

# CANOE

## FOCUS

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# CANOE FOCUS

Canoe Focus The official magazine of the British Canoe Union

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# C O N T E N T S

*The following photograph has been received with the caption 'Les Freres Dangereux espece de con, danse le chute d'Lipra' Any white water paddlers with ideas of where this fall may be please write to Focus, marking correspondence 'Mystery Fall'. There will be a prize.*

# Comment

## NEWS FROM HQ

### APPOINTMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR

**I am pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Owen as Director of the British Canoe Union.**

**By profession Paul is an accountant and management consultant, spending nearly twelve years with Ferranti International PLC – latterly as Financial Planning Manager. A keen canoeist he has made a valuable contribution to many canoeing activities, notably with the Marathon Committee and work for the Devizes to Westminster race. He has served as secretary to the BCU Southern Region and has been involved in publicity work and freelance journalism.**

### SINCERE THANKS

Before I hand over to Paul to make his first contribution as Director to Focus, may I express our sincere thanks to all our headquarters staff team, so ably led by Geoff Good as Acting Director, for the superb way they have carried out the business of the Union in the interregnum and for the tremendous loyalty and dedication they have shown. We are extremely fortunate in the high quality of staff that we have working for us.

**Geoff Sanders, Chairman BCU Council**

### FIRST INTRODUCTION

I write this my first introduction to Canoe Focus as I complete my second week as Director of the British Canoe Union. In these first two weeks I have had the opportunity of meeting many of the people who put in such tremendous effort and my previous involvement in a voluntary capacity has enabled me to get a head start in the post.

My very first day was one of great sadness as I learnt of the death of our President Ron Emes. I knew Ron through my involvement in racing and marathon racing and I was so looking forward to receiving his wise council. The loss of Ron following on so quickly after Trevor Bailey is a major blow to our sport and underlined to me my new responsibilities. I have a hard act to follow.

During recent months I have had the pleasure of working alongside the headquarters staff and I am very aware of the dedication of these professionals who are totally committed to their tasks.

Many of you will already know me but for the record I have been a canoeist for twenty six years. Starting as a kid at home with a "kit" boat made by my brother. During these early years I spent many hours just pottering around on the river and enjoying the recreational side of our sport. At school my competitive sports were athletics, cross country running, rugby, soccer and squash.

I look forward to the challenges ahead with optimism and enthusiasm. Much has been said about the Union's finances and an early priority will be to ensure the continued recovery in this area enabling us to go forward with our plans and aspirations.

**Paul Owen, Director**

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OK. So we are already a couple of years into the 90's and this appraisal is a little late! The issues raised however are not. From the perspective of a long time participant in this branch of the sport I think I can safely claim that 'paddle-surfing' has come a long way since those dim and distant days when 'canoeists' first hit the surf and yelled "Yeehaaaa"!



# PADDLE SURFING

## UK: From the Early Days into the 90's

We will probably never know the name of the very first sit-down surfer; certainly there is evidence that the pioneers were chancing their arm (and their bank balances) in canvas and timber boats back in the 30's and 40's and this is years after the first recorded loop was performed in a Rob Roy touring boat.

### GLASS FIBRE

It was in the 50's when glass fibre was invented and designs began to get more streamlined that surfing took off. Long, lateral runs along the wave were the order of the day and loops and pop-outs were now intentional – mainly because the paddlers could now rely on their boats not breaking up! At this time, the first signs of an 'organisation' and safety guidelines for kayak surfing began to emerge.

### INTO THE SIXTIES

In the 60's the Surf Committee was formed – primarily to organise and run contests. These events became a hot-house for cultivating new manoeuvres and the fertilisation of new ideas. Predating today's rodeo hot-doggers; the top kayak surfers of the day were to be seen throwing in 360, 540 and even 720 degree nose-spins (pivots) – as well as going totally ariel on 'doponts' – All this in KW2's and the like!

By the time the 70's had arrived, slalom kayaks had become lighter more heavily rockered, much lower lined and therefore much more manoeuvrable. The best slalom surfers in this time given a decent swell were crawling all over the face of the waves, performing tight cut backs, serious top and bottom turns wide sweeps and bouncers and were able to hang high enough on the wave face to pick up the odd tube if the wave was right! Frequently all these manoeuvres witnessed in a single, devastating wave ride!

### INTEREST WAS EXPLODING

The major technical development of the 70's however was the arrival of the surf kayak – with its flat hull and chopped down length. This was quickly superseded, 3-4 years later (in 1974) by the surf ski. The early models were around 9-10' long and had no skegs (fins) – dictating the earlier manoeuvres and style; fast and loose and involving side slip occasionally, (such as the 360 degree hull spin). Once the fin became standard, the moves became more tight and radical. By the end of the 70's, surf contests were booming, interest was exploding, skis were getting shorter and every-one, it seems was getting stoked. The hard-

core paddle surfer was a reality; we had our own magazine (Beach break): surf vans (vee dubs) and now be seen on the beaches, loaded up with kayaks and skis – as opposed to surf boards. The paddle surf 'bum' had also arrived.

### SOUTH AFRICA

In 1980 a small team of UK ski-paddlers flew out to the states for an 'unofficial' world ski contest. It was an eye opener. Where as the rest of us were still surfing skis and surf kayaks between 8-6" and 10' long. The South Africans were surging nothing over 7'6". We were solidly and soundly trashed by them! They were performing moves – that the rest of us had never even dreamt of before – "off the lips", "Re-entries", "Floaters", "Cut-back re-entries", etc – we were gob-smacked.

We returned home armed with photographs, hastily sketched plans and measurements and full of anticipation. Within a year, four new 'home-grown', short pop-out skis has appeared in the shops and several of us had also shaped our own custom skis (- all remarkably similar to the South African shapes we had seen!)

In the early 80's, surf contests were getting unmanageable because of the size of entries. The solution taken was for a large number of the ski paddlers to break away from the BCU and run their own 'ski only' events. For those who chose to stay – contests went on as usual but with much reduced numbers.

It is often forgotten by contest surfers, that what is going on at the 'sharp' end of the sport is only a very small (if important) part of the total picture. The vast majority of ski and kayak surfers never hear about contests and quietly graft away at their surfing on the occasional weekend or holiday and simply have fun! For most their main goal is simply to get their kayak pointing in the right direction, or to pull off a couple of smooth cut backs on a shouldering wave or successfully manage their first top wave turn on that brand new-ski; to push their own limits a little further!

The novice gets no less excitement out of feeling the power of a wave on their first soup run, than the expert does from 'catch-





ing 4' of air' on the collapsing wall of a powerful reef break.

At the 'elite' end of the sport, skis are reaching the limits of refinement in design and in the hands of the top paddlers are capable of higher speeds and pulling off "ariels" and carved 360 degrees," etc. At the recreational level, standards are generally improving and the choice and versatility of craft and equipment is growing. In this, the plastic revolution has made a big difference; the short 'fun boats' being much less difficult to control than the old 4m kayaks, and the plastic skis being tougher and more durable than glass skis.

#### 90's FORCAST

The 90's: well, forecasting is always a dead dodgy business, but, for what it's

worth; here goes! As the recession ends (when?) the rate of increase in numbers surfing will pick up again and the problems of overcrowded breaks will get worse – as will the number of injuries.

Surfing can be dangerous and when it is, it is almost always because of the conduct of those doing it! – whether due to ignorance, lack of skill or misjudgment of conditions. Designs will not change much – the main developments have already taken place. However, newer, lighter and stronger materials will allow some areas for development – and will be expensive. Firm boating and squirting has room



for a lot more experimentation and refinement and we may see new developments here, such as the 'mystery' loop, pop out, pivot! Look out for "spot the surfer – if you can" events. Ski performances at the top end have still new moves to discover. For example "Carried figure of 8's "ariel rolls", "barrel rolls", "360 degrees tailspins" and more!

#### ORGANISATION

The organisation of the sport needs more concerted attention – particularly in the areas of contests and in safety. Much has been said about overcrowding, pollution and bad practice. However, as yet, the majority of individuals and clubs have yet to respond to the obvious need for better trained instructors and safer conduct on the water. So, in my view the key issue of surfing, in the UK in the 90's will be about how many take it up and how they conduct themselves! The new coaching scheme for surf has so far only evoked a 'yawn', – yet it has the potential to offer good skills teaching to those who want to learn and good safety awareness for everyone – because we need it.

All photos by Dennis Ball  
Dennis Ball is the BCU National Surf Coach (and a good guy to go surfing with!)

## SURF '92

The surf coaching team are up and running again! We offer an even wider choice of budget surf events for 1992. So beat the recession blues.

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# Obituary

## RON EMES

### RON EMES BCU PRESIDENT 1927 – 1992

It is with great sadness we report the death of our President Ron Emes. Geoff Sanders' speech at the funeral, held in Birmingham on 24 February, is a fitting and moving tribute to a life dedicated to sport.

24 February 1992.

This is a very sad occasion for us all – and we do, I am sure offer our very deepest sympathies to Margaret, to Ron's mother, Ian and Mandy and to all his family at this most trying of times. We remember Ron, his personality, his purposeful life and his many great achievements. We give thanks for his life; for the privilege of knowing him, working with him and above all for knowing him as a true friend.

In the hall of 147 Gravelly Hill there hangs an elegant hand embroidered tapestry, made and presented to Ron by the headquarters staff of the British Canoe Union in 1987 when he retired as Director. It depicts, by the use of appropriate emblems, the different stages of his life.

Ron was educated at King Edward VI Five Ways Grammar School here in Birmingham, served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947 and in the police force from 1948 to 1973. I cannot tell you much of his early days. I was later to become Headmaster of his old school, but there were no horror stories in the records to bear witness that he made his mark there, (though I must report that the only time that I have ever seen Ron unnerved and ill at ease was when, some 15 years ago, he entered the Headmaster's study of his old school, I never did ascertain whether it was guilt or merely a fearful recollection of his old Head). As a policeman, Ron's first beat included the area of his church. In 1962 he became secretary of the Birmingham Joint Branch Board Police Federation, serving as a member on the National Executive of the same Federation, I suspect it was here that he learnt what I might call 'meeting strategies and tactics' which he was later to employ so effectively in the world of sport.

My wife and I moved to Birmingham in 1952 and I contacted Ron when it was discovered that he was Secretary of the Severn and Avon Group of the Canoe-Camping Club. Together we founded the Birmingham Canoe Club, he was as Secretary doing all the work with myself as a grateful Chairman giving support in the background to his excellent work..... a role pattern, I might add, which was to continue in later years in our work together in the BCU!

Ron retired from the police force at the age of 46 and with typical courage and presence of mind started a new life as an undergraduate at Birmingham University, gaining his BA degree in 1976. As a PE student he was about to play his first adult game of rugby, but the start was delayed by the non-arrival of the referee. A young fellow student was said to have remarked that unless he came fairly soon, Ron would be too old to play the game, I can imagine that Ron enjoyed the joke; unfortunately his riposte was not recorded! I am sure it would have been a good one.

Ron became involved in BCU affairs in the 1960s when he joined the Council. He was perhaps more instrumental than anyone in extending the seat of power away from the London area..... so much so that in a few years there was to be talk of the 'Midlands Mafia'. His interest at this time was firmly of canoe racing and between 1960 and 1980 he was the manager, director and coach of the British Olympic canoeing team and training squad-raising significantly the standard of competition in this country. Before 1977 when he became a part-time development officer, he was able to make a great contribution to the affairs of the Union as chairman and member of various sports and recreation committees.

From 1979 to 1987 Ron was Director of the BCU – and the earth moved! For example he was the driving force behind the staging, in 1981, of the first ever triple world championships (in wild water racing, slalom and sprint) to be held in one country in a given year. His deep understanding of the way in which sport is administered and funded enabled the £2 million 'pipe dream' of an artificial white water slalom course to be built at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. It is fitting that he lived to see the headquarters of the organisation to which he devoted his life, established in purpose built premises on the site next to the slalom course at the National Water Sports Centre.

In 1989 Ron was elected President of the BCU, an honour he so richly deserved; he was due to be re-elected again this next month. He had already been granted a MBE for his services to canoeing and an Award of Honour by the BCU Council.

In serving canoeing Ron was to become involved in work with the Central Council



of Physical Recreation and his talents and services were further recognised when he became the Council's Chairman in 1987. As a member of the Sports Council he made an active and valued contribution to many aspects of their work. He served on the British Olympics Committee, the Commonwealth Games Council for England, the National Coaching Foundation Management Committee and with all this work has become a well known, highly respected figure on the national sport scene. You have heard from Professor Orsi, President of the International Canoe Federation, of the high regard in which he is held in international canoeing. Ron will be sorely missed at all these levels of participation; it will be very difficult indeed to replace him.

We all have our own personal memories of Ron – of when and where he had entered and enriched our lives. We must cherish and value these memories, for they will teach us much about – quality of life – about integrity, straightforwardness, courage, firmness of purpose, courtesy, friendship.

My own snapshot memories of Ron include:

- returning from Council meetings in London – on the Birmingham train with the so-called 'Midlands mafia'. No talk here about Council matters, but instead lively, entertaining political debates – always with Ron at the centre of them.

- or the two of us in a car travelling to or from some meeting – Ron talking quietly with pride about Margaret and his family....and certainly not forgetting his cherished grandchildren.

- or at meetings – definitely the star performer after his careful and thoughtful preparation of the business to be discussed.

- his verbal contributions – sometimes lengthy, but always relevant and valuable. And was it police federation strategy which led him to agree enthusiastically with the last speaker and then come to the crucial word – 'BUT' followed by a convincing reversal of the earlier argument.

- his written contributions – as in the reports or minutes he presented – were always valuable and reliable, demonstrating his care, thoroughness and industry.

- lastly, my picture of Ron's stoic determination to continue and the bravery he showed throughout his illness. There were many who worked with him who were simply unaware of just how ill he really was. With cheerfulness and without any trace of self-pity he continued to serve – when, probably most of us would have given up much earlier.

We give thanks for this great man, for his life and example to us all. The memory will sustain us all in the years to come. The final sentence of a recent letter to Margaret spoke for each one of us: "We are given to know few like him, and I am deeply grateful for that friendship".







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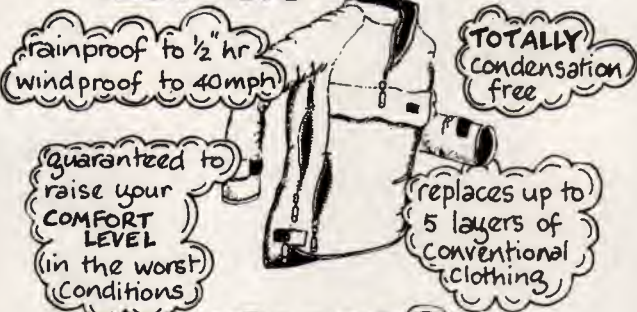
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## INTER-CLUB TRIVIA QUIZ

The National Access Committee chairman, Mike Twiggs, took on a new role recently when he acted as quizmaster Supremo at an Inter-Club Trivia Quiz evening organised by Pennine canoe club at Dewsbury Sports Centre. The evening was intended as a social get together of all the local canoe clubs, but primarily it was a fund-raising event in response to the appeal in the last edition of Canoe Focus for the Derwent Trust.

More than 100 people attended the quiz - teams could be any number of people up to a maximum of 8 - and by charging £10 a team a total of £126 was raised, all of which has gone to the Derwent Appeal.



**Ivanhoe Burrell and Mike Twiggs at Pennines Quiz**  
Photograph: Marrienne Spender

Although the questions were on general knowledge, it was noticeable the worst results emerged from the canoeing section! However, the two teams in the forefront, constantly changing places after each round, were from White Rose with their A Team just beating White Rocket in the final round. Not to be outdone, and to prove the questions weren't fixed, Pennine's team of Sid and the girls came a suitable bottom.....

## LEE TRIATHLON - CALL FOR ENTRIES

British Waterways is organising the Lee Triathlon again this year. The canoe/cycle/run event will take place on Sunday 14 June along the Lee Navigation and towpath from Bow to Cheshunt.

Ford Cellular Systems is sponsoring this year's Lee Triathlon including prizes of car phones for winners in several categories. Last year's Lee Triathlon attracted 150 entries. Overall winner was Dave Hallam of Leaside in a time of 1 hour 23 minutes 54 seconds for the 15 mile course.

Double the number of entries are expected this year. Every

# Notice Board

entrant will receive a special Lee Triathlon T-shirt. New for 1992 is a company trophy for the winning works relay team.

Entries from individuals or relay teams of three are now being invited. Entry forms and full details of the event are available from Carol Lester, British Waterways, Enfield Lock, Ordnance Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 6JG. Tel: 0992 767140.

## LEA BRIDGE WEIR

I would be grateful if you could draw the following letter to the attention of London and South East affiliated clubs and organisations.

Because of a new method of operation, Lea Bridge Weir is liable to give sudden surges to the flow in the old River Lea which could prove extremely dangerous to any canoeist using the water downstream. This means that we are not able to guarantee the safety of any persons canoeing downstream of the Weir for the foreseeable future.

As clubs and individuals sometimes use this stretch for white water canoeing, they should bear this in mind when planning their outings.

## CANOEISTS AND HM COASTGUARD

There were 35 call-outs to canoeists in difficulty at sea, during 1991. The vast majority of incidents appeared to involve inexperienced people in canoes, rather than trained sea paddlers. Any incidents of note are monitored by appointed representatives of the Sea Touring Committee or the Associations.

We are grateful to our Coastguard Liaison Officers, Mike North, for his work in

maintaining a positive rapport with HM Coastguard.

A copy of the schedule of call-outs to canoeists for 1991 is available from the BCU office on receipt of a SAE.

## CANOE CLUB VALENTINE FOR DIABETICS

Dr Charles Fox of the Northampton BIO-RAD Appeal joined members of Northampton Canoe Club during a training session at the Mounts Swimming Pool on Valentine's Day. The canoe club has raised £481.46 from a 25 mile sponsored paddle along the River Nene.

Dr Fox said, "The BIO-RAD machine will improve the speed



**Members of Northampton Canoe Club who took part in the sponsored paddle, with Dr Charles Fox from the Northampton BIO-RAD Appeal**

Photograph: Robin Vowles

and accuracy of the analysis of diabetic control".

The BIO-RAD Appeal was fr £21,500 to replace equipment that was rapidly wearing out. The analyzer is used to test the average blood glucose level of diabetics. Untreated diabetes caused the level of glucose in the blood to rise. This can lead to serious complications such as blindness, amputation of limbs, kidney failure and heart attacks.

The marathon paddle which started from the Northampton Canoe Club at 9.00am. The 12 canoeists stopped at Wellingborough for a lunch break,

and finally arrived at Denford at about 5:00pm. Their Ages ranged from Gavin Hill, the youngest at 12, to over 40.

From Robin Vowles, Publicity Officer, 2 Goodwood Avenue, Parklands, Northampton, NN3 1EN. Telephone: 0604 646892

## ADVENTURE FOR LIFE

Adventure for life is a small but national charity which is aiming to purchase and equip an activity centre in the West Country for deprived, handicapped and disadvantaged children and young people. We need as much help as possible to raise the money needed to not only purchase the building but for all the specialized equipment that will be needed. In particular we need to raise funds to purchase canoes, spray-decks and buoyancy aids and I would like to ask your members whether they would consider holding an event for us or getting sponsored for us in say the Devides to Westminster Canoe Race or indeed any other suitable race. For

anyone wishing to help please contact Franchesca Dening on (0935) 21389 or (0202) 660660.

## CAUCASUS TRIP

In August a group of canoeists including Oisín Hallisey and Mick Murphy from Ireland will be heading to the Caucasus to paddle a series of rivers in the Mt Elbrus area. There they will team up with a group of Lithuanian rafters and will spend approximately three weeks paddling "Alpine Style", ie blitzing rivers near roads.

If any British paddlers want to join this trip I would

be delighted to hear from them, please contact Humphrey Murphy, C/O Tiglin, Ashford, Co Wicklow, Ireland.

Further more if any one is looking for information regarding rivers in any part of what used to be the USSR he should be able to supply them with details and contacts.

## COACH TRAINING

Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Centre, announces a tridisciplinary Coach training workshop from the twenty third to the twenty eighth of August. The course will therefore be for

kayak sea, kayak inland and open cane. The decision to include the canoe coach element has been taken due to more requests from paddlers and the enthusiasm of Plas Y Brenin coaches. As ever, Plas y Brenin is welcoming further course ideas from paddlers, the Norwegian White Water course scheduled for this summer was another students bright idea. There is also a whisper of a Grand Canyon Expedition. Keep them coming.

Further information from Peter Ingram or Peter Midwood at Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Centre, Capel Curig, Gwynedd, LL24 0ET.

#### MAHAKALI RIVER IN NEPAL

Chris Dickinson with John Haugh and Mike Haywood has paddled the Mahakali River in Nepal, the last of the four major river basins in Nepal to be explored by kayak. Paddled in December the river took 7 days from the Api Himal and the 180 km descent had sections up to

1992, and is a member of the BCU/SCA/WCA/CANI and is in full time education.

Prizes will be awarded to individuals and to the winning club/school team. Competitors may use any class of kayak within the current WWR regulation. Further details from Hazel Tordoff, Holly Cottage, Heathlands Road, Wokingham Berks RG11 3AP

#### STRAND TOURING AWARDS 1992

Each year at Crystal Palace the Strand Fibreglass Company present a Canoe to the winner of a lucky draw of Award holders and this year Mrs Lonsman from Ashton Clinton in Buckinghamshire received a new Falchion as her shiny blue prize. The Strand Club Trophy, now in it's third year, was presented to Paul Beck, the chairman of Ackers Trust Canoe Club who, for the second year running, gained the greatest participation prize. A special presentation of a Gold award was also made to Idris Owen, a 68 year old still going



88 year old Idris Owen receiving the Gold Strand/BCU Touring Award at Crystal Palace.

Photograph: M. Hubbard

grade 5 with some unrunnable stuff in the first 20 kms. Chris is also launching a new company called Rapid River Runners, offering quality trips on Nepal Rivers. The first trip will be on the Sun Kosi 4-18 October 1992.

#### BRITISH CANOE YOUTH WILD WATER RACING

This year's championship will be held on Saturday 25 April on the River Bala and is open to any youth paddler who is under the age of 19 on the 1 January

strong, whilst spending much of his time teaching handicapped canoeists on the Montgomery Canal, has also found the time to paddle 500 miles in the year. For more information on the Award Scheme contact Mike Hubbard, 78 Derrydown Road, Birmingham B42 1RT

#### COQUET SHOREBASE THREATENED

Coquet High School's nautical base which was established in 1949 is threatened

# CANOE EXHIBITION

## Crystal Palace 1992

The good weather brought out the crowds for the Exhibition this year and visitor numbers were a vast improvement over the previous two years, showing an increase of a thousand visitors per day. The weekend total was 9696, a 20% improvement.

Although the total number of manufacturers and traders had decreased due to the recession, those that managed to exhibit presented themselves well, and most on leaving were very positive, and had favourable comments. There was much to see and do and numerous new developments in equipment. Paddlers Gear will feature most of what is new in the next few issues. Even if old ideas and products were re-vamped, it was generally done well and the paddler is the main one to benefit (but perhaps not the wallet!) As usual there was something for everyone and the pool competitions and displays were again popular. This years Squirt competition drew much attention, German rodeo star Jan Kellner narrowly winning over Aled Williams, recently returned from Sea kayaking round Cape Horn.

The lecture programme was exclusively for the white water buffs, but all were of excellent quality, particularly Markus Schmidt, whose slides of Mexico prompted questions on the cost of flights; always a good sign.

#### And Next Year

Preparations are in hand for next year, which will be held at Pond's Forge Centre, Sheffield. This is a different venue in character, with a large pool and impressive entrance hall, as well as an equivalent exhibition space. The Centre is well served by trunk roads and rail, with a BR Station a short walk away. Southern visitors should find the cost of the journey North more than offset by savings in other areas; cheaper accommodation, Northern hospitality and none of that Friday evening London traffic.



It will never fly...or will it. An interesting development by McNulty Marine, the TRIAK. Do you sail it, paddle it, or set the controls for the heart of the sun? One of the interesting new ideas on display at Crystal Palace.

with closure in yet another cost cutting exercise. This follows recent reports of the campaign to save Calshot, another of our well established outdoor facilities, in a similar situation.

Vic Brown, Ex Olympic Slalom paddler, has built up the base into a flourishing hive of water activity in recent years: over 200 young (and not so young) people use the base regularly over a year and the base is used regularly to train BCU Instructors. Training and assessment of a wide range of other National awards are included in the programme and

the loss of the base would be a tragedy for the area, and the Clubs who operate from the base. The base is a glowing example of a local facility offering watersports for all at minimal cost. The Minister of Sport called on schools, sports clubs and local authorities to work together to promote 'sport for life'. It is difficult to see how this can be achieved without this very type of grass roots facility. Give Vic your support, write to her c/o Coquet High School, Amble, Northumberland.

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# FISH, FALCONS, CRAGS

## ACCESS

### *and the moving goalposts*

**A fortnight ago I was thrown off the river by a very unreasonable river keeper who was dredging up every conceivable argument for us not being there – including the presence of spawning fish. Now it was a big river, the water was low, but not desperately so, and it came as something of a surprise to have this one lined up against us and backed by two NRA bailiffs, who happened to be close by.**

With a slightly mischievous twinkle in my eye I bounced this experience off Jim, during the course of a run, as a way of putting my reaction to the event into perspective. Now Jim is a mountain, crag and fell man recently converted to canoeing. He is also one of the Lake District's National Trust wardens, well versed in land management, conservation, and dealing with the public, including when they are in the wrong place and doing the wrong thing! His reaction was a mixture of incredulity and in injustice and the steam started issuing from his ears as he drew on his experiences on the climbing crag, mountains at home and abroad and over the thousands of miles of fell running, including work as a mountain guide. In more than twenty five years he could only recall one, Welsh incident where his presence had ever been called into question! Poor Jim, within days of starting canoeing he was having to adjust to the reality (unreality?) of our access situation. I'm frantically trying to reprogramme him to a different world to that which affects other sports, outdoor activities, and the law as it relates to land.

Disturbance to spawning fish is an offense originally intended to protect against poachers and gravel extraction etc. Gradually canoeists came into the possible causes of disturbance and then the Seiont case produced a prosecution and the ploy spread like wildfire around the country. It falls to the N.R.A. to police this law and over the last couple of years we have seen and heard some 'flex-

ing of muscles' against canoeists on these grounds – on occasions with just cause.

#### **PAN GALACTIC**

Here in the Lakes we have established a tradition over the years of keeping off some of the game fished rivers during the fishing season and keeping our paddling to the masochistic, out of season months. Last year in planning the Pan Galactic Rally we sought permission, and in some instances paid fishing interests to be able to canoe certain stretches. Suddenly there was an outcry from the N.R.A. who voiced concern and threatened action against us on a couple of rivers – particularly susceptible in low water and in which spawning takes place in the main river. We duly diverted away from these rivers except for the odd half dozen paddlers, as advised. Even these few paddlers had an interesting exchange with an N.R.A. bailiff. So what about these fish? Salmon and sea trout eggs are laid and buried in fine gravels washed through by a continual flow of well oxygenated water. They avoid heavy gravel, consolidated river beds and areas with algal and fungal growth. Where dead leaves or fine silt accumulates they will not spawn, neither will they choose fast flowing rapids and riffles where the eggs would wash away nor the sluggish deep pool where flow is too poor. Mostly these beautiful fish spawn in tributaries too small to get a canoe down, indeed it is incredible how small the beck's



are in which big fish do spawn. Where they do spawn in the main river it is the outwash of weir and rapid pools where the clean, sterile, washed gravel with optimal flow of highly aerated water is chosen – here there is a danger of disturbance, but just how much? Enough to make us need to be sensitive.

### GOALPOSTS

After the Pan Galactic Rally we were made aware that a couple of our rivers were sensitive, but what about the rest? An odd fish here and there, fish described by the NRA as marginal, where winter flood would bring high mortality to there eggs. What was spawning fish to do with me being thrown off the river – a main river, chosen because of lowish water level? Well the two NRA bailiffs whose presence I was most grateful for, since the river keeper was threatening all sorts of physical abuse, went on to say during our bank side conversation, that – yes this main river was a spawning site and yet to my conclusion that if this main river was an important spawning site then so was every other river in the area. Not only that the eggs don't hatch until March and their interpretation of spawning fish included their eggs as well! The new goal posts were going up faster than I could dribble. Why hadn't they let us know this before? It's a far different cry from a couple of the smaller rivers for two months in low water conditions. Well the reason this lack of communication, I suspect, must be that for years these guys have worked in a clandestine fashion against poachers and to let on where the fish spawn would have opened the way to wholesale carnage and with some of the poaching gangs in this area it would be carnage.

### THE MIDDLEMEN

So where to now NRA? Well, we now enjoy good liaison both locally and nationally. Surely we need to sketch in the guidelines a bit more, sort out which rules are in the book and ensure that all involved in canoeing and

the NRA know which rules were are playing to. It's easy for a canoeist to think of the NRA staff as henchmen for the angling fraternity. The truth is somewhat different and they occupy some of the middle ground attracting perhaps more criticism from the anglers than they do from us paddlers.

### PEREGRINES

As our run progressed the conversation went back to the crags and to peregrine falcons, for which Jim and I shared a good deal of experience. Peregrines provide a good analogy but are more tangible, being easier to see and hear. They are 'schedule one' birds of prey which means that it is an offense to kill injure or take the birds from the wild, and to disturb them at the nest. Climbers come into contact with peregrines like we come into contact with salmon and sea trout, in the breeding season. Climbers found nesting peregrines on some climbing routes and were quick to respond to the letter of the law – where to climb those routes would cause disturbance and risk prosecution and now accept that certain routes and small crags fall out of bounds for a few spring and summer months. The bird protection fraternity have a realistic idea of what level of disturbance the birds can take, possibly because the birds are so much easier to observe than fish, and don't make unreasonable demands of the climbers. Unfortunately four months out of the climbing year is a lot different to the scenario of part of the year for spawning fish and the rest for catching fish!

If we took the same path with spawning fish as has been taken with nesting peregrines we might arrive at the same level of enlightenment and co-operation. At present we are only just setting out and we have a long way to go. Since the NRA have the brief for fisheries management and conservation as well as for recreational use of water, the writing is on the wall. When you consider the millions spent each year on fishery related work and the hundreds spent on anything

remotely to do with canoeing as a recreational use of water, it does make you stop and think – briefly! We can draw some satisfaction from the good relationships which now exist between canoeing and the NRA at all levels throughout the country, and we can voice some sympathy with the task that faces them. We can be as supportive and informative as possible to oil the wheels and we can express some pleasure at the guidelines which are on their way down to river bailiffs regarding canoeing and the recent willingness of the NRA to look at the effect of canoeing on fish. My only concern would be over objectivity.

Whenever I have spoken to fishery staff, who have spent a working lifetime on the side of the fish, often in an undercover world protecting animals which they cannot easily see they give an impression of ultra sensitive creatures being easily disturbed. As a biologist I will take some convincing that my own observations are so far removed from the reality and that the fish require such 'kid glove' handling in order to flourish. The lazy movement of a fish away from the canoe, the number of times they jump so close as to frighten us; that the turbulence from the canoe or my paddle will uncover eggs more than the increased flow from the next shower of rain. That a fish moving away from the gravel redd will not return at the mercy of that powerful instinct which has driven it up river past innumerable obstacles.

Man's treatment of fish in recent centuries is based on them being lower vertebrates which lack the sensitivities of the birds and mammals. I would campaign for fish being treated better but I will take some convincing that they need the level of protection, from canoeist, which is being voiced. I'll certainly do my bit to spread the word for care and sensitivity to meet their needs, as I perceive them, but without the experts coming up with objective evidence and showing me where the goal posts are I don't think I can be considered irresponsible to behave as I do.

**Mike Mills RAO**

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# Paddlers GEAR



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## KIWI 2

The Kiwi 2 is the latest rotomoulded polyethylene kayak from Perception. Following on from the success of the Kiwi, particularly with family and disabled groups, a double version is an obvious continuation to the "Family-fun" theme. The first impression is of a well finished, shortish but stable-looking double with one large open cockpit (rather than the usual two cockpits) revealing two comfortable seats with moulded backrest. The front seat slides easily fore and aft by loosening wingnuts mounted on a lateral alloy tube. This enables trim and leg length of the rear passenger to be simply accommodated, or adjustment for solo paddling. The broad beam ensures excellent stability, a must for this type of kayak, instilling confidence to the beginner or nervous paddler and ease of mind to passengers. Although only 391cm long, there is ample room for two large adults, so this kayak is ideal for family outings and for an able bodied instructor to take a disabled person or paddler of lesser ability onto the water to introduce them to the sport of kayaking. The single kiwi comes with a 'clip-on' child's seat. This will be offered as an optional extra to the kiwi 2, so that a small child can be carried between the fore and aft seat. The paddler in the rear their feet on the forward seat, while "Keepers" adjustable footrests will be fitted for the front person. The keel line follows through into an integral

skeg, incorporated in the rear of the hull. Coupled with the fine bow entry, even a beginner can achieve paddling in a straight line. Therefore enjoying the 'trip' rather than fighting to keep in a straight line. An easy to paddle kayak for all abilities, from first-timers to old-timers. There is plenty of room to carry an assortment of outdoor gear required for a day out or even a camping holiday. The kiwi 2 is light enough to be carried with ease by two people. The 'piece de resistance' is the optional "Deluxe Car Top Package". A moulded lid with foam cross struts fits over the open cockpit, the entire boat is then inverted and sits comfortably on the roof. Webbing straps through the car doors and over the boat, hold your boat safely and easily on the roof, eliminating the need for expensive roof racks. Wet and muddy surplus equipment can, of course, be carried in the boat leaving more room and freshness in the car. The appeal of this versatile double will be widespread: from families who enjoy waterbased fun, to youth groups who wish to take out accompanied beginners, for those catering for less-able paddlers, to holiday hire companies, to name but a few. Like the kiwi, the kiwi 2 is available from most retail outlets across the country.

Further details are available from Perception Kayaks, Bellbrook Business Park, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1QU. Tel: 0825 765891/2.

## THE DAGGER FREEFALL

Although more well known for the open canoe market, Dagger are forging ahead in their kayak design with the introduction of their latest kayak the Freefall. This little gem completes an important trilogy with the Response a large volume kayak for heavier water, the Crossfire a high performance stunt/rodeo kayak and now the Freefall. First glance and a Turkish slipper immediately springs to mind with its funny upturned nose and stern designed probably to improve its recovery performance after taking a steep drop. It does recover well after drops and is quite stable and although unconvinced at first I was soon on bigger falls to test and find its capabilities, I was not disappointed. Whether it was designed specifically to freefall, as its name implies only perhaps the designer knows, but its



Photograph: D. Crooks

length is what really interested me. As a devotee to freefalling and a known advocate of the longer kayak for this activity. Freefall fulfils very adequately the market between the Spud and Mountain Bat. It's length gives it an amazing manoeuvrability without losing the ability to accelerate and hold a good level of speed. In comparison with kayaks of similar length I found the Freefall outperformed in its turning ability and time to maximum speed. It's light and responsive handling leads me to think it will do well in the play-hole market where its volume also allows an interest for the more serious paddler. It has a very comfortable cockpit with excellent knee/thigh braces, and a well sculptured seat, in fact it is the first kayak I have ever paddled without recourse to pad for the hip, and did not miss a backsupport which is not a standard fitting. A large cockpit almost allows the immediate release of the knees but the excellent thigh braces which give such a comfortable fit and the central pillar do not allow unrestricted access in a tight situation. The seat has an elasticated loop for flask or throwline but this restricts further any

although excellent for comfort and grip while in the kayak dig into the crook of the shoulder and very soon leaves a very painful spot. All who carried her (and I gave her away for this activity many times, for a genuine testing reason of course) had the same problem and after a long walk in to a Welsh classic was left with a painful bruise for several days. The decals or Freefall badge is very poor and will let it down on presentation for the British market but overall I found the Freefall a delightful little kayak and a pleasure to paddle. It will provide a real bonus for the larger paddler looking for a smaller boat while also giving good value to the lighter paddler needing a larger kayak. *Philip Blain*

Length: 9' 6"  
Width: 24.5"  
Weight: 38LBS  
Cockpit Size: 34" X 17.5"  
Volume: 71 US Gallons  
Cost: £435

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It started last New Years Eve when I decided this year I'd do something different...By February a friend and I had decided to canoe the Caledonian Canal, quite different enough for one who didn't know there was a difference between a kayak and a canoe and had never sat in either.

# COPPERMINE CANOE TRIP

By March we'd purchased said canoes and had a crash course on learning to paddle...by August I was dumped out on a float plane somewhere in the Northwest territories, Canada, all set to canoe the Coppermine River through the Canadian Arctic out into the Coronation Gulf.

The previous months had seen much activity – a practice trip to Scotland (our nearest Arctic equivalent?) with two of the orchestrators of the Canadian trip, we were still trying to find a fourth member to our party. It was a teaching trip! This is a rapid Lesley, this is how to swim out of a rapid Lesley...this is how to lose all the gear out of the boat Lesley...

## STRANGE MEN

We begged, borrowed but did not steal our gear – I had a lovely sunny trip along the Caledonian canal getting muscles into training...and now here I was with three relatively strange men on Redrock Lake having just been dropped off by a noisy float plane. We were 250 miles from Yellowknife, 285 miles from Coppermine – and it was up to us to get there.

I'd met Dave (our gallant leader) a year or two back, Gert (our chef) on the practise trip and Mike (our court jester) and fourth member of this flung together team, at Calgary Airport.

I must admit to a good deal of apprehension – would I be available to cope with these men for three weeks with no other female company, the isolation of the region and associated dangers, my inexperience as a paddler or a camper, (I had never even seen rapids the size of which we were about to venture down) and my level of strength and fitness – I'd been lifting weights but had finally admitted to the others that this meant of a couple of cans of tomatoes from the cupboard...my spirit of adventure was dwindling...rapidly. I wanted to be able to pull my weight, not be a passenger. However I did have confidence in the others abilities and trusted their judgement – besides which they thought they could cope if I had a fit of the heebie jeebies half way down a rapid. I don't know who was the more foolish – me for going or them for providing the opportunity.

As the float plane left and the absolute stillness became apparent, we took in our view and breathed the clean air – we were here at last. Relief rather than abject panic...we'd

finally got here. The light up there is quite incredible – it's clarity and intensity are really different from here, skies which go on and on, everything shone in the clear sunshine. Sparkling lake, sandy shore, scrubby land – but still greener than I'd thought it would be. A lovely warm wind and a clear blue sky became the norm for our weather – only getting a cold northerly wind and a bit of snow in the last few days. In six layers of clothes that was when I felt like a real Arctic explorer.

## HELLO MR BEAR

We started as we meant to go on – Mike got his feet wet – Get started shouting hello to Mr Bear (our bear deterrent) – Dave looked for a comfortable campsite and I stared out towards the horizon wondering what on earth I'd let myself in for. 285 miles to Coppermine, all dependant on one another to get there. Tired from last minute food shopping and travelling, we went for a quick paddle, cooked our steak and went to bed – soft tundra and a good wind to keep the mosquitoes, black fly and "no-seeums" away. It didn't get truly dark – there was a sort of twilight – then it grew light again. We found we needed our early morning tea, and hence a fire and realised that a quick get away would not be a part of the trip – our record of getting up and off was 1 hour and 20 minutes and we were trying! We decided to shift our day timewise – up at 4am to avoid the bugs and to catch the afternoon wind whilst setting up camp again. Since it was light all night it didn't seem strange to go to bed at 8pm. We kept to this routine until the mornings got too cold and misty, shifting our time to 6am, the cold keeping the bugs away – if it rained we stayed in bed!

The routine of breaking camp, paddling, GORP stops (a wonderful mixture of nuts, fruit, chocolate chips – which some people ate more of than others – and picked out all the brazil nuts), lunch stops, swims and setting camp again soon became our total existence. The complications of life at home faded away. It became the norm to cook on an open fire, to clean you teeth in a different spot each night and to be living out doors all the time. I even got used to the trowel and loo roll stops, you always got an amazing view. I must admit to never managing a pee from the canoe as the others did.

The idea of a journey, of travelling, became

more important than big white water. With the river's changing nature, and the surroundings closing in or opening up depending on the steepness of the river valley meant that each day offered new experiences. Fast or slow current, boils, placid lakes, too much wind, changing rock colour and formation, rapids...

The water we were paddling – lakes and flat water to start with were perfectly clear, you could see your paddle slice through the water and the bottom, when shallow enough, showed brightly coloured rock or sand. It was a delight to scoop water out to drink – ice cold and clear.

Such a trip for an inexperienced paddler is too full of new things to write a technical write up – I hardly remembered manoeuvres straight after finishing a set of rapids let alone now. This is more a collection of half remembered thoughts.

Our first set of rapids took me by surprise. I'd got quite used to our river being calm and flat – these were supposed to be little, not even named on the map – should I really be able to see leaping white waves 1/2 a mile away? Cold feet all over again. What if I panicked – we'd still got miles to go and this was the first of many rapids. Gear was tightly – very tightly – tied in, that did little for my confidence! However it's amazing what you can do with a good look and route planning...and instructions being bellowed from the back – put your paddle in the water Lesley, – Lesley put your \*\*!!\* paddle in the water. Lots more water than I was used to and big bouncy waves, a couple of break outs and we were through. Hmmm. I was quite glad to reach the next section of flat water.

We lined the top section of the next set of rapids and then set off straight thought the biggest waves "to see what would happen". Wow. I think that was when I decided I was going to enjoy this. Down a chicken shoot then time to find another campsite. You never thought the next site would be as good as the night before, but somehow with the tents up, fire lit, a brew on, and dry feet each place took on an atmosphere of home. Some sites were better than others – less bugs, dryer softer ground. None were anywhere near awful and we only spent one evening hunting for a site having moved from a site right by a beautiful stopper (where's my kayak – Gert) because of blueberry stained bear droppings

– the first we'd seen so deemed it wise to avoid camping at what looked like an excellent bear fishing spot.

Towards the end of the trip the rapids became more plentiful – delightful after a three day paddle through alluvial plains! There are numerous small boulder fan rapids that we picked our way down and then a



sequence of biggies!

Rocky Defile, Musk Ox, Sandstone, Escape and finally our only portage, Bloody Falls. The site of an ancient Inuit massacre.

### ROCKY DEFILE

Rocky Defile – where the river runs through a Basaltic cut. The first of the named rapids, the one that everyone gets anxious about, the start marked by two large shoulders of red sandstone, the river accelerating and disappearing around an "S" shape bend. All we could see were large waves... We had lost our good weather so entered the gorge without our beautiful blue skies overhead. It was a definite "look see" rapid, so we climbed the cliff path, a well defined portage trail, carrying some of our gear to lighten the boats. A somewhat sobering experience to come across a memorial to two people who had drowned in the rapids. We inspected fairly carefully – decided we could do it – and do it we did with incredible grace and elegance, beautifully controlled back paddling, a few breakouts, some ferry gliding and Rocky Defile was defeated. Once started there was no going back, who said canoeing through a gorge gives a sense of commitment?

Each set of rapids is different, the next two were done without inspection – instead we went down leap frog fashion following one another, break out to break out. Musk Ox provided a big bouncy chute, Sandstone a bit more manoeuvring to avoid a large rock in the middle of a fast current. Escape done only after a good look, through a gorge again, with big ledges in the wrong places. Mike and Dave took a very close look at the inside of a stopper there... Finally Bloody Falls, 10 miles from Coppermine, the beginnings of civilisation apparent. Fishermen, litter, trampled ground. It seemed sad and quite bizarre after so long without seeing anyone else. Bloody Falls is magnificent, lots of roaring water disappearing round a bend between two steep cliffs. It's in two sections – each apparently not too bad, but together pose serious problems. Without extra buoyancy, helmets and a couple of throwline experts it was deemed unrunnable. Dave and Gert drooled but only paddled in the last of the haystacks the following day just to say they had been in it!

In a sense the trip finished for me at Bloody Falls. Seeing people again brought us

back from a timeless existence. We only had ten more miles of paddling to reach Coppermine and knew the trip was coming to an end. Having decided not to run the falls we carried gear over the cliff tops – a fairly tortuous, steep and slippery portage trail. Tents were put up, dinner cooked and then in a light drizzle went back for the canoes. The first time they



were going to travel without the aid of water! I must admit to leaving this to Dave and Gert who pushed, pulled, panted, shoved and eventually got the canoes up the trail. We retired damp and tired to toast our success...

The last miles to Coppermine through the widening river were tinged with some sadness – more dwellings, people, signs of civilisation, until at last Coppermine and the Coronation Gulf. Pulling the canoes out of the water for the last time we were greeted by some of the local people. Coppermine is an odd collection of old and new, mostly prefabricated buildings, some large and new others tiny and shabby, rusty and brand new "All Terrain Vehicles" and Skidoos side by side, old Inuit natives and very Western youngsters, drying Caribou meat, dead fish and the ever present coke cans. We reported to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (so that a search party wasn't raised) and pitched the tents for the last time. Arctic char for supper donated by the life guard who came to say hello – we had to admit to having lost all our spinners in attempts to catch the massive fish found lower down the river. All we had to do was weight in the canoes at the air freight station and get ourselves back to Yellowknife and from there home. We spent our last evening drinking mulled wine and looking out over the Gulf with an Arctic sunset laid on especially for us. I remember feeling more tired than at any other time of the trip...but we'd done it!

So many moments can't be condensed into one report, I'm left with a few favorite memories, a taste or smell – did you know Tesco's sell Arctic Char? (Best cooked over an open fire – freshly caught of course).

Watching Arctic terns with their ludicrously long wings wheel and turn and dive. Bald headed eagles, so plentiful we called them budgies.

Skinny dipping lunch spots way north of the Arctic circle.

Lazy paddling in what was the last of our sunshine, with a hazy view of the Coppermine mountains my bow paddler slumbering under a tilly hat making no contribution to our forward speed.

Gert's amazing ability to produce a fire complete with oven at any time, any place, any weather.

Master chefs pork satay with peanut sauce. Early morning mists and silhouetted

paddlers looming.

The fish – this big – that got away – with our last spinner.

Losing the trees and seeing a bleaker yet still beautiful landscape.

Feeling so pleased with myself after the very first set of named rapids – Rocky Defile, running through an "s" shape gorge – execut-



ed with absolute brilliance...

Watching a herd of caribou cross the river, some being swept a considerable way down stream, then clambering out and up the bank not 30 yards away. Magnificent animals all huffing and blowing, tossing their antlers, while we ate our stew, with beef (so the packet said).

Getting a glimpse of two wolves, spindly looking creatures, much whiter than I'd imagined, staring at us from the bank as we floated past, turning to run, then stopping again for another look, finally tearing off in a white streak.

Climbing up a hill to view the land beyond our river and at last feeling some of the true isolation – miles and miles of green and blue, lake and river systems everywhere. Suddenly our river became insignificant a tiny ribbon in such vastness, yet in reality our only route to Coppermine.

Two grizzly bears playing at the waters edge – one sniff of us and they were off.

Sitting on cliff tops viewing the river working out a route and trying to gauge the speed of current and height of waves.

The many in jokes that developed and the ease with which we all pulled together despite not really knowing each other well at the outset. If someone was extra tired the others did just that bit more. I didn't feel a passenger – except when I stopped paddling to take in the view...and although I was quite glad to see some of my girl friends when I got back the men really were quite excellent company!

Our flight out of Coppermine followed the route of the river – we saw three days paddling in about five minutes – our speed telescoping time, the river didn't look the same – I'm sure it was meant to be paddled.

- So what am I left with?

Cracked hands, a brown face, 720 slides, some new friends, some new skills and a burning desire to go again, only this time we won't forget the port and we'll go for longer!

Our thanks to Reed Canoes, Sat Zero Clothing, and Lion Equipment, for providing things to keep us warm and dry, for thermals to Rucksacks.

*Lesley Hammond was accompanied by Gert, Mike and Dave.*

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## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

It was good to meet so many fellow canoeists at Crystal Palace, to hear their views and learn of the many exciting developments around the country. I hope that next year at Sheffield I will be able to meet an even greater number of members. Meetings between ERM, WCA, SCA and CANI continue. I have had only 1 response to my appeal for your views. Come on you democrats what do you want? ERM has proposed that paddlers should only be eligible to represent the region identified on their membership card. This proposal has still to be accepted by Council.

Ron Hodgson

## EAST

Having recently taken on the job of eastern region secretary, it was good to talk to some regional paddlers at the canoe exhibition. Thanks to those who supported the stand. Club secretaries should have received the regions yearbook (1992); additional copies are available at £1. There is an immediate need to improve communication throughout the region, the committee will be re-launching the regional newsletter. Please send me details of your club and county tours, courses and competitions ASAP, as well as amendments to the yearbook. Dates coming up include regional slalom championships at Cardington (club weekend) on 18-19 July, Lee Valley triathlon 14 July and Blackwater Tour 5 April. Finally the region still requires a touring representation – any volunteers?

Judith Coffin

## EAST MIDLANDS

Well, as the new year settles down the weather improves, it must be time to dust down the canoeing equipment and make for the river. To find out what is happening in your region, send a supply of stamped addressed envelopes for your free copies of the Regional Newsletters. To whet your appetite: flat water slalom series on the Winfield Pool at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, Friday 15 June, Sunday 12 July and 2 August. Erewash canoe Race – Erewash canal, Long Eaton, Sunday 10 May starting 12 noon; entry fee £1.50 per seat. We wish the new centres at Lincoln Scout Centre and Boston Scout Community Centre all the best with their new facilities.

# Regional ROUNDUP

More details in the Newsletter obtainable from P Mulholland, 23 Riddlings, Allestree, Derby.  
**Pearl Mulholland**

## LONDON AND SOUTH EAST

Is your club interested in canoe polo? Maybe you're not sure how to start. Phil McClintock, the new regional polo rep, is trying to meet this need by organising a tournament at London University on 4 April. It is open to non-league and lower division teams. Even if you've never played before, this is your chance to have a go. All the advice and equipment can be supplied on the day. A second tournament for teams in division 2 and above will be held on 11 April. Over the 2 weekends a regional polo seminar plus grade 3 referee training and assessment will be organised. Notification of these events will be sent to all clubs in the region.

Chris Childs

## NORTHERN

Conquet Canoe Club 'Round the Island Race 1992' 28 June; details from Vic Brown (0670 513544). Junior Classic canoe marathon 25 May; details from Ray Hudspeth, Tyne Valley Canoe Club. Regional weekend at Nottingham 4/5 July; details from Don Raspin (0287 50668). Next meeting Northumbrian Canoeists 23 June; Cumbrian Canoeists 25 June; for dates and times contact Regional Chairman or see full details on Northern Region Forthcoming Events lists, available from the secretary Mr D Pope forward SAE. We are again invited to take part in the Hadrian's row and paddle from Newburn on 20 September; details from Mary Armstrong (091 3846118).

Mary Armstrong

## NORTH WEST

The region's Holme Pierrepont weekend is on 23-24 May. Excellent weekend for all levels and interests; guided tours down the course, rafting, hot dogging etc; space to do your own thing; audience

supplied. The answerphone is now operational on 051 644 0701 after 6pm for regional information. If you want to answer back please ring Ian Thompson 051 648 1095. Friends of Allonby are hosting an international canoe polo tournament at the Albert Complex Liverpool on 30-31 May. Victoria Marsh is now the womens rep. Stuart Marshall is now looking after the display stand. He would welcome any material sent to 25 Richmond Avenue, Grappenhall, Warrington. Copies of the newsletter are available from Mike Burt, 19 Mill House Lane, Croft, Warrington.

Mike Burt

## SOUTHERN

The 1992 regional recreational programme comprises a camping weekend on the River Wye, based at Mordiford, over the 2-4 May Bank Holiday, and four theme tours. These are on the Basingstoke Canal (King John's Castle visit and gourmet lunch) on 17 May (contact 0252 850657); on the Thames and sidestreams near Godstow (barbecue) on 21 June (contact 0295 710123); on the Grand Union near Stoke Bruerne (visit to Waterways Museum) on 5 July; and on the Hamble (up and back on the tide – the Howard's Way Tour) on 27 September (contact 0252 713818). Contact Ted Moulding (0908 676343) for the Wye and Grand Union events. Thanks to Eyot BC for again hosting a most successful regional series of four Hare & Hounds winter training races.

Charles Hicks

## SOUTH WEST

Regional newsletters are sent to clubs but BCU members who wish to receive copies should send an SAE to the regional secretary. Bids for Sports Council grants for club development for 1992-1993 must be sent to the regional chairman or secretary (not direct to the Sports Council) urgently – otherwise we could miss much of our entitlement. The

regional training weekend at Holme Pierrepont will take place on 13-14 June. Details of costs, programmes etc from Nick Robinson, 15 Barnes Wallis Way, Churchdown, Glos, SAE please. Don't forget; "Canoe 92" on 27-28 June at Pewsey Leisure Centre with canoe trade stands, polo demonstrations to publicise our sport. National Canoeing Day 5 September with the Brixham Harbour race on the Sunday.

Jim Cornwell

## WEST MIDLANDS

Holme Pierrepont Fun Weekend 25/26 April; hot dogging, star testing, WW training, rafting, touring; at 5pm on Saturday Dave Thompson hopes to beat the H/P challenge (February Focus); contact Mike Hubbard (021 356 7619). Brum Century, 100 miles around Brum 2/3 May contact I Potter, 2 Hobart Drive, Walsall. Upper Severn Canoe Rally 9/10 May contact R Drummond (0743 365022). Ackers loop 16/17 May overnight camp. Padlathon 3 May Ironbridge to Bewdley sponsored event. River Wye tour 7 June; information Dave Bateman (021 772 3739). Calling all disabled and wheelchair paddlers interested in trying marathon racing; Collin Keridge (0533 356696) will be pleased to hear from you. Regional Handbook £1 from M Male, 20 Alcester Road, Finstall, Bromsgrove, Worcs.

Mike Male

## YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Members of the Region are being offered a copy of the newly updated – and BCU approved – Canoeists Guide to Yorkshire Rivers at the special discount price of £3.95 (normally £4.95). To obtain a copy send cheque (payable to BCU Y&H Committee) to Norman Taylor, 73 Gateland Lane, Leeds LS17 8LN quoting BCU number. All members of the Region should have received their free copy of the Y&H 1992 yearbook. Anyone who has not received one should contact Hugh Pashley, 10 Crawshaw Grove, Sheffield S8 7EB. The Swale Charity Paddle held last October raised over £2400 which has been presented to three charities. The marathon coach Richard Ward is holding a coaching weekend on 2 and 3 May; further details from David Gent 0484 518913.

Marianne Spender

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## SEA KAYAK CLASSIC ANGLESEY



### 2<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 1992

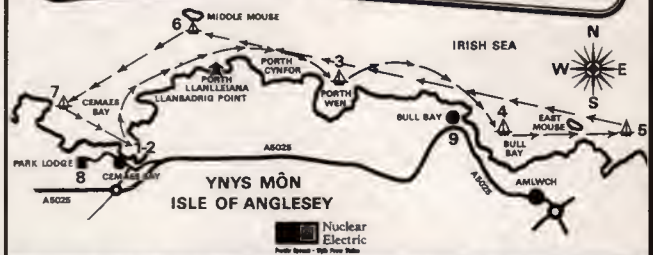
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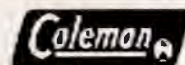
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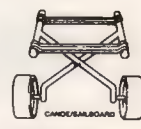
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## Announcements

**Arethusa Kayak Club** wish to congratulate Stephen Lenney and Hilary Middleton on their recent engagement. A sale of redundant canoeing kit will be held in the near future.

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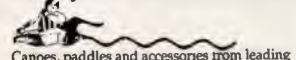
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## Dear Focus

We enjoy reading your magazine a lot. But we think you put too much white water things in it. It would be nice if you put more things in it about calm water, marathons and sprints like Hasler races. We paddle Rangers. We are sure that other readers of Canoe Focus that paddle racing canoes would be pleased if you put things about marathons and sprints etc in the magazine. Eg photographs of canoes and races things about crew boats, canoe course and race information. We are very keen paddlers and are in divisions 9 and 8. We go to Leighton Buzzard canoe club.

**Jenny Lumb age 12 and Joanna Shipway 13**

## Dear Focus

Hi, just like you, I have a Bust and just like you, and many others like us, I have gone through the pains of decompression, etcetera, etcetera!!

My first buoyancy aid, was taken apart, a zip was inserted, this meant I could at least get into it without all the pushing and pulling over the head. Then recovered to allow for more breathing allowance and pockets, but this meant it slipped up when swimming. Finally discarded for a made to measure design.

If you want something doing do it yourself, has been my motto, and as I am a qualified seamstress it was not too difficult.

Since the start of my canoeing, in 1988 I have made the kit for the family, (with 4 doing it I can't afford to bye) and after recovering and enlarging one buoyancy aid, I then purchased some foam from the manufacturer and produced my first expedition buoyancy aid, again made to measure.

The rule being I will produce this kind of equipment for who ever rescues me!! I have now completed 3 other expedition aids. And survive to make more.

Though not tested, (by BCU) when on the River Teme 2 years ago in high water, in a difficult stopper, and 'out of my boat', my new buoyancy aid was tried and tested well, and I have not found any problem (whilst capsizing) since.

My own is not an expedition class, but could be made that way if I reach that requirement. It has more buoyancy than a

# Dear FOCUS

normal aid would have and foam over the shoulders to assist when portaging.

It is comfortable to wear, allows breathing, for me no paddling restrictions, and I think neat.

Self help solutions are a possibility but great care should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient buoyancy and is up to the BCU standards in other respects i.e. closures and strength. Bear in mind also that it would not be strictly legal in many situations. In most competitions B.A's must conform to the BCU/BCM standard.

**Mrs Delia L. Ellard**

## Dear Focus

During a recent 'open' weekend on the Dee, the footrest and karabiner rails were removed from my mountain bat. Theft of such specific items obviously suggest a canoeist. If any of your readers (including canoe retailers) are offered a 'good deal' on such items or any second hand items for that matter, would they ask a few questions first before buying.

Fellow paddlers tell me that theft of this sort is on the increase. Why do we tolerate it? Can we not reduce it's appeal to those who do it by avoiding suspicious 'deals' and displaying a little more integrity?

Information on the items mentioned would be gratefully received by myself or the police at Llangollen.

Yours foot restlessly, G Jones  
Dear Focus

The February 1992 issue of Canoe Focus highlighted several areas of concern regarding the reporting of canoeing facilities. Being members of the coaching scheme the continued safety of the people we introduce to the sport is of paramount importance. Safety awareness has to be learnt and we therefore feel uneasy when we read incomplete reports, cursory paragraphs or no report at all when fatalities occur.

Despite several reports in Focus and an official statement in CoDe regarding the drowning of Trevor Bailey the fact that the K2 lacked adequate buoyancy only emerged five months after the incident. Is it possible that senior BCU officials do not consider this an important factor in this incident? What recommendations would they suggest for future K2 paddlers?

The same issue of Focus also states that in 1991 there were seven canoeing deaths. Two of these were reported, only Trevor Bailey's in any detail.

While we appreciate the fact that it is not easy for fellow paddlers to come to terms with a fatal accident, paddlers finding themselves involved must be encouraged to share their experiences. While there is an understandable reluctance to talk about and discuss the circumstances which contributed to an accident, how can we learn from these experiences? How can we prevent a similar situation arising again?

Only by sharing this information with a wider audience will anything be learnt, then something positive might come from a seemingly negative situation.

The same must happen when "near-misses" occur. These are probably easier to discuss as the outcome is not so tragic. If we are aware of the contributory factors then maybe we can change our approach for future trips, thus preventing a "near miss" becoming a "hit"...

There is not a complete solution - ours is a risk sport - but we must continue to reduce those risks by every means possible.

**Paul Kilham BCU Senior Instructor and Pam Peatroy BCU Senior Instructor**

## Dear Focus

Director of Coaching comments: we do try to report

on anything of significance, following an accident. The fact is, that the vast majority of canoeing accidents occur to untrained people, who are invariably poor swimmers, not wearing a buoyancy aid. We will, however endeavour to comment on each incident in future, rather than provide a periodic resume, as is included in this Focus.

Recent attempts to report on fatalities and 'near misses' have run into various difficulties due to such things as service personnel being implicated, other Associations having to be consulted, those involved being unwilling to allow their report to be used.

We rarely receive reports of 'near misses'. However, moves have now been made to try and improve on white water safety education through constant reporting and analysis of both fatalities and near misses, and your contributions in this respect, will be welcome.

With regard to the drowning of Trevor Bailey, other correspondence received infers a 'cover up'. If I had wished to achieve this, and was capable of doing so, the best course of action would have been to have made no comment to the police when checking out the K2 as it was brought ashore, and then visited the boathouse later in the evening, and stuffed a block in the stern!

Further, I would hardly have referred to the matter in the report on the inquest in the last issue of Focus.

The missing buoyancy block was one factor in a sequence, any one of which could have made the difference between life and death. Had Trevor elected to wear a buoyancy aid, had the wind conditions not been misinterpreted, had they worn spray decks, had they eased off paddling a little sooner when the swamping occurred, had Trevor stayed with the swamped kayak - the bow was quite capable of supporting a swimmer - then the outcome may have been difference between Trevor deciding to stay with the kayak - which his partner commenced to drag ashore - or swim away.

The fact of the matter is that in the conditions prevailing on the day, in the sheltered confines of the regatta lake, any reasonably experienced racing kayak paddler, discussing the issues,

is likely to have concluded 'if the worst comes to the worst we can always swim for it!'.  
This does not make it right. Clearly, mistakes were made. Apart from the ultra-cautious, however, I do not believe that many of us are so careful of the basic golden safety rules in everything we do, that we do not all, at some time, run the risk of being 'caught out'.

The result usually, is merely embarrassment, or a feeling of 'I shan't do that again in a hurry'. Occasionally, as in this instance, the consequence is tragic, and out of proportion.

The result usually, is merely embarrassment, or a feeling of 'I shan't do that again in a hurry'. Occasionally, as in this instance, the consequence is tragic, and out of proportion. In the final analysis, Trevor was a mature person and sufficiently experienced to make his own decisions. He knew the 'rules', but took a chance, with dire consequences. I believe that once established in the sport, we have the right to make these choices for ourselves.

On the other hand I shall continue to press our long standing policy of the necessity of novices and white water canoeists wearing buoyancy aids at all times, and everyone paying attention to the basic precepts, to avoid such tragedies.

**Geoff Good, Director of Coaching**

#### **Dear Focus**

I am writing with reference to recent discussions in Canoe Focus about open canoe sailing and international sailing canoes.

Alan Powell suggests that the two types of craft are at different stages of the same evolutionary trail. He is not alone in that view; several others have made similar comments, but I disagree. My own open canoe is not a sailing dinghy and never will be. For me the beauty of the craft is its versatility: I can use it by myself or with one or tow others; I can paddle canals in it, run rivers or sail on lakes in it. A good example of this versatility is a canoe-camping tour along the Great Glen: paddling the Caledonian Canal, sailing the lochs and running the rivers.

The International 10sqm canoe has undergone a long evolution into a high performance sailing craft which is extreme even by sailing dinghy standards to which it surely has more similarities than to a general purpose canoe or kayak.

I could draw a parallel with say a wave-ski; a craft which although it could still be defined a kayak has evolved to such an extent that it has greater similarities to a surf-board than to a general purpose kayak. Of course it even shares their same big-wave environment. Now surely no one potters and picnics using a waveski just as surely as no one uses an International Canoe for touring and camping. Both craft, though very good at what they're good at, have lost their versatility.

My canoe in "sailing mode" admittedly doesn't sail as efficiently as a good dinghy don't perform well down grade 2 or 3 rivers. NO boat can please all people all of the time but I certainly find that my boat pleases me most of the time and in a wide variety of applications.

I would hope that the rules which we in the open canoe sailing group use will ensure the retention of the boat's versatility and the encouragement of safe techniques. These can be fostered by events which include the different canoe "modes" ie, poling, paddling, portaging and perhaps even and "upset race" where the boat must be capsized and recovered before continuing. Indeed one annual event already established is a sailing/paddling race at the Royal Canoe Club meet each October.

Canoeing is a joy to me because of the variety it offers being in effect a number of subsports under a common banner. We are all on the same side nonetheless, each one of us intent on having fun just messing about in boats.

**Keith Morris**

#### **Dear Focus**

May I take this opportunity to thank all the plastic boat paddlers who assisted my 14 years old son on the Holme Pierpont Slalom course on 25.1.92.

His slalom boat had become swamped after the spraydeck came off and he got out at the side leaving his boat to complete the course. It did this nicely but came to rest squarely on a 'dalek' with the cockpit facing upstream and full of water.

Several minutes later the boat folded but remained firmly wedged. For the next 45 minutes a group of paddlers

with plastic boats tried to remove my sons boat. The weather conditions were freezing, the water on 2/3 flow but they tried relentlessly. One of them even jumped in to try and attach a line, but was pushed with some force into the damaged boat and dalek.

After all attempts had failed I returned to the changing room block and asked how long before the water flow would reduce. The gents reply in the bib office was "as soon as I press a button" which he promptly proceeded to do. Considering the course was extremely busy, it was a very thoughtful and helpful act on his behalf. Some 15 minutes later, with the flow reduced the very same paddlers turned up to remove my sons boat by attaching a line to the cockpit.

After a total of 1 and 1/4 hours the slalom kayak was retrieved (it is repairable) and things returned to normal.

I do not know the names of anybody involved, but would like to offer a sincere thanks to them for assisting in what appeared to be an impossible situation. It certainly restores faith in human nature.

Thanks to you all.

**Mr Terry Wardle and Stefan Wardle**

#### **Dear Focus**

We read with interest your article on buoyancy aids for women and visited the 'women in canoeing' stall at the International Canoeing Exhibition. We genuinely want and tried to obtain buoyancy aid to fit us, two 5' tall female life-guards. We found it indeed impossible though many stalls were very helpful and sympathetic, and had obviously read the article too, but such aids are not designed for the obvious needs of women.

In particular we visited 'Crewsaver' and refurbished our needs, even offering to trial such luxurious and necessities as small buoyancy aids with pockets that do not ride up and are not deemed 'adult'/child secure they fit men. My vice captain's husband who accompanied us noted that Crewsaver produce everything for everybody - dog buoyancy aids or even cats but not one for the wife.

We feel this sums up the current situation with the forth

coming Olympics and paddle day many smaller people be them small women, small men or children will be inducted into the sport but they will face horrendous problems of getting kit to fit and will be forced to go onto the water with ill fitting equipment which makes parity of achievement and opportunity impossible to achieve in a sport which could do this.

**YM Wood (sec), V Summer (vice cap), A Summer (husband) Birmingham Lifeguards/BCU Lifeguards Unit.**

#### **Dear Focus**

I would first like to thank you for the benefits I have received from the BCU over the last 4 years as a member. Having been a recreational paddler for 18 years now the last four without doubt have been the best. Due to the help of local access officers in planning varied sea and river trips.

I introduced 2 friends to the sport 3 years ago and have unsuccessfully tried to introduce them to the BCU and the nail went in my coffin lately while paddling the Tees.

We had an excellent trip, again due to the help and advice of others in the shape of Russ Smith at Four Seasons Barnard Castle. Russ was bugged by me for days checking on the river level as we did not want to paddle above our level - thanks Russ.

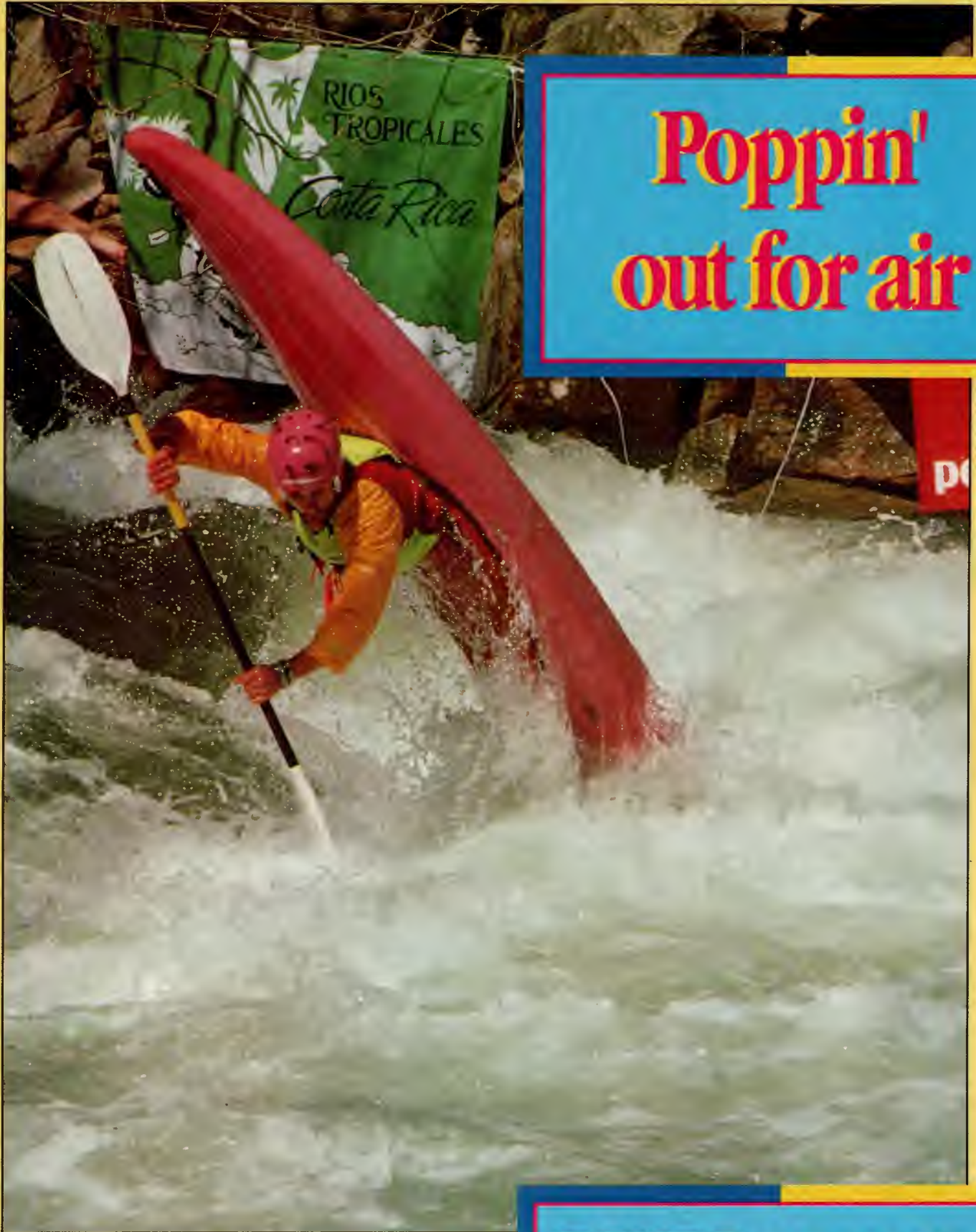
Disaster struck in the form of paddlers we met up with - they were playing about as we came through them one by one - one by one we smiled and uttered a greeting - no reply not a smile or a grunt I felt like ripping their BCU stickers off their boats and sticking them somewhere more useful.

Maybe it was because we had budget boats, paddles and helmets not bats, green paddles and fancy hats. For the immediate future we have lost 2 potential members due to lack of attitude!

Come on no matter what we paddle or at what level we paddle at least give the next paddler a smile it can go a long way!

**Johnny Gillespy**

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# Competition FOCUS

## CANOE POLO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The canoe polo national cup competition finals were once again held during the Crystal Palace exhibition. Top teams from all over the country had qualified to compete in the three classes of open, ladies and youth. OPEN The open first round started on Saturday morning and saw the exit of last years runners up Luton to Scottish champions Woodmill, but otherwise produced no surprises.

The quarter finals were also held on Saturday, and Meridian and St Albans 'A' had comfortable victories over St Albans B and Viking respectively to earn their semi-final places, while Woodmill came from behind to beat Humberside 3-2 in the last thirty seconds of the match. Defending champions Bere Forest had the biggest fright however in the last quarter final when Meridian B led at half time and took the game into extra time before Forest finally scored the winner in the last minute. LADIES Sunday morning saw the start of the ladies competition, with St Albans A and Mutineers going through to the semis to play St Albans B and Woodmill respectively, the latter two having been given byes to this stage. YOUTH The youth quarter finals followed, and St Albans went through after extra time against Tynemouth along with Viking who beat Humberside 4-0. Friends of Allonby and Bere Forest were given byes to the semi finals.

The first ladies semi-final produced no shock, with St Albans A beating their own B team 3-1, but the other semi between Mutineers and Woodmill proved much closer. Full time finished with the score at 1-1, and the match was only settled in extra time when a quickly taken free throw enabled Mutineers to score into an open net, and earn their seventh appearance in the final.

The youth semi finals did produce one surprise, with Friends of Allonby beating youth league champions St Albans 3-1, while Viking looked strong on their 2-0 defeat of Bere Forest.

The open semi finals promised to be two very tight games and they did not disappoint. The first

semi pitched Scottish champions Woodmill against Meridian, national league champions in 1990/1991. Woodmill controlled the game for much of the first half but could not get through the Meridian defence, and it wasn't until two and a half minutes into the second half that the deadlock



Jim Bright

was finally broken. Meridian won possession in defence and broke very quickly, allowing Dave Higson to score into an open goal and give Meridian a crucial lead. Woodmill piled the pressure on and were finally rewarded with a Martin Shires goal with only thirty seconds left. Tough tackling and controlled possession by Woodmill were the dominant features of extra time, and no goals resulted, making the game the first of the tournament to go to penalties. Meridian fell apart during the shoot out and Woodmill went through to make their fourth final. The second semi final really was a battle of the giants, with defending champions Bere Forest taking on League champions St Albans. Not surprisingly the game was very close, and as half time rapidly approached it took a piece of individual brilliance to put St Albans ahead. Alan Vessey succeeded on paddle flicking the ball into the top corner of the Forest net, while practically stuck in the corner and with his back to the goal! In the second half Bere Forest fought back well and following the interception of a poor St Albans pass, Gary Linton was able to score into an open net. Sudden death extra time followed, and a well placed long ball from

Mike Vessey was sufficient to set brother Alan free to score his second and the winning goal, taking St Albans into the final and setting up the chance of a league and cup double. FINALS The youth final was a game of many chances, but it was defending championships Friends of Allonby who scored just five seconds before half time against Viking. A strong fightback by Viking was not enough with many of their shots off target, and the Liverpool side defended well to retain the youth championship.

The ladies final was a repeat of the previous years fixture, with defending champions Mutineers playing St Albans. This year it was St Albans who took the initia-

unfortunately for them Chris Parkes was in fine form on the St Albans goal. The southerners had two more chances on the break, Mike Vessey hit the bar with his effort, but Alan Vessey put his chance away with only ten seconds left on the clock to give St Albans a 4-1 win and their second cup championship. The polo at Crystal Palace once again provided excellent entertainment and this year there was a great deal of open and attacking play which may explain why only one game went to penalties. Congratulations to Friends of Allonby for winning the youth championship and to St Albans for achieving league and cup doubles in both open and ladies classes.

Andrew Leafé

Action from the polo championships

### Crystal Palace 1992 - Polo Results

**Open 1st Round**  
Luton 1-4 Woodmill  
Humberside 3-1 Bere Forest B  
St Albans B 2-1 Luton C  
(after extra time)  
Meridian 5-0 Avon Assassins  
St Albans A 4-1 St Johns  
Viking 4-1 Friends of Allonby  
Tufty 0-9 Meridian B  
Bere Forest A 4-1 Birmingham  
University

**Open 1/4 Finals**  
Woodmill 3-2 Humberside  
St Albans B 1-7 Meridian  
St Albans A 4-0 Viking  
Meridians B 2-3 Bere Forest  
(after extra time)

**Open Semi Finals**  
Woodmill 4-2 Meridian  
(on penalties. 1-1 full time  
score)  
St Albans A 2-1 Bere Forest  
(after extra time)

**Open Final**  
St Albans A 4-1 Woodmill

# TOP TIPS

*and handy hints*

Outfitting a boat, like so much else, is a personal thing. We end up with (unless rich or uncommonly keen) one boat to serve a variety of purposes. Contrast this with the native builder, who designed specifically for the conditions that he would operate in and could improve each subsequent boat with any thought of modifications.

## OUTFITTING AN OPEN CANOE

These notes are based on my own interest in solo expeditioning and although specific to plastic/Royalex boats are applicable to most open canoes. However there is always a danger of believing that one's own method is the 'right one'. Straight away I will declare that this is 'my way' and as I see other methods or think of improvements, it will be subject to change. I have however made the outfitting as versatile as possible to cope with anything from a force 5 wind on a Scottish loch to a grade 3 rapid. A couple of rucksacks along with spare paddle, a pole, bailer, sponge and other odds and ends could lead to a very cluttered boat. The thought of becoming entangled in this gear in an upset frightens me. For this reason, I have tried to keep things as simple and tidy as possible.

### END LOOPS

I remember the pain when I drilled the first hole in my Royalex Pathfinder: I had not even got a scratch on the boat at that stage! One pair of holes in each end of the canoe to hold a small loop of 10mm rope: in the event of a boat being pinned on rocks, these end loops provide bomb proof attachments. Its no good tying onto the carrying handle on the deck and relying on the few pop rivets to hold it in place.

### RECOVERY ROPES

I cannot resist trying to find the limits of both my boat and my skill: either way mean plenty of swimming and therefore having a system of recovering my own boat is useful. The basic idea is simple: by attaching a throw rope to the boat in advance,

upon capsizing you grab the throw bag and swim like crazy for the bank and then quickly run the rope around the nearest rock or tree. I had started by having a single throw bag attached to the side of one of the seats, a system that seems to work well on some boats by flipping them on their side and emptying them of water as the tension came on. This did not work well for my Old Town Pathfinder so I moved the bag to the end of the boat and, because of the disorientating effects of the best swims, a second bag was placed at the opposite end. Placed under a couple of pieces of shock cord attached to the deck and with one end of the rope clipped via a karabiner to the end loops, it only takes me a moment to locate and free the throw bag. A group of us were being assessed for our Advanced Proficiency and we had looked at various pulley systems using the throw-rope. A little later and back on the river, I was attempting to surf a large wave. The inevitable happened and I went for a swim. Not in the least perturbed, I treated it as an opportunity to show off the system. Grabbing the throw bag, I struck out for the bank. The rope was not holding me back at all, in fact it was feeding out better than ever before, feeding out too easily! According to the onlookers I stopped, thrust the throw bag into the air and my chin dropped! I had neglected to clip the throw bag and had merely placed it under the shock cord; my boat was shooting off down stream while the assessors and both the older candidates fell about laughing. So remember that the system works very well as long

as you, a) reach the bank before you run out of rope, and b) remember to clip the rope to the boat. Swimming down a rapid accompanied by an open canoe is not a healthy occupation. If a swamped canoe is caught broadsides on to a rock, a force in excess of a ton will be applied to it by the water in event the simplest rapid. In many cases, particularly if the boat has little buoyancy, it will gracefully wrap itself around the rock; this is termed a bear trap when the canoe wraps around the victim and the rock! If I am in the slightest doubt as to my ability to keep upstream of the boat and out of trouble, I quickly get well clear.

### LACING THE SIDES

Back to the drill! One of the things I find invaluable is the ability to fasten gear anywhere inside the boat. Some manufacturers provide their own system of tie-ins attached to the gunwales. Again this demands considerable faith in a set of rivets and I have seen two boats wrecked after the gunwales have popped and all the gear and buoyancy had floated clear; in both cases this occurred in the powerful but flat water at the ends of rapids. I have drilled a series of holes about 4cm below the gunwale and 10cm apart. These are threaded with 5mm rope creating a series of attachment points inside the canoe; with a tight fit there is no perceptible leakage. As an extra I have run shock cord down the inside of the boat by twisting it through the interior loops of the threaded rope; this enables me, by pulling a loop of the shock cord out, to quickly secure things such as a

sponge or the end of the spare paddle and yet have them readily to hand ( by putting more shock cord under the seats, spare paddles can easily be secured at the blade end). When practising lining and tracking, try running the bridle ropes up through the exterior loops before tying inside the canoe. This method enables one to easily adjust the position of the bridle to get the best performance.

### BUOYANCY

If your boat does not come with buoyancy already fitted then it needs some! Most plastic/Royalex canoes barely float on the surface when swamped; sit in them and they have the tendency to float below it. This makes them extremely vulnerable in a rapid and worse than useless in open water. Personally, I favour small inflatable buoyancy bags at each end. The solid end tanks made by Perception are extremely heavy and seem out of place in a journeying canoe that will inevitably need to be portaged at some stage. By attaching a short rope to the buoyancy bag, then threading it through the bow or stern rope where it loops through the boat, the air tank can be secured into the end of the canoe. A thin rope crossed through the interior side ties of the canoe and over the air bag finishes the arrangement. I normally carry all my day or camp gear in a series of dry bags inside an old rucksack. This is yet more buoyancy for the boat, once tied in. Both ends of the securing rope are best finished with a quick release knot (eg A round turn and two half hitches, with the hitches tied using a bight of rope) so

the gear is readily available. Trim is still critical for a competent performance. On river trips I often place all the gear in front of the bow seat; this allows me to move my own weight forward easily to free the stern for a reverse ferry glide or, by moving to the rear seat, go bow high and power on down the easy sections. On open water the tied in position of the gear is determined by the wind direction. Some people argue that this method makes a swamped canoe heavy to pull over a rescuing canoe. Unfortunately, the conditions that swamped the first canoe may endanger any boat that attempts to help. It is better to guarantee that each boat will stay afloat. Another system sometimes recommended, is to tether each bag on a rope so that they can float clear during a swamping. Personally I find that things get in the way in a rescue and I have a horror of catching my legs in the loose rope. The maximum buoyancy is definitely needed when building catamarans or trimarans with improvised sailing rigs. I have, on one occasion sailed a catamaran straight under; all the gear was on tethers so we ended up with all the gear floating at the end of short ropes, four of us in the water and two boats level with the surface but lashed together with timber and ropes. We were lucky that we were close to shore otherwise our only alternative would have been to cut everything loose and then perform a boat over boat rescue. If it had all been lashed in, then we could have paddled it ashore.

#### BAILER

Either attached via a very short cord to a karabiner and clipper to the boat or, as in the photographs, a ring of old inner tube can be whipped to a seat and the bailer simply pushed into the rubber.

#### POLES

I seldom set out on a journey without a pole but these versatile bits of kit are awkward to stow. With split poles I use a combination of the side shock cord and a short cord around a thwart. By drilling and placing a small wooden block on the yoke an inch or so from the gunwale, aluminium or bamboo poles can be bent and held into place against the side before tying in.

#### THE FLOOR

Once wet, things get very slippery. Many is the time I have put in a really impressive bow

rudder only to find that the canoe has continued on in a straight course with me executing a fast 180 degree spin in the bottom of the boat! Many people get around this by gluing a thin sheet of closed cell foam into the bottom; I have not yet done this; I make do with either a pair of knee pads or a good solid brace with my knees.

#### BANG PLATES

With the plastic/Royalex boats these kevlar and resin kits do a good job of protecting the bow and stern.

#### YOKE

The easiest way of carrying an open canoe (once it is up there on the shoulders). I have left mine in the carrying position. Some people move theirs to get a better central paddling position; unfortunately that then means that you must improvise a carrying yoke.

#### SADDLES

Brilliant for specialist white water canoes but out of place in a journeying boat. By fixing the paddler and hence his/her weight in the centre, it means the canoe is no longer paddleable in the traditional style which is so appropriate to multi day trips.

#### KNIFE

The system I have been describing leaves one with a remarkably uncluttered boat, however ropes and water are not a good mix. A good knife, easily accessible and capable of being used with one hand is a sensible precaution. The thought of being dragged down a rapid behind a swamped canoe is not a nice one. Get out there and experiment. Think about improvements and modifications to any system and keep your mind like your canoe, open. Remember that it is hard to retain total faith in your own infallibility when, occasionally, the canoe and yourself arrive at the bottom of a rapid..... separately. Recommended reading: Song of the Paddle..... Bill Mason Canoeing Wild Water..... Cliff Jacobson

*Ray Goodwin is a partner in Experience of Adventure, Llandrillo, who run courses for all ages and abilities, and all levels. Contact him on 0490 84348*

*All photos by Ray Goodwin*

**1. General layout.**  
The drilled and threaded hull is clearly visible. Note the shock cord holding, the paddle and pole; also the section of inner tube gripping the bailer



**2. Reverse Ferry Glide.** With the rucksack and the paddler both forward, the stern is unweighted making the manoeuvre possible



**3. With the gear still in the front, the paddler has moved to the stern to get the bow high for fast forward paddling.** Note the throw bags on rear decks and clipped to end loops.



**4. The recovery system in use.** John has swum to the bank and the boat is now penduluming in. Note how high the canoe is floating



**5. The fully swamped canoe remains paddleable, just!**





## PHOTO COMPETITION

The photographs in the BCU Yearbook have been well received with many of them causing comment. One vintage shot of National and Olympic Slalom Coach Alan Edge has caused more interest than most. Someone telephoned Alan and left two minutes of laughter on his answering machine in response to the mugshot above. As it has aroused so much interest here is the full uncut version. A kayaking history test here; to win a BCU tee shirt please write and tell FOCUS: who took the photo, the World Championship year and who were Alan's team members.

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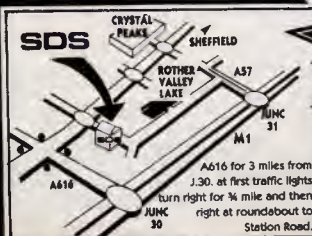
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**Full kevlar** carbon north shore excel slalom kayak. Blue deck, clear hull 9kg, GC £200 for quick sale. Tel R Benson 0602 783522

**Full Kevlar Dolphin**, high volume WWR VGC £225. Dirolen Concept top slalom canoe VGC £125. Tel: D Sloney on Sheffield 369221

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**Gaybo low volume** kayak, good allrounder, sound repair work, reasonable condition £50. Tel: Mr Travers 0202 721120

**Gaybo Midas sprint K1**, GC, kevlar under stern rudder £200 ONO. Tel: J Perrier 0438 350249 or Ellen 0438 739294

**Gaybo slalom C2** with offset cockpits (right hand rear), complete with foam seats, leg straps and 2 spraydecks, £140 ONO. Tel: M Lawrence 041 772 8640

**Grumman 13** aluminium canadian canoe. 2 paddles, 2 buoyancy aids. All only used 6 times. As new £400. Tel: D Robinson 081 744 1852 (day) or 0932 349179 (evenings)

**Haze shadow 2000** GRP slalom. Brought at last years canoe exhibition and hardly used £160 ONO. Tel: M Hay 0379 384306

**Islander expedition** sea kayak, VGC, 3 years old, white/orange, incl suunto compass, VCP rudder and spraydeck. £355 all incl. Tel: D Martin 0703 268404 answerphone

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**K2 Falcon**, overstern rudder, VGC £390. Tel: G Hunter 0442 254911 Marsport Falcon K2 ideal for DW, overstern rudder, metal grab handles, VGC, with roof rack attachment to fit roof bars. Will deliver if not too far. £500 ONO offers. Tel: S Coe 0272 246080 (evenings).

**Lendal Wings** 219 RH 70 degrees black, used only twice £80 ONO. Cost £100. Tel: J Oliver 051 639 9379

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**Mohawk Canoes** 15ft XL15 £650 ONO, 16ft White water £680 ONO. Tel: S Finch 0628 485031 or Ross 09323 41626

**Mountain bat**, full ww spec. excellent condition, £300, rotobat, full ww spec, GC £200, freestyle hardly used £180, nomad (high-volume glass-fibre touring), VGC £120. Two AP/2000 helmets £20 each. Two crewsaver buoyancy aids £20 each. Quadrant buoyancy aid £20. Tornado dry cag £20. Gul wet suit £20. Pyranha spray deck (for mountain bat) £20. Ottersport paddles £10. Nylon spray deck £10. Wet suit boots £10, BDH's. Roof rack to fit Ford Sierra or similar gutters) £25. All items open to offers. Tel: K Dudley 0702 386862 or 0376 48691 (evenings).

**New unused paddles** for sale due to retirement. Spring C1 159 cms 875gms £80. WWR asymmetric C1 625gms £70. 3 WWR symmetric mercier C2 625gms £70 each. 2 slalom C1 mitchell £70 each. 2 WWR C2 balsa mercier symmetric 143.5cms, 480gms £80 each. 2 WWR C2/C1 balsa mercier symmetric 145cms 515gms £80 each. Tel: A Stanley 0502 76 677

**Nomad extra**, kevlar hull and seams, glass deck, badger footrests, also bushsport neoprene spray deck for extra, both in excellent condition £240 ONO. Tel: R Mills 0352 720667 (answerphone) Nordkapp HM sea kayak, full expedition rigged (pump,

compass, lines etc), lots of extras. GC and bargain at £300. Tel: I Macnab 061 737 6206

**Perception Sabre**, royal blue, excellent condition, £180. Tel: J Forman 0227 471751 evenings,

**Pink Linear stunk bat**, ww £300 ONO, one carbon kevlar, dominater slalom boat, £50 ONO. Tel: S Rodgers 0229 53788 after 4pm

**Prijon Gattino** (red) excellent condition £320 ONO. Tel: J Crouch 021 429 5257

**Prijon Invader** 1 year old VGC £220. Also new 7 CWT capacity canoe trailer and lights carry 4/6 kayaks with large box storage 7.4" x 4.4" x 19" £275. Tel: S Rich 051 608 7191

**Prijon Invader** 1.5 years old, one careful lady owner who requires a lighter boat £300. Tel N New 0223 60125 (evenings)

**Prijon T slalom**, full plate footrest, airbags, red, good condition, £250. Tel: D Shemmans 0462 671229

**Pure Perfection** custom waveski, blue, pint and yellow, christo footstraps, lapstrap, multifin trifins, bumpad, coily ankle leash. Hardly used hence £300. Tel: D French 0983 730394

**Pyranha competition** slalom kayak, carbon/kevlar construction, GC £150. Tel: Mr Travers 0202 721120

**Pyranha Stunt Bat**, WW spec, pink, one year old, but little used hence excellent condition, £280. Tel T Orchard 0373 453050

**Red Prijon T canyon**, rear and front airbags, deck lines, sound condition, comes with yak deck to fit £250. Tel: D French 0983 730394

**Schlegel double torque**, full carbon, 204, 2 sets, brand new, all reasonable offers considered. Tel: M Galbraith 0786 72816.

**Small volume Nomad Extra** suit 11-14 year old, VGC, blue/white fade £160. Tel: A Parratt 0472 882233

**Three Fibreglass** 'Perfect' pool bat £25 each or all 3 for £60 plus 1 wild country 2 man 'Quasar' tent. £280 new will sell for £200. Tel: M Manfield 0420 475525

**Sea King Sea Kayak**. Blue and yellow, 3 hatches, deck lines, pump, VGC £250. Can bring to the Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace. Tel: D Youren 0977 799059

**Skerray sea kayak**, excellent condition, expedition model with deck pump and skeg; too large for small paddler, £550 ONO. Tel: A Wheatcroft 0293 786457 weekdays between 1900 and 2100 hours

**Solway Dory Canoe/Kayak** sailing rig, little used, perfect condition, complete £150. Tel: Howard 0602 863770

**Two Sea King kayaks**, yellow and orange, deck fittings, spray decks and cockpit covers. Little used, VGC £550 for the two ONO. Tel: A Hall 0472 346271

## WANTED

Bubbie or spud, whatever condition. Tel: A Ellard 0788 810076

**Open canadian**, preferably 16ft, plastic or GRP. Also paddles and buoyancy aids. Tel: S Marshall 0925 267342

**P & H Iceflow** or Iona sea kayaks. Tel: D Youren 0977 799059 Yak double spud/topolin duo for university club. Tel: Alex 0786 63431 (please leave a message).

**Polyethylene C1**. Tel: R Fletcher 0403 58830

**Slalom K1** in GC for J12 paddler; cut down kayak would be ideal. Tel: A Bartlett 0703 790887

**Struer Ranger K1** (or similar) and Glider K2. Any condition considered. Tel: A Stanley 0502 76677

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Merseysport** have 10 Poly Pippin 14s in need of repair to give away, if the person can collect. Anyone interested should contact our site manager Rob Sutcliffe on 051 708 9322

## STOLEN

**Bright yellow K1** from Leicester Rowing Club, first week in February. Unique South African 'Jaguar', distinctive features: DW no 438, patch for where feet have come through deck, clear hull. A bit tatty but great sentimental value. Tel: O McDonnell 081 427 1877

## FOUND

**River Lire** below Hack Fall a Schegel paddle. Owner to identify. Tel: N Wilson on Harrogate 503024 Ext 4205

**Grumman 17'** aluminium open canoe ww spec, GC £350. Prijon T Yukon touring kayak, GC £150. Tel: R Dickinson 0628 34926

**Huron open** canadian canoe 16' mahogany gunwale and thwarts. End sealed compartment £125. Tel: C Gosly 0723 513628

**Rotobat** excellent condition £250. Prodigy metallic deck GC £250. Maestro met deck £350. Two MkII Aeroquatics £370 each (Excellent condition) Dagger Response £300 Tel: Jason 0602 502361 after 5.00pm

**Tiger K1** in GC suitable construction for marathon. Tel: S Smith 0905 55007



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