *Focus*, for almost half the original real costs, and, as a bonus, *Focus* is delivered on the dates advertised. In addition, the "Supplement" containing late news, and the annual calendar of events have become regular features, and with this issue will appear for the first time, separate copies of "Regional News" for each of the Union's nine Regions. Having then established a reasonably sound management formula, the Board have undertaken to concentrate their attention on the presentation and content of the Union's magazine.

Perhaps, while reviewing the progress achieved by the Board in seeking to produce a magazine for members, by members, and about members, a statement regarding the content of *Focus* is appropriate. We make no apologies for borrowing the following resigned comments from an anonymous Editor, who apparently shares our own dilemma when trying to get the balance right.

Getting this magazine out is no picnic. If we print jokes, people will say we are being silly. If we don't they say we are too serious. If we don't print your contributions, we don't appreciate genius. If we do, the magazine is full of rubbish. If we make a change in the write-up we are being too critical. If we don't we are sloppy or asleep. If we clip things from other magazines we are too lazy to write them ourselves. If we don't we are too stuck up with our own stuff. Like as not, someone will say we swiped this from some magazine. We did.

Issue	Publication Date	Receipt of Copy Date
Summer (23)	8 May	1 April
Autumn (24)	3 September	20 July
Winter (26)	10 December	30 October
Spring (26) (1983)	9 February	1 January

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Oliver Jestie Cock MBE



Oliver's Challenge

Oliver Cock, having at last reached the mature age of three score years and ten, wishes to compete with all those friends with whom he used to slalom in the '50s.

The Chalfont Park Canoe Club, on their thirtieth anniversary, have kindly offered to run this memorable slalom at Hambleden on the 26th and 27th June this year. It will be run to the ICF rules of the '50s (no roll bars!) and they have promised not to make the course too difficult (or, we hope, too easy!). There will be a sociable evening on the Saturday night, and they have generously suggested that entry to the competitions should be free. Camping facilities are available at the camp site near Hambleden Mill on Saturday night. Folding Boats preferred.

Those who would like to take part on this auspicious occasion should contact Tom Cronin, 28 Shepherds's House Lane, Earley, Reading, Berks.



At Inverness after a tour through the Caledonian Canal in 1946.

Oliver first became interested in canoeing in 1935 and returned to it with enthusiasm at the end of the War on demobilization from the Royal Engineers. In 1946 he made his first instructional film, the beginning of the "Clarence" series, and a year later launched the BCU Film Library. It was about the same time that he set up the BCU Proficiency Test Committee with the object of formulating standards for an activity which was beginning to attract increasing numbers of young people, an indication of the direction his work was to take in the years ahead. At Henley in 1948 Oliver served as a Technical Official at the Olympic Canoeing Regatta and the following year saw him elected to the Council of the Union.

From 1953 to 1961 he coached the Slalom Team and had special responsibility for training the late Paul Farrant who gained the Gold Medal in the 1959 World Championships in Geneva. It was during this period that he wrote an instructional manual *You and Your Canoe*. In 1959 he became enthusiastic for the ideas put for-

ward by Desmond Hoare (later Admiral Hoare, Head of the First College of Atlantic, at St. Donats Castle) of providing trained canoeists with opportunities to serve their communities, and he became the Secretary of the newly formed Corps of Canoe Life-guards. When about the same time the BCU Coaching Scheme was launched, Oliver was one of the first to be appointed as Honorary Coach. Two years later he became the first full-time National Coach and in due course the Director of Coaching. During the 15 years that he served the Coaching Committee of the Union he built up one of the best and most efficient coaching schemes in the country, and through this his services to youth and sport have been inestimable. In 1962 he was presented with the BCU Award of Honour for his many services to the sport, and in 1977 he was included in the Queen's Silver Jubilee Honours list, and received the MBE. On his retirement as Director of Coaching in 1979, he was appointed as the part-time National Access Officer, and has remained in this position until the present time.

Oliver at work in the role he liked best.





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Kayaking – the Basic Skills (Part 1)

Jim Hargreaves has identified and produced a comprehensive analysis and breakdown for the new *Canoeing Handbook* of the basic skills on which are founded all the abilities and techniques needed by a canoeist to handle his craft in whatever situation presents itself on river, lake or sea.

A short summary of this section, which runs to some 28 pages of text and pictures in the original, is being produced in this and the next two issues of *Focus*.

The proposed logical sequence, apart from learning to hold the paddle, get in and out, and practise capsize drill, is: forward paddling, backward paddling, sweep strokes, draw stroke, stern rudder, low brace turn, sculling strokes, bow rudder, tilting the canoe to assist turning. (Forward paddling was covered in *Focus*, No. 21).

Terminology

Low telemark has been replaced by a different technique, the *low brace turn*, and the *high telemark* has been superseded by the *bow rudder*.

Drive face. This is the face of the blade(s) that would pull against the water when the paddle is used for *normal forward propulsion*. The opposite side of each blade is called the back.

Controlling wrist. The controlling wrist does the rotating of the paddle shaft, with that hand holding firmly. The opposite hand allows the shaft — also called 'loom' — to rotate backwards and forwards as the paddle is feathered. In all the descriptions of skills, it is assumed that blade angles will be set by the controlling wrist, and that both hands will retain their normal position and hold on the paddle.

Low, High and Hanging Strokes. A low stroke is performed using the back — non-drive face — of the blade, with the wrists uppermost. A high stroke, or high version of a stroke, involves the drive face of the blade, with the wrists under the shaft. Hanging strokes, or versions of strokes, are when the paddle is used with the arms in an extended position.

Brace. The term brace can be applied to any stroke which involves the movement of water against the blade, or the action of opposing forces, rather than the working of the paddle itself, to effect movement, or give support. It is most commonly used to describe the action of supporting oneself on a surf wave or stopper, by leaning on, or hanging from, a relatively stationary blade which is placed flat on the upsurge of water.



Backward paddling. Pivot at waist. Look over shoulder (!)



Forward sweep stroke sequence. The progression onto a slightly tilted blade is shown.

Backward Paddling

The development of strong, accurate reverse paddling is important, often being required in an emergency situation.

A big effort must be made to twist the trunk so that it is possible to watch the directional stability of the boat. The paddler turns at the waist, bringing the shoulders parallel to the gunnel, and looks over the same shoulder as the side on which the stroke is being performed. It should be possible to see the stern clearly. The back of the paddle blade is inserted into the water as close to the stern as possible, with the forward hand across the body, so that the loom is almost parallel to the keel-line and not following the curve of the gunnel. The most effective part is when the paddle is level with the hips, and the stroke can be very strongly applied at this point, as the paddler's body weight is directly above it. The blade continues alongside the boat until it is no longer effective — that is at a point approximately level with the knees. The paddle then is withdrawn, and a stroke performed on the opposite side.

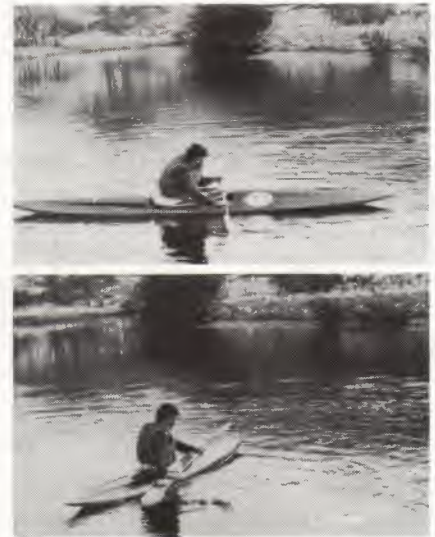
It makes sense to look over the shoulder on the side which is found to be the more comfortable — every other stroke is adequate.

Progressions. Start very slowly, and practise paddling between slalom gates, buoys, or similar targets to develop accuracy. It is possible for an instructor to raft up in a T position, holding on to the bow of a learner's boat, when close quarter coaching can be given. Set 'stopping' goals, and work the skill to the point where it is possible to stop from full ahead, and be reversing within three paddle strokes.

The Sweep Strokes

The sweep stroke is a very simple, yet highly efficient turning stroke, which can be used to great effect by beginners and experts alike. It gives valuable assistance to those who may be frustrated by their craft's apparent desire to go in ever decreasing circles. The expert uses it to alter direction at a moment's notice.

Forward Sweep Stroke. The paddler



leans as far forward as is comfortable, and inserts the blade close to the bow. With the paddle loom as near horizontal as the deck of the craft will allow, and the paddling arm extended, but not stiff, the upright blade is swept around until it reaches the stern, thus completing a semi circular arc.

Although this is good practise, and lengthens the stroke, so that the novice can feel it for a longer period, in reality, for white water canoeing, it is more efficient to do two or three rapid strokes close to the bow. This can be borne out by observing an expert white water paddler preparing his boat for a break out. Several fast sweeps close to the bow will be used to push the boat towards the eddy.

The longer form of sweep can be used to good effect where a more leisurely turn is required on flat water, on the sea, or wherever the boat is being turned by the wind. It is vital then to ensure that the blade is driven well into the stern, by pushing the opposite arm across in front of the body.

Reverse Sweep Stroke. The reverse sweep should be started as close to the end of the boat as possible. Rotate the trunk strongly through 90° so that the shoulder line is parallel with the gunnel. The back of the blade is inserted very near the stern, and swept with a near horizontal loom around past the hips, to the bow. In reality, the blade will probably be withdrawn when it is at right angles to the body, as before.

When applied to a moving craft, the opposing sweep has an arresting affect upon momentum. Thus it is useful in sudden changes of direction, where braking is also required.

Progressions. A useful exercise for a beginner is to place the paddle blade near the bow as described, and then move the bow to and fro by appropriate short movements of the paddle. This should be repeated for all four stations.

Once competent sweeps are being achieved as described, the stroke should be practised with the blade slightly tilted, so that the top edge is leading. This allows body weight to be put on the blade, and the reach extended.



Draw stroke. (Left) Just after the commencement of the pull. (Right) The blade has been feathered through 90° and is being returned to the starting position.



Alternate forward and reverse sweep should be used to turn the canoe in its own length.

For forward sweeps the paddler should tilt the boat *slightly* towards the side on which he is executing the stroke. This lowers the centre of gravity and enables the paddler to perform a wider sweep, lengthening the lever of the stroke, giving it more power, and greater stability. If the boat is leaned too far, however, it spoils the hydrodynamics of the hull, and causes drag.

Draw Stroke

This is one of the most useful of all the basic skills. The body, paddle and arm positions form the foundation for the more advanced high combination strokes which follow. The skill is useful to the beginner for moving away from, and towards, the bank, or rafting up with other canoes. For the expert it is a vital stroke which should be mastered thoroughly, so that it may be used in any conditions.

From the normal paddling position, the canoeist turns his head through 90° brings his shoulders round to about 45° and reaches out with the drive face of the blade towards the gunnel. The paddle is inserted as perpendicular as possible. The action of drawing the near vertical blade through the water towards the boat, pulls the canoe towards the paddle, resulting in a sideways movement.

The optimum position for the paddle is completely upright with the blade fully immersed. In this position the working blade area being presented to the water is at its maximum. Both arms should work hard in levering the paddle. The top arm pushes away from the boat with the back of the arm crossing the forehead, while the lower arm draws the blade towards the gunnel. The sooner the blade is rendered vertical the more effective the stroke will be. This is controlled by the top arm. Unless the upper arm reaches well across to the other side of the boat, so that it is almost directly above the lower arm, the working blade area will be ineffectively small.

When the stroke is complete, the paddle will be alongside the gunnel. Before it touches, the blade should be deftly twisted through 90° with the drive face towards the stern, and feathered out at right angles to the boat, ready to repeat the draw.

Progressions. Initially, the blade can

simply be lifted out of the water or withdrawn by slicing it towards the stern, at right angles to the direction of the stroke. Ultimately the aim is to recover the paddle, or start the stroke again, by slicing it out into position through the water. Practising slicing the blade directly out and directly in without resistance, helps a learner to achieve a full 90° feather.

Coaching Points. The stroke should be performed at right angles to the Centre of Lateral Resistance (CLR) — that is, the point along the gunnel line where, if you attached a rope and pulled the canoe sideways, it would move symmetrically towards the direction of pull. This normally, but not always, is alongside the hips of the paddler. Observe closely the effect that the stroke is having upon the craft. If the bow or stern begins to gain, the paddle is not in line with the CLR, and will need to be moved to counteract this.

Recovery Stroke

The recovery stroke is used to regain stability after loss of balance. Upon losing balance, the paddler reaches out to the side towards which he is capsizing with his paddle held as low as possible, and the flat of the blade presented to the surface, at right angles to the boat. The blade is pressed firmly on to the surface, and this provides a platform of resistance from which support is gained whilst the canoe is levered upright

with legs and hips. The further out the paddler places the blade, the more support is obtained, as the lever of the stroke is lengthened. However, the leg/hip action must be correspondingly more efficient and the body kept low to reduce the centre of gravity.

After the paddle has been pressed on to the surface during the initial loss of balance, it will begin to sink with the weight of the paddler upon it. This is why it is most important that the loom is kept very low, presenting the flattest blade surface possible to the water. Equally important to maintaining a flat blade, and thus the widest possible radius to the stroke, is ensuring that the loom of the paddle is at right angles to the fore/aft line, or longitudinal axis, to obtain maximum leverage. The body should also be kept low.

Once the blade begins to sink it loses its efficiency, as the radius of the stroke is reduced. This can be counteracted by turning the blade through 90° and slicing it quickly back up for the surface for more support. This right angle twist at the end of the stroke also facilitates the withdrawal of the blade after recovery has been successfully executed.

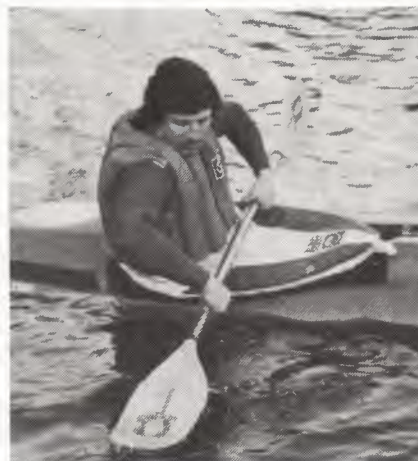
Progressions. Two canoes raft up facing in opposite directions. One paddler at a time places his paddle blade on the other cockpit, and supports his body weight while alternately taking the canoe off balance and recovering it by rotating the boat from the hips. The knees must grip firmly, and the body remains comparatively still.

The paddle may be held by the end to provide a long lever, which will give a lot of support. Gradually reduce the length of the lever until the stroke is being performed with the hands in the normal paddling position.

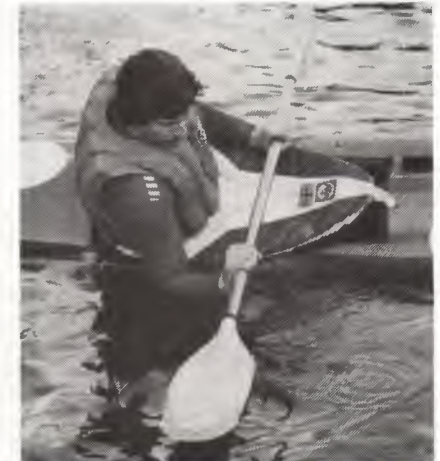
Once some confidence is gained, keep the eyes shut and practise on both sides.

Coaching Points. The stroke initially will be performed most easily by using the drive face of the blade on the controlling wrist side, and the back of the blade on the other side. This is because the blade need only be rotated through 90° in the one case, whilst on the other side it must be rotated through 180°, and the elbows tucked under the loom.

Both forms of the stroke need finally to be learned on both sides, the 'low' version being more applicable, in practice, to racing craft.



Low recovery stroke. Using the back of the blade.



High recovery stroke. Using the drive face of the blade.

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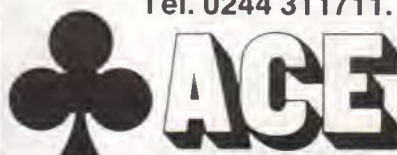


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Presenter Gordon Burns (centre) shares a festive moment with sporting superstars (left to right) Andy Ripley, Naomi James, Beryl Burton and Richard Fox, in *The Krypton Factor Celebrity Special*.

Richard demonstrated his mental and physical skills with great success on 'Televisions Toughest Quiz' - *The Krypton Factor*. After a keenly fought celebrities competition our World Champion managed to beat the field winning the Mental Agility and Assault Course rounds. Second by only three points was Andy Ripley the ex British Lion of Rugby fame.

Richards prize of £1000 was donated to the Mike Jones Memorial Fund which helps young canoeists and is at present supporting the eye hospital at Skardu in Pakistan close to where Mike lost his life.

British Canoeists Challenge Chilean 'White Water' River

A four-man British kayak team left Londons Heathrow Airport, on January 6 to attempt the descent of one of the World's prize white water rivers - the Rio Bio Bio in Chile, South America. The team consists of highly experienced mountaineer/canoists under the leadership of Jim Hargreaves, who includes canoeing around Cape Horn in his list of achievements.

After arrival in Santiago, the Chilean capital, the expedition will travel south via Chillan to Santa Barbara and then by steam train up the Bio Bio Valley. At the valley head, the team, augmented by local porters, will hike to the farthest practical point up river. The subsequent journey downstream by kayak is expected to take about 14 days during which the British team will encounter a series of major rapids, which have been described by American canoe experts as "jawbreaking".

The 200 mile Rio Bio Bio rises at Lake Galletue in the glacier and volcanic heights close to Chile's border with Argentina. It then cascades through deep gorges for a hundred miles and this 'white water' stretch is the part of the river that the expedition will be tackling. The Bio Bio marks a natural barrier between Chile's central valley and the Southern Forests, home of the Araucanian Indians. 'Bio Bio' is the Indian word for the call of a forest bird.

National Benzole - whose Smurfs are currently helping to promote safety on water for the Union - are assisting in the sponsorship of the Rio Bio Bio expedition. Each of the four kayaks will bear Smurf characters and names. National Benzole have a stand at the International Canoe Exhibition where, besides promoting our canoeing safety campaign they will also show the boats and equipment used on the trip.

DEDICATED TO THIERRY GIORGATTI WHO LOST HIS LIFE

Many of you will have seen the 'Ace Reports' film - Valley of Ice which was shown on Independant Television shortly before Chirstmas.

The Valley of Ice was the filmed record of an expedition down the Alsek river in Canada from Disappointment Glacier to the sea, a unique event to raise funds for the Spastic Society in the 'Year of the Disabled People 1981'. Paul Vander Molen, Laurent Nicolet and Thierry Giorgetti padded this heavy white water river, with raft support, as it descended from the Yukon to the Pacific Ocean in Alaska through canyons, ice fields and wilderness.

On the most difficult part of the trip one of the group lost his life. Thierry Giorgetti disappeared in Turn Back Canyon as the river swept through a thirty foot wide funnel and in his memory Paul Vander Molen, the only Englishman in the group, tells the story of the Valley of Ice in our next issue. Our picture shows Thierry entering the first rapid in Turn Back Canyon.



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AMATEURISM – THE NEXT STOP?

by Ron Emes, Director, British Canoe Union. BCU representative to the National Olympic Committee. Ex Director and Manager of Olympic Training Squad 1960 – 1980

The 11th Olympic Congress held at Baden-Baden, West Germany in September last year gave renewed emphasis to the inherent ambiguities of the rules governing amateurism in modern sport.

Although declaring unequivocally that professionals will continue to be excluded from the Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee have revised the terms of Rule 26, that is the rule governing the participation of amateur competitors in the Olympic Games.

Before explaining the changes in this rule it will perhaps be useful to review the arrangements which have recently been initiated by the Union for protecting the amateur status of members, all the circumstances that have determined the formulation of the existing British Canoe Union Amateur rule.

In modern times Amateurism has been the subject of much acrimonious debate within the sporting community, and many sincere and dedicated athletes have sought to establish a balanced perspective in what is a continuing dialogue. Many believe that there is no total solution to the problems that arise from the conflict of values manifest within the professional/amateur ethic, and no form of words that attempts to define amateurism will entirely satisfy all interests.

International canoeing success provides inspirational stimulus which promotes increased participation at all levels of involvement, and also provides a source of national pride and pleasure to those who do not participate. Gifted athletes should have adequate facilities to develop their sporting talents and our best competitors should be supported in their preparation training and competition to a degree which is "fair and equal" in relation to the opportunities given to competitors elsewhere. At present British canoeists are often at a considerable disadvantage due to lack of funds and facilities.

Since the publication by the British Canoe Union in March 1970 of their policy regarding "amateur status", there have been many changes in the attitudes of sport to the amateur ethic.

In April 1977 Sir Robin Brook, then Chairman of the Sports Council, in a statement to the Chairman of the Governing Bodies of Olympic Sports, echoed the views of many sportsmen and women, when he wrote – *true amateurism is no longer possible in many sports which require almost total dedication to achieve success at the highest levels.*

As the effects of changing attitudes are translated into practical terms and Sports Aid Foundation Awards, Grant Aid, Commercial Sponsorship, and Sports Scholarships become more readily available for canoeists, the Union have been increasingly required to define their own standards of amateurism. However, the Union, like other Governing Bodies of Sport, are confronted with the almost impossible task of legislating for a set of circumstances which is not of their choosing, and over which they have little or no control. The hypocrisy and paradox of amateurism for Olympic sports was initiated and is perpetuated by the International Olympic Committee. If a sport wishes to continue in membership of the Olympic Movement, the Amateur Rule of its International Federation must conform with the strict standards of amateurism established by the International Olympic Committee.

Accordingly, in 1979 it became necessary to reconsider, in the light of contemporary developments within the International Canoe Federation, the National and International Olympic Committees and the Sports Council, the British Canoe Union's Amateur Rule and its practical interpretation. In undertaking their examination of the rule, the Union were well aware that they were embarking upon a hazardous and speculative exercise that required them to produce a form of words that would satisfy the diverse and often vested interests directly and indirectly concerned with amateurism. Considering that the ancient Olympic Games were beset by similar problems in the 4th Century BC, it did appear highly unlikely, de-

spite the not inconsiderable ingenuity and ability of the Union's legislators to engage in jurisprudential gymnastics, that an agreed and satisfactory formula would emerge from their deliberations. In the event however, the solution was reasonably simple, and the Council of the Union finally accepted in March 1979, that their new amateur rule should be the International Canoe Federation Amateur Rule. Thus the test of amateurism in Britain would be that applied internationally, which was after all the ultimate test for a national rule. For any rule that prevents an athlete competing internationally is valueless. The rule reads as follows:—

An amateur canoeist is a sportsman who devotes himself to the sport for pleasure and for his own moral and physical well-being without deriving therefrom, directly or indirectly any material gain. He is not permitted —

(a) *to engage as a professional in any sport or to receive compensation for loss of earnings;*

(b) *to participate in competitions in which money prizes are given;*

(c) *to use championships titles for the purpose of financial or material gain which does not represent payment for actual work done — for instance, payment for use of championship titles in the publicity of commercial firms.*

He may, however, receive travelling and subsistence payments corresponding to his actual outlay during a competition and for a limited period of training and he may receive clothing and equipment as required for practising the sport — but only from the British Canoe Union.

As this rule inevitably contains many ambiguities which necessitate interpretation, an "Eligibility for Amateur Status" Committee was established by the Union's Council to advise, and authoritatively interpret questions of doubt. This Committee has decreed that an amateur canoeist is permitted to —

- (1) Be a physical education or sports teacher who gives elementary instruction
- (2) Accept normal fees as a part time instructor in basic canoeing skills
- (3) Accept academic and technical scholarships and bursaries and that assistance administered through the British Canoe Union may include —
 - Food and lodging
 - Cost of transport
 - Pocket money to cover incidental expenses
 - Insurance cover in respect of accidents, illness, personal property and disability
 - Personal sports equipment and clothing
 - Cost of medical treatment, physiotherapy and authorised coaches.
 - Compensation, in case of necessity, for absence from work or basic occupation, on account of preparation for, or participation in canoeing events.
 - In no circumstances shall payment made under this provision exceed the sum which would have been earned in the same periods.

The Eligibility Committee has also decreed that an Amateur Canoeist is *NOT* permitted to:—

- (1) Have allowed his person, name, picture or sports performance to be used for advertising, except when the British Canoe Union enters into a contract for sponsorship or equipment. All payments must be made to the Union and not to the individual.
- (2) Carry advertising material on his person or clothing in competitions held under British Canoe Union rules, other than trademarks on technical equipment or clothing as agreed by the British Canoe Union.

It has been agreed that the term British Canoe Union may be interpreted as meaning Specialist Committee of the Union, for the purposes of the foregoing regulations.

The underlying philosophy that has determined the attitude of the Union towards amateurism, is that whilstsoever the International Canoe Federation distinguish between amateurs and professionals, then it is necessary that the Union must also define the status of British Canoe Union members if they are to continue to compete internationally.

Within the constraints of the definition, it is generally agreed that to seek recompense for athletic talent, should not be regarded as encouraging an inevitable slide towards avaricious sporting immorality. However, the Union are also anxious to avoid their sport being subverted by commercial interests, and developing abnormally through the involvement of canoeing impresarios. It is for this reason that assistance offered in cash or kind must be administered by the Union or its authorised Committees.

Practical examples of assistance afforded to members of the Union and the effect upon their amateur status are as follows:

Personal Sponsorship for Expenses and Equipment

Must be administered by The Union

Cash Prizes	Must not compete in an event where cash prizes are given
Compensation for loss of Earnings	Must be "in case of necessity". Payment must not exceed sum that would have been earned.
Advertising	Permissible within the circumstances referred to.
Extent of Amateur Rule	All individual canoeists (not clubs or organisations), competitors and non competitors are subject to the Amateur Rule. To derive material gain whether from competition, expedition, coaching, or any form of canoeing activity, other than within the circumstances referred to may be an infringement of the Amateur Rule.

To return then to the original theme of their exposition, which was the effect of the International Olympic Committees deliberations at Baden-Baden upon British canoeists. Well, the immediate effect is that the International Canoe Federation will need to amend their amateur rule to accord with Rule 26 of the Olympic Charter, and no doubt this will be done at the International Congress to be held at Belgrade in July this year. Following this the British Canoe Union will then need to amend their amateur rule to accord with that of the International Canoe Federation, and it is likely therefore that by the beginning of 1983, the new amateur rule for British canoeists will contain the following requirements additional to those already in existence.

"That the amateur rule is based on the principle that an athlete's health must not suffer nor must he or she be placed at a social or

material disadvantage as a result of his or her preparation for participation in sports competitions. Amateur canoeists must not have

- (1) Been registered as professional athletes or professional coaches in any sport.
- (2) Signed a contract as a professional athlete or professional coach in any sport before the official closing of the Olympic Games.
- (3) Accepted without the knowledge of the British Canoe Union material advantages for their preparation or participation in a sports competition.
- (4) In the practice of sports and in the opinion of the British Canoe Union manifestly contravened the spirit of fair play in the exercise of sport, particularly by the use of doping or violence.

The foregoing exposition regarding the British Canoe Union Amateur Rule is by no means exhaustive, and will inevitably generate a need for additional interpretation and definition. Accordingly should further information be required please write to the Director, British Canoe Union, for his advice.

Advertising and infringement of the amateur rule

Often confusion arises regarding the relationship between advertising and the Amateur Rule. The British Canoe Union Amateur Rule requires that — "Championships titles must not be used for the purposes of financial or material gain, which does not represent payment for actual work done — for instance payment for use of Championships titles in the publicity of commercial firms."

There are, however, additionally, International Canoe Federation Rules, that apply to competitors participating in *events organised under International Canoe Federation rules*,

and these are not connected in any way with the rules of amateurism.

The rules for Slalom and Wild Water Racing are —

- (1) Boats, accessories and clothing may carry the same trademark as the corresponding article on sale to the public. In any event, these symbols cannot exceed 20 x 5 cm on boats or 10 x 3 cm on paddles and may appear only once.
- (2) Signs or trademarks on equipment shall not be reduced to the prescribed dimensions by addition of tape or similar means.
- (3) If the name or the insignia of the club is applied to the boat or accessories it also is subject to the size restrictions of section 1.
- (4) National emblems may be used without size restriction.
- (5) Any boat or accessory that does not meet the above restrictions will not be accepted."

The rules for Racing and Marathon Racing are —

In training and in international competitions it is forbidden to indulge in commercial publicity. Boats, accessories or clothing shall carry only the same trade mark symbols as corresponding articles on current sale or the name of the club. In all cases these symbols should not exceed 20 x 5 cm on boats and 10 x 3 cm on paddles and, in the latter case, only once on each face. Any boat or accessory which does not comply with the above mentioned conditions will not be acceptable. Teams are responsible for their own equipment."



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If you still live in an ark, the chances are that you also think the coastguards are dedicated men who sit in isolated lookouts gazing diligently out to sea. Well, they are certainly dedicated people, but they have long since given up relying on their eyes. In fact they have given up a lot of their original responsibilities to become a forward thinking service, equipped for the twentieth century and playing a role as useful and effective for the supertanker as for the sea canoeist.

The service was founded in 1822 to 'guard' the coast against smugglers and the pirating of wrecks and lookouts were based at almost every accessible bay and beach. It became clear over the ensuing years, however, that these lookouts could act in a safety role to those who were legitimately at

FOR THOSE IN PERIL ON THE SEA

by Neil Shave

sea; and in the course of time radios replaced telescopes, land-rovers replaced horses, and teams of experienced personnel in well equipped control centres replaced the lone men in their lookouts.

The service is now the responsibility of the Marine Division of the Department of Trade (neither the Royal National Lifeboat Institution nor Trinity House as commonly supposed) and ranks alongside the Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade as a 999 emergency service. The popular belief that coastguard officers are all retired or failed naval officers is also a myth: the service is staffed by experts in the field of coastal and maritime safety and rescue, and carries total



national responsibility for the initiation and co-ordination of all civil cliff, beach and sea rescue, often for up to hundreds of miles from our coast. This co-ordination may involve Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Search and Rescue Units, Lifeboats, merchant and fishing vessels, and cliff rescue and beach lifeguard teams.

For operational purposes, the country has been divided into six regions, each under the control of a 'Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre' (MRCC). These are situated at Dover, Falmouth, Swansea, Yarmouth, Clyde and Aberdeen and each has a number of sub-centres (MRSC) to help cover its area of responsibility.

Statistics have shown that less than 2% of all incidents passing through the hands of the coastguard are the result of him being the first to see the incident and the majority of these incidents are subsequently reported by a third party. The other 98% are first reported by the casualty, other mariners or the public at large. Hardly surprising, therefore, that the coastguard relies on the spoken word for his information, transmitted via either telephone lines (known as landlines) or radio. An important feature of his radio communication is the VHF Marine Band, providing a range of up to 60 miles where conditions are favourable. By the careful siting of remote aerials, the coastguard has radio cover in this band for almost the entire coastline — the only exceptions being a few remote and steep sided bays.

In the last twenty years, there has been an increase in leisure time and with it has come an increase in the number of small boats afloat; many manned by inadequately trained 'crews' with inadequate equipment. Until recently the coastguard had considered sea canoeists along with these people, feeling that our small boats were no match for the unrelenting sea and warning us against undertaking even the most humble venture.

UK sea canoeists did not remain idle during this time, so developing their skills and equipment that we now lead the world in our sport. The coastguard has not been slow to notice and we now enjoy a good working relationship, even though the occasional 'cowboy' canoeist sets us back a step or two.



Left: Peter Legg (Senior Watch Officer at Dover MRCC) on 'electronic' look out, keeping an ear to the radio safety channels and emergency telephone lines. Right: Nick Goodman (Duty Officer at Calshot) on more traditional lookout from his vantage point at the top of the tower pictured above.

From this working relationship has emerged a code, and the coastguard has come to expect that a sea canoeist will:

- 1) only go to sea if properly experienced and equipped
- either 2) use a reliable shore based contact (agent) who can raise an alarm when the party is overdue.
- or 3) notify the appropriate MRCC/MRSC of the nature and intentions of the party, as well as clear the activity as finished.
- 4) report the description of any boats washed off the beach or otherwise lost at sea.

The experience required in 1 will naturally depend both on the nature of the journey as well as on the prevailing sea and weather conditions, but the inventory of equipment must include:

- lifejacket or buoyancy aid
- clothing to provide against wind, rain/spray and immersion
- flares both to attract attention and pinpoint location
- a detailed plan of primary, secondary and escape routes

Point 2 can work well. The agent must know the exact intentions and limitations of the group, and must neither be inclined to panic as the overdue time gets closer, nor wander off home halfway through the day tired of waiting. When the alarm needs to be raised, the agent must be able to supply the coastguard with full details of the party and its plan. It is often the search for this information that wastes so much valuable rescue time.

Point 3 requires some judgement. A surfing party would not be expected to notify anyone, nor would a touring group staying within the confines of a bay or beach. In both cases involving the coastguard could be deemed to be trivial. Extremes of weather, however, (particularly if off shore winds were involved) could change trivial into vital. The question of reporting when an activity is over should be common sense, but it is amazing how many groups come off the water elated at the success of the trip, not giving a second thought to the coastguard who is by now busy radioing boats in the area for details of your last known position.

Point 4 is common sense again, but many a search has been launched after finding an abandoned kayak only to discover (after much wasted time and money) that its owner is safely tucked up in bed after a good day's paddling. A paddler is of course free to use most sea areas without reference to anyone, and he may consider it 'beneath him' to use an agent or contact the coastguard or may just not want to bother anyone. Equally, a coastguard cannot force a sea canoeist to make contact. Being a professional, he is a busy man but can always find time for those who take the sea seriously. He will happily provide information about the weather and local conditions, and will be pleased to keep a watchful eye and ear whilst you are afloat. The Duty Officer may not, however, be a small-boat man and may neither understand your sport nor condone your intentions.

Relations with the coastguard are therefore a question of both discretion and communication. *Discretion* being the interpretation of all prevailing circumstances and

conditions. *Communication* being an interaction of people and equipment: not only a canoeist's communication with the coastguard, but also the coastguard's communication with his many contacts on the coast and at sea perhaps to report your last known position or the exact location of a sighted flare.

The most useful form of modern coastal communication has to be the marine band radio, and I believe the sea canoeist should give serious thought to using it. CB sounds like a good idea, but it has limitations. The coastguard does not have it, neither does military and merchant shipping. Its use is restricted to canoeists keeping in touch with each other, or in touch with their agent, but waterproof sets are not readily available. VHF Marine Band, however, is carried by every coastguard, every coast radio station, every military and merchant vessel and many pleasure craft; and the Calling and Safety Channel (16) is monitored by all of them whenever the ship/station is manned. A portable set can give a canoeist several miles range and can ensure a large number of ears along much of the UK coastline. The sets need to be licenced, as does the operator, but the cost and inconvenience of the formalities are outweighed by the contribution made to the safety of the party.

Sea Canoeing is represented within the structure of the BCU by the Sea Touring Committee (STC), a sub-committee of the Access Coaching and Recreation Management Committee (ACRMC). Close contact

is maintained with HM Coastguard at this level through Dick Richards, sea canoeist as well as Regional Controller for the Swansea Region of the service. Reporting to him on the canoeing side are a number of regional liaison officers — active paddlers who not only know the coastline of their respective regions, but who are also prepared to liaise on questions of safety and act as 'expert witnesses' in the event of an incident.

Finally, I make mention of the Advanced Sea Kayak Club (ASKC) — a large body of sea canoeists who through meetings and newsletters exchange ideas and monitor the 'state of the art' of the sport. If you are a sea canoeist, join this club and meet and enjoy the benefits of being associated with the wealth of experience and knowledge within its ranks. In the meantime, you might remember 'ASKC' before you next launch at sea unannounced:

- A = ask about local conditions
- S = say what you intend doing
- K = keep monitoring your progress
- C = clear when you return safely

And remember, you may know a lot about sea-canoeing, but the coastguard knows a lot about the sea.

Coastguard Liaison Officers: Dich Richards, (Nationwide and Swansea Region and Hon Tres of STC), Ron Moore (Falmouth Region), John Ramwell (Yarmouth Region, Chairman of STC and Secretary of ASKC), Neil Shave (Dover Region), David Shaw/SCA (Clyde and Aberdeen Region).



Sea Canoeists do it Alone!

HOW BORING:

Especially when you stop and think.
That housewives do it at the sink,
That pop-stars do it with the beat,
That soldiers do it on their feet.

But some are moved to paddle clear
Of beach and bay, of groyne and pier;
To find some peace, to find they're free
To roam at will across the sea.

The one who solos often fits
His boat with all the latest bits —
With pumps and bulkheads, paddles spare,
With decklines, towropes, compass, flare.

A boat that's long, a course that's true,
A design that's old, a sport that's new.
But this same loner often loathes
To wear the right canoeing clothes:

The clothing that will help him float
If he is parted from his boat,
It's all too often one will find
It strapped to deck or left behind.

If epic strikes, as strike it will,
Could it be conquered just by skill,
Or would our loner need some help
To free him from the tangled kelp?

So soloists please spare a thought,
Whilst wearing all the gear you ought —
Consider all the risks you take,
Reflect on all the rules you break.

Balance the pleasure that you get,
Against the example that you set:
For codes of safety still decree,
That less than three there should never be.

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The team would like to thank the following who helped in other ways — Baron, Berghaus, Billington, Beaufort Air/Sea Equipment, British Airways, Pyranha and Whitewater Sports (Official supplier).

Canoeing in Scotland



The law of Scotland is different from that of England and this has enabled more progress to be made on access problems than has been achieved south of the border. For rivers: the landowner cannot restrict the passage of craft over rivers that border his land and therefore, provided access to the river can be obtained there is little difficulty in access down the river.

There are two points arising from this. The first is that access over land may be difficult, and rivers adjacent to public roads are few. The second lies in the increasing use of those rivers to which easy access can be made. In general the first point can be surmounted by private agreement with a landowner in advance and the Scottish Canoe Association has names and addresses of landowners who are agreeable in this manner, but the second is more difficult. For many landowners the proceeds from the fishing rights bordering their land are a

major part of their livelihood and fishing is a major industry in Scotland. It has always been the policy of the Scottish Canoe Association and its parent BCU that canoeing should coexist with other water sports — including angling — and not act to their detriment. There is no doubt that parties of 20–30 canoeists frequently passing down a stretch of river do reduce the pleasure of angling — if not the number of fish or canoeists actually hooked — and therefore agreements are being considered with various angling associations and landowners to limit the times of canoeing, i.e. within certain hours or a limited number of days per week. At present these are local agreements with specific canoe clubs and the Scottish Canoe Association gives such agreements its blessing though at present not making them mandatory on all its members.

In consequence, visitors to Scotland are requested to contact the SCA at 18 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh before canoeing on Scottish rivers.

The other inland waterways are lochs and canals. The most well known canal is the Caledonian canal passing through several lochs including Loch Ness. For this passage a small charge is made by the British Waterways Authority. There are also camping sites on the shores of the lochs. The lochs in Scotland, and the artificial lochs made by dams are canoeable provided access over land can be obtained. This is normally straight forward and for some lochs e.g. Loch Lomond, it is unnecessary.

Sea lochs are also of free access and so are the shores though no camping is allowed on the Isle of Bute and restrictions may be in force on naval or commercial harbours. Details of sea touring can be obtained from the SCA who have information sheets specific to certain areas of the west coast.

This summarises the access position but there are various aspects of canoeing that should be observed both on the grounds of safety and courtesy. For rivers the spate conditions can be very different from normal and in winter and spring the water from melting snow make the chances of severe exposure following immersion very high. Also certain weirs and rapids can and have caused fatalities. Notable are the weir on the river Awe that should not be attempted and Campsie Linn on the river Tay at high water. Salmon fishermen are common on the rivers and the canoeist should wait up stream if a fish is being played until it is convenient to pass.

On lochs the precautions associated with coastal touring should be followed as they can become rough very quickly. Also sea lochs often have strong tide races at their entrances. Tide races are also a feature of the seas off the west coast so that in some places stoppers and features normally associated with rivers exist between islands.

What can be expected in the future for canoeing in Scotland? Over the next few years a comprehensive guide will be published and added to so that the visitor can plan an itinerary without danger of offending anyone over access problems. Looking further ahead there are proposed canoeing hostels at specific white water sites such as Grandtully — where the land has already been purchased — so that difficulties of transport and access can also be overcome. In the distant future one can also see the possibilities of slaloms and white water racing in sea tidal races that would offer sufficient challenge for the most intrepid canoeist.

John Fryer
Vice President SCA.

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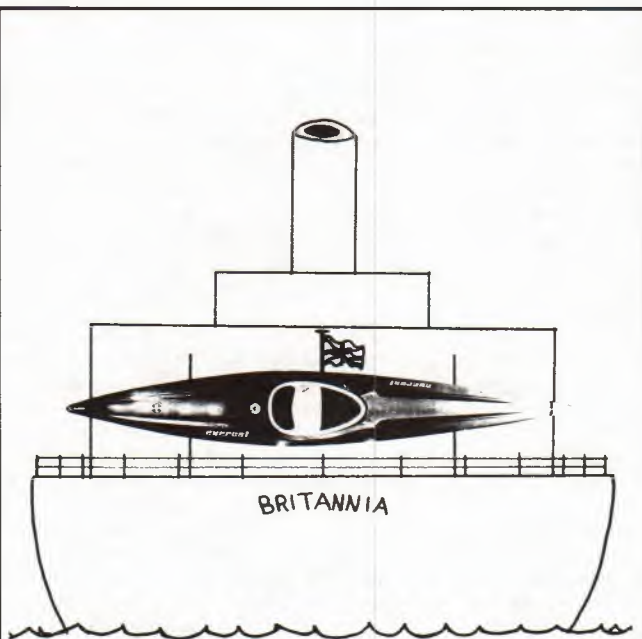
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Fosters Draft

Fosters (the Australian for Lager) are helping the Union to stage the 1982 International Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre.

Fosters Sports Foundation is a trust set up by Trumans Breweries to aid sports that they feel would benefit from additional help. Other sports to gain from Fosters interest are Hang Gliding and Boomerang throwing. In our particular case Trumans involvement has occurred at a most welcome stage in our development.

When the British Canoe Union was asked to take over the Canoe Exhibition early in 1981, the opportunity was grasped with both hands. Each year a significant outlay occurs before the event takes place, the strain of which has been removed from the Union's shoulders by Fosters Lager.

The exhibition committee is more than happy with the generous support it is receiving — support which is likely to spread to other sections of the sport.

Watch this space!

The 1982 International Canoe Exhibition

The 1982 International Canoe Exhibition ushers in a new era in the long history of the exhibition, in as much that it is the first to be organised and run, by the British Canoe Union alone. Until the 1981 exhibition, help both physical and financial has been given first by the CCPR and then by the Sports Council. These days Crystal Palace and the Canoe exhibition are synonymous, but in its long history it has been held in many places. My first memory is of the Duke of York's Barracks at Chelsea, but as the sport of canoeing grew so did the Exhibition and many and various were its homes, schools, the Seymour Hall, Colleges and then Crystal Palace. In the early days, of course, it was a one day event and then in the late 60's it was decided to make it a two day event. A lot of heartsearching went into this decision; would it be a success, would the people come. Our fears of course were groundless and the Exhibition has grown,

until now we use practically all of the sports hall complex and have something going on in the main pool all the time.

The pool events have become quite a feature over the years, and as this year our theme is sea canoeing, we hope for some instructive and exciting displays from the Sea Canoeing Fraternity and maybe a few surprises as well. A number of the films are on expeditions and many of the stands have sea canoes and equipment exhibited on theme emphasising canoeing link with the seas especially in this year of 'Martime England'.

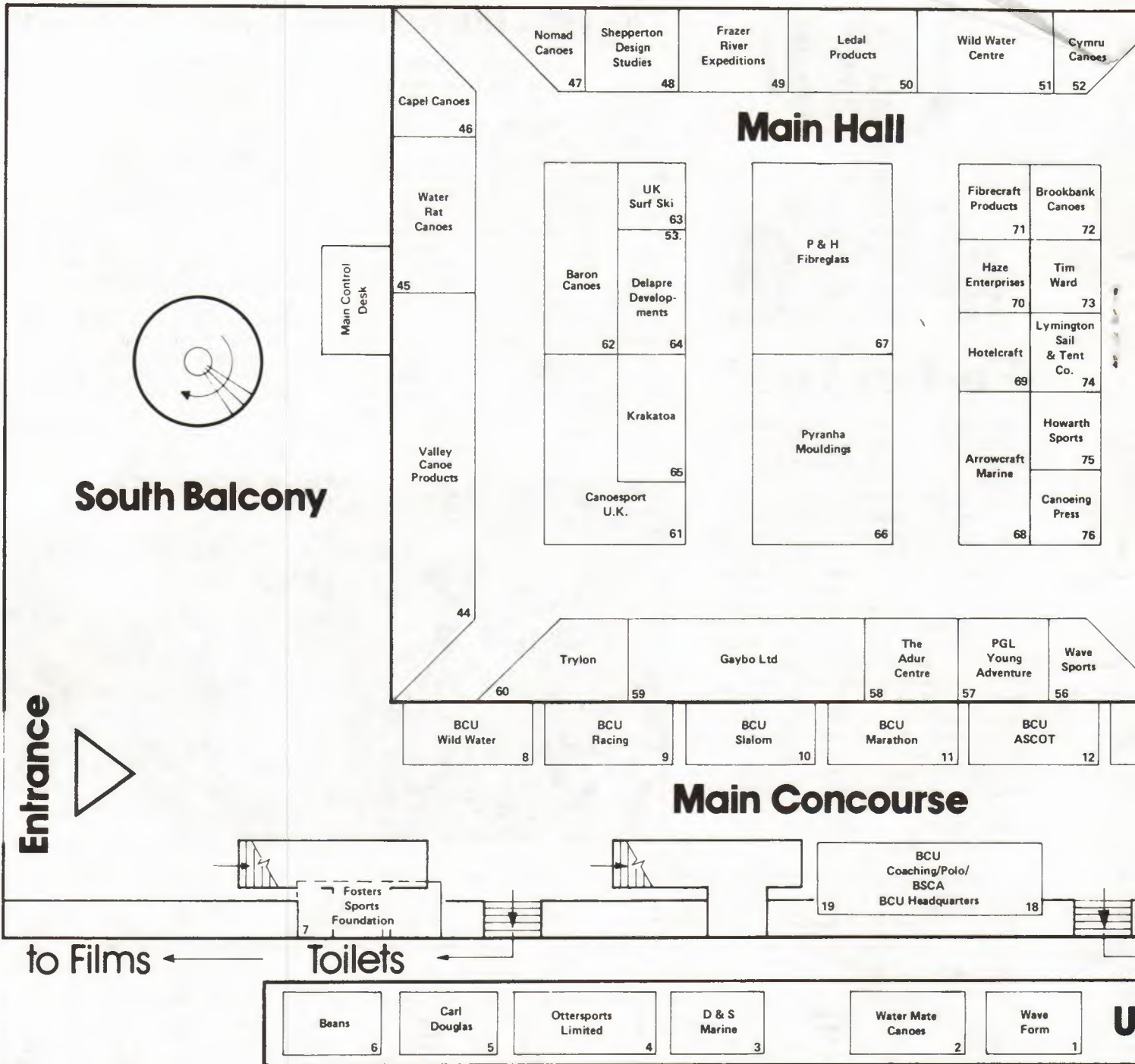
In the training pool we have the 'Come Canoeing' group giving youngsters their first taste of paddling a canoe. So why don't you come and try our International Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace.

J. A. Bright



Combined Services	Inland Waterways Association	Valley of Ice Expedition	Canadian Canoe Association	Canoe Camping Club	Youth Hostel Association	Sports Council																								
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INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION

Crystal Palace
20-21 Feb '82

Pool Programme

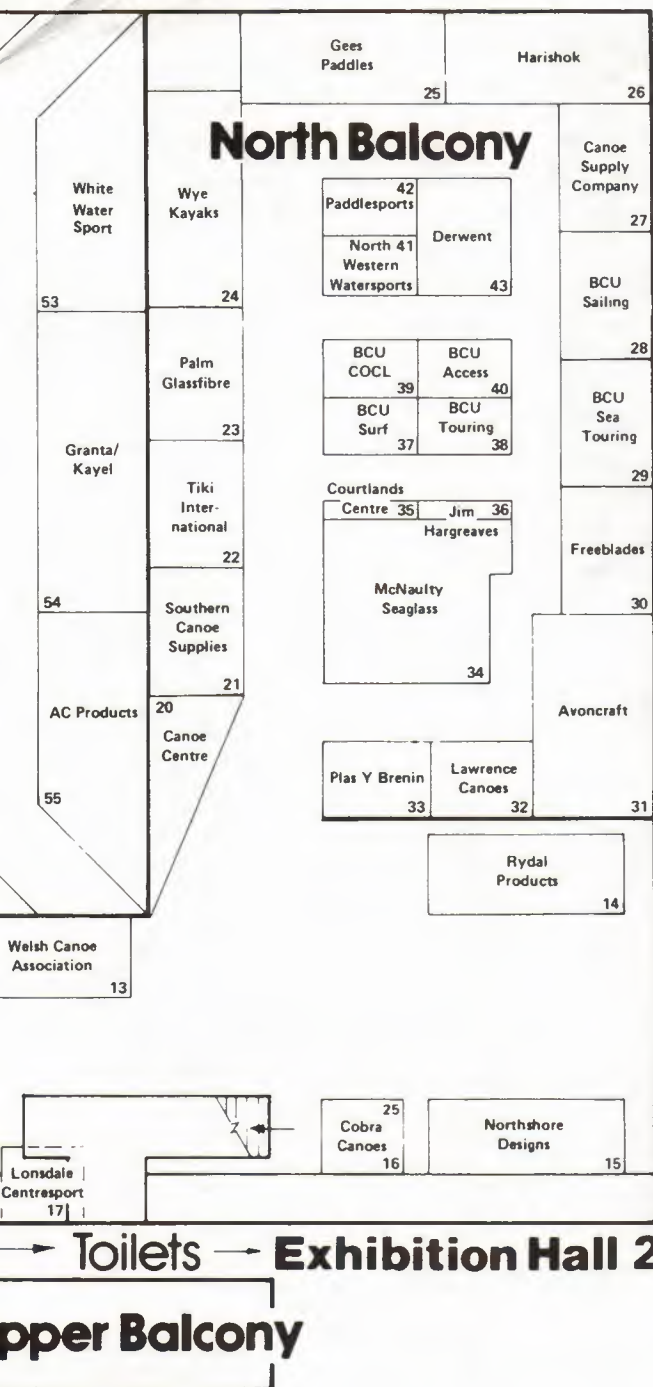
Saturday

- 1000-1140 Polo
- 1140-1200 Canadian Canoeing demonstration
- 1200-1230 Inter-club fun event - C7 tug of war/canoe push ball
- 1230-1300 Surf rescue demonstration
- 1300-1400 Slalom
- 1400-1430 Inter-club fun event - C7 tug of war/canoe push ball
- 1430-1530 Polo
- 1530-1600 Sea canoeing demonstration
- 1600-1700 Slalom
- 1700-1730 Polo

Sunday

- 0930-1100 Polo
- 1100-1155 Slalom
- 1155-1215 Canadian Canoeing demonstration
- 1215-1255 Polo
- 1255-1325 Surf rescue demonstration
- 1325-1420 Slalom
- 1420-1435 Slalom trophy presentations
- 1435-1515 Inter-club fun event - C7 tug of war/canoe push ball
- 1515-1555 Polo
- 1555-1625 Sea canoeing demonstration
- 1625-1715 Polo

Slalom wriggle tests and coracle wiggle gate events in the diving pool will run concurrently with slalom and polo events in the main pool.



- 53. White Water Sport
- 54. Granta/Kayel
- 55. AC Products
- 56. Wave Sports
- 57. PGL Young Adventure
- 58. The Adur Centre
- 59. Gaybo Ltd
- 60. Trylon
- 61. Canoesport UK
- 62. Baron Canoes
- 63. UK Surf Ski
- 64. Delapre Developments
- 65. Krakatoa
- 66. Pyranha Mouldings
- 67. P & H Fibreglass
- 68. Arrowcraft Marine
- 69. Hotelcraft
- 70. Haze Enterprises
- 71. Fibrecraft Products
- 72. Brookbank Canoes

- 73. Tim Ward
- 74. Lymington Sail & Tent Co.
- 75. Howarth Sports
- 76. Canoeing Press

NO. 2. EXHIBITION HALL

- 77. Inner London Education Authority
- 78. Inner London Education Authority
- 79. National Benzole
- 80. Combined Services
- 81. Inland Waterways Association
- 82. Valley of Ice
- 83. Canadian Canoe Association
- 84. Canoe Camping Club
- 85. Youth Hostel Association
- 86. Sports Council
- 87. Long River Canoeists Club
- 88. National Scout Association
- 89. Calshot Activities Centre
- 90. Advanced Sea Kayak Club

- 91. Handicapped Canoe Association
- 92. East Midlands Region BCU
- 93. Yorkshire & Humberside BCU
- 94. Northern Region BCU
- 95. Eastern Region BCU
- 96. Sea Rangers Association
- 97. National Association of Boys' Clubs
- 98. Sea Rangers Association
- 99. Boys' Brigade
- 100. South Region BCU
- 101. North West Region BCU
- 102. Spanish Canoe Association
- 103. Peterborough Development Corporation
- 104. French Canoe Association
- 105. RNLI
- 106. The Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society
- 107. RLSS
- 108. South West Region BCU
- 109. West Midlands Region BCU
- 110. North London Rescue Commando

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Derek Hairon and car, moments before it was manhandled out of the rising water.

Cut off by the Tide

When the country was gripped in the teeth of some of the worst winter weather for 50 years, the Sea Symposium took place in Hampshire. The Symposium is organised by the Advanced Sea Kayak Club (ASKC) on behalf of the Sea Touring Committee (STC) and is a gathering of all those interested in sea canoeing — be they listeners, lecturers or paddlers. The spot chosen for the gathering was the Calshot Activities Centre, situated on a shingle spit extending into Southampton Water and occupying buildings and hangars once used to build the flying boats of Schneider Trophy fame.

It was the weekend of 11/13 December that participants set their bearings for this fine south coast centre, braving deep snow and black ice in the process. The weather made it quite impossible for the contingent from the North East to attend, but otherwise some 60 of the expected 80 arrived, including one from the Channel Isles and a party from France to represent the French Canoeing Association and their sea kayaking interests. The symposium takes place every second year and a tightly packed programme of lectures and demonstrations had been planned for this 1981 event: Japan 1981, *Drew Delaney*; Safety at Sea, *Brian Sheen*; SW Greenland 1977, *Eric Totty*; NW Greenland 1977, *John Bull*; Photography from Kayaks, *Mike Watson and Derek Hairon*; Labrador 1981, *Nigel Foster*; Baffin Island 1980, *Frank Goodman*; South Sea Island Craft, *Ray Barker*; HM Coastguard, *Dick Richards*; Starting a Centre, *Ian Garland*; Flares, *Dave Evans*; Cockpit Liners, *Alan Byde and Nick Padwick*.

Reports on each of this kaleidoscope of subjects either has — or may — appear in its own right in this magazine. In addition a detailed and informative report published by the ASKC will be available shortly. The presentations (varying in both canoeing content and interest factor) followed consecutively through the weekend. The only scheduled interruption to the sequence was the AGM of the Sea Touring Committee on the Saturday evening. The formalities were

quickly dealt with, and two points of concern were raised under 'any other business'.

The first was a report by the French contingent of the latest news on their government's restrictions on small boats (including kayaks and canoes) going outside 300 yards (sorry metres) from the shore. The French canoeists are making representations through their local MP's but they are not hopeful of an early settlement. In the meantime the advice is not to attempt a channel crossing, although a test journey will be set up shortly to see whether special approval will be granted to a *bona fide* group of suitably experienced and accredited personnel. The second was the possibility of restrictions being imposed on canoeing from North Devon beaches following the serious accident at Croyde Bay last summer. It has still not been confirmed that a low line slalom boat was the culprit, although popular rumour eagerly follows that course.

An unscheduled interruption to the weekend happened about midday on the Sunday in the middle of Frank's presentation on Baffin Island. Dave Evans (Deputy Warden at the Centre) burst in to announce that the Spit was flooding and that some vehicles were already up to their wheel arches in water. *Mass Exodus!* (Apologies to Frank for the interruption, but time and tide wait for no man!).

The flooding was the result of a fairly high spring tide, egged on by onshore storm force winds gusting at nearly 60 knots and full of horizontal sleet and snow — true blizzard conditions. It was the neck of the spit (the only way off) that took the brunt of the weather, with waves breaking over it and flooding to a depth of about 4 ft.

As cars were driven and/or manhandled clear of the swirling water, Roger Irwin went to check the mooring of his Avon SeaRider, and Drew Delaney and Mike Watson checked their kayaks — all three having used water transport to attend from their Isle of Wight homes. The SeaRider was full of water and had sunk as far as the engine casing: the two kayaks were still intact but

Mike went white at the sight of his Angmagssalik (akin in balance to a one wheeled bicycle for the uninitiated) and the prospect of launching for home into an onshore 10. Hurried telephone calls revealed that the entire south of England was experiencing similar blizzard conditions and there was discussion about bringing the weekend to a premature finish to allow an early start for home.

Wasted mental effort.

None of our vehicles would make it through the depth of water, and the wait was on for the tide to turn — a longer wait than normal due to the double high tide in the north Solent and the resulting two hour stand. It now looked as if the Sea Symposium — a gathering representing a major percentage of the world's sea canoeing experience — was stuck ... cut off by the tide.

Lunch gave the opportunity to review the situation and Dick Richards telephoned to see whether the helicopter that he had booked from HMS Daedalus as a visual aid(!) for his talk on the coastguard would make it. Negative. All three had been launched to attend Channel distress situations that made national headlines. Towards the end of Sunday afternoon the water level had dropped sufficient to allow vehicles through and many left for home. Conditions elsewhere in the country forced some to stay until the following morning — a group which included the three with the really very short journey back to the Isle of Wight!

Altogether an interesting weekend with that ever welcome opportunity of meeting familiar faces: and some striking presentations ... Ian Garland and his story of the hard work and hardships of a man determined to start an adventure centre and make it pay. Frank Goodman and his fascinating tale of building and paddling Nordkapps with the Inuit people of Baffin Island and Nigel Foster and his unassuming yet gripping story of what must rank as one of the most challenging solos in our annals.

For my money I would like to have seen better editing of slides in some of the (too many) expedition reports, and perhaps heard from a few sea-faring outsiders — the Master of a tanker at Fawley, or the Master of a warship at Portsmouth, or a Trinity House Pilot. But there are only so many hours in a weekend ... perhaps the year after next.

Neil Snave

Brian Sheen and flare, watching anxiously to see whether it would fire on the third attempt.



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FRASER RIVER KAYAK EXPEDITION

An exclusive story by Peter Knowles

Introduction

I had first paddled some sections of the Fraser River in 1977 and the kernel of the idea must have been planted in my mind then. To most people the idea of journeying down a major river from source to mouth is an exciting idea. To me personally the idea of paddling a major white water river in a kayak was doubly attractive — it seemed to represent the fullest possible use of the special attributes of a modern kayak. Strong, light, instantly responsive, fast and manoeuvrable; no other craft could be used for the journey I was thinking of. Nor of course would any other craft give that immensely satisfying essential close feeling of personal oneness with the vagaries of moving water.

Whilst the Fraser river was not the most technical white water in the world, in its 800 mile journey from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific it offered some of the most dramatic extremes of white water to be found anywhere — all on the same river! I discovered that as far as was known, no-one had paddled the whole river by kayak. Plenty had canoed it — but only with very lengthy portages of many miles around the difficult sections. It appeared to be the largest white water river south of Alaska to have no dam on it — due to the valuable salmon fisheries. From all accounts it was little changed from when Simon Fraser had first journeyed down it in 1808; modern settlements, roads and railroads had largely avoided the river.

The team relaunching after a lunch stop in the shadow of Mt. Robson — highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies.



The river had an evil reputation with a sad toll of hundreds of lives. Moran Canyon and "Hells Gate" were infamous. Although only two hours drive from Vancouver only two kayakers had attempted Hells Gate — both with raft support in 1975. In the intervening years no-one had been tempted to repeat it.

Planning & Preparations

Because of this ill reputation, and the time involved to paddle 800 miles, I couldn't persuade any of the very competent local British Columbia paddlers to join me. Initially I was not keen on an all British Expedition in that I had personal experience of the legacy of bad feeling Sir Ranulph Fiennes had left following his "Headless Valley" expedition (British Army conquers the colonial wilderness!").

Choosing a British team was no problem. John Griffiths and Sue Hornby were old friends, we had learnt canoeing and white water swimming together, and were very competent all rounders. I thought they might like to try their hand at a long expedition — for Sue a relaxation after the World Championships? Pete Midwood was another old friend with a wealth of experience and several expeditions behind him. Jeff Gill and "Pedro" Montgomery were stalwarts from our expedition to the Grand Canyon of the Stikine in 1979.

One of the two kayakers who had paddled Hells Gate was Dave Green, who I paddled on the Colorado with in 1973 and

I had then joined him again in 1977 to run several BC rivers. I had written to him and was delighted when he said he could join for Moran Canyon and Hells Gate. I had what I felt was a strong and balanced team — but more important a group of friends who I felt reasonably sure would get along together.

Finance, was at first a major problem — there are plenty of grants available if you organise yourself 18 months in advance — but like most canoeists, to organise myself even 9 months ahead is a major undertaking. However, our trip seemed a natural for the Mick Burke Award and I just managed to beat the deadline for the applications. This competition for the best expedition film is held every two years in memory of BBC cameraman Mick Burke who was lost on Everest. We were selected as one of six expeditions to receive a grant, training, loan of cameras and film. John was an enthusiastic and artistic amateur cine member and jumped at the idea of being cameraman. I wasn't keen on dragging along a full scale camera team — but making a film ourselves was very different and added further interest to the expedition.

Intending to make a film, we were in a stronger position for seeking help from sponsors. We first thought out the commitment we were prepared to make to sponsors and formulated a policy and statement that was agreed to by all members of the team. We were keen on a fast, lightweight, self-reliant expedition with the minimum of short support carried in the cars. All equipment was going to have to be light, reliable, and tough — only the best would do. We carefully assessed what was necessary and who, in our opinion, were the best suppliers for each item. We then only approached these selected suppliers for help. Almost every first choice supplier generously offered to donate the required equipment. We endeavoured to obtain a single major sponsor to underwrite the total cost of the expedition but although nearly successful, ran out of time. The choice of kayaks was difficult, we were tempted with down river racers, but in the end settled on high volume slalom length boats.

Research and planning was fairly straightforward. Maps, water values, books, personal descriptions, were all readily available. We took along a reprint of Simon Fraser's Journal as our day to day guide as we descended the river. It was fascinating and eerie listening to Fraser's description as we sat round the camp fire in the dark on the bank of the river.

Timing of the journey was tricky. We needed low water conditions to run the Canyons, but these were in October-November, long after the first snowfall. We settled on mid-September to mid-October and hoped for an Indian Summer. My initial idea for running the river was beautifully simple — catch the train with a couple of friends at Vancouver, jump off at Yellow-



Sue Hornby negotiating a beaver dam near the source of the river.

head Pass and paddle back to Vancouver! — On closer examinations there were a few minor problems — the train didn't stop for example (the idea still appeals though!)

I'd spent the month before on a 'warm up' trip driving around the Yukon with a bunch of wild water freaks in a 'Quest for the Malamite Salmon' (article in next issue of White Water Magazine). I didn't have the courage to take the hire van back — it was in such a state — so decided to hang on to it for a few extra days and shanghai Anton Hunt to be our 'shuttle bunny' and return the van. In the next few days Anton very good naturedly put up with a lot of hanging about; as soon as there was any action and the cameras came out, only to be told to 'get off the set!'

Meanwhile back in England John & Sue's flat was starting to resemble an outdoor equipment shop. BA were helpful about the boats and gear and the team flew into Vancouver where Anton and myself were waiting to meet them. We whisked them away to their first night's 'doss spot' — a squatters house that was due to be re-developed ...

The following day a drive up the Fraser Canyon and look at Hells Gate didn't do anything to ease jet lag stomachs or hang overs. A quick warm up paddle on the Thompson river and then an overnight drive to the Rockies.

The Start

First problem with paddling a river from 'source to mouth' is to decide where it is practical to paddle from. The Fraser starts as a trickle on a rock face high up on the mountain wall of the Rockies. We decided to start at Yellowhead Pass (1138 metres high) which was the route Simon Fraser had taken to cross the Rockies. We would then be following in his footsteps — starting on the Great Divide — the watershed between rivers running to the Arctic Ocean and those to the Pacific Ocean. We would join the Fraser downstream a few miles from its true source.

"Following in the steps of Simon Fraser" proved quite realistic as we dragged our boats through scrub, alder thickets and

swamp. Sue was physically nauseated by the stench from the mud and rotting vegetation — others quite enjoyed a good wallow! Blackfly gave us a friendly attentive welcome. Fresh evidence of bear and moose added to the smell, however, the noise of our passage must have frightened them off. Shooting beaver dams was fun and rather different, but it took most of the afternoon to cover some three miles, and like previous travellers we felt relieved to reach the more navigable waters of Yellowhead Lake.

The real white water started two days later below Moose Lake — some eight miles of heavy technical grade IV which really got us loosened up and paddling well. We were really enjoying this, and then round an innocent looking bend and right in front of us a dull roar and a cloud of spray. A sharp breakout here — for this was Overlander Falls.

Overlander Falls

This is a famous, impressive waterfall — about the same volume as the River Thames at Teddington dropping over an eight metre high ledge into a deep pool of froth and spray. I had been here two weeks before with David Mamby and incredible as we had found it, we had very definite accounts of how several people had paddled it. Dave (with his reputation at stake!) had bravely shot it, followed by Pete Atkinson. Both had survived.

We inspected it very carefully — the others looked a little disbelieving when I said I would run it. 'No problem' I said unconvincingly and put on a cheerful grin. The cheerful grin became more of a horrid fixed leer as naked fear gnawed at my heart and the others made preparations for filming and rescue. 'No problem' was not quite true in that the line up to the shoot was spoilt by two tricky stoppers just above the falls. Luckily I hit these just right, took a deep breath and there I was, dropping, dropping, dropping — with no sensation of hitting the surface. I felt my ears popping, the turbulence pulling at my body and the paddle and then many seconds later an easing of pressure, a rising sensation and up I popped to the surface several yards below the fall. A great feeling — but better in retrospect.

Jeff Gill in the gorge below Overlander Falls



Pete Midwood ran it next 'How deep is the pool?' he had asked me. "Oh, somewhere over 40ft the locals reckon" I'd replied. I was watching afloat below the falls, as over he went. It looked a good time, then I heard a distinct 'thunk', — the familiar sound of fibreglass hitting rock. My heart sank, time stopped, no sign of Peter or his boat. Then, up he popped but jammed upside down by the current against the far wall. He tried to roll but each time the boat edged a little closer to the fall ... we could not reach him, help or rescue was impossible Pete let go his paddle, gave a huge push against the wall, grabbed his paddle, rolled up fast and paddled out of danger. The bow of Pete's boat was slightly dented, 'How deep is it Pete?' I asked casually thinking about his 60ft drop. Well, having seen that, any normal sane sensible person would have been completely put off running Overlander Falls (I for one!). However, we had Pedro Montgomery with us....

Pedro hit the chute at a slight angle and the force of the water grabbed his paddle and rolled him over. He popped up, and tried to hand roll but had the embarrassment of being rescued and the usual banter of 'why did you throw your paddle away Pedro?' 'Posing for the cameras' etc.

We called it a day and went off to camp. By now I think most of us had made up our minds about Overlander Falls, as someone said '100 people will try it and 99 will make it...' 'Funny extreme white water is a personal thing and depends mainly on ones feeling about a short life.'

A little disappointed to have had to be rescued, Pedro ran the falls again the following morning. His decision was received quietly, he was neither encouraged nor discouraged by the rest of us. Our enthusiasm had abated overnight as time and our imagination had had chance to colour in the very real risks. Most of us would probably have been happier if our friend didn't attempt it, but respected his personal courage in deciding to run it a second time. Pedro's run was successful.

The gorge below the falls was beautiful white water — powerful shoots and short pools requiring aggressive, confident paddling if you weren't to miss a breakout. Pete Midwood was leading and decided to stop in a hole for a coffee break. He gave a lovely

demonstration of graceful aerobatics but refused to do it again for the cameras.

That evening the van left us and we had the difficult task of packing the kayaks with the equipment and food for the next two weeks. If the kayaks were to be reasonably manoeuvrable and safe in white water it was essential to keep the weight down. In a warm climate this is fairly easy — but we were still in the Rockies at the onset of winter, our wet suits froze hard at night, icy winds, rain sleet, hail and snow meant that if we slowed up on the river we got very cold. We needed plenty of food to "stoke up". However we had the best of equipment and clothing and although our kayaks seemed heavy, the average weight was probably about 80 lbs.

We had attracted an unofficial supporter — Wesley was an expert on the Fraser, recently retired, and exploring its 146,500 sqkm watershed in his camper van. He was thrilled to meet up with us and gave us a friendly send off and a promise to maybe see us a few hundred miles further on.

The river was now much easier, a grade I or II. We came to another high waterfall — Rearguard Falls. Jeff and Doris ran this (I believe for the first time ever) but it seemed an anticlimax after Overlander Falls. We settled into a routine of steady paddling. We would look for a campsite just before dusk, lighting a fire, changing and getting the tents up and camp established just before dark. We cooked the meal and wrote up our diaries by firelight. Early to bed and up at a very anti social hour. Because of the cold we would normally light a fire for a brew and warmth at lunchtime.

Each night we took great care to suspend

all food high up between two trees, well clear of the camp, so that the bears would not be attracted. Several nights we had been unable to find a campsite that didn't have bear paw marks, and freshly eaten salmon remains. As a token gesture we kept our paddles by the tents but knew that if a grizzly really wanted to eat one of us the chances of stopping him weren't high. The locals were still talking about the naturalist "bear expert" who had been camping up on the Liard the month before and had been eaten! We were too tired out not to sleep soundly.

The river was teeming with salmon and eagles soared overhead. One day we surprised a black bear quietly swimming across the river. Gliding along, we saw a wealth of wildlife — Jeff wrote them all on the decks of his boat but soon ran out of space.

Long ago, in the planning stages we had realised the problems of trying to make any kind of a film on a fast lightweight trip like ours. We didn't appreciate just how difficult it would be. We had to carry two cameras, lots of film, tripod, spares, sound equipment. All had to be kept dry somehow, when most of the time we seemed to be filming in the rain, and most of our gear was damp if not wet. We had no nice sunny periods to dry things out because we were always on the move. John did a superb job, he had to carry and look after most of the gear, direct the filming and action, be the main cameraman, and worry about film records, shot lists, balance, continuity etc. All this whilst paddling and everything the rest of us did.

After a few days the river really slowed down. We were several days behind sche-

dule and had important commitments back in Britain after the trip. If the team was to paddle the whole of the river we knew we would have to make a slight change of plan and we decided to split up to do the relatively flat section to Quesnel. John and Sue would do the first 100 miles, Jeff and myself the middle section, and Pete and Pedro the last section, meeting up in Quesnel four days later. A lift from a helpful local and all went to plan. We all had quiet pleasant paddles, the wilderness experience being heightened by just being two persons. John and Sue in fact saw no other humans for three days. This was the section of river that in the pioneer days before the rail roads had had a regular service of stern wheelers fighting the rapids to ferry supplies to the gold prospectors, trappers, and early homesteaders. We could see the remains of the old landing stages and the occasional deserted cabin alongside the river. We were a little apprehensive about the "Grand Canyon" — described as a grade V rapid, it turned out to be a mild grade II—III.

At Quesnel, we had a well deserved days rest and visited Bonherville — the old gold mining capital of British Columbia. It had been superbly restored and looked quite picturesque with a couple of inches of snow covering it. We enjoyed a civilised meal in the local Pizza, (eat as much as you like salad bar — our record is 7 platefuls). The locals were a bit puzzled by these hungry strangers dressed in red pile romper suits. They kept their distance though as few of us had had the courage to bath in the ice cold river water.

We stocked up again with dried food and set off as a team again. The river now was

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(Above) Jeff Gill reflecting on the peace and solitude,
(Below) and then back to the reality of clearing up the campsite.



very different, large and wide with a powerful current. At Prince Gorge and Quesnel the river was polluted by discharge from the Pulp Mills, it was now a dark brown colour and gave off an acrid chemical smell.

It didn't taste too good either! We were disgusted that this majestic pure river could be so grossly and blatantly polluted. The valley and its vegetation now started to change as we came more into the rain shadow of the Coastal Mountains.

We were coming into the "hot arid zone" or so I kept saying — it stayed dull and overcast with rain and an icy wind! The pine trees got less and less being replaced by sage brush. There were now no signs of bears at our camp sites, Sue breathed a sigh of relief until reminded to look out for rattle snakes.

On the river bank we saw signs of old gold mines and homesteads and met up with a couple of old timers who were washing gravel using small engine powered sluices. They were friendly but noticeably taciturn, on the subject of gold! By now everyone was used to the turbulent boils and whirlpools on the rapids. The few big stoppers were normally obvious and easy to avoid. We passed the old wooden suspension bridge to Gorge Ranch (largest ranch in North America) and got a friendly wave from a cow hand in a pick up. French Bar Rapid proved no problem and late in the evening, with a biting cold head wind we came to the lonely reaction ferry at Big Bar Creek. Here Dave Green met us with a van loaded with beer, steak and salad. Great Welcome!

Moran Canyon was next, some 40 miles long. Dave and I had paddled it in 1977 and had had a couple of epics when members of our party had capsized on the turbulent water. I had a vivid memory of one swimmer being carried along about 10 feet under the surface for a hundred yards or so, whilst I was paddling along on top looking down at him. (We wore CO₂ life jackets on top of our harrishoks for use in the event of a swim).

I volunteered to drive shuttle. The wind rose throughout the day and I suspected the rest might have to make an overnight bury. I was surprised when the team paddled into the campsite only minutes after I arrived after driving 100 miles on hair pin dirt roads. Dave described it as a "Picnic Trip" calmly dodging whirlpools, playing on the rapids and exploring gold mines en route.

Bridge River Rapid followed shortly after Moran Canyon. This had a reputation as the worst rapid on the river and even the very largest commercial rafts normally portaged it. Three kayakers had attempted it in 1975 but all had drowned. Dave and myself had seen it several times before and thought that at the right water level it might be possible.

When we inspected it, our hearts dropped and we quietly looked at each other and indicated no. It was a frightening rapid — the worst large river rapid I have ever seen. The main shoot disappeared in a mass of vicious re-cycling turbulence. There was no hint of a tongue or a boil to show where the water came out at the bottom. To attempt it wasn't crazy, it was about certain suicide. We were heavily disappointed having run every other rapid and fall on the river. We portaged round and carried on down the river. Our low morale was given a boost when we came across Wesley, our unofficial supporter standing on the river bank waving, where he had waited for us for three days.



Pete Midwood approaching Rearguard Falls with rescuers in position.

Below Moran Canyon, we had two days of fairly flat paddling and then Hells Gate and the Fraser Canyon. This is formed by the river cutting its way through the 12,000 foot high Coastal Mountains. Simon Fraser had had to climb round the canyon on crude ladders and poles suspended from the cliffs. In his words "I have never seen equal to this country ... we had to pass where no human being should venture". A major obstacle to transportation, the railroads were blasted through only at high cost in gold and lives.

Wesley offered to drive shuttle, so off we set as a full team. The volume had now been swelled by several more tributary rivers, amongst them the green waters of the Thompson River and was roughly 100 times that of the Thames at Teddington.

The first rapid "Shuzzy" was straightforward. "China Bar" followed soon after with huge 20 ft. haystacks! We played on this a short while then carried on round the corner of Hells Gate. This is a well known tourist sight with an aerial tramway to bring the masses of gawp and stare at the heavy water.. Even the salmon had difficulty in surmounting this rapid and an elaborate system of massive fish ladders had been built to help them. We scouted the rapid in civilised style over a bowl of hot chile in the cafe. On the theory that it was unlikely that everyone would swim we decided to run three people down close together. Whoosh ...! talk about a high speed run, the Guinness Book of Records has it all wrong about Lava Falls being the fastest rapid.

Sue had said all along that she had no intention of running Hells Gate, however having watched the first three safely down, and fortified by the chile she decided to give it a go and come through in elegant style — cheered on by the tourists and staff of the cafe. We were all exhilarated and climbed back to collect our cameras and film gear. Sue got talking to the cafe owner who calmly told her that "only six persons" had been drowned that year, running the river in large rafts.

We carried on down through Block Canyon — some powerful turbulence, but by now we were used to getting spun round and carried sideways 30 ft or so. We managed to avoid the few serious whirlpools and arrived safely at International Bridge. A celebration dinner that night in the local "Greasy Spoon" — the first to Hells Gate

without raft support, and for Sue the first woman to even dream of doing it.

The Canyon was still not over. "Sailor Bar" rapid the following morning proved quite meaty. Jeff went through the first stopper got caught and thrown around, it threw him out, he got eaten by a whirly, popped up surfing on the second stopper looped off after a few minutes stylish shoulder rides, got eaten again, rolled up, eaten again and rolled up finally several hundred yards down stream looking a little washed out! The rest of us tried but couldn't imitate this spectacular performance.

We stopped for lunch on the next day at Yale, upstream limit for the stern wheelers, and watched an old feller popping gravel on the beach. From here on the river was through the mountains, the valley opened out, the river broadened to half a mile wide with meadows and gentle farms on either bank. The 120 mile paddle to Vancouver was an anticlimax. Now we were at the end of our journey the sun came out of course!

Conclusion

Looking back the trip proved more onerous than I or most of us had I think envisaged, but despite this it was enjoyable and immensely satisfying. A major regret was that all of us would have liked more time to explore and meet more of the open handed, friendly and hospitable people we met. Probably the finest measure of any holiday or expedition — we came back good friends!

Notes

- 1) We are keen to encourage others interested in anything similar. We have a stand at the Canoe Exhibition (in the main hall) where the equipment we used will be on display and we would be delighted to answer questions, offer any advice or help we can.
- 2) The Mick Burke Award is scheduled to appear on BBC World About Us in March or April.
- 3) A full expedition report with section on equipment evaluation, filming, personal views will be on sale at the Exhibition.
- 4) Nearly two thousand colour slides were taken on the trip. The best of these have been selected for illustrated talks to canoe clubs, groups, etc. Please see us at the Exhibition for details or phone 01 391 0299.

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ACTION ON ACCESS

What Next?

One could almost say: "What has happened so far, anyway?"

Funnily enough, the first question is easier to answer than the second: The difficulty is that when one is "at war" so to say, one can not tell the enemy all about one's strategy, nor where one is about to attack next. An awful lot has been going on behind the scenes as it were but which we have not been able to publicise or shout about, because this would enable those who would prefer it otherwise to arm themselves to their best advantage in the hope they can further hold us at bay. This would make our work all the more difficult.

However, there are some things which are going on, now, about which we can talk, which augur reasonably well for the not too distant future. We have long been convinced that a very great many legal navigations have simply disappeared into limbo through lack of use. In this respect the law concerning navigations is very similar to that of rights of way on footpaths, etc: "Once a highway; always a highway". The job is to prove that such and such a navigation was "once a highway". This means very long and very deep research. Fortunately for us, there are others who also believe there are a lot of "lost navigations". The Sports Council and the Water Space Amenity Commission — both Government Departments in their own ways — believe this; and they have put up money for a two-year research into the problem. Members will remember the survey which the WSAC carried out on the rivers that canoeists use. The answers to their questionnaires were not as complete as we had all hoped, but they were useful. The research into navigation rights cannot in two years cover all the rivers and streams in England. The number being researched is limited. At the end of the two years a report will be issued on what has been discovered. Although we cannot yet divulge anything specific, I can say from what I have heard over the bush telegraph (our "mole" if you like) that some very useful information is being turned up.

As well as this, some members of the Access Team have been doing their own research work, and this has been very useful too. We now have several works in front of Counsel for his legal Opinion. This is not obtained as fast as we would like (who wouldn't have liked it two years ago?!). We must be patient. As soon as an Opinion is given, the information will be published and any possible action recommended. This is where the Access Fund comes in. All this correspondence with our solicitor and Counsel costs money. Indeed, a lot of the research costs money too. Therefore the more we can build up the Access Fund the more research we can undertake and the more we can seek legal advice. The Pledges

are pledged only to legal action in the Courts. If we can make sure that our legal position is sound, less and less will we have to rely on the Pledges. It would be silly to go to Court with a case we might lose!

I said that members of the Access Team were doing research work, but it doesn't need only to be such a member. If you, good reader, like research work, write to Head Office or contact any member of the Access Team whom you know, and ask them how you can help. It needs a lot of people — the more, the merrier! I am sure we can always find something local to your patch which is worth investigating. We can certainly give you guidelines as to where you can start looking, what to research and how to research it. I wrote some articles on this business about a year or more ago, and they were published in *Canoe Focus*. Unfortunately time and space have precluded my completing them yet. Perhaps I shall have a bit more time in the future; and then I shall hope that there is room in *Canoe Focus* to publish them. When that is done, we might even put them together and publish the lot as a booklet. It would be useful for further researches.

One more piece of information I must give you. This concerns a committee which has been meeting under the auspices of the National Anglers' Council over the last few years. The anglers are as aware of our strife as we are, and they also would like a reasonable solution to our problems. As it did not seem that we were getting on very well it was agreed that the two totally independent friends who always sit with us should get together and create a "Statement of Intent" between the anglers and the canoeists as to how they could agree. Well, a draft Statement was put out by the WSAC and the Sports Council and they put it before the next meeting of the NAC liaison committee. Certain modifications and alterations were made to the draft at that meeting, and this revised draft has now gone out to the relevant committees of both the BCU (The National Access Committee, the ACRM Committee and the Council) and the National Anglers' Council. After that it will come back to the Liaison Committee when we sincerely hope that it will be accepted.

After all, it would be infinitely preferable to be able to come to agreement than to prove a navigation right. If the right is proved it means that anything that can be allowed to navigate the water; speed boats, water skiers, rafts, the lot. This on some of the smaller rivers would hardly make canoeing worthwhile, let alone fishing. To this end the National Access Committee are drafting a Model Agreement on which we can all base our own, local agreements as recommended in the Statement of Intent. It all makes sense really, and anything is better than going to court.

Oliver Cock

Problems at Hambleden

Dear Sir,

Chalfont Park Canoe Club is concerned that individuals and canoe clubs are using our 'home waters' at Hambleden Weir, possibly jeopardising the future development of the site.

It seems that now the weir development work by the Thames Conservancy is concluding, word is spreading that Hambleden Weir is one of the better places to paddle on the Thames. Whilst the club appreciates that all Thames licence holders are entitled to use the water, it must insist that anyone using the weirpool adheres to the rules imposed by our club and the Hambleden Weir Slalom Association. (HWSA).

In recent weeks, there have been a number of occasions when paddlers have been on the weir (a) alone, (b) without a crash hat or (c) without a buoyancy aid; however, last weekend practice gates were put up by visitors over the weirpool — tying the gate lines to the footwalk railings and to private property. The landowner was under the impression that it was members from our club who had entered his property. The situation was embarrassing, and a written apology, following our oral one on Sunday morning has been sent to the landowner by this club.

The visitors had not gained permission to put up the gates from anyone, viz: Thames Conservancy or the lock-keeper, the landowner on whose property they ventured to put up the lines or indeed the HWSA, (our club being the founder members of this association set up to promote the site and control all slaloms and organised practice in the weirpool). We insisted that the course be taken down immediately, and in fairness to those concerned, it was. The visitors were unaware of the situation.

The club's relationship with the local landowners and others is good at the moment, but as the number of events being held at Hambleden is increasing and we are undertaking sensitive negotiations for the future development of the site, we do not want our position to be jeopardised by the thoughtlessness of visitors. The insurance liability at Hambleden could also be a problem with many very expensive cruisers mooring in the backwaters.

Those involved last weekend gave me the name of their canoe club, and a letter has been forwarded to their secretary, but we wish you to acknowledge our rightful interest in the future development of Hambleden Weir as a slalom venue and would be grateful if you would include an item in *Canoe Focus* pointing out that whilst paddling in the home waters of any club, they should respect the rules of the club and seek permission as necessary. Anyone wishing to organise practice or put up slalom gates should contact: Mike Gettleson 01-450 6532, Tom Cronin (0734) 665119, Richard Mullick 01-450 6182 or myself on 01-450-8203.

Malcolm Box Secretary Chalfont Park Canoe Club

Editorial Note: We've no doubt this letter is indicative of problems which are going to arise increasingly over the coming years.

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Deliverance?

The 1981 National Coaching Conference was held at YMCA Lakeside, a worthwhile, and enjoyable programme being organised by the Cumbria Coaching Panel with Graham Lyon, Chairman of the Scheme.

Among the less demanding diversions was the opportunity for a trip in open canoes. Few had paddled one previously, but the trip was without incident except

for this particular section. The shots were taken by Dr Frank Whitebrook, President of the Australian Canoe Federation.

Reading from left to right: 1 The briefing. 2 Robert Livingstone, C1 paddler from Northern Ireland, and colleague, quietly confident. 3 All at sea? John Ramwell and Dave Coggins (Eastern) weighing up the odds. 4 BCU Director of Coaching, Geoff Good, and Assistant Sylvia Lunn, past Olympic Sprint paddler, with Geroge Steed,

USA — minus cigar. 5 Ken Mort (Canadian Canoe Association of GB) fending off, with John Cooper (West Midlands). 6 Ray Cowan joining Steve Lacey (both from London) in an unsuccessful attempt to avert disaster. 7 Chris Hare (Cleveland) and Carel Quaife (Chairman Access Committee and ACRMC) considering the matter. 8 Dave Evans (Calshot Activities Centre) and Ric Halsall (Yorkshire and Humberside) summarise the whole journey — superb fun!



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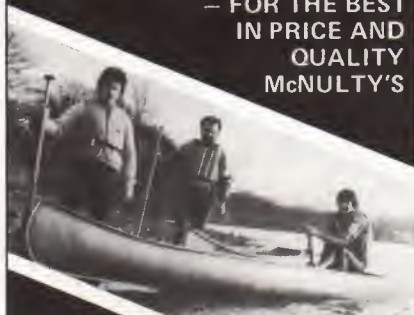
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Thoughts on the Trent

175 miles top to tail

One Saturday in May saw the culmination of a six year-old idea, the end of six months canoe and circuit-training and days of packing all our gear into four slalom canoes (fitted with skegs). Fifteen-year-old pupils, Simon Turner, John Clark and Stephen Thompson (from Dinnington Comprehensive School, South Yorkshire) and I set out by road for Stone, between Stoke and Stafford, to begin a six day paddle down our favourite River Trent.

Over the last two years we had often paddled at Swarkestone, Sawley, Hazleford and Averham weirs between Derby and Newark so what better than to canoe-camp along the river right up to the new Humber Bridge. From a mere 12 ft. wide at Stone the River Humber spans well over a mile at the bridge.

We passed 11 power stations and 14 sizeable weirs (only three shot) with the river in semi-flood which made paddling a little easier. We do confess to having had a day's rest on the Wednesday but finished as planned on the following Friday at Ferriby Sluice some 3 miles back upstream from the bridge.

As we picked the wettest Spring Bank for 14 years, we were somewhat damp but once 'decked up' for the day the rain did not deter us. Everything was stowed in polybags from clothes, sleeping bags, tent and radio to gaz stove/cylinder, waxed matches, bread, potatoes and eggs. Even the 15 ft of O/S map had been water-proofed! We had bought river registrations for our canoes and the fishing season did not start for a few more weeks.

Camping on the banks (with permission where possible) presented few problems. The locals seemed very interested and kept our water and milk supplies topped up. A dear old couple near Newark took in two whole polybags of our wet canoeing gear on Monday night and dried it (their son was a canoeist!).

We paddled for 7-8 hours each day, averaging around 30 miles, stopping over-

night at Sawley, Ferndon Ferry and Kneith on the fourth day.

Following a day of rest we then paddled on to Burton Stather where we camped before the final stretch to the Humber Bridge, a twenty mile paddle down the estuary.

Throughout the 175 miles the most polluted stretch was at Nottingham, where the problem was the abundance of motor cruisers, and the most dangerous was Cromwell Weir which is a deadly place with little chance of survival if you get accidentally swept over.

Below Gainsborough the river traffic consisted mainly of 80 ft. barges with larger ships (20 ft. to deck level) nearer to Trent Falls. Again everyone seemed friendly or just looked on in curiosity. The tidal section of the Trent floods in for only 2½ to 4 hours and then ebbs out for 8½ to 10 hours. The tide can rise about 10 ft at Burton Stather and almost 20 ft at the bridge. Luckily we had neap tides which helped our Thursday 5-mile battle against the flood to Burton Stather (to save time waiting for the ebb). The final 3 miles to the bridge on Friday were marred by the start of the flood coinciding exactly with low water and not an hour later as the locals had told me but we hugged the south bank and were only 10 minutes later than I had planned.

Local reporters gave us a bit of a fright from the bank under the bridge but we soon recovered and ferry glided across to the north bank which was a fair trip in its own right. Spurn Point coastguard was quite chatty and pleased we had enjoyed our trip. Even the lock-keeper at Ferriby Sluice popped down to ask if we could manage, offering to open up his lock or fish us out if we couldn't.

We suffered no blisters, only one tummy bug, lost a skeg and a helmet, kept the camera dry, saw a seal near Scunthorpe and were all very happy to have finished.

John Thorpe



End of the paddle, Ferriby Sluice. Left to right Simon Turner, Stephen Thompson and John Clark.

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Roving Report – Jersey

A world record was shattered at Crystal Palace in 1980 when John Bouteloup from Jersey Canoe Club performed 100 hand rolls in 3 minutes 23 seconds.

Suddenly we were aware that a high order of canoeing ability existed in that small and distant corner of Britain. This was endorsed during 1981, when a team from Jersey including John, swept the board at the British National Surf Championships, taking 1st in the Surf Kayak team event against the Home Counties. The previous year John Searson, whose father is Club President, had given warning the year previous by coming second in the Senior Individual Open, and 1st in Juniors.

Late in the summer of 1981 I had the pleasure of spending a couple of days with the paddlers of Jersey Canoe Club, which in total has around 100 members. Not surprisingly I was impressed by what I saw. The Island is situated in one of the most ferocious tidal situations in the world, and once clear of the bays it is not possible to proceed for more than a couple of miles without meeting a fairly interesting tidal race. As a result, the general standard of ability is very high!

Until threatened by the guns of the French Navy, the Club ran several trips to Brittany, but now content themselves with visits to Les Ecrehoux, Les Minquieres, outlying rocky islands some seven miles across 4–5 knot tidal stream, and the other Channel Islands.

Although canoe journeys to the French mainland are prohibited, coastal trips around Brittany are engaged in, and white water tours undertaken – there is no canoeable river on Jersey. During one such trip to the Continent, the Nordkaps created a considerable amount of interest from a German tourist, aged about 70, who, it transpired, had paddled from Hammerfest around the North Cape of Norway in 1935, with others, in two Klepper folding doubles. This had been part of an amazing six month tour, the details of which have been translated and are hopefully being published in the Advanced Sea Kayak Club newsletter.

Expeditions and contests are taken very

seriously, and the canoeists follow a hard training schedule when working up for a major trip or surfing event. There is no coast guard service on the Island, and a rapport has fortunately been established with the harbour master, who is responsible should incidents occur around the coast.

My introduction was to be taken out with a 'basic' group into waves resembling haystacks – real ones, that is – and the next day to watch the 'proficiency level' trainees playing follow the leader, rock dodging, and practising rolling in a local friendly tide race – which I did not consider all that friendly!

The club has regular use of a pool, attracting some 40 paddlers to the weekly sessions, and enjoys an attendance of 30 or more for the Sunday morning open training, which runs right through the year. I worked with the Sunday morning group on some of the paddling skills, and by way of diversion introduced them to 'chariot racing', whereby one canoeist sits on the paddle, which is across the two canoes, while his partner stands and paddles the raft along. Subsequently this has apparently been tried in the Tour de Rozel tide race, culminating in the chariot being backward looped.

A number of personalities have come to the fore in this situation, not least being Kevin Mansell, my guide, who had earlier led an expedition from Alderney to Weymouth. This involved 70 miles of open channel with a notorious sea area situated at each end. The bit in the middle can be a problem as well! The low visibility meant that their greatest hazard however, was from shipping, and in fact the group of five paddlers did have one very narrow squeak. John Bouteloup, a member of this team, was one of a trio of Jersey paddlers who achieved the first continuous circumnavigation of Ireland in 1978.

Long may the redoubtable paddlers of Jersey flourish, and continue to further their standards of canoeismanship and ability on the sea. For their generous hospitality I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Mansell, and to Dave Thelland, who also arranged the visit, and his wife, a very big thank you.

Geoff Good



John Hurley (left) and Peter Scott on Les Minquieres (pronounced) Min-keys).



(Above) John Hurley seal launching. (Below) Nicky off Les Ecrehoux.



From l to r: Micky Keen, Paul Bouteloup, Kevin Mansell and John Bouteloup checking their navigation mid-Channel in poor visibility. Photo: John Hurley.



Visiting canoeist from Dorset at Jersey, complete with mizzen and anti-turtle BDH container.

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Devizes to Westminster – an Everymans Guide

by Commander J M Lane

“Notice to Competitors: Under ideal conditions, the race calls for strenuous and sustained effort. In bad weather, it can be extremely arduous and, below Teddington on the Tideway, dangerous. Only experienced canoeists who are able to swim, and who have trained hard for at least three months prior to Easter, should attempt the Race.”

Since 1950 no Easter has been complete without the epic Devizes to Westminster canoe race and 1981 was no exception. Often deservedly described as the toughest canoe race in the world, the start is traditionally scheduled for Good Friday and this year on 17th April one hundred and twenty two senior crews assembled at Devizes to tackle the gruelling 125 mile course.

A mere fifty nine hours and perhaps a quarter of a million paddle strokes later I was in London, accompanied by my gallant crew. Together we had powered ourselves down the Kennet and Avon Canal to leave Pewsey, Hungerford and Newbury bobbing in our wake, joining the less placid but equally scenic Thames at Reading. On through Marlow, Maidenhead, unglamorously named Staines, then to Chertsey, Kingston and finally, very finally to Westminster. We leapt over seventy six locks and sundry other obstacles en route, and to make up for the absence of white water, we encountered un-navigable and dangerous weirs, under-water hazards, low bridges and irate nesting swans. To be precise it took us fifty nine hours and twenty nine minutes, and we came last out of the ninety six finishers.

The quicksilver winners of the race (Messrs Greenham and Belcher) took just seventeen hours, twenty two minutes and fourteen seconds. For myself, after forty two years I have learnt not to expect miracles. My crew is not prepared to reveal her date of birth, but with a combined age totalling seventy eight, we took to the water long on years and short on training.

My biggest problem was finding a crew at all; I had the Mirage double canoe, paddle and life jacket waiting for nearly six months when in desperation I wrote my wife's name on the race entry form just in time to beat the closing date. As she had never paddled a canoe before in her life, I broke the news gently, naturally emphasising that she had been specially selected from a long list of

less fortunate applicants. That cut no ice whatsoever, but it was not completely untrue.

The quest for Super Paddler was long and unavailing. Canoeists who claimed to have completed the DW race in bygone years hastily declined further consideration – for reasons that were perhaps not too difficult to discern. Others, less experienced, expressed unknowing enthusiasm, only to fail the physical, or the mental, or the float test. My own stability in a racing kayak has been found wanting at times, but with some of these hopeful heroes it was a case of permanent inversion.

Anyway, I explained all this to my wife, more or less, and through some error of judgement on her part we embarked in mid March on a trial outing on the friendly (if not stagnant) waters of the misnamed Chichester canal. How we came to capsize will never to entirely clear, but it was certainly very cold and very muddy. Morale and the training programme suffered a setback. With the London Marathon intervening and a subsequent rowing regatta causing a conflict of loyalties, it was three weeks later and early April before we took to the water again. Ten days before the Good Friday start.

My crew maintained that care of three small children in a three storey house constituted more than adequate race preparation, so I was forced to double my own weight training programme as a counter balance. What's more she professed a new found dislike of water, weighed in at hardly more than 100 lbs and barely topped five feet. I began to wonder if more than thirty years of casual canoeing experience on my part would be sufficient by way of compensation.

With the pressure on, we steadily advanced from the shelter of the Portsmouth torpedo range to Portchester Harbour and thence progressed to the Thames at Wallingford, complete with those weirs, suspicious swans and the swamping, mind-

lessness of the full ahead Easter pleasure boats. Proficiency came but slowly and with a longest outing of eight miles in two hours we assembled our compulsory emergency kit and headed for Devizes in the early hours of Good Friday with a high degree of unspoken uncertainty. Perhaps thick fog would mercifully shroud proceedings.

No change. A brisk north easterly wind made for a clear if cold start. Shortly after nine, tallied and checked, Number 174 was on its apprehensive way. Our main concern at this stage was to avoid capsizing before crossing the starting line. The large number of spectators and the prevailing atmosphere of determined competence were disconcerting. Our number was called and we were off. The Starter called our number a second time, imagining that his first call had gone unheard when our speed of advance failed to quicken. We only have one speed: rather on the slow side. We kept well to the side of the channel, almost in amongst the reeds, to avoid being run down by overtaking racers. 'Here comes another one' muttered my crew at all too regular intervals. We received our share of curious glances, and the spectator lined bridges peered down doubtfully at our unsteady progress. With most competitors aiming to catch a tide twelve hours or so distant, a little deception was necessary to disguise the fact that our tide was still three days hence. That kind of planning calls for precision.

Three hours saw us to Pewsey, a whole twelve miles of the course devoured by our relentless rhythm and further than we had ever travelled before. Time for the first of a thousand stops and for the blisters to be repaired. In our ignorance we looked forward to the first lock. The sun came out and our support party, champion sustainers and supporters that they were, fed us mountains of calories. Would it be a record to put on weight during the race, I wondered? My crew complained of the quantity of weed and reed that was being flicked from my paddles into her face, but that apart she seemed reasonably content with her lot.

The quarter mile long Bruce Tunnel at mile seventeen was a new experience. For example, it was dark, and someone had taken the towpath away. My crew brought us through singlehanded, and she tells her story rather better than I do. We enjoyed the half mile walk at Crofton Locks, the dried out section of the course; the sun shone and it seemed a pity to hurry over such lovely countryside. The same may be said of the whole idyllic length of the Kennet and Avon Canal, and indeed

Pewsey Wharf – Just warming up!



Chertsey Lock – Its all downhill from here!





Marital bliss — Just the way to spend the week-end.

most of the stretches of the Thames. What a delightful way to spend Easter.

But the canoe found an uncomfortable way of becoming heavier as the day wore on, and the portages mounted, even though it can only have weighed sixty pounds or so complete with spare gear. Nightfall found us a few miles beyond Newbury at Bulls Lock, only thirty six miles completed but still in with a chance if we were to finish by the deadline of 1100 on Easter Monday.

We heard some of the faster crews going through in the night, but repressed the desire to join them until seven the following day. The sun soon cleared the white frost but that north east wind redoubled its efforts to blast us back to Devizes. In due course we found Reading, with the suburban swans noticeably better tempered than their country cousins. Leaving the Kennet and Avon Canal and fifty four miles behind us, away we went on that vast expanse of Thames stretching up to Sonning Lock. The wind reminded us of the seventy one miles still ahead, and the drunken pleasure craft set up a succession of rolling wakes to test our developing expertise. Our Waterloo was not far off. We pulled in at Henley, where the sunshine had induced droves of town-folk and visitors to take to the water in all manner of unpredictable craft, resulting in the choppiest conditions we had yet encountered. With thoughts of more relaxed times ahead, we confirmed our reservation for a punt for the July Royal Regatta and then paddled on, finally meeting calmer waters some way past Remenham. It was at Medmenham that we sank.

A convoy of gin palaces descended on us at full throttle and there was no escape. We fought off the first three tidal waves, but the fourth curled towards us confidently, a hundred feet tall. We looped the loop. The convoy skippers adjusted their ocean going caps and far-horizon binoculars, rang down to the engine room for more power and disappeared into the distance without so much as a disdainful glance in our direction. We reached the shore some little time later, swimming through the pall of carbon monoxide. As if by magic our champion support party materialized on the towpath with a holdall of dry gear, tallied with admirable forethought, 'First Capsize'.

It was dark when we reached Bray Lock, but with 43 miles notched in thirteen hours of paddling it seemed far enough for the day. The predictable symptoms of hand

cramp and wrist seizure were now in evidence, to be ignored as best one could for the final forty six miles.

Easter Sunday brought another frost, more cloud, less sun and some cold, very wet showers. The wind was stronger than ever. Hopes that the pleasure cruisers might remain alongside for the day came good for the first three hours, but not long before ten they all broke loose, seemingly simultaneously, and the chaotic bumping, boring and shouting at Chertsey and Shepperton Locks provided scenes of pure delight. The hundred mile mark at Sunbury was indeed a welcome milestone, but by somewhere short of Kingston driving rain and the ferocious gale blowing straight up river reduced our forward speed to nothing, and we were in danger of being sunk as the water built up. Pinned against a twenty foot wharf by wind and waves we assessed the situation as problematical.

Somehow we gained the refuge of a small pontoon and there followed a series of interesting evolutions as we hauled ourselves and the canoe to comparative safety. Not least of the obstacles which confronted us was an eight foot barbed wire fence. Whilst engaged in the ascent and no less difficult descent of this daunting barrier, with my crew and canoe precariously balanced on the top strand of wire, we were joined in the wind and rain by a man and

his dog. Help at last, I thought, overlooking the rules of the race. 'Mind the flowers', snapped the man, and his dog led him off down the towpath. I unhooked my wife from the fence, and mindful of the flowers we in turn proceeded on our way. I inadvertently took to the river again via the launching ramp of the local yacht club, which proved to be more slippery than I had estimated, but we finally portaged ourselves to the traffic lights at Kingston Bridge.

As we waited for the red to change and the hail and rain torrented down, a lady in an adjacent Mercedes adjusted her fur coat, turned up her heater several notches and gazed at my crew in amazement. But we eventually arrived at Teddington Lock, complete with canoe, not long after the all important High Water. Time for tea, a little sunshine, and for a few reflections. If necessary, I decided, we will walk the last seventeen miles.

We put even money on sinking or being sunk somewhere along the Tideway, so we donned wet suits and proceeded. The wave of tripper boats receded as evening fell, but not so that north east wind, and on exposed stretches it was hard going to the last. Because of the rough water we were unable to take full advantage of the ebb tide, and somewhere near Wandsworth Bridge we were forced to portage our way along the foreshores mud in the gathering dark. But somehow, and in spite of the wind, we finally put Battersea, Albert and Chelsea Bridges behind us. Another crew appeared at this stage and went through; we found it hard to believe that we had actually been in front of any one.

The black water seemed rougher than ever in the cold darkness but we found time to appreciate the illuminated bridges and some of the unexpected carvings, only to be flipped aground by a tidal eddy near Lambeth Bridge. There was clearly going to be no downhill action in this race, but if pressed we knew we could always swim the last few hundred yards. Big Ben chimed an appropriate welcome as we swept under Westminster Bridge and as we came alongside the finish at the steps of County Hall the whole of London burst into thunderous applause. To travel as slowly as we did demands dedication. Looking up we saw the faces of our champion support party and even a flashlight popped. So that was that. It was all over. But not quite.

The only crew in history to finish heavier than they began.



Friendly hands lifted me ashore. My crew cheated and leapt out unaided, just to make a point. It left me wondering what had been going on behind me for the past one hundred and twenty six miles; next year I'm sitting in the rear seat, even if she can't reach the rudder bar. We returned to reality, and it seemed strange to walk along without the canoe on our shoulders. It was not only part of us, it was a passport to another world. A hot shower was promised in the car park, and sure enough there before us was a steaming tent making encouraging gurgling sounds.

We joined the single hurricane lamp inside and the wind, unabated, lifted the walls of the tent with every gust. I took time to change, but my crew went ahead into the shower. It was only when she emerged moments later through the swirling mist, teeth chattering and a quite remarkable shade of blue, that I discovered we had no towel. He who laughs last

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