

CANOE FOCUS

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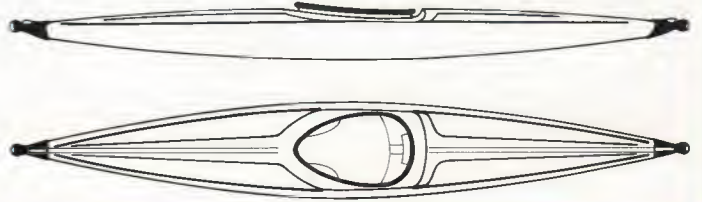
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH CANOE UNION





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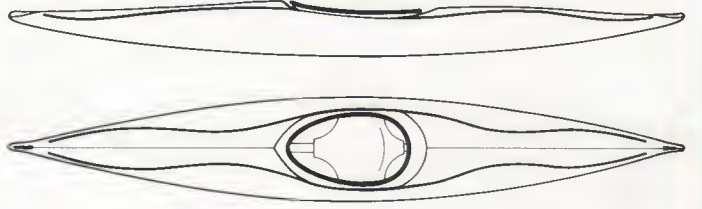


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COVER STORY

Ice cave – the source of the Alesk

BACK COVER

The American crew Elizabeth Hayman/Fritz Haller competing in the C2 mixed slalom at the 1981 World Championships at Bala – Photo: Keith Williams.

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Editorial

The Second Annual General Meeting of the Incorporated British Canoe Union was held at the Zoological Society of London on the first Saturday in March. No doubt there are those who would consider both the venue and the month particularly apposite to the occasion, and in view of the attendance and the business discussed their speculations may well be appropriate. There were 55 persons present, most of these were members of the Council of Management, and the remainder had been invited to the meeting to receive awards for their services to the Union. Interestingly, there were a number of items for consideration that were to say the least controversial. The largest deficit ever experienced by the Union, £9,383.00 had been reported; there was a motion before the meeting that sought to transfer the authority of the Council of Management to the membership for settling the level of annual subscriptions and there was a potential loss to be reported of £5,000.00 or so, that had arisen from the organisation of Canoe '81. All this information had been circulated to every member of the Union, with their Spring issue of *Canoe Focus*, and the 1981 annual report and statement of accounts, thus providing adequate time for digestion and action. Approximately 1% of the voting membership of the Union considered the occasion to be sufficiently important to justify their attendance, and as has already been reported, most of these had a special interest in the proceedings. What lessons is the Union to learn from this paradoxical experience? All the traditional features necessary for a well attended, lively and useful Annual General Meeting were present. The venue was reasonably accessible, information had been widely circulated and in good time, and the business for discussion was interesting and controversial. Is it that members are not sufficiently concerned with the administrative activities of the Union? Is it that they are reasonably satisfied with the conduct of the Union's affairs? Is it that most consider the paraphernalia of meetings, motions, and management to be extraneous and irrelevant to their personal canoeing interests?

Whatever the reason, the Council of Management at their most recent gathering agreed that it was time to relegate the Annual General Meeting from an occasion traditionally regarded as the Union's perennial bun-fight, to that of a formal business meeting, strictly in accordance with the Companies Acts, at which there will be no extra-mural activity, and where it will not be considered a failure should no more than the statutory quorum (15 members) be in attendance.

Whilst, therefore, the Union have clearly failed to attract members to their tedious and boring annual yawn, they have been magnificently successful with the organisation of the International Canoe Exhibition. The Minister of Sport, Neil Macfarlane graced the occasion with his presence, and Fosters Sports Foundation were delighted to have provided the Exhibition with very

useful sponsorship. So it seems that "Times change and we change with them". The Annual General Meeting, which in the 50s and 60s was the social occasion of the canoeing year, often attracting two or three hundred members, when everybody who was anybody came to London to meet the hoi polloi, gossip, exchange news, and congregate in their separate Committees before or after the main attraction of the day, has finally sunk into oblivion. The opportunity it provided for socialising has gradually fallen to the Exhibition, which, with its exhausting programme of films, displays, competitions, conferences, symposia, demonstrations, and the facilities available for viewing canoes, equipment and people, has limitless potential for development and expansion, and most importantly does not cost the Union money to organise, indeed it provides a very generous source of income to their funds.

However, to return to the original theme which was the 1982 Annual General Meeting, and its business. The motion that sought to prevent the Council from increasing subscriptions and imposing levies without the consent of the membership was not lost, it was decimated. Not one single vote was cast in its favour, and during the debate that preceded the motion being put to the meeting, it was apparent that members were well satisfied that the Council had behaved with scrupulous fairness.

There was a general consensus view expressed that the benefits of membership should be considerably improved and the cost thereof incorporated in subscriptions. Thus, the implications were that comprehensive insurance, including accident, equipment, and life, be provided, and that the services available from the Union should be updated. Inevitably arrangements of this nature would necessitate an increase in subscriptions of two or three pounds a year, and the obvious consequence is that those who need and must join the Union will continue so to do and enjoy the improved facilities of membership. Those who join for altruistic reasons however, will be less favourably inclined, and it might well be that membership would suffer detrimentally. Alternatively, a much smaller subscription rate could be offered to those who merely wished to be "associated" with or support the Union and its activities, providing minimal benefits, and costing only a few pounds.

The worrying feature of such a proposal is of course that those presently paying a full membership subscription, who were not attracted by the new benefits, and who did not have to be full members, either as competitors or through their involvement with the coaching scheme, would opt for an associate membership. Estimates are that this would cost the Union many thousands of pounds in its first year of operation. Clearly a balanced judgement, with a careful appraisal of the evidence available is necessary. Fortunately for the Union, the final decision still remains with the Council of Management, and not the Annual General Meeting. Whilst most would agree that the democratic process manifest in general meetings of members is to be admired and encouraged, it is reasonable to propose that government by discussion will only be effective if people can be stopped from talking!

Competing in Slalom . . .

A State of Mind? asks Neil Shave

The lists of names in the Slalom Yearbook give some indication of the number of people competing seriously in this area of the sport. But there are others who compete less seriously, and many more for whom slalom is a mystery.

I fell into the latter group. Like many of my fellow recreationalists, I could probably negotiate a slalom course without making too much of a fool of myself, but I am not moved to take part in a real event. The reasons took some thinking about, but I came up with four:

- 1) I'm not competitive
- 2) I see no sense in spending a whole weekend canoeing, but really only being on the water for about six minutes.
- 3) I do not understand the rules
- 4) The jargon is like a foreign language

My conscience nudged me into looking a little deeper — Was there really something unacceptable about slalom? — Or was it just a state of mind?

The Competitive Problem: The solution is simple, we are all competitive. Examples abound in everyday life ... have you never 'competed' for the hand of a preferred partner? ... have you never 'competed' for a job? ... have you never 'competed' to get to school or work on time?

What is slalom, apart from competing with all available experience, technique and strength to negotiate as fast as possible a particular course over agitated water? Perhaps what has been putting me off is the fact that some people are so deadly serious about winning, that failure to beat everybody else is accompanied by tears and tantrums. Perhaps we should remember that slalom is competing against the course and the water; the only way to judge whether our skills are sweet perfection being to see how well someone else manages. But it is always the course that beats you, never the other paddler. State of mind?

The Time Problem: There are many of us who have arrived at a river bank to find that the river has dried up or is in flood, or have arrived at the coast to find the tide miles out or the sea torn apart by a raging gale. We probably get on the water for a few minutes, and then justify the rest of the weekend spent away from home by talking about the camaraderie and team-spirit of our fellow paddlers. Is slalom not much the same? A practice run and two live runs — perhaps seven minutes at most. And the rest of the weekend? It's the camaraderie and team-spirit that makes it so enjoyable. Perhaps the only real difference with slalom is that you know before you start that time on the water will be minimal. State of mind?

The Rules Problem. No problem. Before you can understand rules, you need to know them, and the Slalom Yearbook explains them very clearly. Rules govern which side of the road we drive on, when we are allowed to marry and how many years we must attend school. Almost everything we do is governed by rules, and it is a pathetic argument to pretend that it is only those of slalom that are not to be understood. State of mind?

The Jargon Problem. Every skill, every profession, in fact every group of people working at the same task, has a language of its own. Even the various disciplines within our own sport have their own terms and expressions. Part of the reason is perhaps that everyday English does not have a word that suitably describes every movement or situation or set of circumstances that specialist skills require. Part of the reason is perhaps that we sometimes like to be able to make our interests sound very important or talk about them without too many other people following the conversation. In either case, the normal way to pick up jargon is to get involved with the people using it — the same way as a child first learns its mother tongue. So if your excuse is that of

it being a 'Catch 22' situation — you cannot learn the language until you are involved, and you cannot get involved until you learn the language — it's not valid. State of mind?

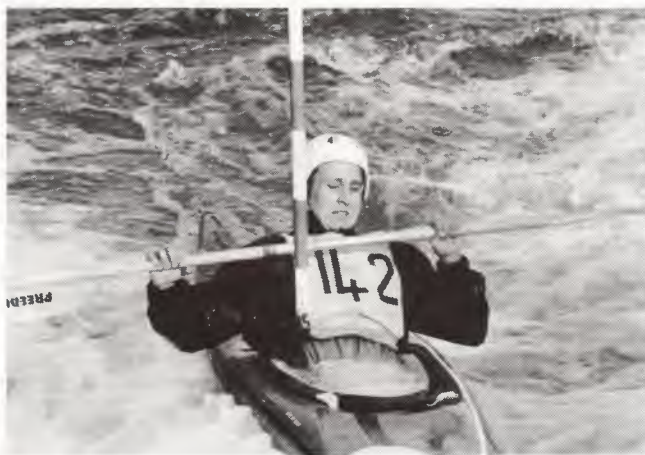
So that now all objections have been dismissed, let us start competing.

Apart from boat, paddle, crash hat, spray deck and lifejacket or buoyancy aid, you need to be a member of the BCU and have an entry card. Blanks of the latter are obtained by begging or borrowing some from your club, or by sending a large stamped self-addressed envelope to: Mr R. Hardy, 'Brevard', Church Road, Newtown, Fareham, PO17 6LE. The completed entry card (together with the fee) needs to be sent to the organiser of the slalom, to arrive not later than the Friday a fortnight prior to event. Instructions and a start list arrive, and the weekend soon comes round. Your first competition will be in the Novice Division, although the rest of the divisional structure differs slightly, depending on whether you paddle kayak or canadian. Dates for the Novice (as well as other) events and the names of organisers appear on various calendars, as well as in the Yearbook.

It is a weekend away — camping or caravanning — cooking for yourself or for others — talking about the water and the course — watching the preparations and the performances — meeting the competitors and their companions. Every now and again there are a few minutes afloat, when the rushing of the waters and the reactions of the spectators spur you on. Officials keep careful note of the time, and judges allot penalty points depending on poles that you hit or gates that you miss. The highest placed competitors are promoted to Division 4 (in kayak events), on the basis of 1 for every 5 starters.

Strangers now become colleagues as efforts are compared — the eddy by Gate 6, the break-out after Gate 12, the sprint to the finish. Out of the officials and the timekeepers and the judges, out of the scores and the penalties and the results — comes an atmosphere. Not of the fastest man being the best, but of belonging to a great team.

It's not the winning, it's the taking part ... the only difference being a state of mind? See you soon.



(Left) Slalom events take place over a weekend, and most competitors and judges camp or caravan. The scattered tents, boats and bits of kit hanging to dry might appear untidy to the purist, but it is home and part of the atmosphere for those taking part. (Right) A touch by any standard and the 5 point (second) penalty that it carries.

The Divisions:

There are 6 for kayaks, starting with Novice and working through Divisions 4 to 1 up to Premier at the top. There is one structure for men and another for ladies. Canadian (or canoeing) events – both singles and doubles – are divided into only 4 divisions, with the sexes competing together. Youth (under 18) and Junior (under 16) compete alongside others, but there is often an additional trophy for the fastest in the event. The most popular event is Mens K1, the year having started with a list as follows Premier Division Position 1) Richard Fox, 2) Roger Manwaring, 3) Albert Kerr, 4) Nick Wain, followed by 1943 eager paddlers as far as Ben, David, Ken and Kenneth Young – appearing at the bottom of Division 4, thanks to the alphabet and no results so far. Hundreds of others are equally eager, but remain anonymous in the Novice Division, until promotion reveals a name.



The modern slalom boat has minimum inherent buoyancy, and often travels just on or beneath the surface of the water, particularly in broken water. This, coupled with the 10 cm gap between the poles and the water, means that a paddler can turn his boat inside a gate. He must be careful, however, to ensure that the line across his shoulders passes through the gate completely before he turns, otherwise he could be deemed to have missed the gate and incur a 50 point penalty.

The Course:

The course must not be more than 800 metres long and is made up of a number of gates, through which a competitor must pass. Each gate is two poles suspended above the water, each pole being at least two metres long and between 35 and 50mm in diameter. One pole in each gate is painted with five white and five red bands (alternate colours), and the other pole painted in white and green. In both cases the bottom band must be white and the end of the pole at least 10cm above the water, adjustable in length to match the water level. A gate must be between 1.20 and 3.50 metres wide and negotiated in numeric sequence, the number being displayed in black on both sides of a yellow board measuring 30cm by 30cm hanging from the top. The side from which the gate must not be attempted has a red diagonal stripe painted through the number. Each gate must be negotiated such that the red and white pole is on the left hand side of the paddler and this will necessitate some gates being taken backwards (known as reverse gates.) A course must include at least four of these and they are identifiable by the letter 'R' painted on both sides of a yellow board as per the gate number. In addition, one forward gate is nominated as the 'team' gate. It is marked as for a reverse gate, but with the letter 'T', and a team (of three paddlers) has to negotiate it within a 15 second period during their run. Both 'R' and 'T' boards have a red diagonal stripe through the no-entry side. The starting line for the course cannot be the first gate (although it can be a special start gate) and the finishing line must be at least 25 m from the last gate.



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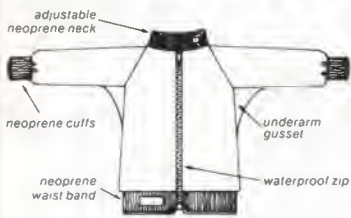
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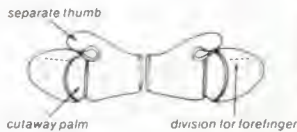


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HOUND DOG



It is with some humility that I don the mantle of my revered predecessor "Snoopy". It was inevitable that immediately his flair for fearlessly investigative journalism became known, he would be quickly "snatched" from the relative obscurity of the canoeing press and transported to fame and fortune with the tabloids. Whilst his fans will obviously be disappointed, many of them will applaud this demonstration of the market-place economy in action — United Press International Ltd. had "Snoopy" on a metaphorical lead. Immediately there was some prospect that his services would be used unprofitably, there was a sharp tug and it was back to the kennel!! Anyhow, or as they say in some parts of the country "Any road up", for better or for worse you now have me, "Hounddog", and whilst I may not be all that "Snoopy" was, I'm enthusiastic, energetic, and most importantly it would seem, I have no business connections, and can therefore pledge complete loyalty to my public — that is until I get a better offer. This then, being the first occasion that I have addressed my readers, may I unreservedly re-affirm the pledge that "Snoopy" gave to you all in his introductory column, but three short issues ago, Autumn 1981 to be precise. I solemnly promise that I will not be deterred from reporting truth, as I see it. I will only use innuendo, half-truths and scandal when I consider it necessary — I will never be persuaded by those without influence and authority from revealing all!!!, in other words I will, without fear or favour, maintain the traditions of the sensationalist press.

Albert Cracks it

Canoeings Gordian Knot, which equates to solving 100 Times crosswords during a Council meeting, has finally been cracked by Albert. How to raise £3 million from 2678 slalomists and their mums to build the Artificial Slalom Course at Holme Pierrepont. Albert, Albert Woods to those unfamiliar with one of the better known wits of the Canoeing World, is Chairman of the Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre Artificial Slalom Course Action Committee. On receiving a recent enquiry regarding charges from a scout group anxious to use the Course when it is completed, he replied — "The first three goes will

cost £1 million each, and after that its 10p per run"!!

He should be so Lucky!

I am reliably informed that the proceedings of the last excretiatingly boring meeting of the Council of Management were enlivened, when new members were invited to introduce themselves. All dutifully announced their names and status within the Council, thus Bryan Ward, Touring Committee; Paul Rea, Elected Member; Dave Stanley, Yorkshire and Humberside. The last to speak was obviously overcome by the enormity of the occasion and announced with great solemnity, "John Liddell, Erected Member"!!

Time Travellers to Note

Whilst it is wise to acknowledge that none of us are perfect, even though some of us may be, the most recent publication of "Canoeing" does contain an interesting example of the problems that beset the moguls of the press. A fascinating photograph of a very old C2 negotiating the Merano World Championships Course in 19-plonk, seeks a suitable caption. The closing date for entries into this idiomatic competition was given as the 10th March. Unfortunately *Canoeing* magazine was not delivered to subscribers until some days after entries had to be submitted. Ah well, I suppose it avoids the problem of nominating a winner!

Felicitations Frank

For those who seek the elixir of life, take up canoeing! Frank Luzmore, well known for many years as the Archdeacon of Open Canoeing, celebrated his 90th birthday at Richmond Canoe Club recently. Whilst he does not admit to personal acquaintance with MacGregor, he's certainly been around a very long time. All readers of *Focus* will wish to join Hounddog in expressing their congratulations to Frank and expressing the sincere hope that he will become Canoeing's first centenarian.

Piscatorial Perambulations

Who spotted "Snoopy's" deliberate mistake in the last but one issue of *Focus*? It must have been obvious to all but the most illiterate of readers. Fishermen are not adherents of Newton of course, he was the chap who was banged on the head with an apple, (or was that William Tell) and pontificated about motion. It was Izaak Walton of *The Complete Angler* to whom fishermen turn for inspiration, though from 'Hounddogs' experience motion is hardly their scene! A remote connection has been discerned between these two great men however, in that Walton once observed — "Angling may be said to be so like the mathematics that it can never be fully learnt"!! Comments in reply to Walton's remarks are not invited, they were made after all more than 300 years ago, and things ain't what they used to be!

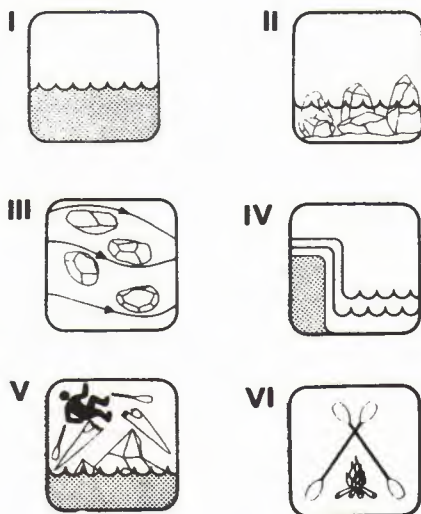
Perfumed Performers

The suspicions of some of canoeing's "hard men", that today's slalomists are a load of "Pooftas", would have been strengthened recently when their International Manager

took delivery from Faberge, of a crate of "Brut" male cosmetics, including body mist and other more intimate toileteries, for distribution to this year's Slalom Europa Cup Team. One hairy, hoary, hardnosed old hand was heard to exclaim, "How are we ever going to beat the *!*! — Russians when our International paddlers smell like a load of fairies."

Brazilian Brainstorm

A recent invitation received at Headquarters from the Brazilians, to participate in a canoeing tour on the Rio Bonito, provided a vivid illustration of humour being used as a means of emphasising danger — No one could possibly misunderstand what may happen to those who venture on Grade V and VI water.



Olympic Oracle

Richard Fox, World Individual and Team Slalom Champion, winner of last year's *Crypton Factor*, was definitely promoted to the Premier Division of the male chauvanists, when he incorrectly answered the question, "In which event did British Women reach the Canoeing Finals at the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games?" by replying "K2 1000", he was only half wrong of course, it was the K2 500m. Its fair to observe that very few of Britain's lady racing paddlers would know how long a World Championships Slalom Course should be!

Spanish Satire

Focus has been searching for a really funny Canoeing Cartoonist for many many years, and they may just have found him. Jesus Rodriguez Incla, (no he isn't a relative) is the Director of the Spanish Canoe Federation, and he wields a wicked brush. An example of his work, a Christmas Card is reproduced on this page, and we hope that future publications will contain a regular feature from Jesus. Other canoeing publications — follow that if you can!!



Kayaking – the Basic Skills (Part 2)

Continuing our series on the basic skills, we cover the low brace turn, and sculling draw. This article is a condensation of chapter 5 of the new Canoeing Handbook, contributed by Jim Hargreaves.

Low Brace Turn

The low brace turn is a static stroke which requires momentum for it to function, and is used as a turning stroke when support is also required.

The paddler adopts a similar position to the start of a reverse sweep stroke, except that the blade is not quite so close to the stern, and the back of the blade is flat on the water. By leaning onto the blade held in this position, drag is caused on that side of the craft, making it slow down. The boat therefore swings towards the side on which the stroke is applied. As the momentum dies, due to the dragging effect of the stroke, the paddler becomes unstable, and, as he senses the reduction in speed, sweeps the blade forward in an arc, in the same way as a reverse sweep stroke. This gives added stability and completes the turn. The stroke is often used when breaking into and out of a fast moving current, and enables the paddler to counteract the flow of the water by leaning downstream, and at the same time effect a turning stroke. For many it is the method used to learn breaking in and out in simple currents, as it provides greater stability than the bow rudder. In complete contrast, but for exactly the same reason, it is often used to break into very fast turbulent water, as it gives that extra little bit of stability, when a capsizé could be disastrous.



The Low Brace Turn (above) Commencement of the stroke. (Below) Sweeping the paddle forwards.



Progressions The stroke is not a technically difficult one to perform, and can be practised on flat or easy water until the paddler is confident enough to lean well onto the paddle blade and sweep it forward.

Coaching Points. The stroke position should be taught statically at first, and then applied to a moving craft on flat water. The faster the boat moves, the more lean the stroke will support. If the paddler is encouraged to commit himself from very early on it will make life a lot easier when he is introduced to fast moving water.



The Sculling Draw (left) Drawing the blade towards the stern with the drive face opened at an angle of 30°. (right) Bringing the blade towards the bow with the opposite feather.

Sculling Draw

The sculling draw is another stroke which moves the canoe sideways. It may be used in much the same way as the ordinary draw stroke, for coming alongside the bank, or rafting up with other canoeists. It is of limited use in difficult conditions, as a well executed draw stroke is much more powerful. However, sculling is a valuable skill to master, as it teaches smooth and efficient handling of the blade under the water. It is an excellent exercise for developing blade awareness and co-ordination.

The stroke is performed at a uniform distance from the gunnel, level with the Centre of Lateral Resistance (CLR) with the paddle loom as near vertical as possible. Start with the blade ahead of you, parallel with, and about 12' away from, the gunnel, and fully immersed. The arms are in a similar position at this stage to the draw stroke, although the top arm is best arched over the head, as opposed to being in front of the forehead, in order to lock the shoulder joint in position. This enables the arm to act as a firm support rather like a rollock. From this basic starting position the drive face of the blade is opened towards the stern at an angle of about 30°. The paddle is then taken towards the stern of the boat, keeping the loom vertical in the process, and an equal distance from the keel-line, throughout. The blade travels for approximately three feet, and then the angle is switched, so

that the blade is opened to the bow of the canoe, and sculled back the other way. This alternate pressure on the paddle face draws the boat towards it, resulting in a sideways movement.

Progression. Hold the lower paddle blade in a similar way to that employed by the Japanese when holding a table tennis bat – that is, four fingers down one side of the blade, thumb down the other. This links the canoeist directly to the blade of the paddle, making it easier to master the tricky co-ordination of this stroke. Once the



change from one direction to another has been mastered, the paddler may resume the normal paddling grasp.

Coaching Points. In the sculling draw it is important that fluency of movement is achieved, particularly while the blade angle is being changed. The more fluid the stroke, the more even will be the movement imparted to the craft. The stroke must be mastered slowly at first. Speed comes with familiarity.

Check to ensure that the loom is vertical throughout, and that the blade is fully immersed. Concentrate on ensuring that the paddler performs a symmetrical stroke, resulting in the boat moving directly towards the paddle and at right angles to the CLR. The paddler should also be coached into deliberately making the bow or stern lead during this sideways movement. This is achieved by opening the blade slightly more towards one end of the boat or the other whilst performing the sculling movement, enabling the paddler to observe the effect upon the movement of his boat, which will help him make adjustments to the stroke.

Sculling for Support

This is as much an exercise as an everyday stroke. The canoeist obtains support from his paddle, whilst in an unstable position, by sculling it backwards and forwards on or near the surface. The development of this ability can contribute an enormous amount



Sculling Support sequence (left) Pushing the blade forwards. (centre) The blade moving towards the stern with reverse feather. (right) Commitment of body weight to the paddle. Notice low centre of gravity. Recovery is occasioned by hip flick.

to a paddler's confidence. It is commonly used as a support stroke by white water paddlers, and when performed in the extreme, it is virtually an eskimo roll.

The sculling action is identical to the sculling draw, except that it is executed with the loom near the horizontal, as opposed to the vertical position. The paddler reaches out to the side of the boat, lying back to reduce the C of G to a minimum. The blade of the paddle is laid flat on the water with the drive face down, and is then tilted, so that the edge nearest the bow is lifted slightly. The blade is sculled across the surface towards the bow for about three feet. The blade is then swiftly tilted the other way and sculled back again.

Throughout the exercise, the shaft of the paddle should be as low as possible, giving the stroke a wide radius, and presenting the flattest surface possible to the water, thus providing maximum support. Once the basic sculling action has been mastered without too much weight being applied to it, the paddler should begin to apply pressure by leaning the boat towards the stroke and gradually capsizing. The stroke will need to be performed quicker as more weight comes onto the paddle.

It is possible to capsize completely, still keeping the head clear of the water, and support the upper body on the stroke, or to simply lie back and scull in a near capsized position for a long period. To recover from this unstable (if you stop sculling!) position, the legs and hips must rotate the kayak about the longitudinal axis, while the paddler's head is kept as near the water as possible. This action is enhanced by a press downwards on the flat blade, and is identical to the final stages of a roll.

Progressions

- 1) Hold the paddle by the top with the other hand on the neck close to the blade. The long lever this provides gives a great deal of support. Gradually reduce the length of the lever.
- 2) Raft students up facing in opposite directions, while they take turns in supporting each other, allowing for experiment without the risk of a capsize. First port to port, then starboard to starboard.

- 3) In a pool, or shallow water, stand behind a person and tip one way, then the other, to put pressure on the stroke.

Coaching Points. As with the sculling draw, fluency is important. The paddler should be encouraged to produce an efficient, smooth stroke, as opposed to a violent thrashing action. This is a committing stroke which inevitably results in capsizes, so choose carefully the time that you practise it. It isn't ideal as a warm-up exercise for novices in March, for instance! Watch that the loom is kept low, it should be almost on the gunnel when the boat goes on its side. Ensure that the C of G is kept low by the canoeist lying well back.

It is important that this, and indeed all strokes, are practised with equal enthusiasm on both sides. Eventually the paddler should be able to turn completely upside down and then simply scull back up again, regardless of which side he capsizes on.

Bow Rudder

This is used to turn the boat, and at the same time provide support which can be used in a variety of situations, from turning on flat water, to breaking in and out of the wildest rapids. It flows into and out of the forward paddling stroke very easily, and is therefore most useful as a combination stroke, when turning momentum and power need to be alternately applied.

Leaning slightly forward, the blade is inserted level with the paddlers knees, drive face towards the boat, but the leading edge turned out at an angle of about 30°. The loom is as vertical as possible, and then the arms bent dynamically. The lower wrist should be bent almost to a right angle, while the upper arm should have the back of the wrist in front of the forehead. The stomach muscles are employed to speed up the turn, with the legs gripping the deck firmly, so the boat is driven round the paddle with the opposite knee.

Progressions. The simplest way to get into the basic bow rudder position is to place the blade in the water, loom vertical, as if preparing to do a draw stroke. Slide the blade forward, keeping the shaft of the paddle upright, until the blade is level with the knees. The blade is then opened with the wrists bending forwards, to an angle of

30–45°. This gives the basic position of the stroke. To execute it when the boat is moving, in a technically correct fashion, is not quite so simple, but if practised on flat water at slow speeds it will soon develop. Gradually introduce the stroke in different situations until the paddler begins to feel the support which is provided by the water pressure against the vertical blade.

Coaching Points. The most important points to consider are the position of the arms and the blade angle being presented to the water. The top arm should be bent in front of the forehead, with the wrist in front of the brow. The top hand is therefore reaching across to the other side of the boat, but the shoulder joint is not locked. This allows for adjustment of the arm's position during the stroke. The top arm is often spectacularly, but uselessly, wrapped around the head of the paddler. In this position, the arm is locked and very weak. The lower arm should be strongly bent to almost 90° and held close to the body. This utilises the strongest arm muscles and ensures that the levers involved are short and very strong.

Bow Rudder. The top arm is deliberately held too high in order to show angle of the blade.



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IN BRIEF

Are you keen to help paddlers succeed? The BCU has designed some courses specially tailored to your needs.

Anyone — paddler, parent, friend — willing to spend time encouraging, timing, and motivating another, is eligible. You will be helped by attending a **Competition Trainer** or **Competition Coach** course, for slalom, racing or wild water racing. At Trainer level, there is no requirement to take a formal qualification, to hold any prior certificates, or even to be able to canoe. The courses are designed to give you helpful knowledge which will enable you to coach with greater confidence and ability.

Full details and dates have been circulated to all clubs, are shown on the BCU calendar, or are available from BCU headquarters (stamped addressed envelope please.)

A NEW ROLE FOR HILARY

Hilary Boshier (nee Peacock) MBE, one of our best known international lady paddlers, who gave birth to a baby boy in July last, has been made National Competition Coach for Wild Water Racing. The Coaching Committee and the Wild Water Racing section jointly appointed Hilary. Her main task will be to provide the course and resource material necessary to encourage sufficient people to come forward as Wild Water Racing coaches, and to ensure that our paddlers are supported at all levels of their development.

BRITISH SCHOOLS SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIPS

The B.S.C.A. Racing Championship will be held at Thorpe Water Park on 3rd July 1982. Any school or youth group who is a member of the School Canoe Association can enter the races over 250m and 1000m. Whilst a major regatta is taking place on the course that weekend, we are told the 'Schools' events will be separate from the normal inter-club races.

CONTINENTAL MAPS & GUIDES

If you are looking for canoeing maps of areas farther afield than our own pleasant shores, then they are available from The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upton-on-Severn, Worcs. WR8 0HJ.

Whilst the firm is better known for supplying mountaineering maps they have expressed a willingness to obtain and hold catalogues of canoeing information. We understand it takes 4–5 weeks to obtain maps to order from continental sources.

BRITISH KAYAK EXPEDITION TO THE BIO-BIO RIVER CHILE 1982

We are pleased to be able to say that Jim Hargreaves' four men expedition to the Bio-Bio was a complete success. The river turned out to be even more outstanding than expected with an absolutely amazing number of sustained and difficult rapids. They had 6000 cubic feet of water per second in the river for their run, compared with 800 cfs on the Tryweryn for the World's last year. The river was at its lowest level for thirty years due to minimal snowfall during the preceding winter. Jim's comment was "Thank God for that!" The river was rafted last year at 30,000 cfs — the biggest flood in 100 years.

The next copy of Focus will have an exclusive story on this trip through Nirreco, Quiet Canyons and the Royal Flush Gorge containing rapids heavier and more technical than the Grand Canyon in Colorado.

100 Years On — Rob Roy goes to Israel

The canoe in which John MacGregor (1825–1892) paddled up the river Jordan during one of his famous solitary expeditions, was recently air-freighted from Britain to Israel where it will be shown, over the next year, at Tel Aviv and other museums.

John MacGregor was a philanthropist, writer and traveller, and is most well known for his explorations, by canoe, through Europe and the Middle East. All his canoes bore the name 'Rob Roy'. This particular boat has for many years lain in the rafters at the Royal Canoe Club.

MacGregor's most perilous journey, started in 1868, took him through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and subsequently to Palestine where he navigated the Jordan and Lake Gennesareth.

The canoe in which he made this voyage, and which is now on its museum tour of Israel, has an oak hull and cedar deck. With a length of 14 ft (4 m) and beam of 26 in (66 cm), it weighs 72 lb (33 kg). Seated in a cockpit, the paddler was provided with a backrest and footrest, and MacGregor used a double-bladed paddle similar to those he had seen in Siberia. A small, stowable mast and sail were also carried. This Rob Roy design has been the basis of many sporting and cruising canoes.

In 1866 John MacGregor founded the Canoe Club, which became the Royal Canoe Club in 1873. The 'Rob Roy' was collected for packing, by Alltransport, from the Club's premises in Teddington.

Our picture shows members of the ICF Board inspecting the craft on the occasion of their meeting in Britain.



IN THE NEWS

On a recent Radio 4 Natural History programme, the commentator was discussing the difficulties being experienced by swans swallowing anglers' hooks, and the lead poisoning resulting because the poor birds swallow the lead shot weights.

The member of the rescuing team with whom the commentator was talking, told of an occasion when he was called out to help a bird which had got itself properly hooked. When he had freed the swan an angler called from the bank: "Can I have my hook back?" The rescuer remonstrated with the angler over these problems, pointing out the agonies to which the birds are put; to which the angler replied: "Well anyway, the swans have no right to be on the river!" The rescuer's comment on this was: "There's just no answer to that". I get a feeling that I would have blown my top.

ADVANCED SEA KAYAK CLUB

John Ramwell has asked us to give the Advanced Sea Kayak Club a plug, a request we are happy to comply with.

Formed for the benefit of all sea canoeists the ASKC has done a great deal of work in communicating with and bringing together paddlers who set forth on the briny. Membership is reasonably priced at £3 a year, cheques should be made payable to ASKC and sent with name and address to J. Ramwell, 4 Wavell Garth, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY!

Bob Gray reviews the 1982 International Canoe Exhibition

It was not so much the shapes of canoes that had changed at this years exhibition as the ways in which they are being made. There is a clear indication that the manufacturing of canoes is being subject to considerable technological advances, in many cases using materials and techniques pioneered in the aircraft industry.

Competition boats are being constructed lighter and more rigid, thus increasing their performance whilst the general purpose canoes can now be manufactured from plastics that give greater strength, have a longer life and need less maintenance.

ACE of Chester were showing the ACE-Perception *Mirage* which is imported from the USA. Claimed to be virtually indestructible the kayak is rotationally moulded in ultra-violet stabilised cross linked, high density polyethylene. Hull and deck are manufactured in one piece with adjustable seat and footbrace. With a length of 400 cm and a width of 60 cm Ace say it is a medium volume high performance kayak. However, with a weight of 19 Kg (42 lbs) it is substantially heavier than a GRP boat of comparable design. The *Mirage* markets at around £200.

The other roto moulded boat at the exhibition was the *Freetime* which Pyranha import. By comparison this craft is high volume but has two different size seat fittings. In the very near future Pyranha will be manufacturing roto moulded kayaks in this country. On show was a GRP prototype of the new boat, the *Freestyle*, with a length of only 12 ft and a 24" beam. Graham Mackarath, managing director of Pyranha, said that the new design is basically a play boat that will handle very similarly to a slalom kayak.

In contrast Wye Kayaks had an Open Canadian canoe constructed of similar materials. The Coleman Canoe, again imported from the States, is vacuum formed in 'RAM X' an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene. Prices ranged from around £200 for the 13' version to around £300 for 17' model which certainly compare favourably with prices for GRP Canadians.

Pyranha were also exhibiting slalom and white water racers using Epoxy Kevlar construction. They claim improved impact resistance and are able to offer a very light boat 6½ Kg for slalom and 8 Kgs for the Whitewater racer. At a price of approximately £300 these boats are obviously aimed at the enthusiast at the top end of the sport.

An interesting item on the Baron stand was the Yakima Footbrace imported from America. They offer a worthwhile alternative to the standard footrest. Manufactured from aircraft-grade anodized aluminium they are fitted into the canoe by drilling two holes in the hull of the boat with rubber washers serving as watertight seals. The beauty of the footbrace is in the spring trigger mechanism which allows quick and

easy adjustment with one hand — rather than fiddling about with rusted up wing nuts. The footbrace comes in three sizes 7", 10" and 13".

Significant new developments were also evident in the construction of racing canoes. Hydrospeed Ltd. a new company to canoeing, with new designs and production methods, were exhibiting their *Mistral* K1 *Sirocco* K2 and *Tornado* K4. The construction technique incorporates composite materials used in a sandwich form moulded at an extremely high temperature, using honeycomb core of either aluminium alloy or aramid fibre. The manufacturers state they are able to produce a kayak which is lighter, stronger, and more rigid than conventional wooden or GRP boats.

Hydrospeed say they have introduced a totally new element into the design of racing kayaks. The 'radius of gyration' is a familiar concept in other boat sports and its applications ensures the most efficient distribution of weight. The location of weight centrally and the consequent reduction of weight in the bow and stern reduces pitching which results in more speed. With the new production methods they are deliberately constructing below the minimum ICF weights regulation. This allows the canoeist to concentrate the weight in the centre of the kayak by the addition of lead so that he is always racing a boat at minimum allowable weight. The weight factor

could be particularly significant with the K4 because using conventional materials it is difficult to construct a boat to the minimum weight and retain the degree of rigidity that is required.

It is claimed by Hydrospeed that the new boats are faster than a conventional kayak. It will be interesting to see the times these boats achieve in competition. Prices range from just under £400 for the K1.

Two other stands with honeycomb aluminium K1's were Canoesport and Pyranha. The Carbocraft K1 is marketed by Pyranha at £360. They are planning to introduce a K2 and K4 later this year. The Canoesport K1 retails at £375.00 and is manufactured with a more conventional lay-up technique by Canoesport UK.

Meanwhile, in the pool a continuous programme offered demonstrations of a wide range of canoeing activities and competitions. Two cinemas featured the premier of *Canoe 81*, the official record of the Triple World Championships in addition to a number of international expedition films. The exhibition sponsors, Fosters added to the international flavour with a special exhibition offer on their draft lager.

There is no doubt in my mind that this was the largest and most successful canoe exhibition to be staged at the Palace. I am sure that many of the record attendance of 11,555 would agree with me.

The Carbocraft K1 — one of the new breed of honeycomb aluminium boats. Pyranha plan to introduce K2 and K4 versions later in the year.



FOSTERS — THE AUSTRALIAN FOR LAGER

Breaking Point A stress-test report

During the last BCU Coach Assessment course at Plas y Brenin in North Wales a number of tests were carried out on three different kayaks to establish:-

- 1) Would a cockpit 'pod' improve "rescue" work.
- 2) Would it strengthen the boat and make it safe in a wraparound accident.
- 3) How much stronger is a plastic boat in a wraparound accident.

Alan Byde very kindly agreed to come down to the Brenin for the weekend, bringing with him two kayaks of similar weight in clear resin - I then decided which boat the cockpit pod and which the normal cockpit should go in. Graham Mackerath of Pyranha kindly reassured me that should we damage one of our plastic kayaks he would replace it.

We first carried out tests with regard to the rescue aspects of the two Byde boats. The pod made the boat unsinkable - a quite unusual feeling to tip a boat on its side and be unable to fill it up!! One could easily roll it without a spraydeck - and self-rescue was simplicity itself. As for X rescues, then it became a simple matter of going to the bow - picking it up (this was easy since there was little water in the pod anyway) turning the boat over and getting the victim back in. A very weak person or child would be able to perform a single handed rescue in no time at all. The destruction/strength part of the test was of great interest, though the problem of how to test the boats was very complex. We decided to suspend the kayaks on two 2' high benches one at either end, and place a plank loaded with bricks on the centre of the up-turned boat. This, though by no means a perfect or realistic test, was at least measurable and comparative for the three boats. Figures are shown below. What was interesting was where the boats broke. Boat 'A' with a normal cockpit, broke just in front of the cockpit, and would have trapped an occupant fairly quickly. Boat 'B' with the pod - first broke in a similar place to the other till the pod took the weight, and then when it did go, it broke behind the cockpit, thus allowing the occupant to re-

lease himself very easily. Most felt this to be a more significant finding than the slightly stronger force it took to break the 'pod' boat. The plastic boat, though admittedly considerably heavier than the fibreglass boats, took a much greater load. The kayak, however, also folded just in front of the seat, and again would have trapped an occupant. The question remains, however, would one have a little extra time to get out of the kayak before it folded, because of the far greater force required to fold it in the first place? The other really remarkable feature was that the plastic boat sprung back into roughly the same shape. Left overnight in the warmth of the drying room, it was by morning perfect and one could not tell that the kayak had almost been bent double, 12 hours previously!

Conclusions. The conventional kayak can present problems of rescue, rolling, and self-rescue and in a wraparound situation is potentially dangerous. The insertion of a cockpit pod makes all the above either no longer a problem or at least a far less serious problem. The plastic boat is exactly the same as a conventional kayak in rescues, but poses similar problems in a wraparound situation except for the question already raised, does the extra time enable one to extricate oneself before the boat folds. Further tests are needed to answer that. What is of most interest though to us, other Outdoor Education Centres, and anyone with 'repair' problems, was the fact that whereas the two fibreglass boats would need a mould or considerable time in repairing them - the plastic boat required 12 hours in a warm room, to get it back in perfect shape - and could have been used immediately. My thanks to Graham Mackerath of Pyranha and to Alan Byde for his time, boats and interest.

	Bricks	Weight
Boat 'A' - without pod	27	216 lb
Boat 'B' - with Pod	39	301 lb
Boat 'C' - Plastic	60	447 lb



The 'pod' takes 301 lb



Whilst the 'non-pod' breaks at 216 lb.

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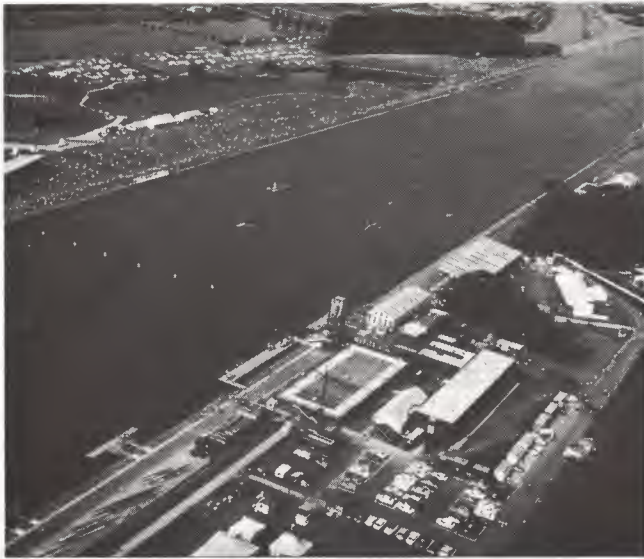
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Holme Pierrepont – the dream coming true

by Paul Rea

With the recent announcement that Planning permission has been granted for the artificial slalom course at the National Water Sports Centre, at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham my dream seems to be coming true.

My dream has a simple idea, but far reaching consequences. I keep seeing Holme Pierrepont Centre, packed with canoeists from all branches and disciplines, for the first time being together with their sport.

As I dream I can imagine a regatta on the main course whilst slalomists train on the dancing waters of the slalom run. Out on the river a group of canoe paddlers gently run their boats up to the grassy bank looking for the spot where they can portage over to the camp site.

On another weekend I can imagine canoe sailors there whilst the stragglers from a marathon race make their way stoically towards the finish of their event on the Trent.

Holme Pierrepont is going to be a place where, for once, we will start to come out of our compartments, where we can discover the thrill of another discipline. Its a venue where canoeing can take place at every level to cater for every ability. Fancy taking the whole club away to do all the different things, race, tour, sail, slalom and marathon, and then meet up to hear all about it. The accommodation is already there with bars and eateries as well as a good camp site.

The last link in this home of canoeing is the artificial slalom site. The course will be a channel which will be built to divert some of the flow away from the Holme Sluice, giving a drop over the 600m of over 13 feet. The course will be variable by altering the inlet control sluice so you can make it suitable for novice paddlers or world champions. We now have planning permission so we can start getting to grips with how to get the money to build it. It would be unrealistic to think of getting it all built commercially, so instead we are having talks with groups who are interested in helping us with some of the earthworks and additional talks with government agencies.

But we do need the support of all canoeists for this project. This is why we sent you a pledge form, to ask you to say that when the shovels start digging, then, you would be prepared to give a donation. The response has been very encouraging and we hope that either as an individual you will post yours or as a club, to help with my fantasy.

Proteus canoe club collected all their forms together and have pledged £750 between the 21 of them. This is not far off £20 each – well done Proteus. Perhaps your club could try the same things. We need to be able to show lots of people that canoeists are very serious in their desire to get the centre of canoeing in Nottingham.

So please support Holme industry and remember There's no place like Holme.

The Faces behind the Names

Am I alone in finding that *who* will be at Crystal Palace is a bigger draw than *what* will be there. Of course the new designs and the new materials and the new accessories are of interest, as are the clubs and the expeditions.

But no other canoeing event seems to bring together so many people from so many disciplines – from inland and sea, from competition and recreation, from small groups and large groups, from the North and the South. You struggle through the crowd like an inept slalomist, heading for a particular stand, but recognising so many familiar faces en route that your destination becomes forgotten or diverted.

"There's the chap I met on a course at 'x'."

"There's the speaker from the meeting at 'y'."



Dave Patrick



Bob Burnell

"There's the person who capsized in the race at 'z'."

And when you reach the stand, it is not manned by disinterested souls with blank expressions it's manned by well-informed staff, with happy faces and often familiar names.

Familiar, because their name may well be printed on the boat or the paddle or the whatever that you are buying. And what is more, you may well be discussing the weight of your new boat or the length of your new paddle with the chap who will be making it!

I find it reassuring that those who run the companies that manufacture the equipment with which I might risk my life, are not just entrepreneurs, but entrepreneurs with a past and ongoing involvement in the practice of the sport. More than that, they are as prepared to talk to little Jimmy's mum about his new boat, as to the celebrities.

You may argue that their companies are not large enough for it to be any other way – no place for the executive Director poised in lack of action at his rosewood desk. Is that the case? I prefer to believe that it is their status as amateur sportsmen that is a greater draw than their commercial interests.

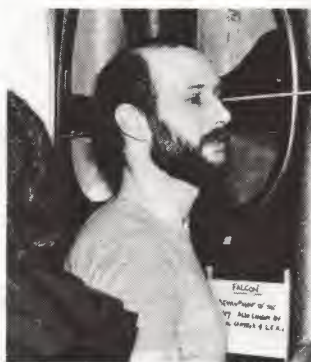
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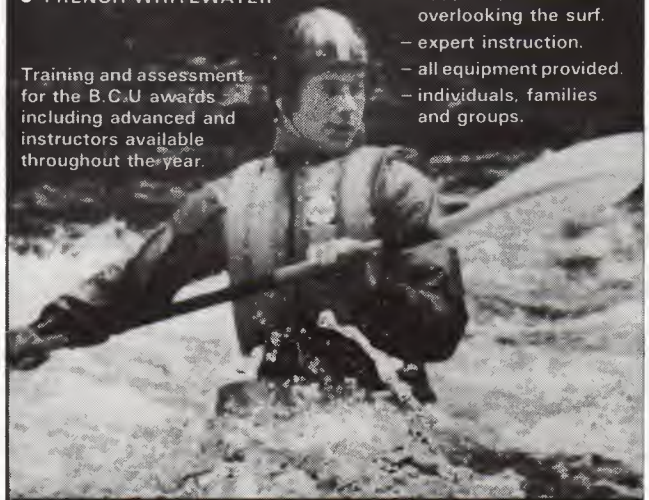
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THE VALLEY OF ICE

by Paul Vander-Molen

"The Alsek is one of the last unexplored rivers in the world. No one had ever made the entire journey from its isolated source to the sea.

250 miles of raging icy waters which cut through the largest ice field in the northern hemisphere. The speed of the current in places can stop the salmon from climbing back up river.

In June 1981, a team of international explorers, set out to make the descent from the glacier source to the ocean in 4 metre long single seater kayaks.

The Alsek starts high in the Canadian Rockies at the base of a glacier in the Yukon and flows for some 250 miles before reaching the ocean in Alaska. 'The Alsek' is unique — four giant glaciers run perpendicularly into it, glaciers which have been known to dam the entire valley when in surge. It is joined by four major rivers and with a maximum flow rate of 48,000 cubic feet per second powering through canyons in places, only thirty feet wide, the water movements become unnatural and unpredictable.

The Team

There were nine of us, three of us would make the attempt in kayaks:— Thierry Giorgetti 20, Laurent Nicolet 23, and myself, Paul Vander-Molen 24. There were six in the support group — three travelling in each raft. Brigitte Sarres being the only woman member of the International Team. For the descent of 'Turn Back Canyon' we would be joined by Adam Wilson.

The Only Way in

We awoke 5.30 am on 22nd June and looked up at the overcast sky. It did not look good: we had waited and planned for over a year, and it looked as if we would wait yet another day before the helicopter we had hired could transport us to the source. Without warning, the sun blazed through, and around midday (with kayaks tied to the feet of the Jet-Ranger helicopter) we set off for 'Disappointment Glacier'.

The river runs through a remote valley and, as there are no precise maps of the area, we had to fly along the river to get an idea of what we were up against. The land was flat, the valley sides were heavily wooded in places, and barren or ice-covered in other spots. The mountains were white with snow, and distances seemed unreal. The river turned a sharp left, the helicopter banked over and the open country started to close up. We had reached the canyon, flying as low as possible, but due to our speed and altitude were still given a distorted scale of the rapids below. One spot in the eight mile long canyon looked choked and would require a close scout, the rest looked navigable.

Disappointment Glacier

As we left the canyon, Disappointment Glacier appeared a few miles ahead. A large river of frozen water 50 miles long, 1000 feet wide and possibly hundreds of feet in depth. We were completely hemmed in by two large rock masses. The only way in had been by helicopter — the only way out seemed to be by kayak through the canyon.

A gentle, yet icy wind blew up the glacier and we decided to make a move. For the helicopter's safety, it had been left on the more solid section, some way up the

sloping ice mass. We decided to try to slide down the glacier in our kayaks, and slid with our legs out of the cockpit, stopping and speeding kayaks with our feet 'Flintstone style'. We stopped above a sheer edge, abseiled down the front, roping each kayak in turn, then took to the water.

The Source

In our attempt to leave no part of the river unexplored, we made our way to where it came gushing out from under the glacier, into a cave of ice.

We entered the fragile looking cave: large blocks of ice hanging waiting to fall. Some had already fallen. We made as little noise as possible and reached a small stopper wave, formed just six feet from the rear wall. It was unbelievable to see so much water so close to the source. It takes British rivers 20 to 30 miles to reach this sort of volume. Suddenly there was a terrifying cracking sound that echoed around the cave. We beat a hasty retreat!

Our first impression of the river was that it was abnormally dirty, such that the rocks were camouflaged. Even in the height of summer, the water coming from the frozen ice is at zero degrees centigrade. By anyone's standards it is extremely cold. We covered some four miles as the river flowed between banks of earth, dotted with pebbles and rocks.

Where Did the River Go?

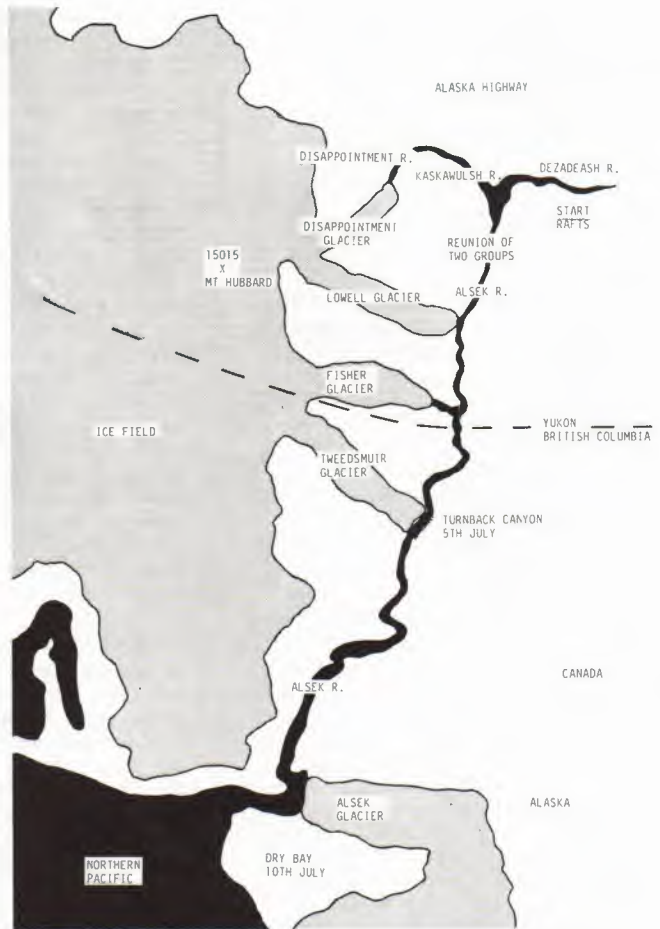
Some miles further down, we were suddenly halted. The entire river changed altitude, and instead of flowing over the glacier, went under it. We luckily stopped in a convenient calm before being swept beneath this massive undercut. The only solution was to

carry the boats over the top until we rejoined the river. The entire area looked like a lunar landscape. We discovered a long thin lake approximately the same width as the river we had left and pointing in the same direction, but there was absolutely no current. We put to water, paddling 'down' the lake — what had happened to our river? The icy wind blew against our direction of travel, we were cold and our hands were numb. Suddenly the lake, in a matter of yards, was transformed into a bubbling torrent as the water surged up from underground. We had our river back again.

With three days survival rations packed into our kayaks, we were to make a reunion 80 miles further downstream with our raft support. We had a small lightweight tent, a sleeping bag apiece and a light change of clothing for the evenings. We were continually in our neoprene wet suits, which were not a luxury. In this environment they were essential.

Choked

Two days on we reached the canyon that we had scouted two days before in the helicopter. It posed no great problems technically, plenty of nice bouncy waves. We were, however, extremely wary of any undercut sections, where the river flows under the rock face instead of past it. As we manoeuvred round each bend of the winding flow, we knew that we were approaching the rock choke. Laurent rounded the following corner and screamed out, and a high pitched sound came echoing back. Thierry and I did not need any more explanations. We managed to stop in the small 'break out' and set about scouting the rapid. A large rock had fallen, leaving only inches each side for passing. This was



followed by a dangerous set of fifteen foot drops. It was not 'on'. We were forced to portage out and then back into the canyon.

Six cut hands, three torn wetsuits, and five hours later we got back in our kayaks having climbed up and down the almost vertical, tree ridden, earth covered canyon wall. By evening the canyon was behind us and, like entering paradise, we came to where Disappointment River meets the Kaskawulsh river.

The surrounding landscape had changed drastically. All round were hills covered with green trees. The contrast to the cold dark closed-in canyon on the Disappointment was striking. It took four hours to cross the delta of streams and lakes where our river joins the Kaskawulsh river.

We camped on the bank of the Kaskawulsh on a bed of moss, hidden in the trees. The valley was huge and sand-bars lay on each side of the river.

It is strange how one's mind is transformed by events and circumstances. I was particularly worried about the bears. Before we arrived in Canada, I had not really thought about it. We had done our homework; we knew what to do and how to behave in this, the world's most populated area for grizzlies. The food was to be hung in trees or packed well away from the sleeping tents and absolutely no food at any times in the tents.

We set off on the Kaskawulsh river and by 10 am had already covered some ten miles. It was a large river moving at a rapid pace, but was more or less flat water. There was a strong cold wind blowing in our faces. On the evening of the third day, we reached the massive delta where the Kaskawulsh and the Dezadeash meet. The volume of water becomes impressive and the river changes its name to become

The Alsek.

Dimensions in this place are so large that one loses all sense of distance — what appear to be close horizons require hours of paddling to reach. That night we arrived at the pre-arranged meeting place; the base of a volcanic-type mountain. Our food had lasted three days as planned, but we had nothing left. We set up camp and slept.

Blown Back Up Stream

While we had been on the Disappointment Glacier, the rafts had been preparing to

leave from one of the major tributaries flowing into the Alsek, the Dezadeash. Allowing for delays caused by the wind and other problems, they were supposed to have covered their section in two days. By the morning of the fourth day, they had not arrived. When they eventually reached us that afternoon, we were to learn that shortly after setting off, they had been literally blown back up stream by gale force winds. They had pulled the rafts along the banks with ropes so as not to leave us too long without food. When the rafts reached us, our saucepan, made from aluminium paper, was leaking miserably on the fire. The six times used tea bag made little impression on the water, which was already a dirty brown. We were hungry and glad to see the others. Meeting up with the rest of the team reduced the feeling of isolation that we were beginning to experience. In this vast lost valley surrounded by chains of mountains and thousands of square miles of frozen waste, one feels the comfort of the group, but the group itself is alone.

"Turn-back Canyon"

We had collected all available information about the canyon and had studied aerial photos taken in 1949. It was very impressive. It would require aerial scouting and, if the descent was not possible, an airlift over the top. With no other option open to us, we had to commit ourselves to a date to reach Turn-back Canyon. Taking the river speed, wind, filming, resting and exploration into consideration, we chose the 5th July. If we did nothing else, we had to be there by this date to rendezvous with the plane.

On each of the following days we covered approximately ten miles. The river was wide in places, often over two miles, and there were frequent huge waves created as the river's inclination became greater, or when it flowed round a bend.

At one stage Laurent suddenly disappeared over a rock ledge which extended over a quarter of the width of the river. The water flowed over the ledge and fell some four feet. It was not much, but enough. There was a huge and dangerous stopper forming just below — he looped but landed upside down and was drawn back into the stopper. He rolled, got a breath, and went back over. Occasionally the nose of the kayak appeared but that was all. Thierry and I had seen what happened but were helpless. The current was too powerful and

too fast and we were being swept away. Laurent rolled over six times, each time being pulled over by the incredible force of the stopper. We were beginning to get worried as he had been in there for almost a minute. Suddenly, to our relief, he was literally 'spat out' and fell upside down, clear of the 'backwash'. He rolled up, his helmet was half off, his glasses round his neck and his buoyancy aid twisted. He had been very lucky.

Sand Storm

Never was the effect of the wind as bad as the day before we reached Lowell Glacier. The rapids we encountered were not technically demanding; certain 'stoppers' required avoiding. The problem was the thousands of needle-like pellets of sand the wind pounded into our faces. Visibility was greatly reduced. Even our snow glasses did not help, as they just reduced the visibility further. The river down-stream disappeared into a deep haze, as the sand was blown at high velocity up-river. From our maps we knew we were approaching the Lowell Glacier. It was our seventh day on the river. The Alsek Valley is unique in many ways. It is also unpredictable. In 1884, it is recorded that the Alsek Valley was flooded. What was discovered later was that the river had been dammed by a mighty mass of ice. It had 'surged' at such a speed that the river actually stopped.

Some days later the 'dam' broke and millions of cubic metres of ice and water poured into the valley below the glacier. The force of the water flowing through created a huge hole, which is now a lake 60 square miles in area. It sits clamly at the base of the Lowell Glacier and remains as the only evidence of those events of over a century ago.

Turn Back Canyon — 4th July

By the 4th July we arrived at the mouth of Turn Back Canyon. The place was frightening. We spent three and a half hours getting to the canyon. It was freezing and small pellets of ice were being bombarded at us. We were colder than we had ever been. The large waves had soaked us and the members of the rafts, who had bailed continuously.

We not only had to find a camp in this now dark, lonely, miserable place but we also needed to find a suitable landing spot for the aeroplane we had arranged to meet on the following day.

The canyon gets its name from a group of explorers of over a hundred years ago. They arrived by sea at the mouth of the Alsek and spent some months making their way inland up the valley. On arriving at the Canyon, they were confronted with a 10,000 foot mountain chain on their right, ten miles of cut-up glacier on the left, and the raging torrent of river down the middle. They had to 'turn back' and in so doing named the canyon.

On the morning of the 5th, the small aircraft appeared from the south and circled around for ten minutes. The pilot had told us he was not even sure if he would be able to land. He drifted down with engines almost cut and put his plane on 150 feet of sand and pebbles right next to our camp. We were to use the plane to scout the ten miles of Turn Back Canyon to see if it was feasible to kayak.

The canyon itself has been kayaked by only four people, but the flow rate now was much higher than on these earlier attempts.

Our mode of transport up river, kayaks carefully strapped underneath.





The late Thierry Giorgetti

Looking at the dark and desolate place, we wondered how Walt Blackdar had attempted it alone over a decade ago.

The width of the river converged down to a mere 60 feet at the entrance to the first rapid. 'Well what do you think?' we asked, looking at each other open mouthed. The first rapid looked OK, the second was a half a mile section of tight 'S' bends. As the ice cold water surged up against the walls, it reminded us of 'Augsburg' the Olympic Slalom Course — only now the volume of water was at least one hundred times greater. Large whirlpools would appear and disappear; the water would surge ten to twelve feet up against the walls and then run down leaving a ten to twelve foot hole. In certain places we should not go close to the walls. In others the correct line was essential. We watched the route taken by some of the icebergs. They would not have done well in a lower division slalom competition. No rocks were visible, there was too much water.

After further scouting by plane, it became obvious that the canyon was not a continuous jet of water but a series of complex and demanding rapids with numerous places to stop. There were some places we would not want to paddle, but the portages looked OK. The worst spot was a mile or so of unbroken hell between the vertical canyon walls. It did not look very inviting. There were some tight ninety degree bends and in some sections the width went down to a mere 30 feet. We decided we should give it a go.

The 6th of July

We woke early the next morning and following breakfast warmed up by going for a half an hour run in our wetsuits. Today we had wetsuit head covers and an extra jacket. The water was at zero degrees centigrade and we wanted to take no chances. We made some special gloves to protect the backs of our hands, whilst leaving the insides free to feel the paddle. In addition, we each had an elastic cord connecting the paddle to our wrist, to help reduce the risk

of paddle loss. Our major problem was the cold. We would stay together in the canyon and attempt each set of rapids as a foursome. Although we knew that in water like this one is alone, there is little (if anything) that can be done to help someone in trouble.

Having studied the canyon for a year, scouted the first two rapids by foot, arranged for a helicopter to film and act as security, we felt we were now ready to attempt what is generally accepted to be one of the most difficult stretches of rapids in the world.

The helicopter, laid on for filming, carried Bruno, Jean-luc and Brigitte. It stopped by the first rapid to film. Craig and Christian had decided to walk across the ten miles of glacier and meet us below the canyon later.

Adam and I entered the first rapid, passed through a large turning-back wave running diagonally across half of the canyon and were to feel immediately the force and violence of the water — the noise was deafening.

We paddled hard into a 'break-out' on the right hand side, and were soon going up and down with the water that was flowing so unnaturally, like water below a power station dam. Thierry and Laurent, seeing we had been stopped in our tracks by the huge wave, avoided it and arrived shortly after. The next rapids were then scouted — over half a mile of tight continuous 'S' bends. Adam and Laurent started, followed by myself and a small distance behind, Thierry.

Tragedy

We rounded the first bend, avoiding the water piling up against the rearwall. A whirlpool appeared and we were each, in turn, spun round and spat out. Laurent went over and rolled up immediately. The helicopter that was following was caught

by a strong wind and was literally blown out of the canyon and forced to wait below the rapid further down. The canyon twisted and turned sharply and, with the waves and turbulences gushing through the narrow gap, it became difficult to follow each others progress. Our total concentration was devoted to keeping upright and avoiding the huge circular cushions created as the water surged violently against the bends.

We had agreed to wait below each rapid before attempting the following section. Laurent and Adam reached the end of the rapid and some minutes later I joined them. There was no sign of Thierry.

Suddenly, his paddle was noticed. Laurent and Adam positioned themselves on each side of the canyon in their kayaks. I climbed out and scrambled up the bank to look, but from where I stood I could not see back upstream; it was impossible to return by foot.

Twenty-five minutes later Thierry's body was taken from the water by the helicopter — half a mile downstream and too late to save him. Despite the air bags in his boat and his buoyancy aid, he and his kayak had passed under water and we had seen nothing.

After the accident the kayaks were abandoned in the canyon and we were taken by helicopter to the camp below. We were empty with disbelief, no-one could accept what had happened.

We now had to make a decision, whether to give up and depart by helicopter, or to carry on in the two rafts. We decided to carry on. In virtual silence, finding nothing to say, we set out for the sea, eighty miles further down. We reached it three days later.

A week after rejoining civilisation we had the opportunity to fly back over the Aisek. The water in the canyon had risen over fifteen feet and the kayaks that had been abandoned at the site of the tragedy had been washed away.

"One feels the comfort of the group, but the group itself is alone".





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DEEP WATER

BCU APPROVAL SCHEME FOR CENTRES

A system for approving Centres and Companies which offer canoeing holidays has recently been agreed.

There are two categories under which approval will be offered.

1: Those Centres offering a high standard of specialist canoeing instruction; and 2. Centres offering 'adventure holidays' which include canoeing as a fun activity. Certain undertakings concerning standard of equipment, and staff ratios will have to be given, in return for which the BCU will actively promote the scheme to enquirers, education authorities, tourist boards and others.

It is hoped that Centres will co-operate in passing on to all those who enter a canoe during a course, a package containing a badge and information on the Union — in particular how to obtain the names of their nearest canoe club, regional secretary and coaching organisers. Conservative estimates put the number of people in Great Britain who try canoeing for the first time annually well in excess of 160,000.

INCOMPETENT LEADERSHIP

The need for an approval scheme was underlined last October when a Mr. John Arthur Cotterill led a group of five in three slalom canoes and a Moonraker double on the swollen river Tamar near Horsebridge, Devon.

The group got into difficulties on a grade II section, which is rated III in spate, and it ended with the death of 11 year-old Ian Fisher. Another boy — 14-year old Alan Turner — stayed with Ian for some 50 minutes after he had capsized, and almost got him to the bank on several occasions. Alan was not an experienced white water canoeist, and for his efforts gained the first BCU Award for Valour to be presented, which he received at Crystal Palace from the Minister for Sport, Mr. Neil McFarlane MP.

In the Trailblazer Club's publicity material Mr. Cotterill claimed to 'operate to the standards of the British Canoe Union'. He does not hold a BCU coaching award, and has been written to as follows: 'From the evidence given by yourself, and confirmed by witnesses, it is manifestly clear that you do not teach to these standards, and we must ask you to desist from making the misleading statement in your brochure. The exposure of an eleven year old, of minimal experience, none on white water, to the comparatively severe conditions on the day, the inclusion of a Moonraker double, and the fact that you yourself capsized — which we would not expect of an instructor competent for the situation — are indicative of this'.

The Trailblazers Club should not be confused with Trailblazers Educational Adventure Holidays, which is a bona fide company operated by Campamarena Holidays Ltd. of 1a Fowler Street, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire.

REFUSED BUOYANCY AID

A 31 year old man and his girl friend went canoeing on the swollen river Weaver at Millfields in Cheshire on 15 March. The man's father offered him a buoyancy aid before he departed but he refused to wear or carry it. The pair got into difficulties above a weir, the boats were trapped and they were carried over. Keith Brammer then disappeared. At the time of going to press, the body had not been recovered. The 'canoe' involved belonged to the non specialist market.

INVESTIGATING CANOEING INCIDENTS

Occasionally when an accident occurs, the persons involved find themselves bombarded from all sides by well intentioned members, offering help, advice, or criticism.

In order to ensure that all noteworthy happenings are investigated, but that confusion is avoided, a policy has been agreed. Reports and requests for action should be made in every instance to BCU Headquarters, who will issue an enquiry form, and agree with the principal regional officer concerned as to who should be appointed locally to be the official BCU spokesman. This officer's name and address can then be obtained through headquarters.

Those with a legitimate involvement should communicate with the official spokesperson, and not make direct statements to the press, or approach the individual concerned in the case, on behalf of the BCU.



Just one of the 2000 Canoeing Handbooks sold at Crystal Palace

Book Review: Canoeing Handbook —

Editor Geoff Good — Published by the BCU.

Three hundred and fifty pages for £5—25 (B.C.U. Members) *must* be good value! A glance at the book confirms this — it is packed with information and covers every aspect of the sport. Its pedigree is a good one, not only has it called on the accumulated knowledge of several generations of canoeists, but its parentage is clearly the very successful Coaching Handbook, which, of course, it supersedes.

The change of title is significant, as the style of writing has been altered from the rather clipped notes of its predecessor to a much more readable format that is obviously aimed at a wider canoeing audience than merely members or intending members of the B.C.U. Coaching Scheme. While this new style certainly makes the whole book more readable, it also makes it a little more difficult to extract and digest the mountains of information it contains.

Nine different authors offer twelve chapters and the remaining six are the work of the editor, Director of Coaching, Geoff Good. What a task Geoff must have had; and what a first-rate job he's made of it! The authors' differing styles hardly obtrude and there is very little duplication between the chapters.

The illustrations don't tell such a happy tale, however: the photographs are generally good, but often a line-drawing can explain a point better even than a photograph. The line drawings seem to have been left to the separate authors — sadly, even if you can write it doesn't follow that you can also draw. The quality of the drawings varies tremendously from excellent to feeble: some so feeble in fact as to be almost meaningless. What a pity a good artist wasn't commissioned to illustrate every chapter throughout the book — the extra expense would have been amply repaid.

Wisely, Geoff has steered the book away from detailed analysis of the competitive components of canoeing, which he restricts to just one chapter, but adds a good bibliography to help those who want more information. Several appendices are also included.

The sheer weight of information gathered here hardly allows the Canoeing Handbook to be read at a sitting, but a chapter a night wouldn't be soporific! A happy inclusion is the chapter dealing with canoeing for disabled people and, long overdue, and probably attempted for the first time here, is a chapter describing basic canoe design parameters and their relation to the hydraulics of canoeing and the 'feel' of the canoe to the paddler.

Destined to become the canoeists bible, this excellent book is not without its dogma and apocrypha. A statement like: "Craft should have 'open cockpits' — i.e. the knees are not trapped under the deck. This relieves the fear of being struck in the event of capsize" written in a paragraph dealing with teaching canoeing seems very strong when one would guess that 90% of all canoeists start their paddling career in a closed cockpit canoe.

Apart from the odd minor flaw, what Reed's is to the yachtsman now, the Canoeing Handbook will be to canoeists in future — carry it in your canoe at all times and your insurance premium should fall!

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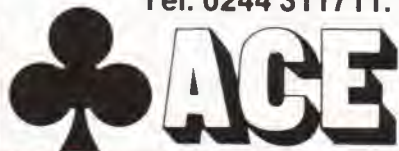


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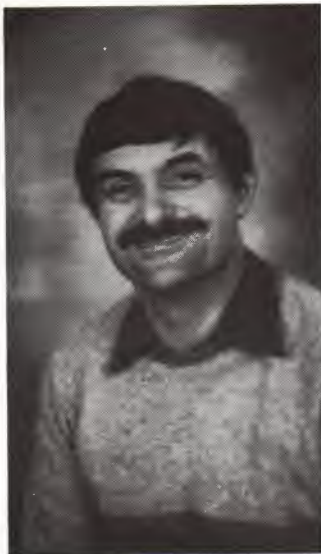
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Afon Tryweryn

After 27 years in the Army Physical Training Corps George Davis has joined the staff of the Union as the Canoeing Management Officer on the River Tryweryn.

Working from an office near Bala, George is burdened with the task of creating the system by which all canoeists can gain access to the waters of this National White Water Site. After

eight years at the Army Outward Bound School this 44 years old captain cannot be considered as a stranger to Wales. Previously based at Tywyn he has a good knowledge and appreciation of the area and its residents. George can also draw upon the experience he has gained canoeing in Hong Kong, Singapore and in Norway, where he has been responsible for the organisation, safety and administration of all the Services canoeing.

Apart from canoeing, George has represented the Army at modern pentathlon, cross-country running and fencing. His other interests include rock-climbing, skiing, windsurfing; less strenuously, ornithology and wine making. He sees the job of developing Tryweryn as a great challenge and intends to provide the best possible service to all canoeists.

And so, after many trials and tribulations, and in conjunction with The Sports Council, Sports Council for Wales, WCA, Gwynedd County Council, Merioneth District Council, we have a Management Officer on the Tryweryn. Whilst the permanent arrangements are still to be confirmed we can look forward to the Afon Tryweryn being available to many more canoeists. Because the next issue of Focus is not due out until late in the year George Davis has asked that we print a few notes for your guidance.

- 1) Advance booking procedures and a scale of charges for the use of the facility are being worked out. It is hoped that these will come into operation by mid-summer.
- 2) As an interim measure, an answerphone will be installed at the control centre. This will give up-to-date information on water level and any restrictions which may apply. The number is Bala (0678) 520826. Do not ring the Welsh Water Authority. They will not accept calls about water levels/releases in future.
- 3) A list of rules for the use of the facility is being formulated and will be available hopefully also by mid-summer. A provisional set of rules will be displayed as soon as possible at the control centre. Please observe them, particularly as regards access and egress, as any disturbance to the local inhabitants may prejudice the future development of the facility.

Wildlife on Upper Ouse

Recently there have been reports of canoeists using the River Ouse near Turvey in a most unreasonable manner. They have been going downstream six abreast, shouting, transistors blaring and driving wildfowl before them. I am sure that all would agree that such action is totally irresponsible, and I hope that they are not members of the BCU. The owner, Mr. Sanders, has no objection to canoeists providing they behave, but having spent years building up a fine nature reserve on a beautiful stretch of the river, he has no intention of seeing it spoilt. He requests that between MR 938536 and MR 940546 we keep to the right hand bank, avoiding the left bank which has cover used by the wildfowl, and that we go no more than two abreast.

Transistor radios do not belong in such an environment so leave them at home — enjoy the countryside at its best — peacefully.

P. Wathen, *Regional Access Officer.*



New National Access Officer

Roger Irwin became the National Access Officer of the British Canoe Union on April 1st!

Roger joins the HQ staff having completed ten years service with the Home Office Prison Dept, serving as a Physical Education Instructor for most of that time. During his time in the services he became very involved with the coaching scheme and has been a coaching organiser since 1976.

Latterly he became a founder member and Chairman of the BCU Southern Region.

His wife and one daughter are also keen watersports enthusiasts and are well known in sea touring and competitive surfing. Roger looks forward to meeting and working with the Regional Access Officer's and their River Adviser's and is keen to receive any communications which may assist the campaign for greater access.

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membership of a club. The canoeists take to the water with great enthusiasm, using the time predominantly for coaching activity across the age range, the older boys staying on a while longer as the evenings get lighter for some advanced training. After school on a Friday is the second wet session of the week, Sunday being the third and tending to be the opportunity for trips and special events. Weekend trips are not the easiest to arrange, with formal lessons on a Saturday morning and traditional team sports in the afternoon.

The club has plenty of choice of water, ranging from the rapids of the River Torridge through to tackling the strong tides of the huge adjacent estuary, to coping with the surf of adjacent beaches such as Westward Ho! and Croyde Bay, to paddling the coast towards Clovelly or Ilfracombe. There is also a small outdoor school pool for summer use, and occasional use of a local heated indoor pool for those winter rolling sessions. Further afield, the club has recently participated in a slalom on the River Lynher, in the Mike Jones Memorial Weekend on the Dee, and in an Advanced Inland training course on the Wye and the Usk.

To some outsiders, the prospect of a small club adjacent to the water may seem like an ideal set-up, to others the school environment may seem restrictive. How do the Grenville boys see it?

Martin Pierce (15 and 'Mutley' to his friends) — "A club room wouldn't go amiss, somewhere where we could repair boats and keep the kit. Most of it is just lying around in the car park next to the trailer. I like a small club and we appreciate the great deal that Mr Davies does for us, but we are a bit confined to the Torridge and Westward Ho! They are the easiest to get to in the time available. It would be nice to paddle more often with different people, you can pick up a lot from that."

Jeremy Palmer (15) — "It's great. It's a chance to get out and do something and it's so easy to arrange with everyone being so easy to contact. I have recently joined Grenville from Milfield School where the canoe club was mostly involved in flat water racing. The moving water here makes a change. It's difficult not having the holidays to paddle together and go places, but

The word 'college' is perhaps misleading — it is really a school, a boy's public school which has achieved a name nationally for its scope of opportunities. Its wide range of subjects incorporates academic, vocational and sporting disciplines, as well as a very strong dyslexia unit. Established in 1954, Grenville is a scattered collection of houses and huts on the higher slopes of Bideford in North Devon. There are about 360 pupils — mostly boarders — and all of secondary school age.

The 'scope of opportunities' within the sporting world makes good use of the adjacent waters with sailing, sportsboating and canoeing — activity which is well directed into appropriate clubs. In fact, nearly all the sporting and vocational interests at the school are represented by a club, and a school rule decrees that every pupil under 15 shall belong to one of them. But that does not make the canoe club oversubscribed, a situation brought about in part by year round and 'come rain or shine' participation — a prerequisite that attracts only the keen ... no armchair paddlers!

The club makes no claim to fame, perhaps the nearest to a champion is the master-in-charge, Martin Davies. He is an energetic chap who took to the sport in 1976 when he was looking for a way to keep fit and thought he was too old for rugby. The decision for canoeing (as opposed to countless other ways of keeping fit) was prompted by a pupil asking 'sir' for permission to try out his birthday present of a new canoe in the school pool.

There had previously been some competitive canoeing on the school timetable, but what Martin was to introduce was to be primarily of a recreational nature. His road to experience and qualification started with a one week proficiency course at PGL in 1977, then the road to Senior Instructor with a successful assessment on the River Dart. Picking up a Surf Trainer award en route (fairly essential for a club based a stone's throw from Westward Ho!) and whilst still being involved in school life-saving, cross-country running and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme — as well as teaching Maths and being a family man with two children) the club flourishes.

It may seem surprising that the club has — at most — about 20 members, a number brought about by a large number of factors. Consider that the school attracts youngsters from all over the country (if not the globe) from homes to which they return with all the usual regularity of school holidays. That means that there is no local base of parents or past/adult members to provide direct assistance or support through a management committee. Most of the time that leaves Martin alone, with as many youngsters as he can get into one of the (four) school minibuses. There is sufficient equipment for a range of canoeing, some having been provided by the school (whose only funds come from the pupils fees) and some owned by individuals.

The small number of members and the lack of any corporate structure is not, however, reflected in the spirit of the lads, nor in the range and frequency of their activity — being on the water on average three times a week. Wednesday afternoons are free from any formal school lessons so that every pupil can pursue his enforced

"It would be nice to have a club room. Most of the equipment is just lying around in the car park next to the trailer."





Martin Davies — "I couldn't keep square with my conscience if I hadn't the necessary skill and experience."

I have my own boat and get on the water as much as possible during the breaks."

As for the leader, he says, "There are advantages in being able to paddle as part of the school curriculum, but disadvantages in that the same curriculum imposes restrictions by its timetable — not least of all Saturday school and losing everyone during the holidays." Asked if there is any additional activity that he would like to include in the club programme, Martin answers, "Yes, even within the existing limitations of size and support. There are some good advanced sea trips in the area, like the trip to Lundy. But by the time the boys are old/skilled enough, they leave the school — you see most either leave altogether or go on to a sixth form college at 15/16."

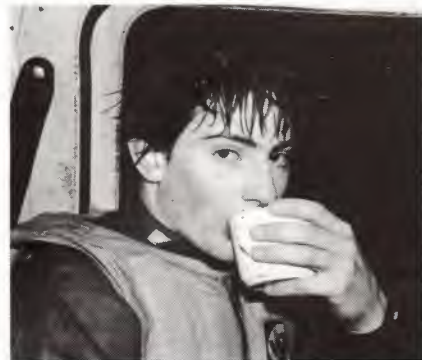
How about the qualifications required by a master taking canoeing at the school, "It is not the same as being under a Local Education Authority. At a private school I can do what I like and without any bits of paper. But I couldn't keep square with my conscience if I hadn't the necessary skill and experience."

How do other members of the staff view the club? Says David Sturdee, house master responsible for all aspects of the welfare of a junior house, "I see christianity as the development of the mind and body to the full. I accept canoeing as making a significant contribution to that development."

So it is not just a way of getting out of chapel on a Sunday morning!

Neil Shave

Flasks of hot coffee ready in the Minibus after rolling practice in wintery cold water. Year round practice sessions restrict membership to the keen.



Mole Valley and the Swans



Anna has been with the 'Canoeing Swans' from the start and practises eagerly in the pool in preparation for going out onto open water in the spring.



Rory checking David's hand position on the paddles. David is blind and hopes to attend the Rotary International Sporting Event at Stoke Mandeville this year.

In 1976, Rory Pringle was involved in completing his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and chose to do 40 hours community service as one of his options. The choice was to be work with the disabled club near to his home in Dorking. It all went smoothly and a seed was planted — a seed which was to combine this new experience with the canoeing interest that had started as a child with his family. Canoeing was already a regular activity, with service at the Ravens Ait and Thames Young Mariners Centres, and successful completion of a Trainee Instructor Course in 1979.

In the meantime, the 'Leatherhead Swans' were becoming well established — a club for disabled and handicapped people that undertakes a variety of recreational pastimes, but with swimming high on the list. Rory got to hear of the Swans and saw an opportunity to teach canoeing as part of their swimming sessions, held on a Tuesday evening at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre.

The search started for training and advice in this specialist skill and — starting right at the top — he asked Oliver Cock and Geoff Good to come along to run a basic session one evening. They naturally obliged, and recommended that Rory attend a

course at Plymouth with Ron Moore, Regional Coaching Organiser and an experienced and accredited expert on canoeing with the disabled.

And so slowly but surely — helped by Pete Scott, a Senior Instructor who Rory had met at Thames Young Mariners, and some girls from St Theresa's School for Girls (who were doing community service for their D of E Award Scheme) the Swans were put afloat.

There can be up to a dozen attending the canoeing session, and the two instructors are stretched in a situation that normally requires a one-to-one pupil/teacher ratio. But there was known to be a large number of paddlers in the area and Rory joined forces with a few others who felt that the masses could be brought together as a club, one part of whose programme could be to train some how to teach the disabled. So the Mole Valley Canoe Club was formed.

Vi Hardman — Honorary Secretary of the Leatherhead Swans and of the Leatherhead Sports Council — is thrilled. "It's marvellous that there is now a club teaching able-bodied how to teach the less able-bodied. Three of the Swans went to Ron Moore's course at Plymouth last year and this year we are hoping all the canoeists will get out of the pool onto local open water. There is some general and special equipment that we need and if we don't have enough money, then we'll do something to raise it. Just as long as there are plenty of people to help on the water."

Can you help? Are you a competent canoeist/instructor with some time to spare. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated and rewarded by experiencing the freedom that the disabled can enjoy on the water, and by monitoring the achievements they attain as they master the one-man-one-boat environment. Or you may know of disabled or handicapped people who would like to become involved in the warm family activity of the Swans. Either way, please contact Rory on Dorking 67220.

In the meantime, Rory is still a Trainee Instructor and fears that his probationary period may have elapsed. Not a bad track record though.



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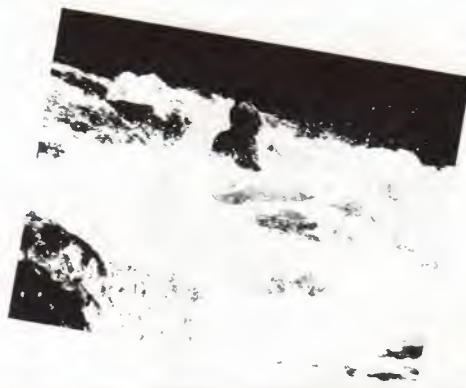
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Dear Focus...

Dear Sir,
British "Con" Union?

Two of our recent dealings with the Union have led me to believe that the initials BCU stand for British "Con" Union! In September my wife returned her Division 2 bib for refund of the £5 deposit — she has been unable to compete this season and will be in Division 3 next season. Instead of receiving a cheque, a voucher came through the post, which she had then to send on to another address to obtain the cheque.

It appears that the BCU is happy to make a simple operation doubly expensive by wasting money on printing special vouchers and by doubling postage costs on both sides.

More recently I entered the Tees 'A' river race in December, sending in my £2.50 entry fee as usual. Because of the bad weather the race was cancelled and the event re-allocated to take place alongside the Div. B & C races in January. However, because of a BCU ruling there has been no return of the original entry fee or carrying forward to the new date. A second entry fee of £2.50 has to be sent. Thus, counting 150 individual entries, the holding club will have received £375 plus team entries for an event not held.

In the case of a slalom I can see that there may be some considerable expenditure prior to the event, and the holding club may be justified in not returning entry fees, but in the case of a river race I cannot see what major expenditure is involved, except for the purchase of prizes which can be used for the re-run event anyway.

Over the past few years the BCU has asked its members to make donations and pledges for various funds. I feel that they can hardly expect future support for its appeals if it makes rules which are designed to make money for nothing out of its members.

Pete Leach, Darwen, Lancs.

Reply from R.J. Annan, Chairman Slalom Committee

The Slalom Executive is very conscious of the difficulties caused by the implementation of the use of bibs in Division 2. The cost of providing for Divisions 1 and 2 of over 1000 bibs with multiple replacements each season has been a heavy drain on our resources particularly in view of the large expenditure on Canoe '81.

Possibly the biggest problem has been to get bibs back, clean and dry, in time to know how many extra are required for the new season. This year we left it too late by accepting bibs until January 31 and are well aware that many who have sent for bibs for 1982 have not yet received them. We hope everyone will be supplied by Easter. Bibs this year must be returned by 31 December for refund.

The bib vouchers were provided free of charge and are an attempt to ease the costs of issuing hundred of £5 cheques. The one great advantage of bibs is, of course, the ability to identify competitors quickly and clearly and ease the judges task particularly by allowing them to spend maximum time on observing the boats through the gates rather than try to see numbers of the boat.

We hope the benefits of improved judging in slalom outweigh the disadvantages in administration and inconvenience. After all the £5 charge is only a fraction of the cost of attending even one slalom at this level and a wrong judging decision can negate the whole weekend's effect.

The Chairman of the Wild Water did not wish to comment on the points in this letter.

Dear Sir,

May I too send my best wishes to Oliver Cock on his retirement and thank him for his help and enthusiasm with the access question. I share his frustration that legal opinion has not been obtained as fast as we would like. Along with many of my fellow canoeists I do find it very difficult to remain patient. We must hope the results are worth the effort and the wait.

I must take issue, however, with his suggestion that "it would be infinitely preferable to be able to come to agreement than to prove a navigation right". It is my experience for "agreements" to be withdrawn or modified unilaterally to our detriment by the riparian owners. Navigation rights have to be exercised in a reasonable manner having due regard to other river users. This should exclude speedboats and water skiers as navigators. Rafts, of course, have been in use for centuries, a fact which has been useful to the BCU for proving navigation rights.

We have had a raw deal for long enough now, this is the time to be determined and not weaken. We must at all costs establish and maintain navigation rights wherever we can. An access "agreement" is no substitute for an established right.

C. Asquith, Leominster, Herefordshire.

Dear Sir,

Linton Slaloms Cancelled

I feel that an explanation is forthcoming for the cancellation of the two Linton Slaloms on 19-20 and 26-27 June.

York club have run these slaloms in the past, and although facilities on site are not very good, we have done our best to ensure that canoeists attending have had a good time at reasonable cost. We intended running the two slaloms again this year, and our organiser went to see the site owner to make the necessary arrangements. He was informed that we could run the slaloms but the

charge for camping would be "at least" £3 per person. Those who have been at Linton will know that the camp site is just a rough piece of ground, fairly cramped, and which our members had to clear of long grass and nettles before a tent could be pitched. We had to provide all the facilities and do the work including collecting the camp fees, and collecting car parking charges from non-camping visitors to the site. The site owner did nothing except take the reimbursement which we gave to her and which we considered to be more than fair. On top of this, we also have to pay fifty pounds per weekend to the Linton Locks Commissioners for the privilege of being able to cross their lock. As this figure is reviewed annually, and we had great difficulty in getting them to keep the figure as low as it was, we could have been faced with a charge of seventy five or even one hundred pounds per weekend. We wrote to the BCU to ask if they would be prepared to assist us to cover the extra cost. The answer was that if we ran the slaloms and then provided them with a detailed statement of income and expenditure, they would then give it their consideration. We did not consider this satisfactory.

We felt that canoeists, and our club, were being "ripped off" and decided to cancel the slaloms. There is a ray of hope for the future, and we do not want to see Linton Slalom lost altogether. We understand that the lease on the site has now expired. If a new leaseholder takes over, we will try to negotiate reasonable terms, so that canoeists can continue their competitions at a reasonable cost.

Mick Shaw, Chairman, York Canoe Club.

Dear Sir,

Corps of Canoe Lifeguards

I am going to start a new branch of the Corps based at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Marine Activities Centre. If you live within easy reach of this area and are qualified or just interested and willing to train, with a desire to become a lifeguard please get in touch with:- Alan Rees, c/o Barking and Dagenham Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Eastbrook Comprehensive School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex.

The Marine Activities Centre caters for canoeing, sailing and wind surfing at all levels of expertise. The Centre also mans a rescue team on call to the Borough's Emergency Officer in the event of flooding.

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Sport Spectrum

ESKIMO ORIGINS

John Brand is keen to get in touch with other members interested in researching the eskimo kayaks from which the sport in this country has mainly evolved.

John has produced numerous scale drawings of original eskimo kayaks held in museums throughout Great Britain, and has recently produced a news letter seeking to exchange knowledge about these designs, and put in touch with each other, those who are interested in further investigation.

Please write to the Director of Coaching at headquarters, enclosing £1. If you wish to receive a copy of John's report and be put in touch with others of like mind.

WEIR RESEARCH PROMISED

Thames Water Authority have recently been installing anti-scour weirs. These are designed to contain the hydraulic jump (stopper) within the confines of the walls of the weir, in order to destroy the power of the water, and so prevent scouring of the river bed below. There is then an anti-scouring lip at the end of the concrete apron, put there to create a small reverse eddy up against the apron and thereby cause silt to build up downstream of it.

CAPE CANOE WINNERS

Winners of three series of prize draws under the Cape Open Racing Scheme, operated in conjunction with the Marathon Racing Committee of the British Canoe Union, were at the International Canoe Exhibition, to receive their individual and club prizes.

Each of the three winners were presented with a new kayak of their choice, together with a £100 cash prize towards their club's funds. Tony Spencer of Hereford Kayak Club chose a K1 racing kayak from Wye Kayaks; Andrew Boyd of Fladbury Canoe and Kayak Club chose an Avoncraft Rapide racing kayak and Stephen Turner of Adlington Canoe Club chose a K1 racing kayak from the Canoe Centre (Twickenham).

Cape Industries have sponsored the Open Racing Scheme for the last two years. Anyone who races in a marathon event receives a numbered certificate which also qualifies the entrant for registration with the British Canoe Union. Every three months there is a national draw of the certificate numbers issued. The competitor holding the winning number wins a kayak or canoe of his choice and the organising club that issued the winning number received £100. Since the Scheme was introduced, more than 14,000 certificates have been issued.

Pictured are (left to right) Tony Spencer, Malcolm Wright of Cape Industries, Charles Sanderson representing Adlington Canoe Club, Kathy Muir of Hereford Kayak Club and Andrew Boyd and David Train of Fladbury Canoe and Kayak Club.



CANOE CANADA

Paul Sevcik is now the Director of the Ottawa River Kayak and Canoe School, based on the Ottawa River in Ontario. A full programme of courses in both kayak and canoe white water skills is arranged for all levels of ability. The address is Box 179, Beachburg, Ontario, KOJ 1C0.

MIKE JONES MEMORIAL FUND

Molly Jones tells us that £15,000 has been transferred to the Winston Churchill Trust who administer the Adventure Award which was set up in Mike's name.

Mark Attenburrow has won the 1982 award for his proposed trip across Scandinavia, from the Norwegian Sea to the Gulf of Bothnia. A distance of 300 miles.

With the aid of £3,100, which was presented to the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, a temporary eye hospital was set up during June 1981 in the Karakoran Mountains at the remote town of Skardu.

Although these hospitals are more akin to camps they manage to perform an immense amount of work and this one was particularly successful. 2475 patients were examined of which 1816 were treated in

one way or another, 350 major operations were performed and 309 minor operations completed.

Blind people trekked into Skardu from the surrounding villages with escorts, the Pakistan Government provided food and shelter. A permanent Eye Clinic is to be established at Skardu in Mike's memory.

£1,500 has been given to the Birmingham University Medical School to provide yearly bursaries to students carrying out health projects in developing countries. During 1982 one student is going to Tanzania and one to Papua, New Guinea.

The staggering thing about all these awards is that the majority of the money has been provided by canoeists or people who are attached to the sport. There can be no doubt that the amount of aid the Memorial Fund has provided will stand as a fitting tribute to Mike Jones who gave his life for a friend in the rapids of the Karakoram River.

WELSH ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN HONOURED

Sandy Buttle, was made a Member of the British Empire at a ceremony earlier this year. The award was made to honour Sandy for his long and devoted work in the service of youth and further education. Our congratulations are offered to this dedicated paddler and officer of the WCA.

KAYAK FRANCE '82

Churchtown Farm, well known for its Education and Outdoor activity holidays for the disabled, is undertaking its first kayak expedition. The Centre has already run several successful field study expeditions to the Hebrides, Scilly Isles, and Swiss Alps. Kayak France '82 will provide the opportunity for six physically disabled young kayakists from South West Devon and Cornwall to take part in their first expedition.

Paul Vander Molen, leader of the Alsek River Expedition, film of which, 'The Valley of Ice' has been shown and featured on British television, will be taking the young kayakists to France in June (2nd-15th) 1982. Funding for the expedition will be made by appeals for sponsorship, local fund raising ventures by the Centre, and by individual members of the expedition team. Offers of help are welcome. Further details from J.K. Chapman (tutor), Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall.

BWB CONCESSIONARY RATES TO BCU MEMBERS

Continuing the concession to BCU Members but reflecting the new charges, the licence fee payable to the BCU for licences taken out BEFORE the 1st April 1982, expiring on the 31st September 1982, will be £13.10 for Adults and £7.10 for Youths and Youth Leaders. Arrangements are being made for 6 monthly licences for BCU Members, to be issued starting on the 1st April 1982, and expiring on the 31st September 1982. The charges for these will be £11.30 for Adults and £6.20 for Youths.

Applications must be made on the appropriate form and forwarded to the Union. Also available are historical notes on many of the major canals. If you are touring or just interested contact the British Canoe Union, Flexel House 45-47 High Street, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey KT15 1JV.

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AGENCIES are available throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland for the sale of GRUMMAN ALUMINIUM CANOES with particular reference to the latest model from this famous American maker, namely "The Eagle". Applications in writing please to the sole importers:- The Canadian-Canoe Co. Ltd, P.O. Box 22, Congleton, Cheshire.

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NOW AVAILABLE the New Canoe Life-guard Manual. All you need to know about setting up a Canoe Lifeguard Unit, Safety at Sea and Inland for instructors and leaders. Price £6.50 plus 50p p & P to Corps Members £7.50 plus p & p to Non Members B. Sheen, 92 Par Green, Par, Cornwall.

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