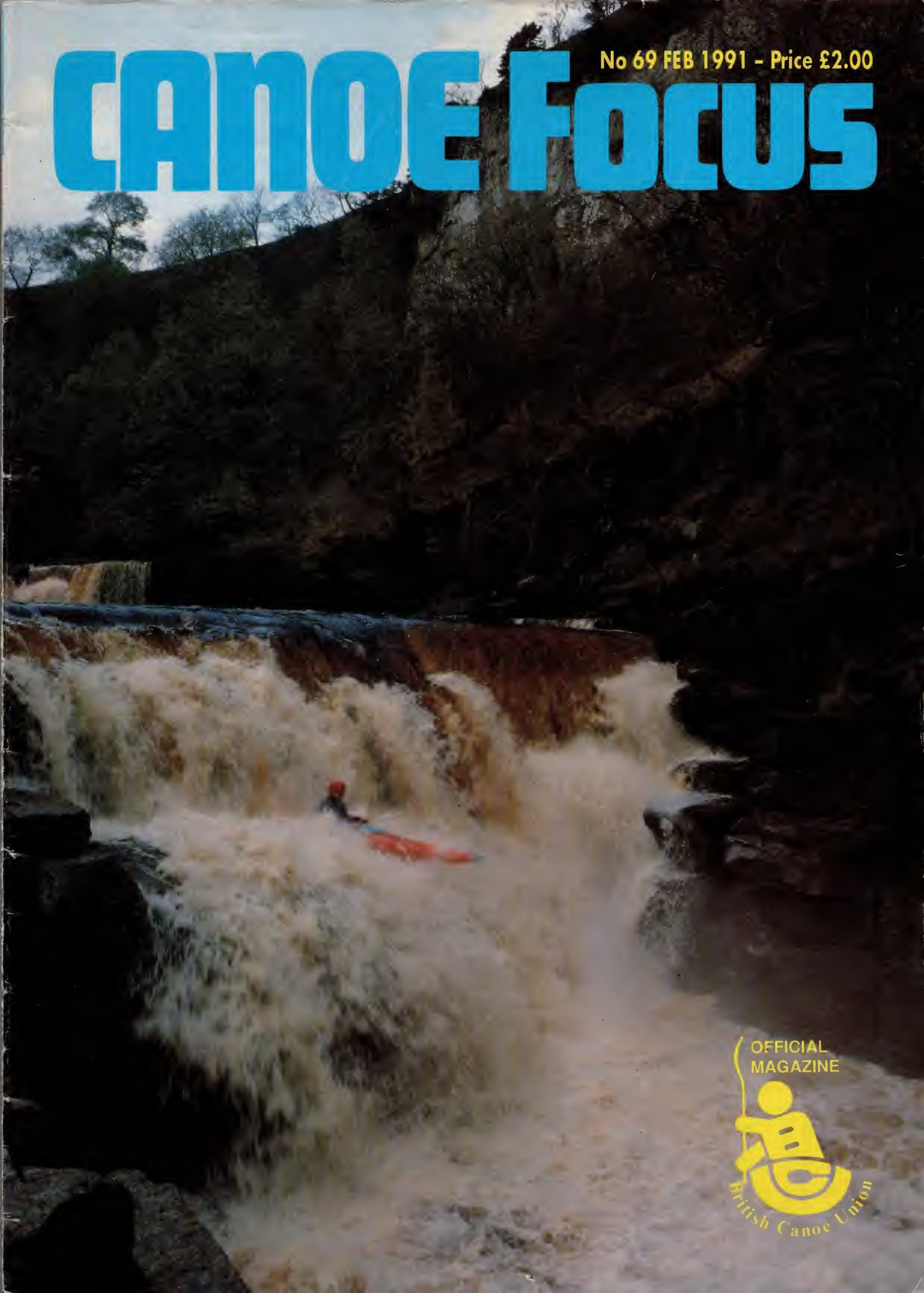


# CANOE FOCUS

No 69 FEB 1991 - Price £2.00



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# CANOE FOCUS

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Front Cover Nick Doll shoots Lower Kisdon Force, Upper Swale, **article inside**, page 18

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by **BCU Director**  
**Trevor Bailey**

## FOCUS MOVES ON

As we move into the new year, we are pleased announce a new style Canoe Focus, as from the April issue. The magazine is being revamped, redesigned and generally given a new lease of life by the Raven Marketing Group, who will also be handling the advertising side of the magazine. Your comments on the new design will of course be more than welcome!

## BCU GOES LOCAL

1991 is also set to be the year when the BCU moves closer to you! No its not the Headquarters staff changing offices again, but the BCU regions planning to increase their programmes of events. In 1991, there will be more tours, more fun events and informal competitions organised on a local basis than ever before, all aimed at the casual canoeist, with the emphasis on enjoyment and companionship. Working alongside its affiliated clubs, each BCU Region will be promoting new and existing events, open to members and, through the taster system, non-members - enabling them to sample what the BCU can offer before joining. Look out for local events advertised in Regional Round Up and your Regions newsletter - these are sent out to affiliated clubs, but if you'd like your own copy, this can usually be arranged, contact your Regional secretary for details

## CLUBS AND THE BCU REGIONS

BCU Clubs can help to promote local BCU events by "opening up" existing club events to other paddlers in their Region. Its a good way of generating extra income and attracting new members. Also, using the BCU "taster" system all participant will be covered for third party insurance. Find out how the BCU Regional Organisation can help your club by contacting the Regional Secretary or Touring and Recreation Officer (all BCU Officers are listed in the BCU Yearbook with this mailing)

## OUR FUTURE IS IN THEIR HANDS!

"Almost everything that is great has been done by youth" Whether you agree or not with Benjamin Disraeli, there is no doubting that young people have a very great deal to contribute to our sport.

They are the future champions, coaches, expedition leaders, administrators, members... etc. etc! So let us encourage them. Let us provide them with opportunities to practice their undoubted talents. Hear their voices - in the affairs of clubs, regions, committees - and give them appropriate responsibility. It may be in helping to manage facilities or assisting in the running of activities or courses. There are suitable BCU tests and awards which will qualify them to give service: the CCPR Community Sports Leaders Award and others may prove attractive and relevant. Give most young people a positive role and they will more than justify the trust placed in them. Get them involved!

And let us do all we can to provide opportunities for young people to sample the fun, adventure, challenge, enjoyment that is canoeing. At the present time there is concern being expressed - in both sporting and educational circles - that pupils at

school will have restricted opportunities for PE and active recreational activities. Can we in canoeing help youngsters in our own localities in schools and youth groups not only to try canoeing but also to progress any new found interest in our sport? Those of you who ould like to share in this vital work will perhaps find helpful some of the suggestions made in my article "Give Youth a Chance" published in the current issue of CoDe\*

I have welcomed the suggestion from Yorkshire and Humberside Region that, at the Open Forum after the BCU AGM on March 9, we should consider the BCU's approach to young people in the 1990's. The more ideas we receive, the greater the exchange of news of successful initiatives and schemes.. the more effective we shall be in meeting this challenge for the future. For the success or failure of our efforts may well determine the progress of canoeing in this country in the future.

**Geoff Sanders,**

**Chairman of BCU Council**

\* Members who do not receive copies of CoDe may obtain a reprint of the article by sending an SAE to BCU Headquarters

## November Council

**Roving reporter, Helen Mullineux was doing her fly on the wall act at the last meeting of the BCU Council. Here are her observations on the latest deliberations and decisions of the BCU's policy making body.**

### Water Privatisation

Anyone with a share in a water company can put a motion forward at their AGM. It was felt that it might be difficult for a layperson to get a motion accepted due to the legal technicalities. Issues such as pollution were bound to be covered by the Annual Report so individuals could raise questions and voice opinions by speaking to that report. Access was less of an issue - water companies do not control many rivers, though they discharge into them. The BCU is looking into the feasibility of buying one or two shares in each water company so that members can have a voice there. Some BCU regions already own shares.

### Carry Your Card!

In future , all BCU members should take their membership cards (or a photocopy) to events where proof of membership is necessary

### Canoe Exhibition to Change Venue?

A survey of members is to be carried out at the next canoe exhibition to see if there is widespread support for a change of venue from Crystal Palace to the West Midlands Sportsmanship Award

Graham Burns and Ivan Lawler were awarded a President's Letter of Commendation for their exemplary sportsmanship shown in repairing their Danish opponents' rudder, at this year's marathon world championships. The Danes are recommending them for a United Nations sportsmanship award.

\*Dennis Walls of South West and Robin Pinner of Shrewsbury are both to receive awards for their outstanding services to canoeing.

\* The Council of Management, from now, will be known as the BCU Council. The Executive Committee have been given more power to make operational decisions, but strictly within the bounds of the policies made by Council. One extra elected member is being added to the Executive.

### The Itchen Case

A Vote of Thanks was made to those members who have made loans (in some cases interest free) to the BCU to settle the Itchen case.

### The Rights of Way Law

The Yorkshire Derwent Case Appeal has shown that 20 years undisputed use gives right of way on water as well as footpaths. However, court cases to prove 20 years use would be very costly. Also the anglers want to appeal to the Lords to have the decision overturned

### Money money money

The BCU have now fully paid off the money owed for the construction of Holme Pierrepont

### Yet More money

Shock Horror! The assessment for rateable value of our headquarters building has been changed from £684 to £8600. Appeals and rate relief are being looked into.

### Membership Recruitment Drive

Membership is the lifeblood of any organisation. New members are vital to the BCU. Regional Committees must look at providing many events in 1991 to bring new people into the sport and to cater for novices. National and low level events could be run "back to back" on the same day at the same venue.

A plea was made for all members to encourage other canoeists to join the BCU. Recruitment leaflets and application forms are available from Headquarters





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- YOU SHOULD ENJOY MEETING NEW PADDLERS
- BEGINNERS SHOULD NOT MIND GETTING WET
- INTERMEDIATES SHOULD HAVE AN ALMOST UNCONTROLLABLE URGE TO LEARN
- BITCHERS SHOULD (IDEALLY) BE FIRST TIME ROLLERS
- YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY COMPETITIVE PRICES FOR ALL COURSES, AND EQUIPMENT BOUGHT FROM ESKIMO'S CANOE STORE

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**CANOE BUY A BETTER KAYAK?**

For slalom information including craft from Perception - Reflex, Nomad, Pyranha and Arrowcraft together with accessories from Wild-Water, Freeblades, Propulsion, MI, Diamond, Bushport etc.  
**Please contact Melvyn Jones**

Information on all other requirements, Personal and Contract, including Ace, Prijon, Pyranha, Perception, MI, Coleman, Arrowcraft (new Aquabat) and accessories from Chang, Tornado, Helly-Hansen, Javlin, Lendal, Schlegal, Kober, New Wave etc.  
**Please contact Tim Houghton**

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West Midlands Canoe Centre,  
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# COMPETITION FOCUS

## Marathon

### NEWS FROM THE MARATHON AGM

A new venue for the marathon AGM saw nineteen clubs attend the meeting at Exeter on the eve of the Exe Descent. The meeting was chaired by Alan Laws who opened proceedings by commenting on his disappointment at the lack of clubs in attendance. Said Alan "The AGM is the forum where views are aired and democratic decisions taken. These decisions do affect your sport and when taken are impossible to reverse until another AGM. The importance of sending a properly briefed club representative is paramount to the smooth running of the section."

#### Two internationals in 91

In his report Alan Laws commented that 1991 would see two International Marathon Races in this country; Devizes to Westminster and a Grand Prix organised by Royal Canoe Club. The race will take place between Windsor and Kingston and will be part of Royal's 125th Anniversary celebrations. 1992 will see a complete contrast when the Marathon Racing Team will embark on their biggest ever trip to Australia for the World Championships. The Sports Council Grant will not enable us to send a full team. We must raise sponsorship and maximise fund raising opportunities. Alan went on to express concern that the numbers attending marathon races were levelling out. Although, not uncommon in sport we must continue to search for ways of attracting people to marathon racing.

#### New Marathon Committee

Rod and Lesley King were sadly unable to continue on the committee; Alan Williams and Richard Ward were elected to fill the vacant positions. Rod and Lesley will be sadly missed and whilst we will see them at races, their unique contribution to the committee meetings will be hard to follow.

The current committee and responsibilities are as follows:

*Chairman:* Alan Laws  
*Secretary:* David Green  
*Treasurer:* Paul Owen  
*National Coach:* Richard Ward  
*Junior Coach:* Roland Lawler  
*Racing Calendar:* David Enoch  
*International Team Manager:* Jim Rossiter  
*Race Records Officer:* Barrie Ward  
*National Team Coach:* Alan Williams  
*National Championship Liaison:* George Oliver  
*Hasler Final Liaison:* David Yates  
*Trophies and Paddlers Liaison:* Guy Dresser

#### International Report

The main events for 1991 are as follows:

Grand Prix No 1 Royal Canoe Club 17 August  
Grand Prix No 2 + Cups Event Berlin 27/28 September  
Grand Prix No 3 Bratislava 4 October

Regrettably the only other events that the National Team will support will be those funded entirely by the host nation. Selection will be as in previous years and as a result of continuous assessment. There will be NO pre selection.

#### New Coaching Jobs

Following Rob Kaven's retirement and the resignation of the Assistant Director of Coaching (Racing), the Executive Committee have created two new posts:

*National Team Coach:* prime function to assist and co-operate with the International Team Manager to arrange the necessary courses and assessment races to provide the best possible National Team.

*National Coach:* prime function to develop coaching in clubs providing the necessary information and support to existing coaches.

The Chairman announced that a sum of £1000 was to be made available from the Racing Scheme to support those new coaching initiatives.

#### K2's on the Increase

Barrie Ward particularly drew attention to the increase in K2 paddling that had taken place over the past five years. He also mentioned that some races had increased in popularity and race organisers should be congratulated in encouraging new participation in this way.

#### Racing Scheme

13716 certificates have been issued in the last year and the September draw was won by Lyn Davies of Nottingham Kayak Club. Grants have been made to: Burton CC, Hereford CC, Fowley River CC, and Eyot Boat Club.

#### East and West Midlands Join Forces

A motion to amalgamate the East and West Midlands Regions for Hasler purposes was agreed, and the top eight scoring clubs from the new region will go to the final. A further motion to change the qualifying process in all regions so that four races would be required to participate in the final was defeated.

#### Race Certificates Go Up

The Race Certificate levy was increased from 40p to 50p.

#### Div Three Limit to Go

Perhaps the most controversial decision of the AGM was to remove the limits on canoe and lady paddlers from being promoted above division 3. The motion was placed on the agenda at the request of the August half year meeting and although all of the discussion was against the idea a vote was requested and the motion carried.

#### Hasler Venue Changed

Following a review of the proposed courses and discussions with the event organiser, the venue for the 1991 Hasler Final has been changed to Burton on Trent and will be organised by Gailey in collaboration with Burton CC.

#### General Meeting at Nottingham

The half year General Meeting will take place at Nottingham on 24 August, 1991 at 5pm. The AGM will take place at Exeter on 16 November 1991 at 5.30pm.

#### New Racing Scheme Sec

The new secretary of the Marathon Racing Scheme is Mrs Monica Owen, 14 Milldown Avenue, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire RG8 0AS. All requests for racing scheme certificates and all completed counterfoils should be addressed to Mrs Owen.

#### Unique Numbers

Every ranked paddler (divisions 1-8) has a unique number. This number is very important for processing race results quickly. Please help the ranking list compiler Marie Ward by using the number on race entries.

#### Don't Forget Your Vest!

A plea was made for club paddlers to wear their club vests at races in order to create a better public image. Hopefully a good image will help to attract sponsorship and publicity to Marathon Racing.

#### Cockleshell Heroes Misprinted

I am not quite sure how the misprint happened in the article about the Hasler Final in the last Focus but the Cockleshell Heroes were of course dropped off by submarine not airplane.

#### More Prizes for Thameside

News from Reading and Leighton Park is that unlike previous years, in 1991 there will be prizes for each of the two races making up the Thameside Series as well as an overall Series Prize.

#### Parliamentary Paddle Success

The D/W Committee organised a Parliamentary Paddle to celebrate the re-opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal. This involved a Canoe Relay from Devizes to Westminster which featured several D/W enthusiasts including past winners. The message from British Waterways Board was received at the Houses of Parliament by Lady Blatley and Tony Durrant MP. The presentation of the scroll was followed by a buffet lunch at which many canoeing and civic dignitaries attended.

Hopefully the whole event will result in further sponsorship of the race and a greater political understanding of our sport.



# EXE DESCENT

The 22nd Exe Descent saw Paul and Mike Wells from Richmond record their seventh victory in the race, although not quite in the dominant fashion of recent years.

They were the only crew to break the two-hour barrier to regain the title they lost last year, and this despite a swim at Cowley and time lost retrieving paddles.

Commiserations, however, should go to Elmbridge's Ivan Lawler and Russell Unstead who had built up a lead of around a minute at Blackaller, the last of the 10 weirs on the 19-mile course. This one delivered the coup de grace to their ailing boat, however, and from there they had to carry their boat to the finish, being overtaken by the Richmond brothers on the way.

Last year's winners Ian Timbrell from Exeter and Dyson Pendle from Norwich had been in contention until Four Pynes where the stopper was big enough to break the back of their boat and give them no chance to continue, and the trail of broken kayaks along the course told a similar tale for many other of the 550-plus entrants.

A minor detail like a broken boat was not enough to deter the home club's major success of the day, however. Steve Amos and Steve Knowles were on the way to retaining their touring doubles title when Cowley Steps intervened, the crew emerging with a boat completely broken in two, and held together only

by the rudder wires. Brushing that problem aside they simply picked up the boat and ran the rest of the way, around two-and-a-half miles to the finish, putting the boat on the water at the line to register a time and keeping their title by just 22 seconds.

This win took Amos to an impressive sixth victory in this class, his second in partnership with Knowles, but none of them were harder won than this: had there been an endeavour award they'd surely have deserved it.

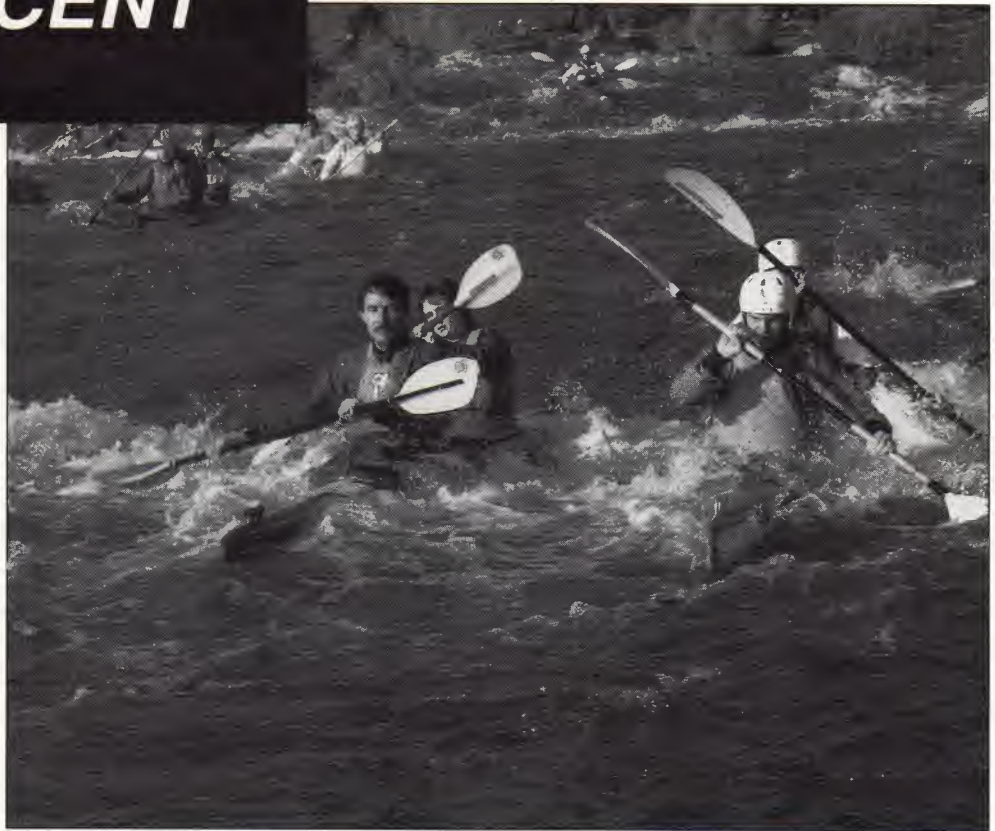
Mention should also be made of Mobile Adventure's Dave Crooks and Joe Pulliam who won the new touring C2 class and beat all the racing C2s at the same time, and of Exeter's own Steve Thomas who romped away

with the senior general purpose title in his first attempt at the Descent.

All in all the Exeter Canoe Club organisers were well pleased with the event: conditions were good, after a couple of very low years, with enough water to keep rescue crews busy, especially at Tiverton Town, Thorverton and Cowley; the standard of competition was high with the racing kayak classes attracting good number of national-class entrants; two new classes, for touring C2s and white water racers alone, were well subscribed; and no injuries were reported other than to boats and paddles.

And with the Wells brothers back as the crew to beat the stage is already set for a fiercely-contested race next November.

**Jane Leigh**



## Exe Descent Winners

- Senior K2:* Wells/Wells (Richmond) 1.49.48
- Junior K2:* Goddard/Covell (Bryanston) 2.49.00
- Ladies K2:* Parsons/Bain (Nottingham) 2.15.14
- Mixed K2:* Dallaway/Miller (Elmbridge) 2.09.54
- Senior K1:* J Butler (Nottingham) 2.02.56
- Junior K1:* A Blackman (Hove CC) 2.31.04
- Ladies K1:* R Leach (Richmond) 2.34.08
- Senior White Water:* D Belbin (Nottingham) 2.08.22
- Junior White Water:* S Peyton (Cambridge) 2.20.42
- Ladies White Water:* S Templeton (RNKA) 2.43.14
- Senior Touring Double:* Amos/Knowles (Exeter) 2.31.02
- Junior Touring Double:* Ellis/Herbert (Wells Cathedral School) C1: S Block (Cambridge) 2.45.52
- C2:* Halsall/Murgatroyd (Leicester OP) 2.40.34
- Touring C2:* Crooks/Pulliam (Mobile Adventure Racing) 2.40.29
- Senior General Purpose:* S Thomas (Exeter) 2.33.14
- Junior gp:* A Shaw (Kings College) 2.45.49
- Ladies gp:* L Holley (Wellington KC) 3.07.31

**Marathon  
Section  
Compiled by  
Paul Owen**



# Slalom



## THE NEW SEASON - OR HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SLALOM BIB REGULATIONS

Its the slalom close season again - a time when all good slalom paddlers look back on those heady days of 1990 when the sun always shone and the water never ran dry -

But the "off season" is also the time when slalom paddlers far and wide, young and not so young have to confront that age old dilemma, **APPLYING FOR THE NEW BIB**. This is a bit of a sport in its own right, so if you're feeling confused, here are some thoughts from Chairman Mike Carter, the Slalom Ranking Officer

### BIB OFFICER CHANGES

There will be two new Bib Officers for the 1991 season:-  
Div 3 K1 Men  
Mrs Sandie Roper, 26 Highfield Hill, Lydney, Glos GL15 5NA  
Div 4 K1 Ladies  
Mr M Elkins, 10 Armstrong Close, Wilstead, Beds MK45 3EJ

All the other Bib Officers are the same as for 1990, and they're all listed in your slalom yearbook, yes that indispensable tome that you threw in the bin last week! If you don't know who your bib officer is, and you can't find a slalom yearbook, then you can phone the Slalom Development Officer Sue Wharton to find out! her number is, (02572 62051) Any other bib queries should be addressed to the Ranking Officer, Mike Carter, 5 Clarendon St, Bedford, MK41 7SQ

### GOT A NEW ADDRESS?

If your address changed during 1990, be sure to inform the Ranking List Compiler for your

Division and Category. Otherwise your slalom yearbook will be sent to your old address! You need to do this even if you have already informed BCU Headquarters, as the slalom administration is entirely separate.

### APPLYING FOR YOUR 1991 BIB

Getting your slalom bib in time for the new season can be a bit TRICKY; in fact over 50 competitors were excluded from the Ranking Lists last year for failing to comply with the Bib Regulations. So here are some hints to help you through the system.

**Don't** forget to renew your membership promptly, if it expires during the slalom close season. Otherwise your bib application may be delayed.

**Do** apply well before you wish to compete - any time from mid January is fine.

**Do** remember to include the following:-

- a valid bib voucher, or cheque for £6 payable to BCU Slalom

Committee.

- your current National Association membership card (BCU, SCA, WCA or CANI) or a clear photocopy.

- a self addressed envelope, large enough to hold your new bib, stamped for 200 grammes (currently 49p 1st class, 38p 2nd class)

- your registration form. This comes with your slalom yearbook. If you want to apply for your bib before receiving the Registration form then send off without the form but please do send the form off when it does arrive, and send it on to the Ranking List Compiler for your Division and category

### WHEN YOU GET PROMOTED

The Novice Division is no more! At the Slalom AGM, it was decided to change its name to Division 5 - so any newcomers to slalom will now be starting in Div 5.

Competitors in Division 5 who gain promotion to Div 4 (still 1 in 5 or part thereof) can then

apply for a Div 4 bib. Send your promotion certificate, cheque for £6 payable to the BCU Slalom Committee, Current National Association membership card, and a large SAE stamped for 200 grammes (49p 1st class, 38p 2nd class) to the relevant Bib Officer:

**K1 Men:** Mrs Jean MacInnes, 65 Dunster Rd, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6JE

**K1 Ladies:** Mr Mike Elkins, 10 Armstrong Close, Wilstead, Beds MK45 3EJ

**Canadians (C1 & C2):** Mr Andrew Budd, 75 Orion Close, Lordshill, Southampton SO1 8BN

Its important to send off for your Div 4 bib as quickly as possible after being promoted as you will be eligible to compete in Div 4 without a bib, only for the 2 weekends immediately following your promotion.

### AND FINALLY

Please remember that the Bib Officers, Ranking List Compilers and Event Organisers are all VOLUNTEERS who are helping to run the sport of Slalom for YOU. Please try to make their job as easy as possible by complying with the Rules, filling in entry forms accurately and completely, and entering events at the proper time, and with the right money, and enclosing at least one SAE to receive your start list and any necessary instructions relating to the event you are entering

**Have a smooth, trouble free and successful season in 1991!**



# SLALOM COMMITTEE SELECTION POLICY 1991/92

## Senior Team Selection

Selection events - 27 April 1991  
Tryweryn Non-ranking  
4/5 May 1991 Nottingham Non-ranking  
Reserve events - 6 May 1991  
Nottingham Non-ranking  
11/12 May Venue to be arranged  
Eligibility - All members 1990/91 Senior Winter Squad plus other boats ranked in the following positions after first 2 Premier events '91.

K1 M - top 25

(including squad above)

K1 L - top 15

(including squad above)

C1 - top 15

(including squad above)

C2 - top 10

(including squad above)

Points system - Paddlers to be ranked on aggregated points  
Number of boats - World Championships

Up to a maximum of 4 boats per class which MUST BE OF AN APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

World Cup Series

Up to a maximum of three boats per class which MUST BE OF AN APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

Pre-Olympics

Up to a maximum of three boats per class which MUST BE OF AN APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

Pre-selection - The Committee endorses the pre-selection of R M Fox MBE and B Marriott for World Championships, World Cup series and Pre-Olympic Games

## Olympic Squad Selection (NB Not Olympic Team)

Final selection - May 1991

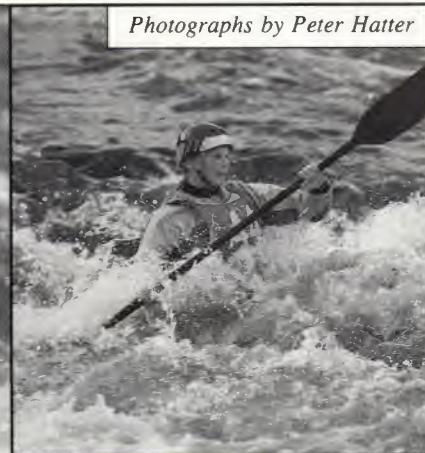
Size of squad - Up to 6 boats per class

Eligibility - On ranking from 1991 selection with the last boat in each class being at the discretion of the Selection Committee. Should such discretion be used, then the boat displaced by the discretionary place shall have the automatic right to enter final selection 1992.

**Olympic Team Selection - Selection policy must have**



Photographs by Peter Hatter



## BOA approval

Eligibility 1 - Any 1991 Olympic Squad member ie from May 91  
2 - Any boat dislodged by selection process for 1991 Olympic squad as above  
3 - 3 additional K1 Men based on early season Premier ranking 1992 plus one boat in each of the other classes.

Points system - to be devised and published in advance for calculation of ranking for selection purposes in which any boat with an entry qualification as in 1 and 2 above will be discounted

Selection events - to be finalised - it is unlikely that such events would be abroad, but should this be the case, funding would be available to those participating  
\*\*NE The process detailed above ensures that discretion is not an element used in the selection of Teams

## Intermediate team selection

Selection events - 2 (as Senior Team above - note entry qualification)

Eligibility - Age group - under 23 on 1.1.88 except C2 class. Those selected for Senior Team will be removed from the points calculation

Size - up to a maximum of 6 boats per class

Points system - all places to be decided on results using a points

system except for the last place which will be at the discretion of the Slalom Committee

## Under 21 squad

- it is planned to select an under 21 squad as an experiment and providing there is adequate finance and staffing. Size of squad to be maximum of 12 boats.

Selection events and other details details to be finalised and to appear in Yearbook 1991.

## Junior Team Selection

Selection events - 3-16 March HP Premier, 23 March Tryweryn Premier, 6/7 April Grandtully 1 Best 2 results from 3 races on points system

Size of Team - Pre Worlds Norway - up to 6 boats per class dependent on paddlers being of an appropriate standard. Up to a maximum of 3 boats per class for 'last year' juniors.

Under 17 team - a team of up to 6 boats per class may be selected from the first 3 events as above and will be on the basis of results only and providing that paddlers are of an appropriate standard, and that there is adequate finance and staffing.

## Under 16 training camp

A training group to be identified on the basis of results from the first 2 Div 1 events 1991

Venue, date of camp to be finalised

## DIVISION 5 - A NEW ERA?

This season will see the demise of the term "Novice" to be replaced by "Division 5" in the Slalom Divisions.

It is not intended to be a ranking division, but a means of encouraging paddlers young and old to take part in Slalom and feel that they are part of the divisional pyramid - not a paents enjoy admitting to paddling as a "Novice"

organisers are being actively encouraged to allow plastic boaters to come, and have ago at slalom, and will be awarding special prizes to this category.

As finances are often tight on these events, the Executive Committee have agreed to supply prizes to organisers for JUNIOR, u18, u16 u14 AND U12 winners.

Peter Hanover, Executive member with special interest at this level is leashed with this development and hopes clubs take up the challenge to encourage new paddlers to our sport. "We desperately need to encourage all paddlers at this end of the sport. there are several ideas to try out this year, perhaps one-day slalom events if numbers permit; clubs not involved with Slalom can have help to organise and run events. We need to get out into the world and make our sport more attractive and fun to take part in" says Peter. "1990 season saw a marked decline in numbers participating in slalom, which we must work hard at to reverse"

Its up to all of us - make slalom fun, enjoyable and available to ALL paddlers, plastic boats, whatever, and 1991 may well be the beginning of as new era

Joe Mulholland



## Ardeche Marathon



A sizeable British contingent attended this increasingly popular marathon event (Nov 1990), and the competition deserved all the billing and publicity the pre race information gave it. Racing down the famous gorge that takes most holidaymakers two and a half days to complete, the winning K2 completed the course in 1 hour 45minutes.

Competitors were from all over Europe with a lone Australian mixed K2 team, they were in the main Wild Water Racing paddlers rather than specialist marathonists, but the standard

of paddling in K1's and K2's was by no means any the poorer for that fact.

Good water conditions provided fairly deep rapids, not deep enough, however, for Mike Ellis and Richard Horsley who managed to break the rudder on their boat and had to get out twice to repair it; the Wild water paddlers were in their element so far as route finding and riding the waves was concerned.

Melvin Swallow and Alan Tordoff paddled a superb race to finish just half a length down

on the French and the rest of the British contingent held up their end to give creditable performances.

Superb hospitality from the French made this a very worthwhile event to attend and I thoroughly recommend it to paddlers in future years.

**John Handyside**

### Results

*C1 Men* 1. J Rosiere 2. P Sylvoz  
3 R Klatt 21. S. Block GB

*C2 Men* 1. Hoyer/Sylvoz 2. Masson Remy/Jacquemet 3. Baechler/Francois 6. Harvey/

*K1 Men Jun* 1. oleon 2. S. Gauthier  
3. T. Cadez 16. S. Peyton GB  
*K2 Men* 1. Goetschy/Lancereau  
2. Tordoff/Swallow 3. Doux/  
Leroux 15. Ellis/Horsley GB 16.  
Wells/Pink GB 26. Carter/  
Parkwson GB

*K2 Men Veterans* 1. Handyside/  
Kelly GB 2. Enoch/Oliver GB  
*Mixed K2* 1. Buser/Steinmann  
2. Valentin/Pruliere 3. Watt/  
Campbell GB

## Wild Water Racing

A K2 made up predominantly of Wild Water Racing paddlers (M Swallow, N Fay, A Tordoff, I Tordoff) beat all comers in a 10 mile K4 race at Royal Canoe Club recently. The reaction to this on the finish line, (apart from cheers from Alan and Ian Tordoff's mum), was a stunned silence!!!

Could it be that Wild Water racers would do better than their racing counterparts if they were to take it seriously?

### Remember to enter Div A's on time

The dates are:  
March 9/10 Grantully  
March 23/24 Tees  
April 6 Washburn  
April 20/21 North Tyne  
April 27/28 Tryweryn  
May 11/12 Tryweryn British open

Entries must be in 2 weeks beforehand (£5 per person)

### Veterans Class

A ranking list is to be produced in the future for veterans participating in Wild water racing.

Further details from Jerry Tracey.

Veterans will be allowed to participate freely in any event and will still keep their appropriate ranking status for whatever division they are in. The British Open will have the veterans seeded in a self contained group as part of the main event but they will still be given their appropriate position in the complete field at the end.

### NORTH WEST REGAIN TITLE

At the first major Championship event of the season in the reshuffled Wild Water Racing calendar, the National Regional Championships title went to the North West.

Held at Dee 1, past two seasons winners, East Midlands were edged into third place by the combined services team.

The North West have held the title now four times out of the last six. Final positions were: North West 1690 pts, Combined Services 1126, East Midlands 1003, Yorkshire and Humberside 564, West Midlands 326, London and South East 250, North 250, Scotland 190, East 167, Wales 90, South 55.

**Phil Dean**



## SHAUN BAKER RETIRES



Shaun Baker, a familiar face on the White water rodeo circuit plans to retire from competitive paddling. Shaun made the announcement shortly before Christmas, giving as his reason, the increasingly high pressure atmosphere now surrounding these events. Said Shaun "I took up rodeo paddling for fun; I'm not a competitive person at heart and the increased emphasis on winning is affecting my enjoyment of rodeo events"

Shaun's decision means that he will miss the first World Stunt Boat championships due to be held this summer in Pembrokeshire, but having already beaten Jan Kellner at last year's German International, Shaun claims to have already achieved his final ambition.

## Div C Discount

The Wild Water Racing Committee have introduced a discount voucher system for Div C Events.

This voucher is at the bottom of the page and will give a £1 discount to Div C paddlers entering a ranking race. Simply cut out and send with the remainder of the entry fee to the organiser of the next race

Feb 24 Wharfe. Leeds CC W Fraser, 27 Marshall Terrace, Crossgates, Leeds LS15 8EA

Feb 24 Taff Cardiff CC N Dallimore, 3 Gilian Rd, Llandaff, Cardiff CF4 2PZ

March 3 Teith Glasgow KC, A Mackintosh, 18a Eglington Gdns,

Skelmorlie, Ayrshire PA17 5DWE

March 3 Styne Haefen, J Tracey, Haefen, Middle Hay Leaze, Allendale, Northumberland, NE47 9NP

March 9 Upper Wye III Bon Tilling, Newbury CC, 5 Ashman Rd, Thatcham, Berks RG13 4WD

March 10 Upper Wye IV, Bobn Tilling

March 24 Trent Nottingham KC D Belbin, 14 Eckington Terrace, The Meadows, Nottingham NG2 2FT

April 14 Shiplake Dash, Chalfont Park, 1 Maero, 17 Larch Drive, Woodley, Reading R45 3LW  
Entry Fees £2.50 per paddler



World Champion Richard Fox took a party of recreational paddlers with "the Experience of Adventure" down the River Dee on the WCA Tour weekend. After spending a day working on whitewater techniques, on Sunday came the chance to test out the previous day's lessons on the run down to Llangollen; with the Berywyn Falls, Horseshoe Falls, the Serpents Tail and the Mile End Rapids. The water was at medium level - Richard's instruction paid off as there were only two swimmers out of the group of eight!

All in all a successful weekend, in which Richard demonstrated among other things the art of "rolling without wetting your hair" and "paddling UP the Serpents Tail"!



### Wild Water Racing Committee Wild Water Racing Voucher



**£1**



*This voucher may be redeemed against any ranking Div C race, as part payment of the entry fee*

*One voucher only per entry*

**Remember to take your BCU card to the event**

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# CANOEING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Report from the SCA Coaching Conference  
by *Dave Halsall*

The innovative topic of the conference "Canoeing and the Environment" was the main reason the SCA coaching conference had its largest attendance ever at Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore. Dave Horrocks and the Coaching Panel from the Grampian and Speyside region should be commended for their far-sighted approach in the introduction of such a topic to the Scottish canoeing scene.

The weekend consisted of a core of informal lectures, which all participants attended and a variety of "dry" and "wet" workshops where people could pick the topics which most interested them. The system proved very successful as it allowed participants to attend workshops they were specifically interested in, or where they had little prior knowledge. The core subjects included: the environment and its importance in Canoe Coaching by Graham McDonald and E Baird; Health issues for canoeists by Dr Bob Phillips; Access and the Law by Duncan Henderson; a report from ISS90 by Stuart Bell; an update on Current issues by the Director of Coaching, Geoff Good; and an Open Forum of Questions and Answers. All the lecturers were very eloquent and enthusiastic in their deliverance of the topics which meant that the participants were never bored.

The dry workshops consisted of talks by Dave Ruse on Canoeing in an Urban environment, Sue Hallands, Greenpeace, Its work and how canoeists might help, Neville Crowther - Canoeists and the conservation of wildlife and Dr Peter Higgins - an idiots guide to salmon and trout biology. People cycled round these groups but with only around 90 minutes for each there was never enough time to do them justice. The wet workshops, even though it was very cold and wet, suffered from the same lack of time. The paddlers had a choice of Environmental Awareness Activities, with Graham McDonald, or waterworks - Tips and tools for Basic Fieldwork with Eric Baird. Both proved very interesting to all who attended and some kayak paddlers were also given an open canoe coaching session into the bargain!

The weekend left many who attended reassessing their paddling and how it interacts with the environment, not just whether they disturb nesting birds, plants and animals but whether the production of their equipment such as plastic boats and buoyancy aids are damaging to the environment in any way and how can they minimise this? There is a very strong environmental ethic within the Scottish coaching scheme and I think this is mainly because they have more to lose than the English paddlers. For a long time, many instructors in Scotland have been including the environmental ethic into their coaching but they would like some guidance for inclusion in the Star Tests from the BCU. The Scottish Conference thought that unless instructors make other paddlers aware of what riches they have in the environment they will not fully understand the need to care for that environment. The weekend was very successful and by the end of the two days my head was reeling with the amount of new information we had received. Some might say it could have been that or the one or two whiskys I had at the social in the bar afterwards, but "when in Rome" Thanks to Dave Horrocks and the Grampian and Speyside Coaching Panel for such an enlightening conference, the Scottish paddlers who made a canoeist from South of the border very welcome and to Canoeist, the BCU, Arrowcraft and Current Trends for sponsoring me to attend.

*Dave Halsall is the Secretary of the BCU Environmental and Conservation Panel. If anyone is interested in the work of the panel please drop him a line at 24 The Fairway, Blaby, Leics LE8 3EL*

## DAWSON CANOEING SYSTEMS

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DON'T MISS THIS YEARS

# INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION!

*16 - 17 February 1991 - Its Canoe Exhibition time again; an excellent excuse to make the age old annual pilgrimage to Ye Olde Crystal Palace Sportes Centre, located in idyllic South London. If you've not yet experienced the Canoe Exhibition, you've a real treat in store; its the one canoeing event of the year you cannot afford to miss -*

## Exotic Lectures!

As usual we are offering a whole weekendful of exciting slideshows from enormously exotic locations; Mick Coyne on the Upper Indus, the "Taming of the Lion Expedition"; Phil Bibby on the Karnali; Bumble Knight on the Chitral area of Northern Pakistan; not forgetting the unforgettable Alan Fox with a celebration of wild rivers and high mountains from around the world. And a special guest appearance from Jez Taylor who runs Feelfree rafting!

## The Latest Fashions!

This is probably the only chance you have to find out what colour bouyancy aid you'll be wearing by the end of the season. You may scoff, you may laugh, but you'll be wearing it, the peer pressure will simply be too much for you. In the world there are hundreds of thousands of little bouyancy aids, paddles, boats, canoe cags, wetsuit bootees and most of them find their way to the Canoe Exhibition to be seen, tried on and even bought by the canoeist, ever eager to part with their money. What better way to spend all that dosh your auntie Eileen gave you for Christmas?

## Action Packed Pool Programme!

Now for a question. What do Mutineers, Tigers, Vikings and the town of St Albans have in common? Yes you've guessed it they're all Canoe polo teams and they'll all be scrapping it out at Crystal Palace at the finals of the Oceanworld National Canoe Polo Championships. Canoe polo is an exciting game to watch, and its the ideal opportunity to soak up the electrically charged atmosphere surrounding this major event. Its a knock-out competition so its all nail biting, death or glory stuff, no second chances around here etc etc! Also on show will be the National Pool Slalom Championships, with some of Britain's top slalom paddlers showing off an impressive array of talents. In between times there will also be a variety of displays; including squirt boating and, by popular demand, a repeat showing by last year's hot favourites, Crazy Krooksy and his Radical Rollers!

## Not forgetting..

All the BCU information stands will be present, with lots and lots of keen, eager, hardworking people to give you advice and information on a host of subjects - expeditions, competitions, access, the coaching scheme. You can find out how to enter all sorts of things from your first slalom to the Devizes to Westminster marathon, you can sort out your ranking queries and last but not least you can renew your BCU membership, bright and early in time for the 1991 season. You can even meet those wonderful, dedicated, superheroes, the staff at BCU Headquarters! Go on, tell us how wonderful we are, it won't cost you anything, and it might make somebody's day!

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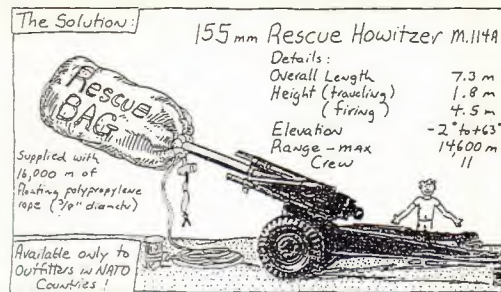
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# Ropes and Throwlines



The rescue rope, be it a throw bag or the traditional American throw rope is now considered to be a 'Basic Tool' for any whitewater paddler. Here BCU Coach and safety expert Graham Wardle surveys what's available and what to look out for when making a purchase

Throw bags/ropes come in all shapes and sizes, but not all are useful to the canoeist, and certainly no one throw bag is suitable for every situation/individual. (see Appendix 1 - An experiment using different throw lines).

Several considerations need to be made when purchasing or manufacturing a 'Throw Rope'. The most practical is to decide on the functions required of the rope:

Basically a Throw Rope has 2 sets of properties:

- 1) As a Classic throw line
- 2) For use in mechanical rescue

In the latter, the rope needs to be pre stretched so as to make it more efficient, in hauling systems.

## Essential Features

Other features for a rescue rope would include:

**Flotation.** The rope must float; most good ropes are made of polypropylene, and should not kink. Thus it may be braided.

**Diameter.** The diameter should be large enough to be holdable/manageable, minimum of 8mm - 12mm.

**Length.** The rope should be long enough to reach a swimmer/pinned boat but not so long that it cannot be thrown effectively. This means most ropes are between 15 metres - 25 metres.

**Strength.** The rope should be strong enough to be safe and useful in the event of a mechanical rescue. (Forces of up to 925 kgs have been recorded in WW Rescue situations. (Wardle LOPC 1985). Therefore a minimum breaking strain of 750 kgs - 1000 kgs is recommended.

In America there are two types of ropes in general use as rescue ropes: The braided polypropylene rope as in throw bags and the standard twisted polypropylene rope which is coiled for throwing. Both types have merits and limitations and it seems to be a never ending argument among paddlers on the eastern seaboard as to which is better.

## The Standard Rope

The standard twisted rope is typically found in 1/2" diameter with the most popular length being around 70 feet. This system is very popular with open boaters and Rafting companies. It is generally yellow in colour for visibility and ultraviolet blockage and it has a tensile breaking strength of 4200 lbs. This throw rope must be coiled correctly before throwing. It is usually thrown underarm or side arm. There are coils in both hands with the coils paying off the non-throwing hand as the rope is fully extended.

**Merits of the Standard Rope include:**

**Speed.** It is faster for repeated throws than a throw bag.

**Accuracy.** In the hands of a trained guide/instructor it is the most accurate/consistent throwing that I've witnessed anywhere in the world.

**Problems of the Standard Rope include:**

**Speed** It is slower to employ initially.

**Storage.** It does not stow easily and the random loops can be a hazard to the unaware paddler.

**Practice.** It generally requires more practice to throw accurately than does a throw bag.

## Appendix 1

### AN EXPERIMENT USING DIFFERENT THROW LINES

#### Introduction

Having led groups on grade 3 rivers, I fully appreciate the value of 'throw lines' in the party. I carry a throwing system that I have practiced with on many occasions and feel confident that I can achieve a fair degree of accuracy. However, I sometimes had the problem of deciding to whom I should entrust additional throw lines, and what type of system they should be given. The best solution is for the other members of the group to practice with a system until they are competent, but I decided to run a test examining the accuracy of 3 commercially available throw lines when used by canoeists who had no experience in their use.

#### Results - see table

A comparison was made between throws 1-5 and 6-10 with each of the systems. The only system that showed any significant improvement in the 2nd phase was the Green Slime expedition.

#### Conclusion

This was not a perfect experiment and its value could be disputed because criticisms can be made, the sample size being too small for example. However, it has helped me to decide that I will carry a Green Slime Pouch on my person with a Wild Water Expedition in the boat (because of a personal preference), and it is the Green Slime Expedition Throw Line that I would distribute to other members of the group to use. Finally, I must stress that this test only measured accuracy in ideal conditions and leaders must consider other factors

	DIRECT HIT	DIRECT HIT (BOYS ONLY)	DIRECT HIT (GIRLS ONLY)	DIRECT HIT OR WITHIN 1m	DIRECT HIT OR WITHIN 1m (BOYS ONLY)	DIRECT HIT OR WITHIN 1m (GIRLS ONLY)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
GREEN SLIME 'POUCH'	18	29	7	47	53	10
GREEN SLIME EXPEDITION	43	59	7	67	83	30
WILD WATER EXPEDITION	26	37	0	56	70	23

such as weight, bulk, length/breaking, strain/flotation of line, cost, ability to re-throw and environmental factors such as the effect of wind, before arriving at their final decision. Your own design might even be more suitable.

**Tony Pursell, Senior Instructor, Outward Bound Eskdale.**



## The Throw Bag

The braided polypropylene rope of the throw bag is smaller in diameter 3/8" with a tensile strength varying between 2000 - 3500 lbs depending on manufacturer.

Like its British counterparts the rope is randomly stuffed into a brightly coloured nylon bag.

### Merits of the Throw Bag:

**Storage.** Loose rope is not left floating around in the boat, ease of carrying.

**Handle.** The bag provides a convenient handle for the swimmer to hold on to.

**Ease of Use.** Easier to throw for inexperienced paddlers.

### Potential Problems of Throw Bags:

**"Bucketing"** The bag tends to fill with water or 'bucket' as it is pulled in if the drawstring or closure at the top of the bag has not been properly set.

**Trapping.** The bag with its ethafoam insert can get lodged between rocks.

**Time.** It takes longer to make repeated throws.

**Freezing.** During cold weather it is possible for the rope inside the nylon bag to become frozen together. Kayakers in North Carolina joke that using a throw bag in the early spring is like throwing congealed spaghetti!

## Mechanical Rescues

The Performance characteristics of the throw bag and the throw rope also differ when mechanical rescue are considered. For most technical rescues the standard twisted rope was found to be superior. It is easier to grip when you and a group are trying to unpin a canoe using the classic 'armstrong' technique. The standard rope can be quickly tied to other ropes if additional length is needed, whereas the nylon bag and the re-tied grab loop tend to get in the way.

## Rope or Bag?

There is no definitive answer to the popular controversy concerning standard ropes and throw bags. As discussed above there are arguments for and against both types. My own personal preference would be to recommend the THROW BAG for general recreational use, but for White Water Rafting and Open Canoeing in the hands of the Professional the THROW ROPE can be superior.

Different situations and different rivers demand certain choice, and the use of ropes in canoeing involves knowing the limitations of the systems available and knowing how to use them.

Thus practice makes perfect. And lots of practice is required in order to throw a line/bag efficiently.

## Recommendations for the future Development of Throwbags

**Shape.** The shape of the throw bag is extremely important it needs to be aerodynamic or torpedo shaped to allow it to push through the air on windy days.

**Opening.** The neck or opening of the bag again requires great attention. This should be slightly flared or funnel shaped to allow the rope to 'fly' out of the bag and it will also allow for ease of re-packing, even if you have large hands. The funnel will also allow for water to be easily added for extra weight if required during a re-throw.

**Neck Closure.** The neck closure needs to be sufficiently robust to hold the bag's contents in place, but also if needed in a hurry easy to deploy. For this the small 25mm Swedish Fixlock clips are perhaps the most superior available at the present time. Velcro after repeated use tends to lose its grip!

**Type of Rope.** This has already been discussed, but for the type of paddling that is now starting to take place in Britain, the Alps and further afield, a good high quality line is essential. With the advent of 'Waterfall Jumping' many paddlers are now using there throwlines to abseil into falls either to inspect them or provide land based protection. The lines currently available on the market were never intended for this type of use. And I am sure it will only be a short

## American Style Throwrope



period of time before a serious accident occurs from this type of misuse.

The American firm Alline of Indiana produce an 8mm rope called 'Spectra'. This rope has an outer sheaf and an inner core, very much like a Kermantel climbing/abseil rope. It has a tensile strength of 5000 lbs and is a pre-stretched floatation rope, with only 1% stretch, which makes it an excellent all-round water rescue rope. This would allow people to use it as an abseil rope as well as being very good for mechanical rescue. The disadvantage of this rope is that it is quite expensive working out at 55p a foot or £1.60 per metre. But if paddlers wish to have good safe, high quality equipment then they will have to pay the current market prices. Safety doesn't come cheap!

Dawson Canoeing Systems(DCS) offer the 25metre "Mountain Bag" a half inch Kermantel 'Blue Water'" rope, with only 8% stretch (conventional bags have 30%) cost £50 approx.

**Bucketing.** The standard nylon bags tend to have the problem of 'bucketing' as they are pulled in for a second throw. By using a small gauge mesh this effect could be overcome and greatly improve the efficiency of the bag, especially amongst teenagers/women who find the large expedition bags too heavy to throw on a second attempt.

## HF's mesh style throwbag





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## ADVENTURES IN SWALEDALE

*by Nick Doll*

At first sight the grassy hills of Upper Swaledale in North Yorkshire seem a picture of unspoilt rural tranquillity with the rolling pastureland criss crossed by immaculate dry stone walling as far as the eye can see.

The countryside seems to contain nothing more threatening than a few contented Dalesbred sheep or perhaps a friendly farmer, but in the river valley far below, different and more potent forces are at work. Many canoeists are familiar with the river Swale further down the valley especially the most popular section from Reeth to Richmond. Here the river falls at the gentle and sustained gradient that makes it such a popular canoeing river.

However, the area above Muker is probably better known to walkers than canoeists as the Pennine way briefly follows the course of the river before crossing the Swale at Keld. Only the occasional paddler will have ventured this far up the valley for the river undergoes a profound change of character. In fact looking at the river bed it appears as though the good Lord had a bad bout of hiccups on the third day of the Creation as the gradual descent of the Lower Swale is now replaced by a series of falls of ever increasing nastiness.

The OS map provides some hint of the river's potential as the gradient from Hoggarths bridge down to just above Muker is an invigorating 80 feet per mile.

At this point the river Swale is still fairly small so that this upland section should be paddled only after heavy rainfall, preferably when the river is in low to medium spate. This contrasts with the sections further downstream which tend to get washed out in these conditions particularly the Reeth/Richmond stretch so that experienced paddlers looking for something to get their teeth into in high water conditions should consider venturing upstream.

Most riverwise paddlers should have no difficulty in coping with this stretch as there are no heavy rapids. The challenge comes from shooting the falls of which there are a considerable number, but don't worry if you're unsure about some of the larger drops simply

portage the falls and this becomes quite a pleasant Gr III paddle set in some spectacular Yorkshire countryside. The only prerequisite to an enjoyable trip is that you can confidently get all the breakouts otherwise your life expectancy stands a good chance of being reduced to that of a subatomic particle and remember they're usually measured in millionths of a second!

The best access point is at Hoggarths bridge where the B6270 crosses the Swale. (OS 872014) To find the bridge simply drive up the valley from Richmond on the B6270 which takes you through Grinton, Reeth and Muker before finally crossing the river about 3Km above Keld. The road then climbs steeply up the hill and out of the valley.

Infact, you can't get much closer to the source which is only another 1.5km upstream. Here the Swale is formed from the union of Birkdale and Sleddale becks. Apart from a few small steps in the bedrock there is little of interest above the bridge.

After parking your car in the blind offshoot of the road by the bridge easy shingle rapids take you downstream, soon Whitsundale beck adds water from the left. In high water conditions this small beck becomes canoeable from Raven seat where a couple of small falls are liable to exacerbate your piles.

In about 1.5km the first of the larger drops is reached, Wainwath Force, a 2m vertical fall easily visible from the road on your way up the valley. It is usually shot via the centre or right hand chute. An element of extra caution is required when the river is in full spate as a strong towback develops here.

Several more rocky ledges then swish you downstream into a curious gully where the river has sculpted a series of basins in the limestone banks as the river flows beneath Park roadbridge. A quick breakout is now required to prevent you going over Rainby Force which is 50m beyond. Sadly, this splendid 4m drop usually has to be portaged as most of the water flows into the right hand chute which lands onto solid rock. When the Swale is in full spate water squirts out of the left chute into the plunge pool allowing this difficult fall to be shot. The portage is also rather tricky but most people should be able to climb down the rocks just to the right of the fall.

No sooner have you got your breath back than the river drops



away in a series of small steps that takes you downward on a rather bumpy ride.

The Swale now enters a mini gorge with cliffs hemming you in first on one side and then the other.

In between the drops an occasional rock dodge scattered along the shingle rapids helps keep your mind on the river and stops you worrying too much about what lies ahead.

About 0.75km further on a sharp right hand bend reveals a stepped double drop with neither of the 2 to 3 metre drops having the comfort of a plunge pool. Close scrutiny of the first drop will reveal a steep rather uninviting looking chute on the extreme right. There is no such soft option for the second fall which produces a bone shaking descent pretty well wherever you go to. It is certainly worth trying to shoot the top fall for this brings you down to a rocky ledge which allows the second drop to be portaged quite easily.

Below the double drop the gorge continues with few signs of civilisation, the contented gurgling of the river, the excited bobbing of the grey Wagtail dancing from rock to rock. They will all help to soothe away fears about unpaid debts, the Poll Tax and Maggie Thatcher so that you can concentrate on the things that really matter, what a luxury!

Paddling along you might just notice the odd roof top or spire belonging to the small village of Keld peeking out from above the trees high up on the right bank.

A brief boulder garden now provides a little light relief before the gorge opens out as you pass beneath a footbridge carrying the Pennine Way. Just beyond Eastgill beck is seen forming a pretty waterfall on the left as it cascades down the mountain side to meet the Swale.

The valley sides now start to steepen again in a rather foreboding manner. Here and there a few large boulders start to obstruct the river course but these are easily dodged.

Suddenly a series of falling horizons greets the eye. This is the upper fall of Kisdon force a fairly straightforward 3m drop into a deep plunge pool but not made easy knowing that the biggy lies 50m downstream. Some generous bank support will be required to prevent over enthusiastic swimmers from trying to be the first to swim over the lower fall (and Survive).

In reality the risk is more perceived than actual as the deep slowly moving current gives plenty of time for a relaxed swim to the shore. The fall is most easily shot on the far right (see photo). This avoids the small rocky ledge which occurs to the centre and left of the fall. Most paddlers will consider the portage a more perilous option as the footpath climbs steeply up and over the ridge on the right bank.

Despite being flushed with success and adrenalin surging through your veins as you look over the edge of the second fall most paddlers will suddenly find a pit opening in their stomachs as if your friendly neighbourhood dentist had just clamped you into his chair, cranked open your mouth and was about to start work with a pneumatic drill!

One look at the 6m plunge will be enough to convince most people that this is a fall to portage. A closer inspection will probably confirm that view. On the left, water flows directly onto an undercut cliff face whilst on the right a tapered ledge sticks out nearly two metres. By choosing a near perfect trajectory you can just clip the ledge before wiping your nose against the cliff face!

The Lower Force is most easily shot in low spate taking the fall between one and two metres to the right of the centre chute. Fortunately the plunge pool is quite deep, however it does shallow



a little towards the sides which we discovered to our cost when we seal launched our rescue boat off the side of the cliff and it promptly sank after snapping the end off!

Even the portage is not without difficulty. There is a choice of a long walk along the footpath or a climb down the cliffs just beyond the fall on the right bank.

The worst is now over with only a few small drops and shingle rapids to come. The austere cliffs are left behind and a calmer atmosphere prevails.

In about 3kms Muker beck joins from the right and the road briefly runs close to the bank. (Os920977) This is probably the best point for small groups to egress although larger numbers may be better off paddling another few kilometers down to Annerside bridge.

**Access.** This is not usually a problem as this part of the river is neither heavily fished or regularly canoed. Advice should be sought from the Local Access Officer, Lofty Wright, 2 Scotton Road, Catterick, Yorks.

**Accommodation.** Keld Y.H.A., Keld. Tel (0748) 86259. The warden is very friendly and will usually be able to give advice on water levels.

**OS maps.** Source to Keld: sheet 92 Barnard Castle & Richmond. Muker to Reeth: sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale.

*Nick Doll is author of 'A Canoeists guide to the North East' to be published by Cicerone press early in 1991.*



## Noticeboard



### GOING EAST

Anne Palmer is one of a group of six female paddlers who plan to paddle the rivers of Czechoslovakia this summer - thought to be the first all female

expedition to be mounted by a British team. The six are all active in the BCU coaching scheme and as well as exploring the whitewater rivers of an area relatively unknown to westerners, aim to foster East West relations, by making contact with Czechoslovak women and sharing experiences of teaching canoeing. Eventually an exchange is planned with opportunities for maintaining links between the two countries.

### CANOE CAMPING ON THE AVON

This year, the Canoe Camping club are holding their annual Easter meet on the River Avon, with a paddle from Leamington to Evesham and a riverside base camp just outside Stratford. The meet is planned for Easter weekend itself - March 28 to April 1 - with a social evening (all age groups welcome) on Sunday March 31. Anyone wanting to attend the meet should write to Peter Clark, 8 Wiltshire Ave, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3D

### DIRECTORS CHALLENGE

BCU Director Trevor Bailey has accepted a challenge from Colin Broadway, of Mobile Adventure, to complete the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race, with him in a C2. The Director's anonymous sponsor has already promised £1000 towards the GB marathon team World Championship funds.



Have you noticed the wacky headgear people have taken to wearing out on the water these days? A member of Hatfield Poly Canoe Club for example was snapped recently modelling this latest helmet style .....showing that Alex Naylor is always in even when he's out!

### END OF AN ERA FOR SCOTTISH CANOEING

The AGM of the Scottish Canoe Association, held in Edinburgh on 17th November, saw the retirement of Fred Nelson as President of the SCA. Fred was first elected to the post in 1979, and is the longest serving officer of the Association. Fred's retirement was marked by the presentation of a watch by Duncan of the Lamhan Deonach (Willing Hands) Quach for services to canoeing in Scotland. Fred's retirement is not a total loss to canoeing for, as well as continuing to remain active in the sport, Fred has been elected as chairman of the Scottish Sports Association and a seat on the Scottish Sports Council. It is hoped that in these positions Fred will continue to assist in the development of Scottish canoeing.

Following Fred's retirement, Craig Douglas was elected as President of the Association. Craig was first elected to the SCA Council in 1981 and since then has held various posts on Council and in the technical disciplines of White Water Racing, Slalom and Canoe Polo, culminating with his election as Vice President during 1990

### PAN - GALACTIC



Despite low water levels, the first Pan Galactic Rally, was without a doubt a resounding success. The event had been planned to "take the heat off" the Mike Jones Rally and to provide paddling on a wide range of Cumbrian rivers without concentrating on any one. Most of the weekend's special events were well attended with the dragon boat racing in particular attracting large crowds. The highlight of this event had to be the West Cumbrian Canoe Club's "scratch" team who fought their way to secondplace in the 250m final, leaving experienced crews in their wake.

One of the major aims of the weekend had been to avoid overcrowding on the rivers that were open, and this seemed to be achieved, largely through the efforts of the many people who gave their time freely over the weekend - thank you one and all

Alan Brenton

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As I made my way through the exit coming off the plane, I was looking for the Fat Controller. The arrangement was, "I'll see you at Atlanta Airport on the 16th of September". Then I saw it, a kayak blade standing out above every thing else with my name written on it. We were both attending the International Safety Symposium at the Nantahala Outdoor Centre. I was returning to my third home (the pub's the second), the South Eastern States of America.

Once the Safety Symposium had finished, the "Butt Cold Water" of the Nantahala called. A fun packed river with class 2/3 rapids along it's 8 mile length. We had both paddled the river before so we decided to paddle a duckie, and what a pair of duckies we looked, with all of our safety equipment on. We were very over-dressed, much to the amusement of the locals. Rafting, duckies and tubing are very popular in America with as many as 2,000 people paddling or floating the Nantahala each day.

The Ocoee is 1 hours drive from the NOC and is a very popular play river. It's white water section is 4 3/4 miles of pure fun, with class 3 & 4 water along it's length. There is only one flat section on the river which is mile long, with hot temperatures and warm water, it is almost heaven sent. You can run the river twice in a day if you're very fit and get on early. We got on late, played at every spot and rescued the very old member of our party who swam. After being told twice of



## **East Coast Paddling With David Crooks**





the second hole at 'double suck' he went into it and, after going round and round for a minute, he bailed out. Having lost his glasses, broke his paddle and nursing his hurt pride we got him to the bank. From there he hitch-hiked back to the 'put in' for his spare paddle, while we went down to Double Trouble. After a very short time Mr X paddled down to us.

It is heart-warming to be around where anyone stops, picks you up and delivers you to your vehicle. The Ocoee has also been chosen for the site of Canoe Slalom when the Olympics go to Atlanta in 1996.

Although the water levels were low I demanded to paddle Section 9 of the French Broad, which is approximately 2 hours from NOC. Our main aim was to get to Frank Bells rapid, with a gentle trip down through Sandy Bottom, and over kayak ledge we arrived at Bells. At a low level all you have to do is think about a pop out and your kayak or canoe will do the rest for you. We stayed and played for a most enjoyable 2 hours before the sun started to set, with everyone getting his end up.

No trip to the South East is complete without boating Section 4 of the Chattooga river. Words cannot describe the sensation of paddling this river. Protected under law, it is a wild and scenic river, and once started the only way out is by paddling 2 miles across a lake. 'Five Falls' is the famous section with Corkscrew, Jawbone, Crack in the Rock, and the last, Sock 'em dog. The best route to run the 'dog' is, hit the launch pad and ski jump the hole. The Fat Controller hit the launch pad and took off. It was like paddling with a giggling schoolboy for the rest of the day with him describing each second that he was airborne.

We then travelled North to boat the Gauley in West Virginia. The guide books had frightened us enough to paddle the New river first. It was going to be an eye opener for both of us, with boulders the size of the BCU headquarters, and large holes often suddenly appearing in our way down the river. I will admit to a slight error of judgement and took a swim at 'Middle Keaney' which caused much amusement to my paddling partner. The takeout is below the second highest suspension bridge in the world, a truly magnificent sight from below.

While looking for Battle Creek Campground, (the most popular site during Gauley season) we went to look at the 'put in'. On the drive down, two guys were thumbing a lift, as we had no room inside

the car they rode two miles on the hood. The river was fantastic with us running the 26 miles over two days, the shuttles were very memorable. We had to have five people in our vehicle, 'no problem' you would say, but we had to have all five in front!

As we got on to the water my memories of the video 'Rolling with Nolan' came back. Down through Initiation, Pillow, Lost Paddle, Iron Ring and on to Sweets Falls. The Rapids all seem to follow on from one another with a slight rest in between. The end of the weekend arrived and we had to leave to make our appointment at the White Horse.

*For people looking at America to go boating, the South Eastern states provide any level of water that you might need. The Green Narrows is rated as a two (US) gallon river. This is how many times you pass water over the poison ivy on your scouting. If you are looking for gentler water then the Tuckaseegee could cater for your needs. If you do go Stateside, budget for a vehicle as without one you won't be able to get anywhere. The cost of living is cheaper than here, with most Americans being very friendly, they will often ask you if you know someone in London, or speak a totally different language to you.*

**Did we have a good time? Oh man we had a blast.**





# Trade News



The advent of breathable dry cags onto the canoeing scene seems set to change one's perception of winter paddling. Despite for several years, having been the proud owner of a Goretex cag designed for hillwalking, I freely admitted to having a fairly sceptical attitude toward the concept of a canoeing garment that was "guaranteed to keep you dry". To me, canoeing and getting wet seemed inextricably linked - you accepted it, got on with it - even enjoyed it! I found out how wrong I had been one November day when I first tried out the Palm version on the Holme Pierrepont Slalom course. After 2 hours rafting, squirting, swimming and generally messing around in boats, I retired to the changing rooms to warm up, dry off and wash off the bugs that unfortunately seem to be an occupational hazard for us Nottinghamites. On removing the said garment I discovered that underneath the cag I was still almost completely dry; the only area of leakage seemed to be the waist seal, where water can seep up underneath the single lined neoprene band; the latex collar and cuffs were perfectly adequate, and the fabric and seam seals completely watertight. Almost certainly the leakage at the waist would not be a consideration for less upside down, underwater sorts of paddling! Since then I have used the same cag for a long trip on the Scottish Dee and a very cold day at Llangollen and on both occasions stayed both dry and comfortable. The fabric is very soft, compared to neoprene coated nylon, and because it is breathable, eliminates that horrible clammy feeling caused by condensation.

*Goretex is constructed from a PFTE membrane which is completely impervious to water droplets but allows the passage of water vapour. This means that a Goretex garment keeps out the rain (or river) but lets out the perspiration. So far, just two canoeing manufacturers are making Goretex Dricags: Palm and Wildwater. All garment designs are rigorously tested by Goretex themselves and carry a 3 year guarantee.*



*Ras Dex's lycra cagoule seal is now standard on the race deck. The seal is designed to be comfortable and unrestrictive, stopping water from penetrating under the cagoule waist band and also preventing the cagoule from riding up. Ras Dex can be used for all forms of whitewater paddling. Slalom - playboating - squirting - now available from good retail outlets. Available shortly - the "gripper" deck especially for plastic boats. For more information on the Ras Dex range contact Robert Soothill on 0602 455786 or 0422 341856. Trade enquiries welcome*

## NEW SHOP IN MERSEYSIDE

"The Elements", a new 1200 square foot outdoor sports shop has just opened its doors in Argyle St in Birkenhead. "The Elements" is an all round outdoor shop, aimed at walkers and climbers as well as canoeists; one of its attractions is an indoor climbing wall and the owners aim to staff the shop with active outdoor enthusiasts. Argyle St is close to Hamilton Square Station and just 100 yards from the Mersey tunnel.

## NEW FROM PLAYBOATER

Playboater are now importing two new kayak paddle ranges; the Wenatchee and the Nimbus Capilano, both from America. The Wenatchee, manufactured by Werner, is a high performance epoxy paddle, featuring an advanced continuous dihedral blade design and a full length epoxy shaft with integral ovaling. At various, colours, lengths and styles, Playboater are selling their Wenatchees at an introductory price of £99.95, wt 1.09 - 1.22kg.

The Nimbus Capilano is made mainly out of wood; its a beautiful looking paddle in Sitka Spruce, mahogany and Ash: the ends are strengthened with P.U tips and the paddle is laminated in epoxy kevlar. Available in lengths 200 - 206, wt 1.2kg, £99.95

## WIN A GREGSON PACK - ANOTHER GREAT CANOE FOCUS COMPETITION!

Find the hidden words, in the word square below, indicating by circling or highlighting them. There are 14 words in all: GREGSON PACK; LIGHTWEIGHT; DURABLE; FLOURESCENT; WATER RESISTANT; TOUGH; FIRST AID SYSTEM; TREATMENT; EMERGENCY; HELP; INFORMATION; INSTRUCTION; FLOATS; SPORTSWISE: To get you started, the first clue has been picked out for you. The senders of the first three correct answers to be picked out of the mailbag will receive a Gregson Watersports Pack, the unique, comprehensive, water resistant first aid pack including full first aid instructions for ; bleeding; burns ; fractures; CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) etc. Closing date; 14th March 1991

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Send your entries to Freepost Word Maze Competition, Sportswise, Maryport Workspace, Solway Trading Estate, Maryport, Cumbria CA15 6BR







# The Chitral Kayak Expedition

by Peter Knight

**“Ferocious rivers..... freezing glaciers...dangerous...” This all sounded a bit desperate, so I was horrified to discover that the newspaper article was about our expedition, and not John Taylor’s “Taming of the Lion” trip, as I had at first supposed.**

The reporter was clearly optimistic about our chances of paddling high in the Hindu Kush mountains of north-west Pakistan. Bearing in mind I was reading the paper whilst hunched in a minibus wending its way over the Malakhand Pass towards Chitral and those self-same rivers, I decided to hide the paper so that the other lads wouldn’t see it.

Like many expeditions, the seeds of this trip were sown whilst day-dreaming over an atlas. This procedure generates many attractive prospects, which further research soon whittles down. We chose to concentrate on the Himalayan mountain chain in Asia, and having rejected Bhutan (too expensive), Sikkim (too steep) and India (too bureaucratic), we settled on Pakistan. Two wiggly blue lines on the map caught our attention, situated close to the Afghan border in the District of Chitral and perched high in the Hindu Kush mountains. An expedition to make the first descents of the rivers Yarkhun and Turikho was born.

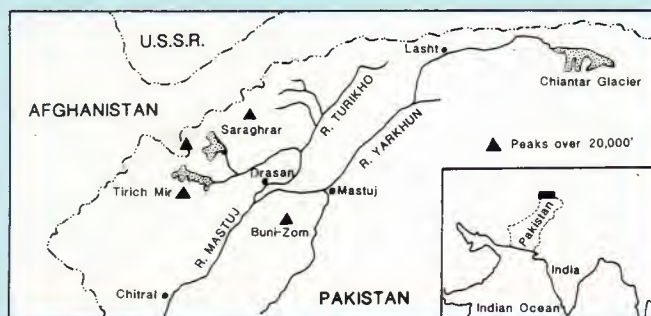
Fund-raising is never easy, but the enthusiastic and generous support of MI Designs at an early stage was encouraging, and obtaining a Mike Jones Award from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust solved the major financial problems. James Morris, Ian Huntsman and Jason Buxton completed the team, and late in May 1990 we found ourselves installed in a villainous Hotel off the Murree Road in Rawalpindi. Afraid of thieves, Jason and Ian closed the shutters in their bedroom on the first night, and nearly suffocated themselves in consequence as the heat and humidity levels built up to sauna levels.

We spent a week arguing with the Pakistan Ministry of Tourism over what we could and couldn’t do, despite a lengthy correspondence prior to our arrival. Prospects looked bleak to start with, but we found two allies who eventually carried the day; Her Majesty the Queen, who as Patron of the Churchill Trust unwittingly lent us her support, and the Adventure Foundation of Pakistan. This last is a Pakistani organisation dedicated to the outdoor pursuits, whose officials include high-ranking military officers. We were introduced to them through our Liaison Officer, Mohammad Farookye from the Pakistan Navy, and they successfully used their influence to help us. By early June, a mountain of gear had miraculously vanished into a decrepit minibus and, with us sprawled inside, it wheezed its way northwards into the mountains.

As a warm-up, we decided to paddle the river Laspur. The jeep ride up the valley gave an opportunity to inspect the river, and laid the foundations of a set of empirical laws governing river-running in general, and Pakistani rivers in particular. The First Law was immediately obvious;

**“All rivers run in gorges; the only question is how deep that gorge is”**

The Laspur rushed in and out of gorges anything from 50 to 200 feet deep. We half killed ourselves carrying the boats down to the put-in through stupefying heat, and launched into the first of the gorges.



The second law of river-running then manifested itself;

**“Rapids inspected from a height of 200 feet appear completely different at river level”**

On the way, as viewed from the jeep track, the river gave the appearance of an easy boulder-dodging type of run. It was a boulder-dodge, alright, but of the exhilarating Grade IV variety, with a rush of fearful excitement as we pin-balled through a shrunken world whose horizons encompassed only the slippery slope of water ahead. The Third Law, which states that,

**“the worst rapids are always out of sight of the road/track/path”**

became apparent later in the afternoon, when we optimistically paddled into the mouth of a beckoning gorge. Within minutes, the gradient became steeper and the rapids both harder and more continuous, the canyon walls rose to dizzy heights on either side and retreat became impossible. It took 4 hours and a Grade VI portage to extricate ourselves from this oft-warned-against, but frequently committed error. Our experiences throughout the trip served to underline the validity of these simple rules, but somehow we frequently failed to apply them, perhaps mistaking optimism for positive thinking.

The Laspur proved to be a delightful river, providing three days of great paddling amidst spectacular scenery. As a warm-up it was perfect, the only mishap being Jason’s attempt to splat a rock,

*James Morris on the Yarkhun*





forgetting that he wasn't in a squirt boat. Morale in the team was good as we jeeped up the Yarkhun river, one of the expedition's main targets. Mechanical progress was soon halted at a flooded ford, and we set off on a four day, 50 mile hike to the Chiantar Glacier, the source of the river. Hiring porters was a new experience, but we were horrified to find ourselves successively responsible for a porter who looked likely to expire beneath his load, and a donkey being encouraged to bear our burdens further with the aid of stick poked into its genitals by its generous owner. Both problems were solved without mishap, but left us in contemplation of the ethical problems involved with our presence in this area.

Standing at the Chiantar Glacier, with sick porters and tortured donkeys a thing of the past, engendered a feeling of satisfaction. This was short-lived, since it rapidly became apparent that the Yarkhun was a much more serious proposition than the Laspur. A river of extremes, it varied from long, flat, fast-flowing sections to tumultuous Grade IV-V rapids without much in between the two. The odd Grade VI fall or gorge rivetted our attention on the river ahead. Owing to the cost of hiring porters, we had taken a calculated risk and carried only two boats to the glacier, planning to have two people paddle whilst the other two acted as bank support where possible (which wasn't very often). This policy nearly came unstuck when Jason took a bad swim from a most unpleasant stopper, and in the ensuing rescue lost his boat and sustained a fractured finger, bruised ribs and a sprained knee. The bank party were downstream of us and, unaware of our problems, receding ever further. Having administered first aid to Jason, I had to make an unwelcome solo descent of the river to catch up with the rest of the group, returning in the evening with a horse to transport Jason down-valley. The expedition team was finally re-united in the early hours of the morning. It was a sobering reminder of both the shocking swiftness with which a paddling situation can deteriorate, and of our isolation; in an emergency, helicopter evacuation was possible - but only after walking 2 days down the valley to the nearest radio, then waiting for the weather to clear sufficiently to allow a landing.

This mishap put us in an awkward position, since Jason, although fairly comfortable, was unable to walk owing to his knee and had to travel out of the valley by horse. The next few days took on the proportions of a chapter from 'Three Men in a Boat', with James and myself alternating in the sole remaining boat on the river whilst Ian supervised Jason's painful progress back to the jeep. A bit like over-correcting whilst steering a skidding car, our progress lurched from one crisis to another; first the logistical problem of getting Jason across the river on a bridge that his horse couldn't cross, then losing contact with James on the river and spending frantic hours searching, to find that he'd run into a 'Third Law' situation, and been forced to make a horrendous portage. It was a considerable relief to be re-united with the jeep, three days later. Unfortunately, the river was rising rapidly and threatening to flood the jeep track and maroon us in the valley, necessitating a rapid exit. Packing Jason into the jeep and retrieving the other two boats, James, Ian and myself completed the last ten miles of the Yarkhun. We were just in time; as it was, the rising river had washed away several bridges spanning tributary rivers and the jeep had to be manhandled across the resulting torrents. Emerging from the Yarkhun valley, we felt a bit like survivors from some spectacular disaster.

By popular demand, we decided to have a rest day, which we spent watching the annual Polo match between the neighbouring (and rival) Districts of Chitral and Gilgit. This was far removed from the genteel English version, with the teams indulging in herculean attempts to slaughter the opposition in what appeared to be a cross between playing 'British Bulldog' and ice hockey, all on horseback. Gilgit won, 14-3. In the midst of the carnage, Dave Manby materialised, approaching the end of several months spent paddling the river Indus and rafting on the river Gilgit.

Pausing only to pack Jason off to Chitral to recuperate, the rest of us vanished up the Turikho valley to explore the potential of the river. The journey was enlivened by tales of drug-smuggling through the mountains, told by our jeep driver and cook. This part of Pakistan has long been a smugglers paradise and a conduit for hashish to the cities in the South, and thence to the West World. Despite assurances that such nefarious activities had declined, we did get a little concerned when the jeep driver began making strenuous efforts to sign us in at every police outpost, no matter how obscure, an



*Wading a tributary of the Yarkhun*

administrative chore which they had formerly tended to ignore...

On the Turikho we re-learned all of the Three Laws of River Running, with the river spending most of its time sulking in the bottom of various gorges. Climbing hundreds of feet in and out of these, several times a day and in blazing heat, was no joke. Despite this, those parts that could be paddled (roughly three-quarters of its 45 mile length) were excellent, ranging from Grade III to V and from tight boulder chokes to big, open bouncy rapids. Perhaps the greatest excitement was felt by our jeep driver and cook, who nearly collapsed from nervous exhaustion; every time someone capsized, they were convinced that the end had come. No amount of rolling demonstrations could persuade them otherwise. The locals also enjoyed the spectacle, perched on the banks like vultures and shrieking with amusement at the sight of the mad foreigners staggering up the river bank clad in bright blue wetsuits.

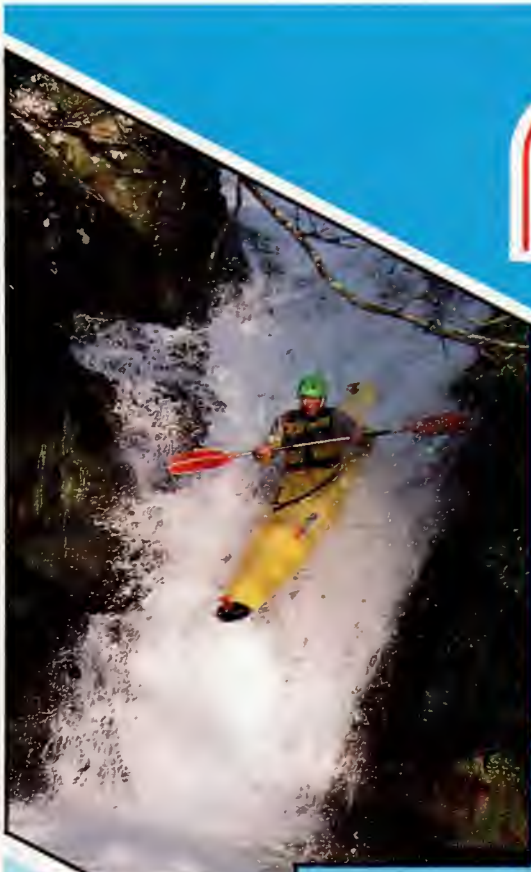
We emerged from the Turikho valley just in time to prevent our jeep expiring from overwork; during the last week, it had rather alarmingly gone into an apparently terminal decline, with first the brakes going, rapidly followed by intermittent problems with the fuel pump and finally a leaking radiator that required filling every half hour or so. It was time to retire gracefully to Chitral, and from thence home.

**The members of the expedition would like to thank MI Designs for boats, equipment, encouragement and tremendous back-up, Molly Jones and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for their trust and support, Vango and Hi-Tec for equipment, Pakistan International Airlines for sympathetic treatment of a vast bulk of excess baggage, Colchester Colour Processors for assistance with film, the British Canoe Union for their support and a whole host of people for their advice, enthusiasm and time. Last but by no means least, thanks to my parents for unstinting assistance.**



# pyranha

## Canoe the World



◀ Dave Newbould  
Pyranha photo competition winner  
River Afon Croesor



▲ Cam McLeay  
Belynd Kiik River (Russia)



◀ Lake Windemere



# TOURING INTO THE FUTURE

## Scene One:

Imagine a well known trouble spot on one of the most popular touring rivers in the country. Time and time again conflict is caused by canoeists parking cars and trailers on a busy country road near the access point. Things are so bad that the access agreement is threatened. But the problem is easily solved. Simply raise thousands of pounds to buy a canoeist's car park away from the road. The locals are happy, so are the paddlers.

## Scene Two:

A family want to know where to take their open canoes for a summer holiday trip to France. A visit to their Touring Officer allows access to the computerised BCU River Database, a copy of which is kept in every region. After five minutes of feeding in the questions they have a printout of five French rivers at the right grade, one or two across the border in Italy, and the title of three published river guides.

## Scene Three:

A young white water paddler has just bought a squirt boat, but he does not know how to paddle it properly. The sport is so new that there are no other paddlers living close to him that he can learn from. He asks the BCU for advice, and is sent a BCU squirt coaching video by return of post.

*Can you put a date on when these scenarios are likely to happen? - When touring and recreational canoeists become so organised that they can raise money and help each other.*



Scene one happened five months ago, when the BCUs South West Region bought some land near Holne Bridge on the Dart, a notorious parking black spot. The database design specification is complete, a major consultation process starts in two weeks, and the database software is paid for. It should be up and running next year. As for the video, filming is complete and the production should be ready for Crystal Palace next week.

This sort of work is possible due to a fundamental change in BCU policy, which is reflected in a touring strategy called the **Touring Development Plan**. As is the case with all politics, this change was only noticed and discussed by the BCU activists whilst the rest of the membership ignored Canoe Focus and got on with the paddling. But that policy of ignoring the policies is no longer feasible. There will be changes in membership structures, regional activities, access help and touring, all stemming from this change in policy. Everybody will notice a change in the years to come.

## The Challenge

In some canoeing fields, such as in the competitive disciplines and coaching, canoeists are brought together in groups. This makes it easy for them to talk about the sport, help each other, and set up representatives to sort out their problems.

Touring canoeists by the nature of their activity do not meet as often, and some work hard to be totally independent. Many do not belong to clubs, and the vast majority do not belong to the BCU. By some estimates there are over a quarter of a million touring canoeists in Britain, of whom less than sixteen thousand are in the BCU.

The touring canoeist's desire not to be organised is understandable, but it does lead to problems. Touring canoeing is almost invisible in image terms, leading to little desire for manufacturers to develop new equipment, or for sponsors to help with promoting non competitive events. In access discussions it is difficult for the BCU to claim to represent 250,000 canoeists when it has only 16,000 members. It is difficult for the sport to grow and strengthen

if new paddlers have no way of meeting others in order to learn the important skills. Although tourists are numerically the largest group within the canoeing family, they are the least visible and vocal.

It is a chicken and egg situation. Tourists see no need to join the BCU because there is no compulsion, or because they think the BCU does not provide the services, advice or events that they want. But the BCU cannot provide the events and services to tourists unless there are enough of them inside the BCU to make it happen.

The Touring Development Plan set out to improve the situation by:

- \* Running touring and recreational events at all levels, to bring paddlers in contact with each other, and in touch with the BCU.
- \* Starting work on the various projects and jobs that will provide an improved service from the BCU to the touring and recreational paddler.
- \* Making it easier and more attractive to join the BCU.
- \* Starting to raise money to invest in the various projects we want to carry out.

Throughout all the work we are doing there is one fundamental principle. We can only improve by increasing the membership, and by starting to raise realistic sums of cash to spend on the jobs that need doing.

## Flat and placid water paddlers

This is the biggest area of potential growth. There are many existing flat water paddlers not in the BCU, either because they see no reason to join, or they taught themselves to paddle without the coaching scheme. There are also thousands of potential new recruits to the sport (including the parents of existing paddlers) who are looking for an outdoor, physical yet relaxing recreation.

The advantage to the BCU of targeting older paddlers is that these are the people who can put something back into the sport. We need active and effective organisers, which we will not get if we only recruit youngsters. More mature recruits might be solicitors or



### River Guides and Databases

One of the BCUs most important jobs is to provide information to members. What the members most want to know is where to go canoeing. Whilst we are happy to see commercial guides published, our policy is that the BCU Regions should publish their own guides if possible. This ensures that the Access information is correct, and that the Regions can make money. Up to date Regional guides are now available in nearly all areas of the country. The T & RC has provided financial help in certain cases.

There are too many rivers abroad to collect all the books and guides, and many of the more difficult rivers are rarely paddled, not justifying the expense of publication. But a computerised Foreign Touring Database could hold much of the information and be immensely useful. This database is one of the T&RCs most important projects.

accountants with the kids off their hands and time to spare. Check you Who's Who and target the local barrister who plays golf with the Chief Constable. The anglers do it, why don't we.

We plan to run tours and events aimed at the placid water side of the sport. These tourists may not need coaching, but they do need information. River guides, the Database, Designs of touring canoes, Foreign touring events, Access.

Many placid water touring waterways require licences, which reduce flexibility over when and where to paddle. The BCU offer a British Waterways Licence as a free perk of membership, and recently the Upper Avon and the Rochdale canal have been added to the scheme. It is intended to expand the free licence project as finances allow.

## The Intermediate Paddler

Most recreational canoeists in Britain are in this class, touring and enjoying themselves on grade two to three water. They are often in the coaching scheme, in an active club, and many are in regular contact with the BCU. This is the group that would seem to have least need of the touring development plan. What can we do?



To put it bluntly and crudely - we plan to raise money. We live in a changing world. The pressures on facilities are getting greater. We canoeists need to ensure that we are organised and able to get a fair share. By running tours and events we can give paddlers a good day out. But if there is a small charge attached then that is money that can be used by the club or the region to improve facilities, increase the information flow, pay the expenses of regional workers and generally help canoeists.

The work in this area is not simply the work of the Touring Committee. The same philosophy has also been adopted by the Regions and the Sports Management Committee. The aim is to put the power and the ability to do good work where the local experts are, in the regions.

### Tours and Rallies

Over the past years we have been told that canoeists do not want to be organised in groups and tours. They want to go off by themselves with their own choice of partners. This is true for some, especially the more advanced paddlers. But for every ten solitary paddlers there are literally hundreds who have repeatedly shown that they like being organised.

The Mike Jones Rally showed the way, followed by the Tryweryn tours, the Pan Galactic Rally in Cumbria, the Washburn event and many others. 1990 saw the first of the annual T&RC Corsica Rallies for advanced paddlers, and 1991 will see an independent Austrian WW Rally in July. The T&RC organise some events, and help and encourage other events where we can. In 1990 the two Tryweryn Tours, organised by the T&RC, raised over three and a half thousand pounds to spend on canoe touring projects.

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## PYRANHA GUARANTEE THE PARTS THAT OTHER KAYAKS HAVEN'T GOT



## The Advanced White Water Paddler

What about the person who paddles harder and harder water, until he gets to the stage where he outgrows his canoe club? He eventually finds a small group of friends to paddle with and goes off with them. Britain is full of little secretive bands of paddlers who rarely speak to other groups, and have no contact with the BCU. What can we do for them?

**Information.** Like the placid water paddler, this group may see no need for coaching, but they do need information. The river guides and database are of help here.

**Access.** The biggest cry for help from this group is for access. We don't want a Touring Committee they say, what we want is access. The reply is simple. The Access Committee can do nothing if it is weak, understaffed and underfunded. It is the job of the T&RC to raise money, manpower and support for the BCU, which then goes to help access.

**Contact.** By running events which are attractive to advanced level paddlers we can hopefully put paddlers in contact with each other more. White Water Rodeos and Squirt Meets, the Corsica Tour every Easter. Encouraging other tours and rallies. There is no compulsion in what we are trying to do. But if we can make it easier for these paddlers to meet new faces, exchange information and learn new skills it can only help. Perhaps a few might even join the BCU.

## The Choice

We have a choice. The plan described above has been designed by the Touring and Recreation Committee, but it is too big for that committee to carry out alone. It needs the support of all of the BCU, especially in the Regions. But why should we give it support? Why can't we carry on as before? It depends on whether you look to the future, the present or the past.

*"So canoeists are prepared to pay for a day's canoeing and an extra £8.00 on membership to cover the cost of negotiating access agreements! What rubbish!... A few years ago I lived in North Wales. Canoeing was like the freedom of the hills. I canoed anywhere. Now to paddle the Conway I have to book early to bid for a ticket.*

*Is this the shape of things to come?"*

*Letter to Canoe Focus December 1990*

This letter clearly expresses the reactions of many canoeists. We agree that it is desperately sad that the world is changing, and that things that were once easy are now impossible. But ten years ago only about ten people per day paddled the Conway. Last year there were sometimes over one hundred (starting from a car park for five vehicles). How many in five years time?

We cannot let our emotions guide our policies, focussing our mind five years in the past, and trying to recreate a situation that has sadly gone for ever.

### Raising Money and Raising Membership

A new system of payments and membership structures has been introduced, with the aim of raising a bit of cash and encouraging people to join the BCU. It works as follows: A club volunteers to run a tour or event to help the region. Just as before, it sets a price for the event to make a small profit. This money is split between the club and region as mutually agreed. BCU members pay this price.

Non members have a choice. They can join the BCU (with new instant membership forms now available) or they can pay a two pound excess fee called the 'Taster Supplement'. (This money is again split between region and club). By paying this fee the paddler is automatically covered by BCU third party insurance. With standard BCU membership now £11.50 (£6.00 for youngsters) it soon becomes economically sensible to join the BCU. Although this system will encourage people to join the BCU it will not keep them in. They will only rejoin next year if they like what they see of the BCU. That is why the T&RC are giving a such high priority to projects such as the river guides and database which provide a direct service to members.



*White water touring paddlers don't want the Touring and Recreation Committee to do very much for them at all. It is the Access Committee whose help they want'*

*Canoeist Magazine April 1990*

If the last quote looked to the past, this one stays in the present. Things are OK as they are, it says, there is no need for the T&RC to do anything. We disagree.

If we cannot look to the past or the present, what about the future. Focus your mind five years ahead. What will the pressure on access be? What will be the effect of water privatisation? Will there be much pressure from rafting? How will it all affect your canoeing? Do we need a strong Touring Committee?

*'Many thanks to all the clubs, businesses, individuals and the BCU Touring and SW Regional Committees who donated to the River Dart Access Fund. £3,500 has now been raised to buy a piece of land beside Holne Bridge for car parking and other facilities. Local Access Officer Kevin Chamberlain said "We have been delighted with the response to the appeal. Not only has the land purchase made access easier, but by digging into our own pockets we have greatly improved our relationship with the local villagers and landowners.'*

*Access News. Canoe Focus December 1990*

This excellent work by the South West Region shows us what to do. If we are truly honest with ourselves most of us will see that the final quote shows the only way ahead. There is no alternative. We must get more organised. The Touring Development Plan is a basis for the way ahead, linked in the regional development and membership recruitment. The changes described here will greatly improve the BCU over the next few years. Please bear in mind why the changes are there, and do what you can to help.

### Help Needed

Hopefully some of you will like what you have read in this article, and feel that you want to help. Although the plan is national, it is designed to have most effect in the regions. That is where the canoeists are that know the local problems, and can best plan the solutions. If you want to help with this plan, it is your own regional touring officer or regional chairman that can use your work best, give him a call.

There are however two specific areas where the national Touring Committee does need help itself. We need a new organiser to run the Tryweryn tours, which provide pleasure to hundreds and are a major fundraiser for the T&RC. If a club or other group can take on this job, which needs some experience and continuity over a number of years, they could make a massive contribution to the success of the development plan. We would obviously provide a lot of help and advice in the early years. Mike Wood, the T&RC Treasurer, is retiring after many years of valuable work. If you could cope with the sums and fancy getting involved with the intricacies of BCU politics then give us a call. It's an exciting time for the T&RC. For the right person this could be a challenging and satisfying voluntary job. Training can be given. **If you want to help then contact John Gregson, the T&RC chairman.**



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PYRANHA GUARANTEE THE PARTS THAT OTHER KAYAKS HAVEN'T GOT



## Dear Focus

### WORLD TOUR

We are planning a world trip with our kayaks between July/August 1991 and August 1992.

We would appreciate hearing about tours/expeditions ANYWHERE in the world during that period as we would be interested in joining you. Please write to Mark and Andrea Barber, 4 Brasscroft, Hadfield, via Hyde, Cheshire SK14 7HF

Mark Barber

### MADE IN HEAVEN?

the following reply was received to a small ad. placed by Dave Crooks in the last Canoe Focus (December edition)

"Dear Mr Crooks,

We would like to apply for three places on your Expedition to Chile next year.

My father, my son and myself are experienced on all types of water. My son in fact has a reputation for his remarkable achievements of keeping afloat in extreme conditions in stormy waters on the Sea of Galilee, and his rescue of several fishermen in trouble on that night is spoken of in communities worldwide. I myself, have unfortunately had a serious accident where I capsized and was broached on a large cross until dead. I have risen above my problems however and you will find that I contribute an enthusiastic spirit to any gathering.

We all three are teetotal, though to liven up a party we are able to turn the odd barrel of water into wine, though I can assure you we have not touched a drop in over two thousand years,

Our abilities include being in three places at once, very useful for rescues, we don't actually need boats at all, and can run ahead to check out possible portages from the water itself. We are also very good with sheep.

I am sure that you will find our talents useful to your expedition, we look forward to hearing from you soon. Just kneel at the edge of your bed and ask us to be with you

J Christ ,

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Heavensent Canoeing Companions, Upper Row, Cloud Nine, The Universe."

### WOMEN IN CANOEING

This year, for the first time, there will be a stand at the Canoe Exhibition to advise and encourage women to take a more active part in the canoeing world and particularly to take coaching qualifications. We want to produce an attractive display of positive images of women participating and are very short of suitable photographs. If anyone reading this can help by lending their pictures for the weekend, please contact me, Chris Lawler, 162 Hough Lane, Wonwell, Barnsley, S73 0EF (0226 751250)

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The manual, as well as a free catalogue of all the current canoe plans is available from Selway Fisher Designs, 15 King St, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6HB.

## COMMITMENT AND OPEN CROSSINGS by Bill Taylor

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ISBN 0 906371 73 2

Available from BCU Supplies £16.95 to BCU members.

On April 19 1986, Bill Taylor, Mick Wibrew and Richard Elliott embarked on and succeeded in completing the first circumnavigation of the British Isles by kayak. It was a journey that had been much discussed but never previously attempted due to the uncertain British weather and potentially hazardous sea conditions. To complete the trip over the summer months, when there would be less chance of



encountering inclement weather, the three were compelled to make numerous open crossings of up to 50 miles, including the Southern Irish Sea, a considerable achievement in itself. Summer notwithstanding, the three found their fair share of epics and extreme weather including near disaster on the Lizard and the first blasts of Hurricane Charlie.

The story of their expedition, described in Bill Taylor's book makes compelling and fascinating reading - there can be few people, especially canoeists, without intimate knowledge of at least some parts of the British coast, and finding one's favourite places described in this way is like rediscovering old and trusted friends!

The book is also a veritable mine of information on the practical aspects of the trip - timing the stages to maximise the benefits from the tides and finding safe havens from the elements. To me, one of the most interesting parts of the book was the chapter on equipment; the details not only of what the group took, but also why they chose the gear that they did, and how they packed it - would be useful reading for anyone planning a seatrip, short or long.

Commitment and Open Crossings is well illustrated throughout and beautifully produced with colour photographs and detailed maps. All in all an excellent read if a trifle pricey and a book that would not disgrace the most high class of coffee tables.

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## Regional Round Up

### Chairman's Spot

with Ron Hodgson, ERMCA Chairman

In the weeks preceding Christmas I was able to attend 4 of the 9 Regional AGMs. I



was struck by the incredible amount of work being done by a few volunteers for the majority of canoeists. The immediate result of this work can be seen in the increase in recreational events (tours and competitions) for both the beginner and recreational paddler. It also shows itself in the increase in water available under the universal licence.

Less obvious is the behind the scenes work on committees of outside bodies such as the NRA, Sports Council and local authorities. It is from this work that improvements in both facilities and access come about.

Please encourage these volunteers by supporting events and offering your services.

### EASTERN

The region congratulates Tony Gurr on his 'English Regions Award' for services to canoeing especially in Essex and his club, Stubbers.

The region is still without a secretary, a key post in the collection and distribution of information to members. Volunteers, whether canoeists or not, welcomed - contact Ron Hodgson on (0763) 73376.

The Regional Coaching Panel meeting is on 20 March - further details from RCO Dave Coggins. A regional tour will be from Bedford to Tempsford on the Ouse on 21 April details from Terry Sykes, 95 Lincroft, Oakley, Bedford.

Cardington Slalom Course is likely to be closed for 6 weeks from the end of March due to channel work by the NRA. The booking secretary Sheila Elkins has details. The Cardington div 3 slalom is changed to 16/17 March.

### EAST MIDLANDS

Following the AGM on 26 November we have a new secretary, Mrs Janet Robinson, and a new treasurer, Dave Clifton. Welcome to both and thank you to George Oliver for his work as secretary. The slalom representative position is vacant - nominations to Chairman, Reg Robinson, please.

The region will be exhibiting at Crystal Palace so do drop in and find out from committee members what is going on in the region, or better still come and offer your help to run events.

The Regional River Guide is available from BCU Supplies at Current Trends price £4.95 including p&p.

A feasibility study has been commissioned for a moving water facility on the River Nene at Northampton.

More information is given regularly in Regional Newsletters to clubs - ask your club for details.

### LONDON & SE

The Region's touring calendar is proving increasingly popular. 1990 saw a full programme of events including tours on the sea and on inland and tidal rivers. There are two tourist trials; the Arun one being held in aid of Arthritic Research and the Westel trial attracting over 100 participants. There was also a full camping weekend held on the Arun.

On average 20-30 people attended each tour and the range of distance and water condition provided a variety of events, suitable for all levels of paddler, including many family groups. The organisers also managed to lay on fine weather on most occasions.

1991 promises even more enjoyable paddling opportunities. For details of tours contact Jeff Simmonds, the Regional Touring Rep; consult the BCU Year Book or come along to the Regional stand at Crystal Palace.

### NORTHERN

The Local Access Officer for the North Tyne from Kielder to Chollerford is Phil Clegg, Calvert Trust, Kielder, Falstone, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 1BS.

The Northern Regional Wild Water Championships are on 3 February on the North Tyne with classes for all types of canoe - contact Mary Armstrong, 7 Dryburn Park, Durham DH1 5AD.

The same regional officers were elected at the Alston AGM except for the Treasurer, who is now Don Raspin of Tees Kayak Club - welcome back to the regional team.

Paddlers are reminded of the Northern White Water Series - details from Jerry Tracey, Haefen, Middle Hay Leazes, Allendale, Northumberland NE47 9NP.

The Pan Galactic Rally in the Lakes on 1/2 December was a great success - many thanks to the organisers.

### NORTH WEST

We are negotiating access for BCU members to the recently restored Rochdale Canal, which passes through some very attractive countryside. Construction work continues at the Burrs site at Bury - do use this facility!

A new committee is in place. Following Jill Bolton's nomination as Access Officer, we require a Treasurer. If interested, please get in touch with our new Secretary Barbara Hitchings, 64 Laidon Avenue, Wisaston, Crewe. We also need a new Regional Slalom Rep.

Congratulations to our Wild Water Racing Team who won the Inter-Regional Event. Phil Dean is interested in hearing from anyone wanting to get started in Wild Water Racing (0254) 831007. The Slalom Team were second at the Llangollen Inter Regional Event. Don't forget Regional Holme Pierrepont weekend 25/26 May for fun, teaching and competition.

### SOUTHERN

The November AGM reappointed the Committee, with new grants and slalom representatives (Peter Collins 0865 820907 and Clive Williams 0635 34926) and reaffirmed our objectives, adding 'purchase of waterways access for BCU members'. See our 1991 Regional Directory (50p at the Crystal Palace Exhibition).

By then our three January Hare and Hounds races at Henley will be over and Paul Owen will

organising his three-race Jeremy West series (first at Woodmill on 27 April - ring 0734 64823 for details). Clive Williams is planning informal slaloms in 1991, to introduce people to slalom, provide for practice and raise funds for rising young slalomists.

The first two of six 1991 regional tours on the Kennet and Avon Canal are from Devizes to Honey Street (7 April) and Honey Street to Crofton (5 May). Ring Ted Moulding (0908) 676343 for details.

### SOUTH WEST

At the well attended AGM on 30 November members were told of the exciting and generous proposals for the 1991 funding of SW canoeing made by the Sports Council. To qualify, club projects must be submitted to the Regional Committee before 1 April 1991 and be related to either the 'Taster' scheme or an objective of the Development Plan. Copies from the Chairman at £1.50 post paid.

The Sports Council Coastal plan safeguards canoeing interests and several clubs consulted during the studies have a further role to play, mainly with local councils.

The touring programme was very successful last year and several new tours have been arranged for 1991. The race training weekends are again a feature of the marathon programme and mini-slaloms will be arranged. Details from the marathon and slalom representatives.

### WEST MIDLANDS

The Holme Pierrepont Rally on 27/28 April will be a two day event with 'Come and Try It', slalom, lilo racing etc.

The Upper Severn Rally on 11/12 May will be a Canadian Canoe Trip from Pool Quay to Shrewsbury, with overnight camp and barbecue. The Ackers Trust Canoe Tour on 18/19 May will be a 35 mile circle tour with about 60 portages! The Stourbridge Half Paddlathon is on 28 April.

For further details on all tours send sae to Mike Hubbard, 78 Derrydown Road, Birmingham B42 1RT, or Dave Bateman, Ackers Trust, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham B11 2PY.

The Regional Handbook will be available on the West Midlands Stand at the Crystal Palace Exhibition.

### YORKS/HUMBERSIDE

Hugh Pashley is the new Regional Secretary, 10 Crawshaw Grove, Sheffield 0742 747874, and Jon Dakeyne is now the Regional Treasurer, 281 Lidgett Lane, Leeds 0532 683560.

Coaching meetings have been fixed for the third Tuesday in March and September, starting on 19 March at 7.30pm at the Buckles Inn on the A64 between Tadcaster and York. All welcome.

The Regional Polo Championships are on Saturday 20 April at Hull from 12 noon and includes the Open, Women's and Under 18 competitions. Entry forms from Marianne Spender, Long Rigg, Booth, Halifax HX2 6SZ. The Polo Prizegiving and Disco Party is on Friday 10 May at the Queens Hotel, Pontefract, details from Marianne Spender.

The contractors started work during December at the Washburn building roads and the water pipes and car park improvements.





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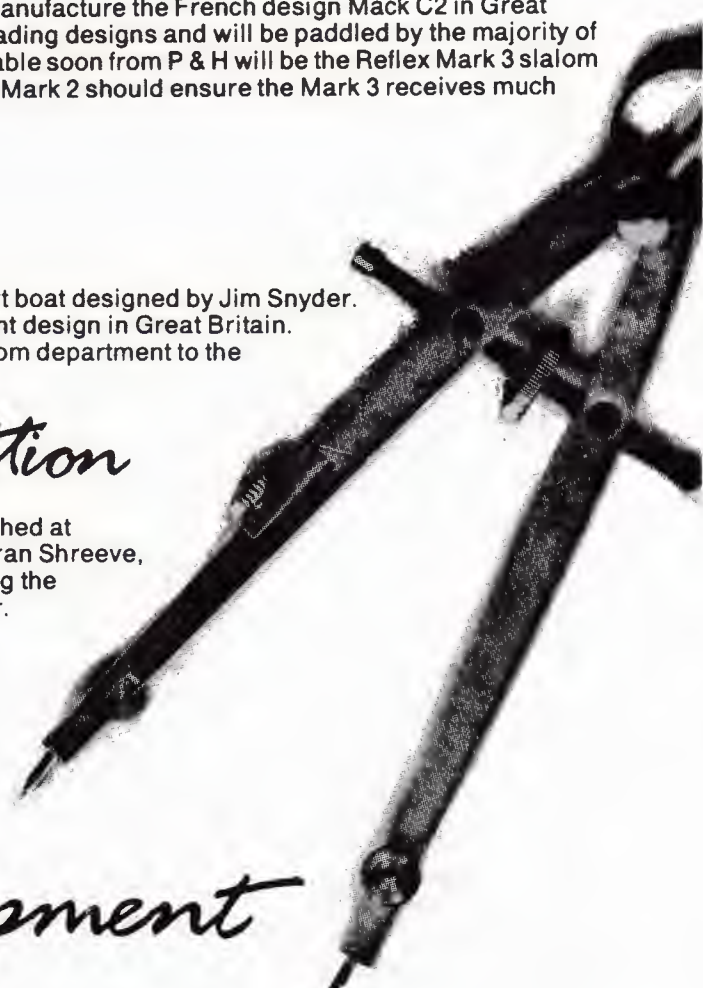
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Details from Paul.

**Group and assistant leaders** are required for summer 1991. Starting in March or June, finish September. Experience of working with children/teenagers in residential Centres within the field of outdoor sport and recreational activities is desirable. Excellent training opportunities available. Details & application forms from: Personnel Officer, Mountain Ventures Ltd, Bryn Du, Ty Du Rd, Llanberis, Gwynedd, LL55 4TY Tel (0286 870454)

**Instructors required**. Climbing, canoeing and sailing. Min grades BCU SI and RYA tidal. Experience in other activities preferable. Min age 21 years. Driving licence essential. Season vacancies March - november and July - September. Apply with cv and recent photo to The Director, Courtlands Centre, Kingsbridge, S Devon TQ7 4BN

**Seasonal Instructors** required. RYA, BCU qualified. Land based skills an advantage. Send SAE for details to: Kielder Adventure Centre, Kielder Water, Hexham NE48 1BS Tel (0434 250232)

**Watersport Instructors** required for May to October 1991 in busy lakeside location. Applications to P Hodgson, Reivers of Tarset, The Comb, Greenhaugh, Hexham Northumberland NE48 1RU Tel (0434 240 245)

## WE WANT PADDLERS

PGL require B.C.U., S.I.'s and other canoeists with considerable experience to instruct children or families for long or short periods between March and October. Minimum age is 18 for the U.K. and 20 for France. Applicants for France should have Canadian experience. All posts are residential.

Details from: Application Department, PGL Young Adventure Ltd, Alton Court, Penyard Lane (820), Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5NR. Tel: (0989) 764211



Jobs 18-30's

## CLUBS

**Causeway Coast Kayak Association**, Northern Ireland; sea kayaking club offers advice, information, companionship and a typical Irish welcome to all visitors to our beautiful coastline. Robin Ruddock, 12 Glenvale Ave, Portrush Co Antrim BT56 8HL tel (823871)





## IS YOUR MINIBUS SAFE AND LEGAL? *asks Andrew Ryland*

*Until I became involved in the bus industry on a professional basis, I did not worry about the legal consequences of using minibuses for outdoor education programmes. Like most leaders, I hired a vehicle from the local garage, and passed on the cost of the hire and/or fuel to the young people, their parents or club. I now realise that had I been stopped by the Police I might have ended up in court, I could have been prosecuted for:*

- \* not having a PSV operators licence
- \* not having a PSV Drivers Licence
- \* using a non-PSV vehicle for hire and reward
- \* not having adequate insurance with potential fines amounting to several thousand pounds.

In practice, this is unlikely, but it has occurred to some people. Besides which, in the event of an accident, my lack of adequate insurance for a 'hire and reward' operation might have meant I would have had to carry the can.

### Hire or Reward

With a vehicle of less than nine passenger seats, it is perfectly legal to pass on the costs of running the vehicle, as long as you don't make a profit out of the operation. It's a whole different ball game, however when using a vehicle of more than eight passenger seats, and this, unfortunately, I had not realised.

If any payments or donations are made, which gives someone the right to travel on a vehicle, whether in money or in kind, and whether by a passenger or a third party, then 'hire or reward' exists.

If, for example, transport is provided by an outdoor centre as part of an activities week and even if this is not identified as a specific cost, attendance on the course has implied a right to travel on the centre's transport, and so either a minibus permit, or PSV Licence, is required.

### LEA's/Charities

Local authorities and charitable bodies such as the YMCA, Scouts or Churches can apply for a minibus permit that allows them to make a charge to cover the cost of the vehicle's operation. However, the vehicle must be up to minibus permit standards, and be maintained and insured for operation as a 'minibus permit' vehicle. The driver need not hold a PSV Licence, although he or she must be 21 or over.

### Private Centres

Private outdoor centres, and freelance instructors, who either own or hire minibuses of more than eight passenger seats for use to provide transport for course members, and who receive payment for the provision of the course, either from course members or a third party, are required to operate their vehicles with a PSV operators licence and with PSV drivers.

If there is an existing business, then the Area Traffic Office of the Department of Transport will be able to issue a 'Restricted PSV Operators Licence' for two minibuses of up to 16 passenger seats. If a larger vehicle is required, or more than two vehicles are to be operated, then a National PSV Operators Licence is required. This requires the member of staff in charge of the transport operation to hold the 'Certificate in Professional Competence in National Road Passenger Transport Operations' (CPC). Exams are held four times a year, and most local technical colleges will offer a training course. Alternatively, intensive 10-day courses are available, with the exam at the end.

### Construction and Use Regulations

Operators of vehicles operated under 'minibus permits', or under PSV operators licenses, should note that construction and use regulations apply. This could mean that the use of high, or heavily loaded roof racks, or trailers that block rear doors from opening, may break these regulations. Besides this, they are potentially dangerous! Also, it's possible to overload a minibus weight limit, without a full complement of passengers.

In conclusion, I believe that statistically we have been very lucky indeed, and all it would take would be a disaster with a number of children killed, and a subsequent press outcry, for the Police to start enforcing the law far more vigorously. If this occurred, I believe some outdoor centres and youth workers might have to stop overnight, or involve themselves in hiring commercial bus operators.

*Andrew Ryland works for Cumbria County Council as their Rural Transport Adviser and is also a freelance outdoor pursuit instructor. (0228 813274)*

**Recommended reading:** *Your Minibus is it Legal.* Published by the Community Transport Association, Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire. SK14 2NY. £2.50 including p & p. ISBN 1 871 633 01 X.


#### Note

The Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) has been nominated by the Department of Transport as a Designated Body for the issue of permits to affiliated sports groups, (this includes BCU affiliated clubs).


The permit disc may be moved from one mini-bus to another, including a hired vehicle, but can only apply to one vehicle at a time.

Send SAE to CCPR, Francis House, Francis Street, London. SW1P 1DE for an application form. The permits cost £2 each.



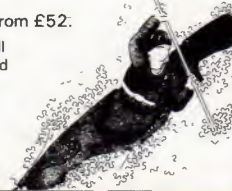


### RIVER DART Canoe Courses 1991



Introduction to Whitewater Skills: 1-3 March. £60  
 Instructor Training/Assessment: 10-12 May. £67  
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 All courses include full board accommodation from £52.  
 Chalet, s/c accommodation for groups up to 16. All rooms centrally heated. Drying facilities. Guides and instructors available through the season.

For details contact:  
**Mountain Stream Activities,**  
 Wydemeet, Hexworthy, Yelverton,  
 DEVON PL20 6SF. Tel: 03643-215





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