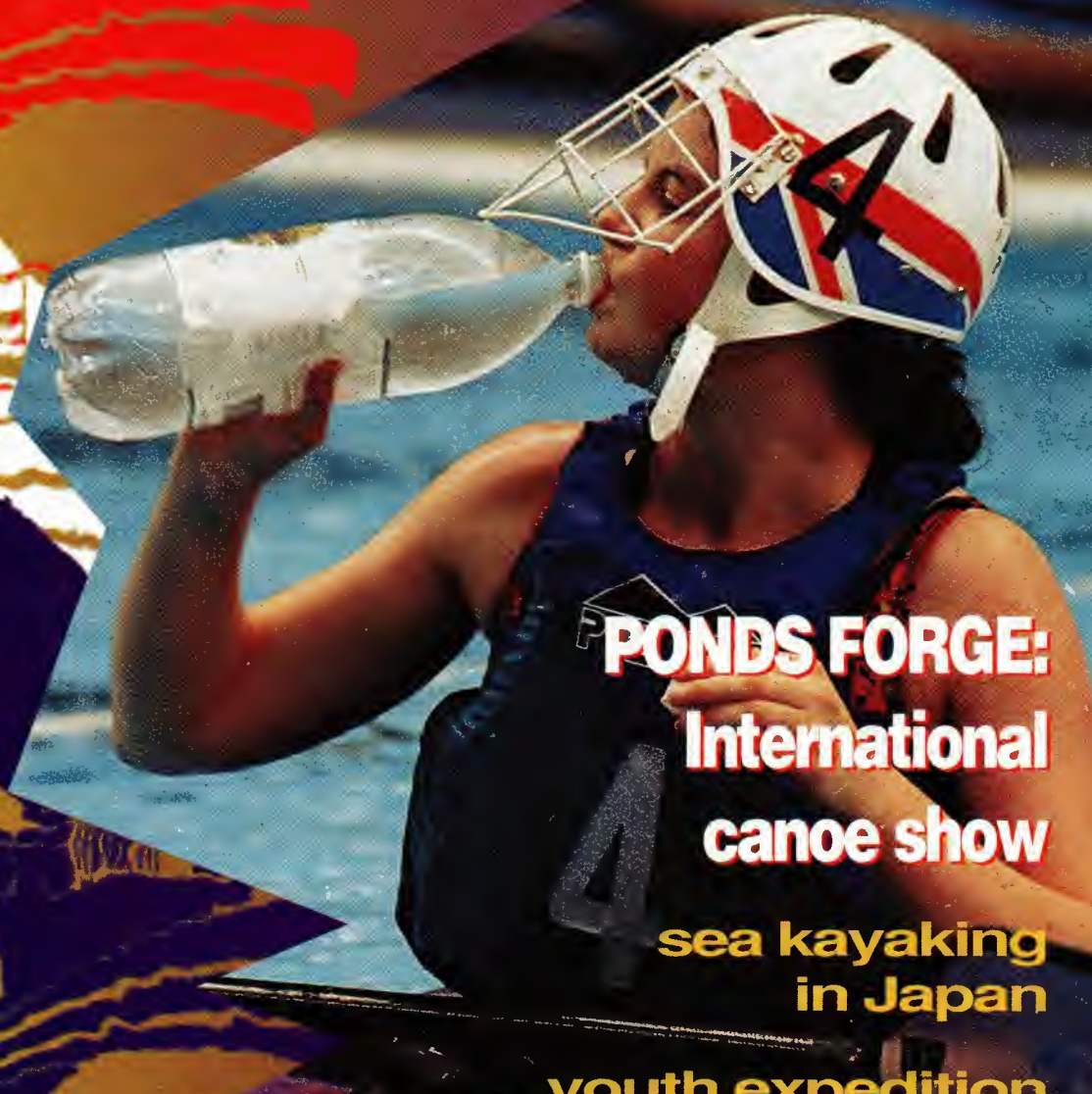


Canoe focus

No 82. APRIL 1993

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PONDS FORGE

PONDS FORGE

PONDS FORGE:
International
canoe show

sea kayaking
in Japan

youth expedition
to arctic russia

surf rats

open boating
in cumbria

PLUS

new features in this issue including Dr D's agony column, paddling with Loel Collins and Donald Bean plus a club feature





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Youth expedition to russia sponsored by Del Monte

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Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. PLEASE don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about people! In a recent dialogue, a paddler's magazine written by paddlers.

Technical Information. Contributions are acceptable in clean handwriting or typed (double spaced). PC disks (3.5 or 5.25) can be read from most Word Processing programmes especially if saved as an ASCII file. Macintosh files saved as DOS or ASCII can also be scanned. Photographic images are preferred on transparencies (colour slides). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and it's agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken in safeguarding material. A help sheet is available for potential contributors. Please send a SAE to the Editor.

The next Copy date is: (in 28 April 1991). Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the April issue.

Front cover: On the boll during pain at Florida Panga. Photo by Heather Gunn, Sportfolio

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Comment



DIRECTORS COMMENT

International Canoe Exhibition Was it a success?


I write this edition of Director's comments as we reflect upon the International Canoe Exhibition and consider the future events. Held at Ponds Forge Complex in Sheffield the Exhibition which was billed as both brave and innovative attracted 7300 paying visitors over the two days. Although about 17% down on the 1992 record attendance at Crystal Palace I believe that the move to Sheffield was justified and... Yes it was a success.

Of the future. Some will argue that we should commit ourselves unreservedly to Sheffield, others will prefer alternating between the two venues. I am fairly sure that no one will suggest returning to Crystal Palace for every event but I would be pleased to hear your views.

2000 Olympics Manchester has unveiled their bid to host the 2000 Olympics. I hope when the bid is successful the sprint canoeing will be held at Rivington Reservoir near Bolton and the slalom competition will most probably take part in Nottingham, although I am sure the Manchester Organising Committee will continue to investigate venues in the North West and Wales.

The British Canoe Union fully supports the Manchester bid and I hope that over the crucial months to September everyone takes whatever opportunity is available to promote the bid both at home and overseas.

MAJOR EVENTS


 During the next three years the BCU will be involved in hosting several major events:

- 1993 Marathon Grand Prix – London in June
- European Canoe Polo Championships – Sheffield July 2-4th
- Junior Wild Water Racing World Cup – Bala 29 July – 1 August
- International Thames Tour in conjunction with the Canoe Camping Club July 23 – 8th August
- 1994 World Canoe Polo Championships – Sheffield
- Slalom World Cup – Nottingham Wild Water Racing World Cup – Bala
- 1995 Wild Water Racing World Championships – Bala
- Slalom World Championships – Nottingham

I am looking forward to being involved with all of these

exciting events and I know that their success will depend on your support.

TREVOR BAILEY AWARD FOR ENDEAVOUR

 Nominations are required for the Trevor Bailey Award for Endeavour. If you have a hard working club secretary who never gets the recognition they deserve, or a coach who is always there for you, or anyone who you feel deserves recognition for dedication to the sport and recreation of canoeing, please write to The Director, at BCU Headquarters, with your nomination and a brief summary of why you have nominated this person.

The Award will be presented at the Ron Emes Dinner later in the year.

Paul Owen
Director



Notice board

News in brief

Birmingham century

The Century is a race run over nearly 90 miles of canal and river around Birmingham. There are classes for K1, C1, K2, C2 and a team relay for up to 10 paddlers. It takes place on 1/2 May: Entry forms and details from C.Chandler 37 Hillside, Lichfield, Staffs WS14 9DH

Soar valley

The Soar Valley Mini - Slalom has changed dates. It will now take place on June 6th at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Details from David Roulston -Bates 0509 620504

Nottingham radio

The annual BCU Rodeo will take place on the HolmePierrepont Slalom course on the weekend 5/6 June. It is a national open Rodeo with classes for all, Dagger demo boats, coaching sessions and 'bring your own BBQ'. The event is sponsored by Palm and No Limits at Current Trends and has the support of the Touring and Recreation Committee. the BCU will also be donating some prizes.

Wellbeing in sport

A new business has been launched in the Nottingham Area aimed at providing a range of sports care services to members of local clubs and competitors. It is particularly convenient for the growing numbers of canoeists, and is only five minutes away from Holme Pierrepont. Offering services like physiotherapy, remedial massage, chiroprody, yoga and sports psychology there is little excuse for ailing paddlers not to get themselves sorted out! Ring 0602 825353 for more details.

Taita mountain bar

The Tarta Mountain Rivers Tour will take place in Slovakia from 26 June to 3 July. The organiser promises that in addition to the canoeing programme there will be visits to 'important and beautiful places' and hospitality. Previous visitors from GB have reported that this is an excellent tour and prices in Slovakia are attractive. The organiser is Igor Kosso, Gajova 17, 811 09 Bratislava, Slovakia.

WHITE WATER RAFTING UK BCU COMMITTEE AGM REPORT BACK

On February 13th the BCU's steering committee for whitewater rafting held its first AGM in accordance with BCU requirements and in preparation for the forthcoming BCU AGM on March 13th 1993. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- a) Establish a working constitution
- b) Report back on all developments and progress
- c) Establish a new steering committee for 1993

Though the turnout was small all business was completed and a development plan formed.

During 1992/93 the steering committee has been in consultation with other rafting representatives to try and establish the best way forward for the development of rafting as an activity and sport within UK.

With strong federal interests this has not been an easy task, however the retiring steering committee had recognised the importance of acknowledging the interest and efforts made by other rafting groups and bodies. Understandably some groups and individuals have seen the steering committee as a threat and concern to their interests in white water rafting. With this in mind the committee felt that a way should be sought to maintain federal interests while at the same time allowing National representation - particularly important in establishing a nationally recognised award scheme and competitive events.

THE WAY FORWARD IN 1993 Following the AGM and further discussions with the Scottish rafting association and the WCA (currently

steering rafting in Wales towards formulating a representative body) there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel.

Agreement has just been reached with all groups concerned that the BCU's committee for white water rafting will be responsible for rafting within England (being known as the English White Water Rafting Committee). The SRA will be recognised by the BCU as having responsibility for Scottish affairs while the future WCA committee will cover Wales. It is hoped that National interests will be addressed through a liaison committee made up of representatives of the federal bodies. With this in mind there will be a future opening for an Irish representatives.

Joint agreements have been reached on:

1 The formulation of a nationally recognised river guides qualification. The majority of progress here is thanks to members of the SRA especially Dave Horrocks.

2 Competitions - Dates are being set for the first national white water rafting championships for 1993. Three venues are being arranged at the Tryweryn, Grantully and Holme Pierrepont. Patrick Fitzgibbon manager of Canolfan Trwyeryn has agreed to be the contact and administrator for this years series. Therefore interested teams should contact Patrick at the Tryweryn office.

A big vote of thanks from Paul Reed, previous chair of the BCU steering committee to all involved in progress thus far. Paul and the current committee are looking forward to an exciting year for the sport of rafting in the UK.



What's up Doc



What's up Doc' go Kayaking Children's TV presenter, Andy pictured recently kayaking at Holme Pierrepont. Despite four swims Andy kept cheerful and professional until the cameras stopped rolling. He had no previous experience of white water kayaking and after a 30 minute crash course with Mike Devlin he was game to tackle the big stuff. The footage will be shown later this month to a large Saturday audience of potential paddlers.

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Another Coach of the Year!



Following slalom Coach Hugh Mantle's success recently Trevor Wetherall, of Richmond Canoe Club Racing Squad was presented with the Coach of The Year Award at the Annual Dinner of the Federation of Middlesex Sports. Sponsored by Gillette the award annually honours the sporting achievements of Middlesex sportsmen and women. Trevor has gained the award for his work with racing paddlers of all abilities, up to and including Olympic standard. Trevor's wife, Francis has competed in 7 world Championships and two Olympic games. Picture: Sir Peter Yarraton, chairman of the Sports Council presents Trevor with his trophy.

Pool Endorsement

In October '92 Focus we published the statement that the BCU Lifeguards 'Swimming Pool Endorsement' to the Rescue Test had been accepted by the RLSS, and the Institute of Baths and Recreation Management'. The RLSS have asked us to point out that this claim is erroneous. RLSS do not 'endorse' life saving qualifications produced by other bodies, and whilst discussions regarding the Swimming Pool Endorsement had taken place, no formal agreement had been reached with the IBRM. Currently the Health and Safety Executive's recommendations concerning 'Supervision in Swimming Pools' are under revision. The BCU is seeking the inclusion of a clear statement regarding the requirements for covering canoe clubs hire of pools, related to the actual level of risk involved.

Womens Sports Awards Young women paddlers will again have the opportunity to receive financial support from the Tampax/Womens Sports Foundation Sports Awards. Olympic Gold Medallist has lent her support to the scheme which will administer sums of £500 and £1000 to deserving athletes between the ages of 11 and 19. The total fund is £50,000. Details from BCU HQ.



INTERNATIONAL TOUR OF THE THAMES.

The Canoe Camping Club of Great Britain, who have long established links with the BCU, are hosting the first International Tour of the Thames on the 24 July - 8 August. With some help from the BCU the event has gained full ICF approved status and the 147 mile tour from Lechlade to London is all grade I water. Suitable for kayaks and canadians, local guides/leaders will be supplied. Camping and lunch stops are plentiful and the prestigious eveny costs £80 per person: this includes Thames licence, camp sites, souvenirs (Tshirt, pennent, Car stickers) and two free meals. Further details from Dave Ball, 44 Hammond Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3PD. tel: 081 443 0819. Please send SAE

RECORD ATTEMPT AT DURHAM CATHEDRAL

As part of the celebrations for Durham Cathedral's 900th Anniversary an attempt will be made to raft up 900 single kayaks along the River Wear through Durham City. This will be a serious challenge and the help of canoeists in the Northern Region and beyond is sought. 11 July is the diary date and all entrants will be charged £1 per boat, which entitles you to a day of fun filled events and a certificate. Surplus entry fees will be donated to charity. The Guinness Book of records are notified and the current record of 580 was set on the Trent in 1991. The event starts at Durham City Rowing Club: do you want a shot at the title?

Arctic Sea Kayak Race

Now established as Europe's premier sea kayak endurance race this years takes place on the 2/6 August. Robert Eglestaff, who entered the race in '91 highly recommends the event as well organised and in unforgettable

scenery in the land of the mid-night sun. The race is taken seriously by some but there are three entry levels to suit all levels of participant: a leisurely ramble, the race itself, and a marathon over the final leg of 48km. Ramblers may register for the marthon leg. There are raffles, cash prizes, good company and the chance of lifetime to paddle the Arctic circle, gaze at high peaks and see countless fiords. Information sheets on receipt of an SAE from BCU HQ



The picture shows the prizewinning paddlers who brought back 5 gold and 3 bronze medals, plus trophy, from the Handy-Kayak events in Ferrara, Italy last September. From left to right: Maggie Taylor, Colin Kerridge, Pete Smith, Dave Bennet, Mike Cranshaw. The transportation of the equipment was kindly sponsored by the Leicester branch of the British Red Cross.



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SEA KAYAK CLASSIC ANGLESEY



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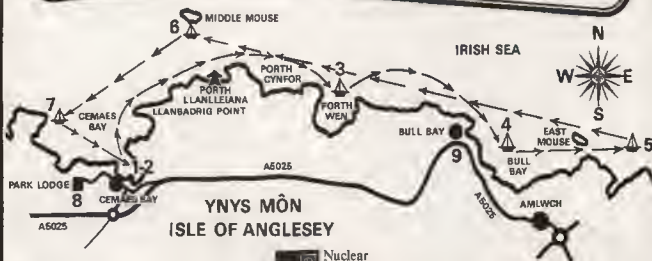
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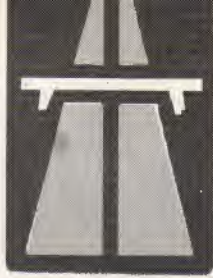


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M Severn?

Motoring focus

Fatal Attraction

I could hardly believe my eyes when I opened the February issue (No. 81) of *Canoe Focus* to page 17 and read the article on car maintenance.

There was a beautiful photograph of my Citroen XM Turbo Charged Diesel (illicitly taken at BCU headquarters on February 12th), complete with multi-functional roof rack equipped to carry 6 G.P kayaks, 4 White Water Racers, 4 Sea Kayaks or occasionally 4 K 2's. A product of careful development since my first canoeing exploits in 1961.

Contrary to the authors opinion, the load on the roof is instantly detachable and does little to detract from the 42.5 mpg regularly achieved whilst travelling to most corners of the UK in pursuit of our sport.

If the photographer had shown himself, and asked nicely,

we could have opened the rear hatch to reveal a purpose built rigid plastic boot liner, capable of holding up to 50 gallons of water without getting the interior upholstery even damp. More than adequate to catch the drips from the equipment of the crew that use this piece of engineering to get from their place of worship each weekend.

Alas, I am not sure whether it was the 'veiled innuendo' that the car was a Renault 19, the reference to being tainted by funny odours or the fascination to try driving down narrow country lanes that caused the "fatal attraction". Three days after the article was published my beautiful XM tried to make love with a 20 ton E.R.F tipper truck whilst negotiating one of the narrow lanes in question.

We are not too embarrassed,



as it was not a canoeist driving at the time, so there is no longer the need to blank out the number plates. This time you have the

owners permission. Devastated from Cardiff.



The Joys of Salt

What a superb account Anne Lineen gave on the joys of canoe motoring. It's only a minor fault that presumably being written by an inland canoeist no mention was made on behalf of the saline counterparts. Here then are some additional points.

As you drive away from the car saleroom in your bright new shiny pride and joy you promise to wash and polish it every Sunday morning in unison with the rest of the neighbourhood. Problem is Mr Jones at number 43 (along with everyone else) isn't out at sea savouring the elements. The shine along with your promise soon fades.

You soon learn salt water has an exact opposite effect of Turtle Wax and if anything it appears to encourage the growth of brown deposits (rust) on your now matt finished bodywork. No need to throw buckets of salt water over the car as an upturned kayak has similar effects! You can bet your bottom dollar that after you leave the water, load the kayak, drain the equivalent quantity of water as a super tanker clearing it's bilges and drive from Skye to home (in the south of England) there is still a steady stream of iron oxide creating water dripping from your kayak.

The next car enhancing medium is sand. Where as salt water can be kept out until rust gets in, sand is present from day one. Better than any valve grinding paste, more effective and cheaper than diamond dust, sand provides built in obsolescence. After departing from the car show room the second purchase is a new roof rack, because the old one has been eaten away by salt water. With loving dedication it is carefully, precisely and accurately fitted. Much later you decide to wash the car and remove the roof rack, after all selling the car with no unsightly rack increases it's resale value by an extra ten pounds, or so you have heard, but what's this? Some one has carefully inserted grains of sand under the mounting points which in turn has ground away the "go faster" red paint revealing bright bare metal. That is unless salt water got there first.

Inside is equally bad. No matter how careful you try, sand is there. Your children who were playing in the beach whilst you were 'hanging in' on that eight foot wave are now making sandcastles by emptying their shoes, inside the car. Your supa dupa, beats as it sweeps as it devours, carpet cleaner is no match for sand.

Our last motorist friend is the windmill paddle. Sods Law dictates that no matter how tight a paddle is secured to a rusty roofrack it will work loose at one end. Consequently as you drive down the M6 at a sedately 80mph other road users are amazed by your impersonation of a flying banshee as the paddle wildly waves and engraves the car's bodywork. The

other deviation to this rule is that the kayak will become totally detached, airborne and either smash into a thousand pieces (GRP Craft) or flattened wafer thin (plastic craft) under a following juggernaut.

I am sure fellow paddlers may identify with these incidents or have experienced additional trials and tribulations.

NIGEL HINGSTON



NOTES FROM *abroad*

Dave Manby
reports on the
overseas gossip...

John Wasson, one of the USA's foremost white waterpaddler has found work on the Robert Redford film 'A river runs through it'. the main subject is trout & fly fishing but there are boating sequences and white water action...look out for it

Doug Emmens claims the first solo run of the whole of the Stikine, including the Canyon. This was his secon run down, his first was in 1991

Word is coming in of a fatal accident on the Futelefue in Chile, no details as yet but thought to be a client on a guided run.

The Rockies report major snowfall this winter and the promise of a good summers paddling to follow on the West Coast. The current exchange rate may deter some Brit paddlers, although cheapish flights are still to be found.

Humphry Murphy is leading a commercial trip to the Caucases in late July/mid August for the Irish National Centre, Tiglin. Details from Humphry at Tiglin, Ashford, Co.Wicklow, Eire. Our man Murphy also has lots of contacts for paddling trips in what was the USSR.

CanoeFocus/Avoncraft Competition February 1991

Several disappointed readers have written to me asking for returned slides and information on winners and prizes. I am afraid that this competition was before my time as editor and all photographic material is with Avoncraft. Despite several attempts to get this sorted out we are no further forward. I have no material relating to this competition Please contact Avoncraft direct and copy all correspondence to me at BCU HQ. . On behalf of Focus, my apologies for delays and inconvenience.

Are you physically disabled?

Team selection opportunity The BCU has been invited to enter a team in a series of 500m races for paddlers who have a physical disability, at an International Regatta to be held in Florence from 29/30 May. A selection event is to be held at Fladbury during the first week in May. All club Secretaries have been sent details. If you are interested please send a SAE to the BCU Office for details

THE UK 1993 WHITE WATER RAFTING SERIES

The race series will comprise of three events, the team with the highest number of points from the three races will represent the UK interests in any International events during 1993.

Teams are to consist of four members who will race in two differing styles of race. Team entries to Patrick Fitzgibbon, Manager of Canolfan Tryweryn. Entry charge for the three race series will be £20 per person. All team members must be members of the BCU, WCA, SCA, CANI or ICU.

VENUES AND DATES
Tryweryn May 29/30th
Holme Pierrepont June 5/6th
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top tips

and handy hints

FORWARD PADDLING TECHNIQUE

THE CYCLE



Illustrations by
Peter Tranter

In the first of a series on paddling technique for beginners and intermediate paddlers, National Marathon Coach Richard Ward unravels the mysteries of forward paddling. Most paddlers spend most of their time doing some sort of forward paddling. Whilst some types of canoeing will have variations in forward paddling style, Richard describes a good working model of the stroke, which individual paddlers will adapt and tweak to suit the kayak, or the type of paddling they do.

INTRODUCTION

In whatever type of paddling you are involved the forward paddling stroke is a key basic ingredient. There are two very good reasons for the use of good technique, to promote efficiency and reduce the risk of injury. For the elite competitor efficiency is manifested in extra speed and endurance whereas the recreational will be able to tackle greater distances for the same effort. It is therefore important to spend time working improving your technique.

It is worthwhile to remember that when paddling, the boat moves past the paddle, rather than the paddle being pulled back through the water. This may be easier to picture if the paddle is substituted for a series of stakes protruding from the river bed. Imagine the paddler reaching forward for the first stake and pulling the boat past. As the paddler draws level with the handhold they let it go to reach forward with the other hand for the next stake and so on. To gain extra reach, rather than lunging forward, "trunk rotation" should be used, to employ the powerful back and oblique abdominal muscles, without upsetting the run of the boat. Trunk rotation is charac-

terised by a twisting motion from above the waist with the spine acting as the centre of rotation. The forward momentum of the paddle stroke is transmitted from the paddle to the boat by a pulling action above the waist and a pushing motion below.

The Stroke Cycle

Good posture is extremely important throughout the paddle cycle, particularly if injury is to be avoided. The points to aim for throughout are to sit upright and relaxed, keep head held steady and knees comfortably bent (together if the boat permits). If water conditions allow, it is also beneficial to release the fingers on the paddle shaft during the recovery phase, it enables extra reach for the start of the next stroke and to reduce tension in the wrist.

The "classic" paddling stroke is a rapid and difficult movement to describe precisely. However for the purpose of the description below, the key elements can be split up into four distinct phases, the plant, the pull, the exit and recovery. The second half of the cycle follows on in similar fashion on the opposite side.

The Plant

The paddler should be fully rotated at this stage, with arm fully extended and ready to use the powerful muscles of the back. Slot the blade quickly and cleanly at boat speed into the water close to the side of the boat.

The Pull

As the pull phase begins the blade should be fully immersed and close to the side of the boat. Initially the pull should come from unwinding the rotated trunk and then followed through by the arm. For maximum effect the blade should not be allowed to slip water and be kept perpendicular to the direction of pull. By the time

the paddle blade is level with the body it is starting to drag forwards in the water and is at the end of the effective pulling phase.

The Recovery

The first part of the recovery phase clips the blade cleanly out of the water, the hand being lifted vertically to shoulder height. The second part guides the blade forward, at approximately shoulder height taking care not to cross much beyond the centre of the boat.

It is important to remember that the recovery, or top arm, guides rather than pushes. The impetus for the "plant" and "pull" on the opposite side are directly linked to the recovery phase. A rushed recovery will inevitably result in a less effective plant and pull.

Conclusion

Although I spent hours writing this article you probably spent a few minutes reading it, the actual stroke takes only a second, so try to improve one part at a time. The basic elements of good technique hold true for all disciplines of kayak paddling. Each paddler must adapt these elements in a "style" to suit his or her physique and boat type. Remember maintenance and improvement of paddle technique requires regular attention from both paddler and coach.

Richard Ward

References:

Focus No.21 by
Director of Coaching,
with technical advice
from Roland Lawler
& Colin Gray.

George Oliver
Paddling technique.

Coaching Handbook
J Hargreaves &
David Train.



Dr D's agony column

DR D's Agony Column This page will become a regular feature depending on demand. If you have a question relating to any aspect of paddlesport, our distinguished panel of experts will be able to help. Send your queries to Agony Column, Canoe Focus, BCU HQ.

SURFING BUG

Dear Sir: I am a BCU member and I have been able to gain my inland proficiency and three star. During a summer holiday in France I was able to have a taste of surf in my canoe, and subsequently I have been bitten by the surf bug, and have enjoyed many trips to Polzeath, Cornwall. Due to my thirst for more information on paddle surfing I have been looking for a paddle surf magazine, but to no avail. Do you have any names

of such magazines that you could send me details about. I have mastered the basic skills of surfing from your hand book and now wish to expand onto some more advanced skills. Could you also point me to some books that may contain such information

KIERAN MORE

Dr D: Surf is not the worst bug you could be bitten by! The demise of Beachbreak magazine

some years ago was the end of our only UK mag on paddle surf. There are some good surf magazines available, mainly Australian and almost all ski orientated. Don't give up hope on British info...it is best gained practically. See this issues feature 'Surf Rats' for details of BCU surf courses and the Competition pages for news of events organised by the BCU Surf Committee.



SPANISH KAYAKING

Dear Sir: Five of us propose to paddle in sea canoes, from Santander, West to Gijon or thereabouts, and back to Santander. Dates are probably 9-24 August 1993. We intend to camp as we go. We are experienced, having done similar trips, but never on the North Coast of Spain. Please 1. Send us the address of the Spanish Canoe Organisation 2. tell us of any restrictions, etc that we need to know.

BYRON FOSSEY

Dr D: Sea Kayaking in Spain does go on but not so much that there are rules and regulations. There may

be some restrictions on beach camping Contact: Federacion Espagnola De Piraguismo, Cea Bermudez 14, 1, 28003 Madrid, Spain. Tel: 010 34 1 5530602 Fax: 010 34 1 5343934 There are some potential problems with French Maritime law and sea kayaking. As you are in the Bay of Biscay it may be worth contacting the FFCK for permission in case you decide paddle east towards the border Federation Francaise De Canoe Kayak 87, Quai de la Marne BP 58, 94340 Joinville-Le-Pont, France. Tel: 010 33 1 48 893989 Fax: 010 33 1 48 861325



ESKIMO ROLL

Dear Sir: My eskimo roll works well enough in the pool but fails consistently outdoors, especially in white water. Can you suggest ways to improve?

WET EXIT, BRISTOL

Dr D: A common problem this. Without seeing you roll it is hard to diagnose accurately but a common reason could be either:

PHYSICAL. Your roll needs adapting and refining to cope with cold lumpy water. Get a coach/instructor/friend to video you and improve your roll under Pressure. This can be done by simulating rough water in the pool using towlines and disorientation tricks. The Canoeing handbook has an excellent chap-

ter on improving rolling. Learn a failsafe finish to the roll, like adding a recovery stroke. Practice in the cold at the end of a river trip.

MENTAL: You panic and have an irrational need to want to breathe air again quickly! Most of us do feel this way but with positive thoughts (I WILL roll) and the support of friends you can persuade yourself to hang in there for a try or two. Count to three and let things settle before you go for the roll. Practice with friends, use video if possible and be critical, but constructive. Copy paddlers who roll well. Most would be flattered if you asked them to show you how it's done....



Please keep your questions coming: the surgery is open. Remember there are probably hundreds of paddlers who could use the answer to your particular question.

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RATS, SURFING and the SILLY

As we move towards Spring again, the thoughts of many paddlers turn once more to their Summer holidays and the occasional weekends away. For the majority of canoeists, this will include at least one or two trips to the coast and a good “thrash” in the surf.

Now the ‘majority’ is an awful lot of paddlers and it is likely that most of them will head off to the better known, popular surf beaches for their sport – on the assumption that ‘popular’ means ‘best’. They may well be disappointed with what they find. Dreams of ‘getting away from it all’ are likely to be shattered by hordes of other surfers and a high level of hassle. Surfing during the ‘silly season’ feels less like ‘escaping from the rat-race’, as joining it!

Taking this connection with rats a little further: Like rodents and many other species, cram too many human beings into a limited space and their behaviour deteriorates. Groups and individuals become territorial, they behave aggressively toward each other and when it gets too bad, violence breaks out and damage occurs. No wonder the beach life-guards refer to such goings on as “Mid-Summer Madness”!

And yet, unlike rats, we human beings (and that includes surfers – whatever craft they use) are blessed with the gift of intelligence. We are not limited to instinctual responses. We can apply our capacities to rationally choose, to change our circumstances and to behave differently. Yet many surfers submit themselves to the most unsuitably crowded conditions and to act as though they had no

more intelligence than rats when they get there.

So what can be done? Well, there is no shortage of good advice and information for paddlers as far as surfing is concerned, yet by their actions it is clear that some prefer to reject it! And herein lies a clue to the way forward: some paddlers prefer to disobey advice given, rather than follow it. Recognising this fact has led me to write up the following list of “new safety guide lines” for paddle-surfers. It differs from previous advice in that it is deliberately designed to be disobeyed! So for all you rodent surfers out there, read on. . . .

NEVER SURF ALONE:

There is safety in numbers, so always choose the most heavily populated beaches and turn up mob-handed. The ideal model here is a heavily over loaded University/College/Club mini bus full of inland paddlers/near novices and towing a 20 boat trailer. Proceed to get onto the water together and head for the most populated board-surfer break on the beach. Use your kayakers ability to take off further out to monopolise every wave and proceed to cause mayhem. Much smaller groups than this can still work together on the principal that it is easier to intimidate in packs.

STAMP YOUR AUTHORITY ON THE BREAK:

Better still, stamp out all other surfers! Cultivate the arro-





ABOVE:
 "Getting away from the rat-race".

LEFT:
 "Rats tend to sleep-in".

ABOVE LEFT:
 Caption
 "Ignore signs! They are for the intelligent."


MAKE YOUR PRESENCE FELT:

Forget skill and technique. Stick your thumb up your bum, put your mind into neutral, pick the biggest wave and drop off the front of it as it breaks, screaming "Geronimo". This tactic will have the best impact if you choose, the most crowded section of the beach, such that the ensuing 'wipe-out' sends you tumbling forwards and sideways, totally out of control and straight into the beach, cutting a broad swathe through all the other water users. (Try to count the number of contacts you make - the soft, yielding ones are bodies, the 'crunching' ones are boards) Repeat, until the water is cleared of people, red with blood or full of men with jackets that do up at the back.

WORK ON YOUR SENSORY ACUITY:

Develop temporary sensory deprivation and deploy this facility as required. Some applications are: Blindness to the swimming/surfing area flags; to all other boardies and swimmers, to the lifeguard who has been trying to wave you into the beach for the last hour (although you could smile and give him a friendly wave back). Deafness to other surfers frustrated cries of "my-wave"; to the mounting insurrection that is gathering around you; to the life-guard who is by now waist deep in the surf and screaming at you through his loud hailer (you could now look towards him innocently, tilt your head to one side and bang your ears to clear them of water, then feigning understanding, indicate to the nearest boardie that the lifeguard wants a word with him and paddle off for another wave) Empathy: This 'sense', along with Sympathy is unhelpful. Spatial Awareness: especially to large, fiery faced board surfers paddling purposefully in your direction with a steely look in their eyes and grim expressions on the faces. Compare your size and mass with theirs. Calculate their velocity, direction and E.T.A. Take appropriate evasive action, bearing in mind that the first law of nature is something about 'survival of the species' and that by now the beach is lined with a lynching party, the rat pack is bearing down hard on you and it's a long way to America!

For those who lean towards a more intelligent approach to surfing, a range of surfing courses and events are run annually by the BCU Surf Coaching team, details available herein.

Dennis Ball (Nat. Surf Coach)
 (With profound apologies for any misrepresentations of the species rodentia) 

gant belief that paddlers (and only paddlers) have the divine right to surf. Bellow "My Wave" on every thing you take, regardless of 'drop in' rules and ethics. Three or four paddlers will easily commandeer every wave in the sets and you will soon have the rest feeling suitably cowed by your presence. Oh yes!

DEVELOP AN ATTITUDE:

Cultivate an air of superiority and the ability to view all other water users as being sub-human. As long as you don't see them as people, you will be able to treat them with utter disdain; as mere dispensable objects that have the audacity to get in your way. Some useful terms for them are "dead flies", "planks", "targets", "slalom poles", "effing gits", etc.

BE POLITICALLY AWARE:

Become a Fascist. (An Anarchist is an acceptable alternative) Paint slogans on your kit like; "I'm a total nutter", "Psycho-Fred", "kayaks eat boardie woofers" or "you have been ethnically cleansed". Choose craft that bear suitably macho-trade names like "Dagger", "Conquest", "Avenger", "Crossfire", "De-Slash", etc. Dress all in red, where a full face-guard and use high impact resistant paddles. Work on obliterating "wishy-washy", liberal principals from your thinking like "sharing the waves with the nice board-surfers". Vote against democratic gestures like "opening up a meaningful dialogue with the Board Surfers Association". Don't even vote!

BCU SURFING EVENTS AND COURSES 1993

May 21-23 "CRACK THE BASICS" £35
 An informal weekend of instruction for those new to surfing (plus grade 1 surf testing)

June 4-6 "GET FLUID" £35
 A weekend for improvers. Further coaching in the basic wave riding skills (plus grade 2 testing)

August 2-6 "TOTAL SURF WEEK" £80
 Another high impact, surf action holiday with a full programme of practice and theory. For all abilities.

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September 24-26 "SURF GRADE TESTING" £35
 Revision and testing for surf grades 1-5. Essential for prospective surf SI training and assessment candidates.

October 8-10 "GET RADICAL" £35
 Coaching in advanced performance skills. Excellent for pre-contest training and SI skills preparation.

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ALL COURSES TAKE PLACE IN SOUTH WALES

October 22-24 SI (SURF) TRAINING £60
 Essential for those surfers wishing to teach or supervise groups, e.g. in canoe clubs, schools, outdoor education centres, etc.

September 4 "NATIONAL CANOEING DAY"
 Nationwide! Turn up on your home beach

ENQUIRIES AND DETAILS
 Dennis Ball (National Surf Coach)
 4 Aintree Close, Hillingdon
 Middlesex, UB8 3HS
 (SAE please)

LEARN FROM EXPERIENCED BCU SURF SIs & COACHES

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LENDAL SHAFTS WERE USED BY MANY PADDLERS AT THE BARCELONA OLYMPICS

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LENDAL

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My favourite paddle

This new series will feature a favourite paddle in each issue. Every paddler has a personal favourite and Canoe Focus would like to print them. The first is a section of the Conwy in North Wales...



Breakfast with the Fairies

The Fairy Glen: River Conwy.

7.30am and staggering around a cold slate cottage, sleep in my eyes and the floor freezing my feet. Heavy rain the day before promises a brilliant day on any river. A glance at the programme confirms the awful truth, work today, not all is lost it's a paddling course and there is time to put in a river before the staff meeting. A quick scabble collects the paddling kit, the boat is still on the roof rack and only a ten minutes drive takes me to the best gorge in North Wales. Leaving the village, blue sky, this is a perfect day for doing anything in a boat. Parking opposite an Oak tree leaving the car running a quick jog down to the gorge edge confirms what wasn't in doubt, the brown waters, just off the flood. A quick change act and grabbing the boat from the rack, a slippery descent brings me to the rivers edge.

At this time of the year the sun doesn't reach into the gorge until late into the day. It's cold but crisp, the bright blue sky giving an illusion of warmth, an illusion quickly shattered by the bitterly cold water. Putting on in the middle of a rapid brings

home what the river can do, a brief pool before the fun begins. A hasty move from left to right brings you to the top of a long runnel, small correction strokes to check the speed and position the boat, a large boulder on the right warns of the final drop: flying off the drop you always seem to dive deeper than you think, surfacing late and close to the last hole, jump it on the right and into an eddy to rest.

A short rapid past a boulder into a slot and hole a quick move away from the wall on the left pushes me into a lazy eddy that slows the boat before the new rapid. This new rapid changed three times in as many months one winter, from a one drop wonder to a nightmare and finally to an easily underestimated entry into the first gorge proper. The acceleration speeds me towards the long rapid through the gorge, sanctuary in the eddies on the left allows time to glance over my shoulder and remind me of the line. Despite the caution the first hole is surprisingly big and its kick

until the portage, not even a glance today. I am going to be late. The sun distracts me for a second, catching the far side of the valley. A rocky scramble leads me to get in, the spray deck fits first time and the lower gorge beckons.

The angle out of this eddy always feels too high but invariably puts me in the right spot to slide over a small drop and "officially" into the lower gorge. Three rapids follow until any real chance of escape, from the top of second I can see bottom, the horizon of the final drop lost in the gradient of the whole section. The first of these rapids is always marked by the smell of the pig farm high on the southern lip of the gorge. Two holes lead me past a razor blade rock, or what should be. Today it hardly shows, the shock of the speed distracts me and I come a little too close to the final boulder. A fast turn saves the day and a chance to rest before the second rapid.

The second rapid always seems softer, the previous rapid is all rocks: this one is all water.

It is gentle however, until the last hole pushes the desk onto my nose and I career towards the large boulder in mid current the blue sky firmly in view. It all slows in the pool below and the boat returns to the horizontal and less frantic control.

The river now disappears over a gorge wide line. No matter how often I approach this it always intimidates and always takes a dummy run to verify the line. The second approach launches me into a hole, every thing goes white visually and audibly, instinctively I tuck up to roll, a blow to my helmet adds urgency. Upright again the long pool gives time for thought over a cracking run.

The final drops provide a quicker run into the Lledr and then into Beaver pool. An even quicker run back to the car ensures I am not late for the staff meeting, odd looks whilst dripping on the carpet. The rest of the day, on the upper Conwy, completes the river and a storming white water day.

Loel Collins



right is always too much. Checking the speed and a relieving view down the gorge heralds the widening of the river as it eases, but only a bit. Rock walls are replaced by the reds and golds of both sides. This is usually a time to relax and enjoy the smaller drops, cushion waves and jets of this section

Loel presently works at Plas Y Brenin, coaching for the Canoe Department, but has been around North Wales area for the last 8 years. During this time he has been responsible for many early descents of some of the sillier stretches of Welsh rivers.

He is a person who is in love with rivers and wild places. I have met Loel at the Tryweryn after he has been working with a group all day, we've then gone playing in holes for a couple of hours. His enthusiasm is very infectious. Running a river with him is akin to rockclimbing on bolts - you have a feeling of security and confidence.

Loel's first forays abroad took him to Norway and Corsica which gave him the taste for things "bigger". The Grand Canyon was soon followed by the Zambezi, Gilgit and Indus. His technical ability helped on the descent of the Shimshal in Pakistan.

He is looking for still "bigger" things, a common utterance is "don't talk grades, talk C.F.S and gradient". He is presently trying his earlier descents of the harder bits of Welsh water in flood, to do the "ultimate run", from source to sea.



Competition *focus*

National Canoe Polo Championships 1993



This was an impressive new venue for the 1993 Canoe Polo championships and many favourable comments were heard regarding the facilities. The Youth and Open games were spread over the two days but women played only on Sunday.

WOMEN

The Women's competition this year was limited to just four teams and Mutineers played South Shore in the first semi-final. Mutineers took an early lead from a goal by Ginny Coyles but South Shore equalised a minute later. The game seemed finely balanced until just before half time when Mutineers scored two goals in quick succession to turn the match their way. In the second half two more goals by Ginny, one from a penalty, put the result beyond doubt.

The second semi-final between Woodmill and St. Albans was a more exciting end to end game with St. Albans opening the scoring less than two minutes before half time, with a goal Jackie Marlow. Then with seconds remaining St. Albans scored another from Caroline Parkes. Half way through the second half Woodmill pulled one back through Jackie Moore and St. Albans were forced on the defence. Then with some fine goalkeeping and excellent passing St. Albans broke away again for Zoe Hillyard to score the third goal.

The final was a repeat of last

years Mutineers and St. Albans. Apart from competing as club teams in the National League both teams provide the majority of the players in the GB Womens 'A' & 'B' teams, so the players are used to playing with, as well as against, each other. In the event the game was keenly contested with some excellent moves from both teams. It seemed as if the first half would end goalless when right in half time Mutineers gave away a penalty and Jackie Marlow scored from the spot. In the second half various threats on goal from both teams proved abortive and the single penalty goal proved the match winner for St. Albans who completed the League and National Championship double for the second year running.

YOUTH

Eight Youth (Under 19) teams were competing in these final stages at Ponds Forge and without a doubt six of the seven matches played provided first class, exciting, end to end entertainment. In the first quarter final between St. Albans and St. Johns, Paul Hillyard opened the scoring for St. Albans but Calum Anderson equalised for St. Johns. Then with twenty seconds of the first half to go David Sanders put St. Albans ahead again. Fierce attacking by St. Johns in the second half put St. Albans under pressure but their defence held firm and the 2-1 scoreline put them through to the semi-final against Firends of Allonby (last years winners), who comfortably beat Edmonton 5-0 in a rather one sided game.

In the third quarter final Bere Forest started as favourites but Meridian, boosted by their promotion to the Div. One Youth League, soon made it clear that they had no intention of losing and opened the scoring after one minute. Bere Forest equalised less than a minute later through Steve Whitlock and an end to end battle ensued without either side managing to break the deadlock before full time. The game

went into sudden death extra time and with the seconds ticking away Meridian were the ones who finally broke free to score the vital winner.

The last quarter final between Viking and Kingston was a close fought affair also and though Viking were felt to be favourites it was Kingston who opened the scoring after three minutes. A minute later Viking equalised through Chris Greatorex only for Kingston to go ahead again. With a minute remaining till half time Viking equalised and then thirty seconds into the second half scored their third goal. This time Kingston fought back and within seconds it was 3-3. Just

time had been played before a St. Albans attack led to another goal by Richard Thomas and a place in the final.

In the other semi final the first five minutes produced no goals and then saw three in the last two minutes as first Viking scored, Meridian equalised and Viking scored again with less than thirty seconds remaining. Chris Greatorex put Viking further ahead right at the start of the second half but Meridian battled on and were rewarded with a Ben Spargo goal with two minutes remaining. Viking piled on the pressure again and scored their fourth goal with a minute left on the clock. The Final between St Albans and Viking promised to be good and it lived up to all expectations. The game started at a cracking pace and the lead after five minutes went to St Albans with a David Sanders goal. St Albans were playing some excellent polo and two minutes into the second half Richard Thomas put them further ahead. Viking came back strongly and in the course of two minutes had equalised with goals from Mark Gibson and Rob Hanson. This was a testing time for St Albans and with the game finely balanced it could easily have gone either way. With forty seconds to go David Sanders rounded his marker and his

continued on page 23
Photos by Heather Gunn of Portfolio



when it seemed extra time was likely Marcus Williamson broke through to score the winning goal for Viking.

The St. Albans/F.O.A semi final was another quality game with F.O.A taking the lead just before half time. Paul Hillyard equalised two minutes into the second half but F.O.A were ahead again one minute later. Richard Thomas then equalised again for St. Albans and the score stayed at 2-2 till full time. Less than a minute of extra



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Dear focus

Coaching Scheme

Dear Focus

A contentious, moaning, whingeing letter follows. The coaching scheme is probably the backbone of the BCU and as such it gets treated badly, I refer to the rule which states those in the coaching scheme must be full members of the BCU. Now if they choose not to be in the coaching scheme, not to give up their time, but to paddle only for themselves, then I feel the BCU would probably grind to a halt.

What I propose is some sort of recognition for those who bother themselves to get qualified, after all if I wished not to teach then basic membership would do me fine, in fact I wouldn't be in the BCU, feeling that the SKGUK would be more suitable for my needs.

However my point is that why can't we reward members who work hard for the sport, possibly on a sliding scale of reductions in membership cost recognising higher qualifications and work rate.

i.e S.I's get a reduction of say £6 increasing to £10 or £15 for coaches, or a 50p reduction per trip led.

I realise that instructors are ten a penny,

but having to pay extra to be an instructor does annoy me, as does having to be in the BCU to lead trips and/or teach.

To qualify as S.I in my chosen field requires travelling and expenses i.e the cost of my S.I training and assessment weekends is more that I spend on a weeks canoeing holiday (and where would I rather go?)

Seriously all I ask is that the BCU recognises the hard work done by most of the coaching scheme and rewards that dedication with some of gesture.

I expect I am not alone in this point of view and would wish this letter to go into Focus and not CoDe, as I believe that an issue like this needs to be discussed by the full membership, after all if it was left to CoDe readers to decide then we risk our credibility dropping to that of M.P's who vote their own pay rises.

Yours in constructive criticism.

ADRIAN MOULD

P.S Bring the canoe exhibition North again as soon as possible please, you had 12 visitors to Sheffield who refuse to go to London.



Stolen!

Dear Focus

I am writing to ask you to publish the rest of this letter in Canoe Focus. I would be grateful if you could include some of it or all of it in the editorial content, because I feel that fewer people will learn from it if it is only in the 'Stolen' section of the classifieds.

The following equipment was stolen from the River Dart Country Park, on Dartmoor during the night of Saturday 6th February 1993. Yellow Perception Corsica S, with yellow Karrimat padding, Wild Water back strap and 2 airbags.

Purple Perception Corsica S, with 'stitch' repair in black on the bow and 2 airbags.

Yellow Perception Dancer, in mint condition Red Prijon Topolino Spud, with R.C.C written on the hull.

Orange Kober paddle, left handed

Orange Kober paddle, right handed

Red/Yellow Nookie Throwline, with carabiner

Top Sport Expedition Throwline, with carabiner

Dawsons Throwline, with 2 carabiners

Most of the equipment was personal prop-

erty of Regent's Canoe Club members. A substantial reward is offered for information leading to recovery of this equipment or to the conviction of those responsible. Information can be given in confidence, and if necessary anonymously, to Paul Bartlett Tel: 071 253 1599 (anytime) or c/o Regents Canoe Club, 17-32 Graham Street, London N1.

Help us to stop theft and those who profit by it. This time it was us, next time it could be you. It is not our intention that anyone who has been sold this equipment should lose out, so come forward, and help us get the real culprits. Never, buy 'second-hand' from anyone who can't prove ownership. If anyone offers you stolen equipment, write down what they said, their description, their car number plate and call the police.

Stamp out crime!

PAUL BARTLETT

One step in the right direction may be the BCU initiative with Boatsafe : see Paddlers Gear pages !

ED.



Snippets

Dear Editor:

One point relating to recent editorials in Canoe Focus regarding finish and contents. I read my magazine once possibly twice after which any items of interest are removed (less than 5%) for future reference and the remainder (95%) is thrown in the recycle bag. Any improvement in paper quality or page finish would be at the expense of our ever dwindling world resources. Allowing that the magazine is published by the sports governing body and some articles may be viewed as bias, overall I believe Canoe Focus provides the reader with a fairly even representation of canoeing in general. Keep up the good work.

NIGEL HINGSTON

Dear Focus:

I have just finished reading my latest issue of Canoe Focus and I enjoyed it. I am mainly a sea canoeist so canoeing magazines do not cater for my type too much. I do not subscribe to Canoeist, but a friend of mine does and passes it on to me. It takes me five minutes to read the interesting bits.

I gave up ASKC some years ago because the newsletters were mainly filled with letters saying nothing in particular. I have also read some of the American Canoeing magazines. It is said they are very good but they are written in typical American style, grossly over padded.

So, at present I find Canoe Focus the best canoeing read for me. Coupled with the latest Yearbook, I think the BCU can be proud of producing some good publications.

In view of the knocks you so often get, I thought you might like to receive a compliment occasionally.

DAVE RAWLINSON

Dear Focus:

I lake many others have had an idea to improve your magazine. This is mine, why don't you put posters in the centre pages? I do like the latest changes and I think they are good ideas but I would be one happy paddler if you use my idea.

Yours hopefully

IAN WHITE

If we had unlimited space and page allocation this would be wonderful! The difficulty would be deciding which material should be left out to accommodate the centrefold. We have now produced a glossy poster: obtainable from BCU HQ on receipt of an SAE

Ed




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continued from page 18

long shot found the back of the net. Viking had no time to reply but congratulations must go to both teams.

OPEN

In the first Round the eight seeded teams met the eight qualifiers from the regional heats. The first three games saw Woodmill, Humbersiders and Luton all win convincingly against Stubbers, Bere Forest B and St Albans B respectively. Bere Forest A, missing two regulars who have now formed the Wimps team, were far less convincing against Bristol who, as a Div 4 team were justifiably pleased to keep the score down to 3-0. Dudley had beaten St. Johns 2-0 before the sixth game produced the one surprise with Meridian going out to Friends of Allonby 2-1, after taking the lead. The last two games went as expected with Viking 'A' beating Wimps 5-2 and St. Albans 6-1 victory over West Lothian.

The quarter finals produced a mixed bag of entertainment. Woodmill were 3-0 up on Humbersiders by half time and that's how it stayed until, with just two and a half minutes on the clock Humbersiders pulled one back. Woodmill scored again and then with under a minute remaining Humbersiders scored a second goal and then a third from a penalty awarded in the dying seconds. Luton took an early lead against Bere Forest and it was not till near the end of the first half that Forest equalised. The match seemed destined for extra time when Chris Bradwell scored his second Luton goal to gain the semi final place against Woodmill.

Richard Rollason opened the scoring for Dudley against F.O.A.

but a fine goal by Stuart Moffitt right on half time levelled the scores. Ian Taylor put Dudley ahead again and their 2-1 win put them through to the semi final. The last match, St. Albans against Viking, was a nail biting affair. Viking took the lead through Graham Sarratt and St. Albans were finding it very difficult to settle down and mount effective attacks. Finally Alan Vessey's shot found the net to make the teams level at half time. Alan Vessey scored from a penalty in the second half but the pressure from Viking did not let up and they had several chances to equalise before St. Albans scraped through to the semi final against Dudley.

Woodmill got off to a good start against Luton in the first semi final. Their marking was tight and they were fast on the breaks and a goal by George Spittal thirty seconds before half time gave them the lead and Ian Braid made it two shortly after the start of the second half. Simon Davison then scored for Luton before Woodmill looked to have played themselves into all sorts of trouble with a two minute sending off for an illegal substitution. Down to four men their possession play and marking was excellent and Luton failed to capitalise on this error before Woodmill were back to full strength. Final score 2-1 to Woodmill and a place in the Final for the second year running.

The Dudley/St. Albans semi final didn't produce quite the excitement of its counterpart but it was a good game, with St. Albans finding the rhythm and playing skills which had deserted them in the Viking game. It took a single goal in the first half, by Ian Plummer, after some well worked passes amongst the team, to settle the result in St. Albans favour.

The Woodmill St. Albans final was a repeat of last year, when St. Albans won 4-1. With the St. Albans Ladies and Youth teams already winning finalists the talk was whether the club could pull off the triple. St. Albans certainly got off to a good start when Alan Vessey shot into an open goal after 45 seconds when a Woodmill pass bounced off a boat but Woodmill were playing well and their efforts paid off with a George Spittal goal before half time. Two minutes into the second half St. Albans broke through for Michael Uessey to score and St. Albans were ahead again. Then with three minutes remaining a complete disorganisation in the St. Albans substitutions was penalised by a yellow card and Brian Moore of Woodmill quickly scored with St. Albans down to four men. Even so St. Albans still came close to scoring on the break but the final shots lacked accuracy, hitting the frame. Once St. Albans were back to five players the game was wide open and the possibility of extra time loomed large. Then with forty seconds remaining on the clock and Woodmill attacking under the goal, George

Spittal was needlessly paddle fouled and awarded the penalty. Brian Moore scored from the penalty spot and it was all over. Woodmill jubilant and St. Albans left to ponder what might have been as they congratulated the Woodmill players who last won in 1986.

Congratulations to St. Albans, who despite this hiccup, still went home with two golds and a silver from this competition plus the Open Division One and Ladies Division One League trophies. Also congratulations to all the teams that took part, for playing the games in the right spirit and providing good entertainment in so many matches. Not one penalty shoot out was needed this year. A final word of thanks is needed for all those who helped make things run so smoothly referees, commentators, timekeepers etc. and especially to the Ponds Forge staff involved in setting up the computer scoreboard and the other assistance they gave.

Valerie Vessey



Slalom pool Championships 1993

Nottingham Canoeists brought home all of the four titles from the National Pool Slalom Championships at the Ponds Forge Arena, Sheffield. Shaun Pearce, current Mens Kayak World Champion from West Bridgford stormed home ahead of Ian Raspin, also of West Bridgford, in the fastest final of the day. They both kept Richard Fox, four times World Champion, and Melvyn Jones

out of the final.

Lynn Simpson, a student from Nottingham University took the Ladies Kayak title, beating Myriam Fox, ex-World Champions from France. Lisa Micheler, current World Champion and Olympic Gold Medallist from Germany, was knocked out in the semi-finals.

Bill Horsman, paddling the new "Maverick" canoe (designed

by Gareth Marriott, Olympic Silver Medallist) beat outsider, London based Richard Davenport in the Canadian Singles final. Marriott was knocked out in the earlier rounds having accumulated six seconds of penalties, despite having the fastest time (also paddling the new "Maverick" canoe).

Iain & Andy Clough, from Normanton-on-Soar beat Pitt & Millar from Scotland to win the Canadian Doubles event.

Kevin Campbell won Saturday's Regional Mens Kayak event, but was knocked out of the semi-finals of the National competition. Nick Smith won the Regional Canadian Singles event, but unfortunately dropped out in the first round of the Nationals.

The Pool Slalom was a very promising start to the season for local canoeists, especially considering the international calibre of athletes attending. We are looking forward to further success at the first Premier event

RESULTS

Mens Kayak

1. Shaun Pearce 2. Ian Raspin 3. Kevin Campbell

Canadian Singles

1. Bill Horsman 2. Richard Davenport 3. Richard Comer

Ladies Kayak

1. Lynn Simpson 2. Myrlam 3. Fox Emma Player

Canadian Doubles

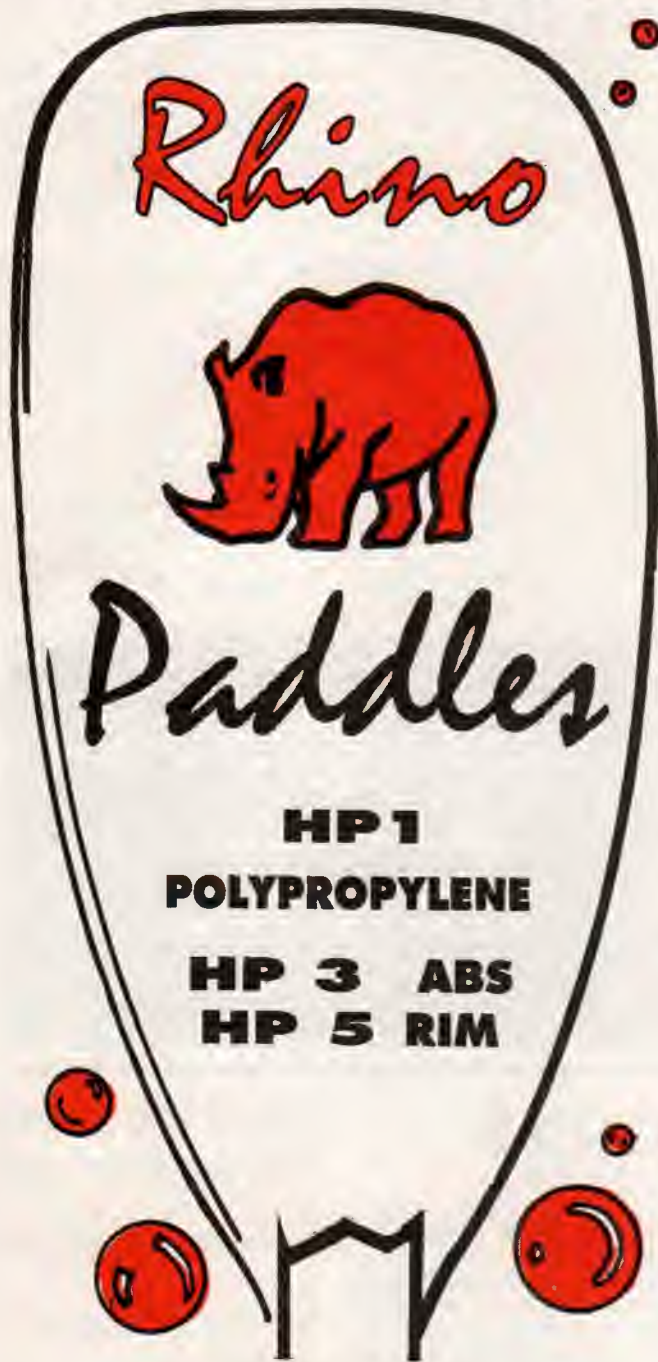
1. Clough & Clough 2. Pitt & Millar 3. Arrowsmith & Brain



of the season in three weeks time. The race will be held at Bala in North Wales on Saturday March 13th, on the dam-released river Tryweryn - site of the 1981 Canoe Slalom World Championships. And then it's back to Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham for the second Premier race the following weekend (March 20th). From these two races the canoeists compete for a place in the World Championships Team Selection races in May.



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Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race

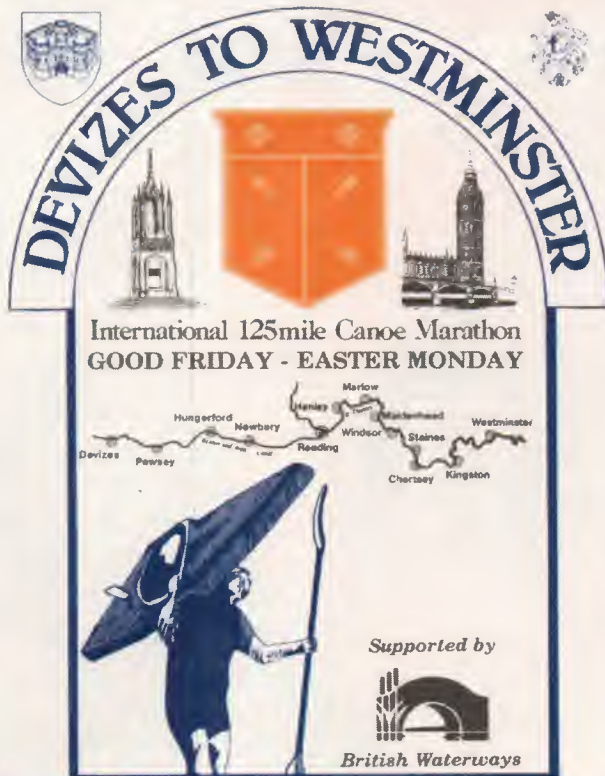
The toughest canoe race in the world takes place at Easter, known as the Canoeist's Everest, the 125 miles journey from Devizes

demands the highest standard of fitness and preparation. The first 54 miles of the course is on the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, fol-

lowed by a further 71 miles on the River Thames to Westminster. The race calls for over 24 hours strenuous and sustained effort. In bad weather it can be extremely arduous and, below Teddington on the Tideway, dangerous.

Start at Couch Lane Bridge, Devizes, on Good Friday 9th April, 1993

Both Junior and Single classes complete the course in four legs of 34, 36, 38 and 17 miles, stopping overnight at Newbury, Marlow and Ham. The record for the one hundred and twenty-five mile course, of 15 hours, 34 minutes was set by Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish of Reading & Leighton Park and Richmond Canoe Clubs.



You are never too old : At last a Veteran Ladies Cup for D.W It took us 27' hours to paddle the race and 7 months to get our hands on the Cup!

Anyone who has participated knows the hours of training and for women the added guilty feeling on 'not tonight dear - I've got a training session at 8am - must have an early night'.


The build up of Waterside and Thameside becomes an all consuming thing - eyes are blinkered minds totally set on doing well on the D.W. Housework gets kicked into touch - 'We'll catch up after Easter' is a well worn phrase.

Once the mind is set, women have a great capacity for achieving what they set out to do - only a broken arm or leg would stop us in our quest. Marathon paddlers have a great capacity for helpfulness and friendliness. During the Watersides we met the nice bunch from Worcester. On the Thamesides - Tamsin Phipps nearly fainted when she announced the two of us had won the overall series. Not bad for two 'Forty Somethings'.

At the time of writing we are starting to train for this years race. Will the old bones take the strain? Reading & Leighton Park have taken us under their wing - will they kill us?

Whatever the result - it's a great race and now there's a Cup for our section we have proved we are a force to be reckoned with.

Thanks to the DW committee for recognising our age-group and the 'Newly Married Couple' who presented us with the cup!!

Lesley Addington and Jacqui Mullins 

EXCEL PLASTIC WWR

The White water racing committee have embarked on a major new initiative to increase participation and encourage youngsters to take up the sport. The manufacture and introduction of a plastic racer which they hope will become the standard craft for all but the top flight paddlers is a brave move. The Excel Wavehopper is the result of collaborations between British and French racers and designers. Hopefully this should redefine the game for many. Falling quotas of ranking paddlers is common across the disciplines but Wild Water have taken a positive step to rectify matters. A resilient plastic boat costing around £350 is a better investment for paddlers, parents, clubs and centres than the current need to purchase a composite boat costing upwards of ú600 (and lasting one or two

seasons!) There is also a plan for a pool of kayaks to move around the events to cater for paddlers wanting to try river racing. A scheme is also under consideration to award racers a 5% time reduction if they paddle the Excel.


GB racer Neil Blackman gave the excel it's first competitive run at the Washburn race (27/28 Feb) and would have won the event had the time allowance rule of 5% been in operation. This has significant implications for all white water racers, whatever their division or ranking. Here are his thoughts: "My first impression of the new boat was that it really did look the business. The big question was, would it actually perform and do the business? The simple answer is...yes: in my opinion this boat is an all round winner. People who regularly paddle Wild Water Racers will

instantly notice that it is slower and slightly more difficult to push along in flat water than a sexy kevlar racing machine. The French Canoe Federation have done some recent testing and come up with a figure of

around 7% slower, this was confirmed when I raced it at the Washburn and found that I was 6.5% down on my normal times. Being heavier, at about 18 kg, and 50 cm shorter than a composite boat I did find it a bit lively at first. I put this down to trying to paddle the Excel like a full length top flight racer, as that is what I usually paddle. Because of the extra weight it requires a little more effort to turn hence it would drift off line more, but once this is taken into consideration it behaves like a composite boat and holds its line very well. When paddling in waves you do get wetter as the boat pitches more due to the reduction in length, but as Excel is so stable, it only adds to the fun. The Excel is a superb option for clubs or individuals, with adjustable seat and footrest it can accommodate just about anyone. With not having to worry about wearing out kevlar hulls on the beds of the average British river, this boat can be raced and rallied to your hearts content."

A recreational coach who gave the boat a spin on rough water was impressed by the boats behaviour. It was well behaved, with surprisingly good secondary stability (that's almost falling in, but not quite!). Break ins and breakouts were acceptable given the 4 metre length and little rock-

er. Rough water handling was good and predictable.

Is this the way forward for other disciplines to tackle the numbers of paddlers who cannot afford the rising costs of competing, travel and kevlar competition boats? 

POLO

With a growing interest in Canoe Polo, a national newsletter under the heading of Polo Zone was launched at the National Canoe Exhibition.

Polo Zone is a new publication (newsletter) dedicated to the Canoe Polo scene, with eight pages reproduced in black and white giving details of events and results as well as a guide to products, and skills. Each issue will contain a team profile selected from established teams. Aimed at all players from club level through to Division 1, including the Youth and Women's leagues.

Being a small publication, Polo Zone will be available only to subscribers at ú4.50 per annum with 6 issues a year being posted direct. Subscription enquiries should be made to Solutions Inc. 200 Portland Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 5QN. Tel: 0273 203323

JOHN BARRY



Canoeing *with* raw fish

[Sea canoeing in Japan]



To explain properly how I got involved in this would take ages, so we will start on the quayside.

It is 5 o'clock in the morning and I'm wrecked! A gruelling week's work, three "last beers" followed by putting up a strange tent in someone's back garden and a brief wine party had collectively resulted in only about three hours sleep. Ahead is a twenty five mile crossing in a fishing boat and then seakayak circumnavigation of Oshima, a volcanic island about twenty miles south of the Japanese mainland. The fact that I can only understand about 10% of the conversation is obviously going to add considerably to the experience.



It took about half an hour to load the kayaks (mostly British North Shore boats), plus all the camping equipment, coolboxes and large quantities of Asahi beer. It took much longer to find somewhere to park the vehicles in the crowded marina area. Sagami Bay Our powerful fishing boat, roared through the mist toward Oshima, disturbing rafts of Shearwaters and passing a huge swirl, where according to our skipper, a whale had just sounded. We crossed a distinct line in the sea where the clear, cool waters of the "black current" cut across the grey/brown waters of Sagami Bay.

Further interest was added for me when I discovered that the loo was the squat type let into the overhanging stern, inside what I thought was a small equipment locker. Using this facility in a one and a half meter swell, head on at twelve knots can be imagined not described. Also, it transpired that I should have brought my own breakfast.

After two hours Oshima appeared through the mist. Steep cliffs thick with vegetation, a tide race off the headland and . . . whales! A group of ten or twelve pilot whales blowing and breaching in the race.

SWIMMING WITH KAYAKS, PADDLING WITH WHALES

The concept of "canoeing with whales" gripped everyone. One by one we hung over the five foot free-board of the boat and dropped into the cockpits of our kayaks, then paddled off after the whales. We got quite close, one or two kayak lengths. "Good feeling neh"! The whales seemed unworried, but not terrifically keen on the idea of "swimming with kayaks".

We paddled back up the tide race and along the coast.



NISSAN CANOE CLUB
NMUK now has an active canoe club. It was "launched" in May last year, with indoor pool training sessions at Elswick Leisure Centre. Since then several open water events have been held at Roker and on the river Wear. More than twenty five people participated during last year, most having little or no previous experience. By the end of the year, a number of members had learnt to do the "Eskimo Roll" and many had experienced the thrills of canoe surfing. Two of the more experienced members, **Tony Hammock** and **Richard Whitehouse** went on a three day expedition in the Hebrides, encountering tide races, a force seven gale, sheep ticks and **Murphy's stout**.

KATO DRINKS GUINNESS

I was paddling with the Arfivic Sea Kayak Club. The club has about thirty members and is four years old. That makes it the oldest sea kayak club in Japan. Anyone who still has an image of the Japanese as a serious bunch of workaholics would learn a lot from a weekend with Arfivic. A fascinating set of people from many walks of life, they are great fun and after the usual initial, rather delicate "getting to know you" period, they are almost embarrassingly kind. Most of the paddlers are relative beginners by our standards, but they have plenty of enthusiasm and loads of spirit. The most experienced paddler, Kato, has been paddling for twelve years and represented Japan at the international sprint regatta at Nottingham. A very strong paddler, he has a particular taste for Guinness.

RAW FISH

In the evening, after setting up our tents on a rather unusual camp-site, (no grass, just two acres of black volcanic ash), we set about the serious business of preparing supper.

This mainly consisted of fish. Raw fish! Tony san! Raw Fish The enthusiasm that my companions show for this delicacy was staggering. Tuna, squid, octopus, shellfish, anything as long as it wasn't cooked. The highlight of the evening was watching our boat skipper, obviously revered as an expert, skinning the fish with one smooth motion of his knife and then deftly slicing the meat into chopstick manageable slices. I actually got a taste for it in the end. On a latter trip I was handed a live sea-urchin and a spoon! It was delicious, infact I had four, although it did not occur to me that I might be ostracized by my Greenpeace friends if they found out.

The evening was spent sitting around Tilly lamps consuming cans of beer and listening to the usual sorts of canoeing crack. Sadly my Japanese is still only survival level, and I only got two of the punch lines. Huge insects strolled about. I made a mental note to check in my sleeping bag before entry.

The following day, after a sumptuous breakfast, it was back to the fishing boat and back out to sea. The pleasure of sea canoeing in such an interesting area was tripled by the strange sensation of being warm.

Back in the Hyama harbour on Sunday afternoon we encountered one of the more frustrating aspects of life in Japan. The cars were totally blocked into the car park. My friends taught me the best way to deal with this situation. Instead of fretting and cursing as in the UK, we sat on the quay and ate watermelon.

After eventually loading the gear onto the cars we all trooped off to Kat's canoe shop and watched the replay of the trip on video. Most of it seemed to be close-ups of the supper preparation. "Ah Tony san! Raw fish - very delicious neh!

Tony Hammock



Photographs by:
Tony Hammock

The fishing boat gradually sweeping up the stragglers. The noise of the cicadas in the trees was amazing. We were a hundred meters out to sea and their incessant high pitched drone could still be heard over the noise of the surf.

Soon we slipped out of the mist into brilliant sunshine. Flying fish exploded out of the water from right under my bow, twisting and gliding twenty or thirty meters before vanishing again into the dark Pacific waters.

Later we pulled ashore onto a dumping volcanic sand beach. I walked along the dark strand beneath towering green slopes, iridescent with slanting sun and mist.



Name:

Donald Bean

Born:

August 1920.

Age:

72.

A paddle with...



Above Right:
In a creek off
General, Costa
Rica.
Nov 92

I first met the remarkable Mr Bean in 1991 in the bottom stopper at Holme Pierrepont Slalom course. Donald spat past me in his battered yellow rotobat closely pursued by the late Trevor Bailey. Trevor introduced us to each other and I promised to chat at some future date about a contribution for FOCUS. Donald has grown with the sport and is living testament that the sport knows no barrier of age. This is how he has seen canoeing develop and unfold over an incredible sixty years.

Donald commenced canoeing in 1932 at the age of 12. He has canoed, with some breaks (away in the Army for 6 years during the war) ever since, substantially increasing canoeing activities since retirement Easter 1985 (just before the age of 65).

CANOEING IN THE 1930'S

At first he canoed with his older brother and friends and originally had a heavy wooden open canoe. This he replaced about 1934 with a galvanised sheet steel one (much lighter, easier to repair, and no seems to 'weep' after being left off the water unused for a time).

The early 1930's were the age of the 'horse and cart and railways'. There were few motor cars, owned only by a very limited number of top executives. Mainly local rivers (Trent, Sow, Penk etc, and canals) were paddled. Rail travel was also very expensive, as we needed a complete goods wagon! Canals were also rather expensive, as there were a number of separate canal companies, e.g Trent and Mersey, Staffordshire and Worcestershire, Shropshire Union, Birmingham Canal Navigation, etc. He remembers a number of long tours, e.g Stafford to Essex Bridge (R. Sow), on to the Trent, paddling past Nottingham – also paddling back (heavy going this), necessitating use of a number of clothes lines to tow the canoe up heavy rapids. He also used a canoe trolley comprising an axle and two pram wheels, for land travel!

They toured across the Midlands to Llangollen and back by canals, going through the Harecastle Tunnel. It was wet every day, and they camped out each night.

There were few canoes, or canoeists, in the 1930's. and Donald's group were probably the only ones in the Stafford area – the next being at Burton-on-Trent and maybe Shrewsbury. In these circumstances, we had no involvement with competitions – or with the BCU's Coaching Scheme (which did not originate until the early 1960's, although the BCU was formed in 1936).

Fibreglass was not invented, and canoes were mainly wooden, (made with a form of plywood) or very heavy, constructed like rowing boats. The new galvanised sheet steel canoe did not become popular.

Interestingly, Donald cannot recall any access problems in those days.

In the 1930's, holidays for workers (other than top executives) were only one week per annum, plus Bank Holidays, so when he left school (one of the lucky ones to get a job), 'long' trips were no longer possible, except for one week a year. Overseas journeys were just not an option then, what with the prohibitive cost of using air transport, which was not particularly developed before the war.

Pre-war canoeing was more or less limited to grade 1 and 2 waters, and capsizing was quite a stigma, to be avoided, particularly because of risk of damage to the craft, and loss of equipment.

There were some kayaks, although he did not have one. Although they had cockpits, they had no cockpit 'coaming' and no spraydecks. Eskimo rolling was not introduced, except for demonstrations, until the early 1960's. Generally, kayaks were constructed in plywood, or they were canvas covered, being on either a fixed or folding frame. They were no use on shallow rivers, as the canvas was easily torn or split.

Anyone reading the BCU's River Guide (which is still available, though mainly obsolete) will note how transporting was orientated towards canals and railways – the use of motor cars not really being an option for the working community.

During the war (1940-1945) and its aftermath, canoeing more or less ceased, and did not resume normality until the early 1950's.

POST-WAR UNTIL RETIREMENT IN 1985

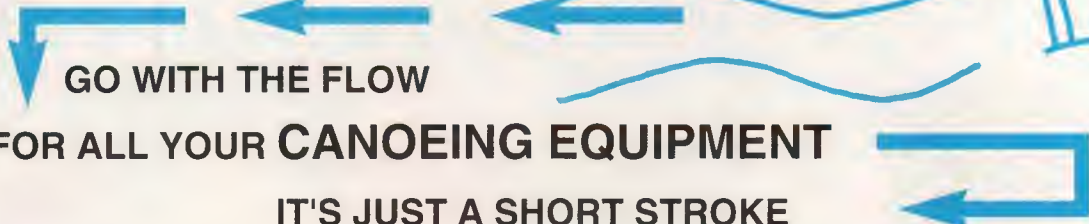
The next threshold in the development of canoeing was not until the late 1950's, with the introduction of fibreglass (a wartime invention), and the introduction of fibreglass canoes and kayaks, and also eskimo rolling mainly in those areas where pool facilities were available. (Most rivers then were heavily polluted – some being almost open sewers). Motor cars started to become more generally available, particularly with the de-rationing of petrol about 1950. People had longer annual holidays, and with the development of air transport, overseas holidays became more generally available to the working classes. Kayaking, as distinct from open canoeing, really began to 'take off'; more difficult stretches of water began to be kayaked, and the "explosion" in the popularity of canoeing had begun. Apart from commercially constructed craft, large numbers were home-made. 'Luxuries' such as wet suits, buoyancy vests, helmets etc, started to become popular (what risks did they take beforehand?), but unfortunately problems with access began to escalate.

The open canoe Donald used pre-war had disintegrated during the war, and he transferred to kayaking, which he has continued ever since.

With the construction of kayaks on an increasing scale, including many by scouts, youth groups etc, competitions flourished – the first post-war slalom being in the late 1950's. Fibreglass craft were quite strong and would take a lot of knocks,

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"After 60 years
of canoeing,
people still say
that I don't
look like a
canoeist"





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so heavier rapids and rocky rivers were paddled, which hitherto would have been avoided. The concept of canoeing was widened.

THE NEXT MILESTONE

The next milestone in the development of canoeing was the introduction of plastic craft, in the early 1980's. This technique introduced a new philosophy into the sport – from then onward it was not 'Will the kayak survive this stretch of rapid?', but 'Will I survive?' – it being understood that the plastic kayak would look after itself, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Waters previously regarded as uncanoeable were now being challenged.

This is where we are today – the popularity of the sport is at its peak, and still expanding. But alas, the access problems, and the lack of worthwhile white water these last few years. This no doubt has accentuated the trend to kayak abroad, coupled with the more affluent society of today, and the apparent absence of access problems abroad.

However, there is a slight swing back to open canoes, and in America we see open canoes filled with airbags, and being eskimo rolled. (Yes, in this country too, but very occasionally.) The Americans like to travel light, and wherever possible they have raft supports, with all 'cargo' being on the raft. Almost a new dimension, which may spread to this country in time?

Donald would like to think that canoeing/kayaking in Britain would continue at its recent pace, but the feasibility of this will no doubt depend on a solution to access problems, in line with the position in countries abroad.

SINCE RETIREMENT AT ALMOST 65

Easter 1985 His job as an accountant (Deputy County Treasurer of Staffordshire) gave the opportunity to 'spread wings', not only in canoeing (kayaking), but in other activities too. He had said for some years before retirement that he wished to get on some worth-while canoeing expeditions (not possible whilst still working), and in fact he retired a few months before my 65th birthday to enable him to join an international expedition in North Eastern Turkey with Dave Manby and others, canoeing the Coruh River from some 7000 feet up the Pontic Alps for some 200 miles to near Artvin, near the Russian border. It was fantastic, with enormous water, and in a part of the country reminiscent of Biblical times.

Donald has canoed abroad a number of times since then, e.g N E Turkey in 1988 and 1989, Austria, Switzerland, France, as well as getting on many of Britain's white water rivers.

Having the BCU's Sea Proficiency test, he has also canoed on the sea, in the Anglesey area (1990), with Spring tides and gale force winds.

Mr Bean has attended at all 15 Mike Jones Rallies; on the Welsh Dee, Tryweryn, Welsh and Scottish rivers.

In 1986 when the Holme Pierrepont Artificial Slalom course opened at Nottingham, he was invited by the BCU to be one of the 50 invited paddlers to paddle before Princess Anne, representing canoeists of the 1930's (the only one in this group!) Donald paddles the course several times a year and feels it offers excellent white water training. He is almost certainly the oldest one to kayak there, and occasionally even swims down.

A BCU INSTRUCTOR

A BCU Instructor, and working with virtually all levels of experience, always on a voluntary basis, Donald is a member of the Stafford & Stone Canoe Club, and an associate member of the Manchester Canoe Club. Primarily however he regards himself as a white water paddler, as this offers the greatest challenge, excitement and adventure (in retirement, challenge is a main source of motiva-



Above:
Yusefeli River,
North East
Turkey.
June 1992
"I swam down
this lot - very
exciting!"

Below:
France, May
1992.
Donald Bean
playing about
on the St.
Pierre de
Boeuf slalom
course off the
River Rhone.

tion). Astonishingly he also finds time for W W Racing and a bit of slalom. At competitions he always seems to be the oldest competitor, by far – but why should he be just an 'ordinary' veteran at 72, when the veteran class starts at age 35?

He has paddled solo the Trans-Pennine Canoe Race (127 miles, non-stop, Leeds to

Liverpool 1986) and twice since then the Birmingham Century 100 miles canoe marathon. Both involved over 30 hours continuous day and night paddling.

Five times Donald has competed in the Stone Quadrathlon (1km swim, 10km run, 10km canoeing and 40km cycling). In 1992 he won the Stafford Borough Residents Prize.

1992 was his 60th canoeing anniversary year, and he decided to 'push the boat out' more than somewhat. Paddling in France, N E Turkey, the Grand Canyon USA (all 225 miles), Nepal (the Sun Kosi and Sapta Kosi from Dolaghat to Chatra), and Costa Rica (on the Rio Sarapique and Rio General) – the only Britain on the Costa Rica Expedition.

Canoeing contains an element of danger, and because of the involvement with others on the water, Donald regards safety as paramount, which has led over the years to involvement with life saving and first aid.

Not afraid of a swim from time to time; it's all part of the great uncertainty of white water canoeing; in fact, in heavy rapids swimming can be even more exciting than canoeing down; His eskimo roll is 100% in baths, but in heavy water when a roll is specially called for, the rolling is a bit hit and miss. Since a shoulder injury a few years ago and he is losing a bit of flexibility but has developed recovery strokes so that, hopefully, he does not swim as often as Dave Manby alleges!

DONALD BEAN CANOES ALL THE YEAR ROUND:

Trent on New Year's Day, Churnet twice in freezing cold; also on Holme Pierrepont Slalom Course. He is certainly weathered well, and is still living life to the full. In his own words 'I prefer to wear out rather than to rust away. No growing old gracefully, or not yet. I am still going strong, so don't write me off just yet.'

"Over the years I have preached that canoeing has a tremendous therapeutic value. It concentrates and focuses the mind on the job in hand – certainly on w.w one cannot solve work or domestic problems whilst w.w canoeing, so one returns from canoeing refreshed mentally, as well as benefitting physically.

I was awarded the BCU's 'Award of Merit' in 1988 to recognise my contribution to the development of canoeing, and their 'Award of Honour' in 1991 in appreciation of my services to the sport of canoeing.

Although still a proficient paddler, I accept that one day I shall have to come down the 'ladder' a bit – but I've been saying this for some 30 years now. One cannot stop the ageing process, but apparently one can retard it.

I am about to sort out expeditions for 1993 – my 61st canoeing anniversary year – possibly more about this after the events.

After all these years people still say that I don't look like a canoeist – just what should I look like, and how do I change?'

This incredible septarian has a full and active life outside of canoeing: the wonder is how he fits it all in, swimming, yoga, volleyball, gardening etc Donald was awarded the MBE in January 1992 for Services to the Community in Stafford – It was presented by H M The Queen at an investiture at Buckingham Palace in Feb 1992.

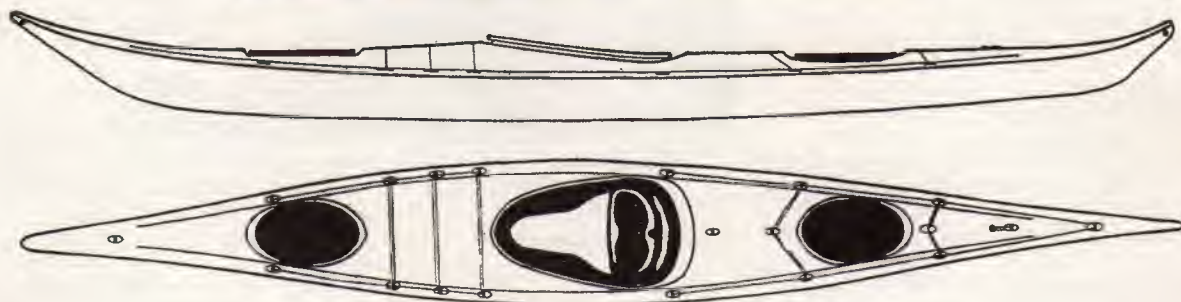
"It is every ones hope to leave some small footprints in the sands of time. Voluntary work improves the lives of those who are helped, and in doing so fulfils the lives of those who do the helping."

At the Sheffield Canoe Exhibition members of the British Youth Colorado Expedition gave their slideshow and lecture: Donald was there on the screen and was part of the team. Young at heart, Young at Paddle.

Donald Bean talking to Kevin Danforth



SKERRAY EXCEL



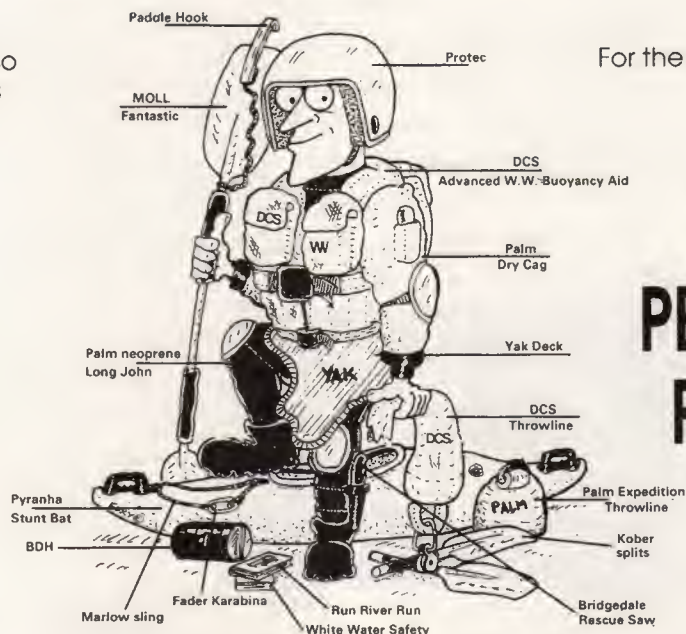
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The importance of Touring as a growth area was emphasised by the large number of enquiries for touring events at the Regions stand at the Canoe Exhibition. Can your club organise at least one canoe tour this year? Events need to be open to other clubs and individuals, and well publicised. Send details ASAP to Judith Coffin (ER Sec) 14 Dell Crescent, Norwich, NR5 8QB.

Touring Officers are Mile Robards (Essex) and Vaughan Reed (Norfolk), addresses in Regional Yearbook (additional copies available from Judith for £1.00 + SAE).

The Region now has a display stand (6'x8') and a 12 foot BCU Banner available for outside events. Contact your nearest Regional rep for details.

JUDITH COFFIN

east midlands

Nottingham Kayak Club Regional w/e Cardington May 1/3: basic Camping, try it sessions plus trip on Sunday. Trevor Chapman 0602 334768 Boat Show. Trent May 20/23. The region will be helping with the BCU Stand: come and make yourself known! Ann Hart 0602 288413

Holme Pierrepont Disabled Mini Olympics. Dave Clifton 0602 781120 Derwent Rally June 6 Simon Dawson 0602 868803 Information Lane 0602 850930

ANN HART

northern

Thanks to all who supported Copeland Canoe Club Pool Slalom Open Championships in January, this is to become an annual event, details from Joe Stalker, Well done to Mark Wignall, winning three classes.

Entries to Durham Cathedral 900 Canoe Raft-up on Sunday 11 July in Durham City, to Mary Armstrong, come and support this attempt and help beat the recorded entry in the Guinness Book of Records.

Have you received your new BCU Yearbook? Name the paddler on the cover, first correct answer to Mary Armstrong will win two places at Durham Cathedral 900 event.

Copies of Northern Paddler avail-

able from Sarah Shrimpton Tel: 0434 381966, news, reports and photo's for next newsletter needed.

Easter Monday 12.4.93 "Conex" Canoe Race, River Wear details from Phil Puckrin 091 5489856

MARY ARMSTRONG

southern

The 1993 addition of the River Wey to the BCU Licence means that, in the South, members can paddle Basingstoke Canal, the Wey and all the local British Waterways Board Canals. Just show the BCU sticker on your boat. BCU membership is superb value. Tell your friends - Don't keep it a secret!

We have a wide range of recreational events planned. To begin with: a gentle Thames trip on 25 April (Pangbourne to Caversham); a playday on the Cardington Slalom Course on 9 May and a Canadian tour on 23 May (Thames side-streams - Reading to Henley) with barbecue afterwards. Contact 0252 850657 or 0908 676343.

The 1993 Southern Region Directory, price £1 is available from Ian Davey (0252 621381)

CHARLES HICKS

west midlands

Forthcoming events include: BIRMINGHAM CENTURY 100 miles around the city, May 1st and 2nd; UPPER SEVERN CANOE RALLY, canoes only, May 8th and 9th; ACKER'S LOOP, 35 miles around Birmingham with overnight camp; PADLATHON Charity paddle for the heart foundation, 25 miles from Ironbridge to Bewdley on the Severn, May 30th, and RIVER WYE TOUR on June 6th. Contact Dave Bateman Tel: 021 772 3739. Regional Slaloms take place May 2nd MARTLEY, May 23rd IRONBRIDGE and June 20th STONE. Contact Mike Walker Tel: 0384 76855. Regional Hasler Marathons take place LEAMINGTON 4th April, ANKER VALLEY 25th April, WORCESTER 9th May, FLADBURY 30th May. contact Peter Jones Tel:021 745 3415. Courses include Birmingham School of Canoeing. Tel: 0384 67896, Acker's Tel: 021 771 4448. Drummond Outdoor Tel:0743 365022. West Heath Canoe Centre Tel:0527 78456

and Sneyd Lake Tel:0922 710020. Regional Handbook £1.00 from Mike Nicholls, 25 Dunbar Grove, Great Barr, Birmingham (include SAE) Good paddling for the Spring.

ROSEMARY PREECE.

south west

The new committee met and confirmed that it will hold four meetings per year. The remaining venues are Apr 23 at Swindon, July 23 at Taunton and Oct 15 at Exeter. The AGM will be at Bridgwater on Nov 26. Shortly after each meeting a newsletter will be sent to clubs and to the LCO's in an attempt to improve the circulation of information. Individual members can get a copy by sending SAE's to the Secretary. Arrangements are going ahead for the Canoeing Exhibition at the Pewsey Sports Centre on 19/20 June, Regional Officers will attend. Watch out for two new publications which may be of interest. "100 Paddles" a series of suggested river trips which includes an input from the S. West, also a new river guide to cover the whole of the South of England.

DENNIS WALLS

yorkshire & humberside

All members of the Region have been sent their free copy of the 1993 Yearbook. Any Regional member who has not received their copy should write, quoting their BCU number, to Norman Taylor, 73 Gateland Lane, Leeds LS17 8LN. The River Washburn release dates have now been finalised for the year and a list of all dates - both competitive and recreational - is available by sending SAE to Don Player. 21 The Drive, Leeds, LS8 1JF. The Regional Polo AGM is to be held on Wednesday 28th April and the annual Prize Giving and Disco is to be on Friday 7th May, both are at the Queen's Hotel, Pontefract. Disco tickets are available from Marianne Spender 0422 882908. The Hull Club International Polo tournament is to be held on the weekend of 26/27th June at Albert Avenue Baths, Hull. Entry forms are available from Joy Davis 0482 505587

MARRIANNE SPENDER



Chair's Chat

Summer is with us again and hopefully will entice us all out onto the water. Most of the Regions have published a list of local events, recreational, competition and coaching, to supplement the national Yearbook, details in Regional Yearbooks and/or from Regional Secretaries (address in National Yearbook). The coming year is likely to see various changes within the Sports Council and proposed National Lottery. I hope that we are all prepared to make the most of these opportunities. Hope to see you on the water (I will be life-guarding on the Devizes to Westminster).

Ron Hodgson

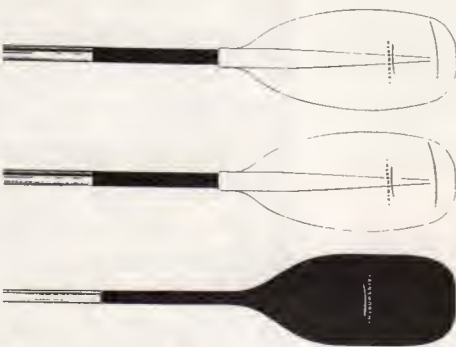


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CANOE CAMPING CLUB



Many Focus readers will be familiar with one or more of these ways of combining canoeing and camping. Even if whitewater is your choice and takes you to cold, wet and wintry mountains, and camping is the only available accommodation – then at least make it as comfortable for yourself as you can.

The Canoe-Camping Club is for canoeists who camp, and campers who canoe, and its activities cover just about every combination of the two. But the members join for much more than this. It's not a local club but a national one, which means a network of friends throughout the UK and some abroad. With no club house, there's nothing to tie the Club to any particular location – instead, national meets are the highlights of the Club's year – the special occasions when members from all over gather together.

ANNUAL EASTER MEET

The annual Easter Meet, held on a river or canal long enough to provide four days canoeing, is an unbroken tradition dating back to the Club's formation in 1933. Its first Easter Meet, took place on the Sever, from Shrewsbury to Worcester, a venue frequently revisited since, and again this year for the Club's Diamond Jubilee. Waterside camp sites are arranged so that the Easter Meet is a true canoe-camping event. Members with larger tents, caravans and camper vans use a conveniently located base camp and have to arrange car ferries daily, while the canoe-campers can forget about their cars for four days apart from a single move of the cars from start to finish, for which a coach is laid on.

The Easter Meet attracts anything from 50 to 150 canoeists but the water never seems crowded, whereas the local village hall hired for the Saturday night Social is packed

to bursting! The organisers arrange food and drink and the party goes with a swing as members meet their friends and catch up with the canoeing exploits of the past year.

The Club also organises longer holidays. Last year a week camping on the banks of the River Wye at the Lucks' all site, Mordiford, offered walking, caving, sightseeing, pottering, sunbathing, shopping and visiting markets, not to mention eating, drinking, singing and socialising, and of course canoeing. Paddling ranged from "have a go" sessions for complete beginners, games afloat for the kids, and instruction for all who wanted it – to day trips on different sections of the river and a canoe-camping journey of several days. The Club benefits from the many instructors among its members who give generously of their time and effort with activities such as these.

MORDIFORD WEEK

By popular demand the Mordiford week is being repeated this year, from 29 May to 6 June (details from Janet Hales, 9 Strode Street, Egham, Surrey, TW20 9BT). Non-members of the Canoe-Camping Club/Camping and Caravanning Club can join the meet by taking out temporary membership.

While the Easter Meet is the major national rally, the vitality of the Club comes from its regional Groups. Each Group Secretary provides the focus for the active canoeing members in the area, and puts together a programme of events throughout the year. Any member from any part of the country is welcome to join any meet, whichever Group is organising it. The meets range from day trips to long weekends on a variety of waters – canals, slow rivers and lakes for a gentle relaxing paddle for all ages and levels of experience – to demanding whitewater trips and sea expeditions (participation at the Run Leader's discretion, depending on ability). The combined list, of over 80 events each year, is available from the Secretary of the Canoe-Camping Club, Rosemarie Green, 25 Waverley Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4HT (SAE please).

LANDS END TO THE WEST MIDLANDS

Thames Group (Ros and Roger Stanley of Wokingham, Berks) and Herts & East Anglia Group (Peter Bullamore, Norwich) cover the South-East, while West Country Group (Tony Wilkins, Abingdon) covers an area stretching from Land's End to the West Midlands! The two northern Groups, Dee & North West (Derek Davie, Macclesfield) and Vale of York (Gordon Emmerson, Pudsey, Leeds) often join each others' meets, particularly for the annual West Coast of Scotland canoe-camping tours, organised over the past decade by Dennis Lees.

Canoeing and Camping – the two go together, say the members of the Canoe-Camping Club. If you're enjoying the great outdoors in your canoe – stay out, and sleep under canvas. If you like the freedom and independence of setting up your own holiday home in your favourite part of the country, why not explore the local lakes and rivers by canoe? And if your urge is to travel, what better way than a waterborne route – letting the water bear the load- not only your canoe and you but your camping kit as well.



Chesterfield Canal



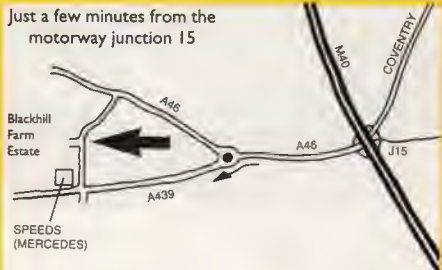
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Dennis is currently the Club's President, while eminent canoeists such as John Dudderidge, Kathleen Toothill, Percy Blandford, Oliver Cock and the late Maurice Rothwell and David Hirschfeld, as members over many decades, are or have been Club Presidents and Vice- Presidents.

The Canoe-Camping Club is older than the BCU and the histories of the Club and the Union are closely linked. The Club was formed in 1933 as one of the earliest of the "activity" sections of the Camping Club of Great Britain & Ireland (as the Camping & Caravanning Club was then known).

1936 OLYMPIC GAMES

Early members were in the forefront of canoe slalom and naturally set their sights on the 1936 Olympic Games. A problem arose: the British Olympic Committee would not allow the new club to represent the sport because, although a national organisation, it was part of another club i.e. the Camping Club of GB & I. The Committee required a separate, independent body – and so the British Canoe Union was formed.

Whilst the new BCU was now the responsible body, it was the CCC members who filled every place in the 1936 Olympic Team and did all the work!

The Club has many firsts to its credit. In 1939 the first slalom competition in this country was organised by the Yorkshire Group in conjunction with the Manchester Canoe Club – which itself started off as a local group of the Canoe-Camping Club. CCC members paddled the rivers of the UK and Europe, writing itineraries as they went. They hosted overseas canoeists (including a German expedition in the summer of 1939 – and canoeing refugees from Nazi Europe). Amongst their members were the cockleshell heroes – including Colonel Hasler DSC. The CCC were the principal hosts for Olympic canoeing teams who attended the 1948

ABOVE:
Leeds to
Liverpool
Canal, Easter
Meet 1992

BELOW:
Norfolk Broads,
Easter Meet
1990

BELOW RIGHT:
Cherwell, May
1990



Games in the UK. After the war, Club members designed and built canoes – David Hirschfeld of Tyne Canoes and Percy Blandford of the famous PBK design. members wrote canoeing books for the new enthusiasts – and the first GRP canoe was built at the Camping Club site at Chertsey, Surrey, where the Thames Group had a base.

CLUB FIRSTS

Club firsts included the first woman to paddle across the English Channel (Pat Sheldon) and the first woman to race a kayak in the Devizes-Westminster Race (Ann-Marie Booth). Its magazine "The Canoe Camper", is the longest running canoeing magazine (from 1933) and forms a major archive of canoeing activities this century, with many detailed accounts of trips and expeditions at home and abroad.

In recent years members have explored waters in Germany (former west and east), Belgium, France, Holland, Slovakia, Poland and Scandinavian countries, plus Canada and the USA. Several members have celebrated their retirement by joining the International Danube Tour for the whole 12 weeks through 7 countries.

UK RECREATIONAL CANOE TOUR

With so many European tours to enjoy the Club decided it was high time that the UK hosted such an event – unbelievably, no international recreational canoe tour has ever been organised in this country before! The natural choice was the Thames – suitable for all types of cane, no access problem, no portages for loaded boats, offering a variety of countryside and lost of sightseeing attractions for visitors – Oxford, Windsor, London – and a suitable distance for a two week trip, some 150 miles (daily distances 8 – 16 miles). Waterside sites have been arranged to cover the length of the river from Lechlade to London, and the NRA Thames Division are giving their full support.

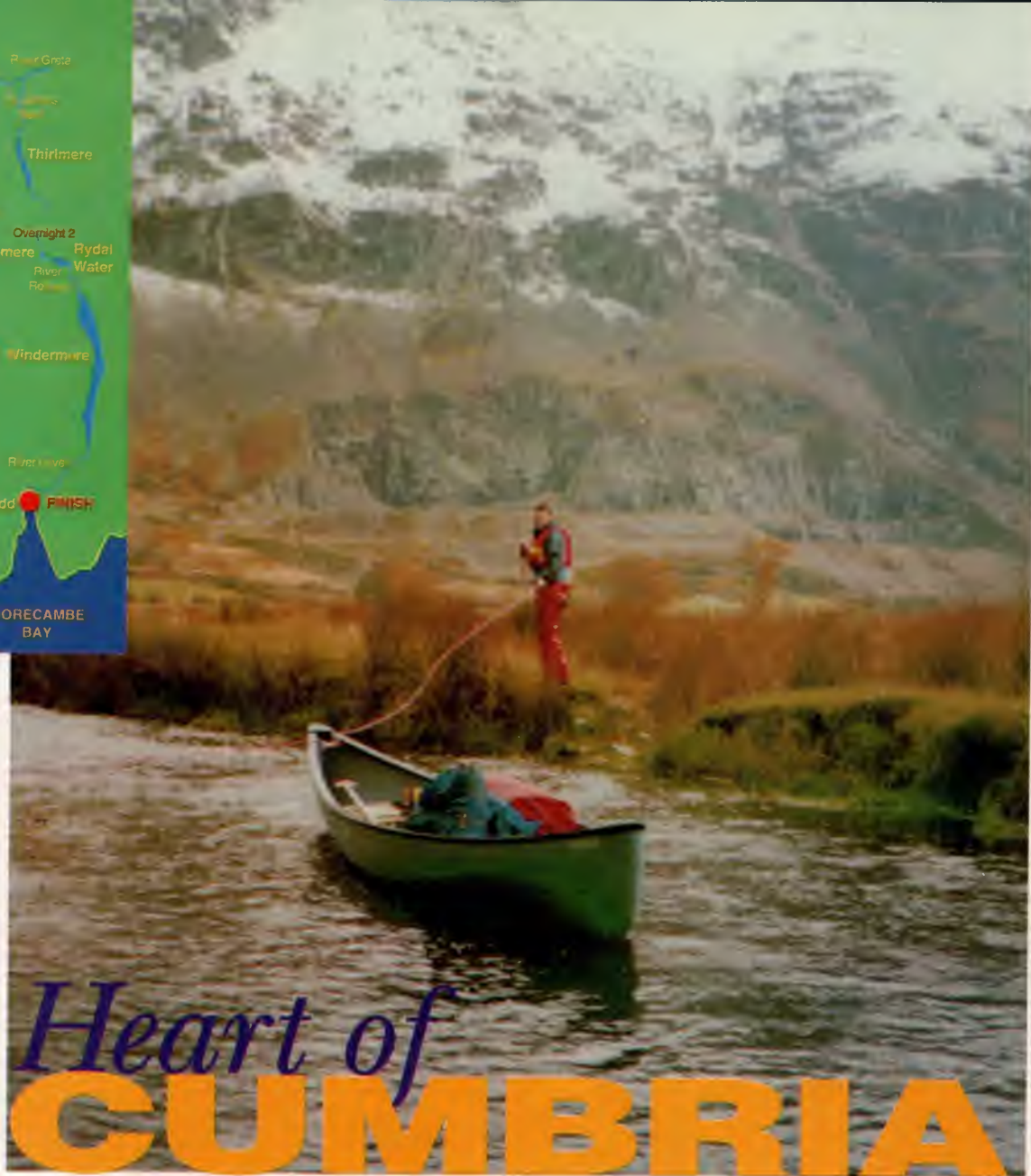
The dates are 23 July – 8 August and the meet has been granted official status by the International Canoe Federation Touring Committee. John Dudderidge has kindly consented to be the Tour President. Up to 250 canoeists can take part – overseas visitors and CCC members have priority (booking for other UK canoeists opens on 1 March). The organisation, by Club members giving their time and energies voluntarily, is led by Dave Ball and Audrey Frew. Tour fees for UK canoeists are £80 for the fortnight (£50 for youth) (CCC members and overseas visitors get a reduction) to include Thames licence, camp sites, a pigroast and a fish and chip supper, tour handbook and souvenirs. Contact Dave Ball, 44 Hammond Road, Enfield, Middx, EN1 3PD for further details and booking form (SAE please).

In its Diamond Jubilee Year the Canoe-Camping Club is still at the forefront of recreational canoeing, of which it has unparalleled knowledge. The experience which its members bring to the organisation of canoeing events will be fully employed in the 1993 International Tour of the Thames.

Janet Hales 

PHOTOS BY
Janet Hales





**By
open
canoe
through
the**

Heart of
CUMBRIA

We put on the Derwent in Workington at 9.30am on a cold and dark late October morning. It was the start of a trip by open canoe which would take us in three days through the very heart of the Lake District. Linking up the two main Cumbria river systems, and finishing on the salt water of Morecombe Bay near Ulverston.

As we paddled away from the farewell waves of Julie and Sally, I couldn't help thinking of the words of Chairman Mao, something about the longest journey beginning with a step. In our case it began with a single paddle stroke as we set off upstream, against a manageable current. I had been thinking and talking about this journey for a couple of years at least; it was good to be under way.

EUPHORIA

The euphoria didn't last long. Fifty metres or so upstream we encountered the first angler, at about the same time that the depth of the river decreased, forcing us to get out and push and wade. The bed of the lower Derwent seems to be lined with cannonball sized rocks covered in a slippery slime, which makes walking upstream with any confidence virtually impossible. Geoff took the bow line; I pushed from the stern as we went up the opposite side of the river to the angler. He did not look at us in a way which suggested undiluted pleasure. It was the first act of a scenario which would be repeated several times over the next four hours. A brief look at the map will show that there is something like twenty kilometres of lower Derwent flowing out of Bassenthwaite Lake. Our progress went something like this: paddle against the current for 50-100 metres, run aground in shallows, get out and stumble with the boat for 200-300 metres and encounter another fisherman with an attitude. It was far longer than I had anticipated. Hopes

of tracking upstream were dashed by the tree cover on the banks, and we were continually forced back into the bed of the river.

"IAN BOTHAM"

In sight of Cockermouth we paddled round one of the numerous bends in the river to see a collection of 4-wheel drives parked by a fishing hut. An angler was up to his waist in the river, casting his flies with rapt attention. We paddled past without making eye contact; it had developed into the best strategy for avoiding confrontation. It was impossible, however, to avoid making eye contact with the bailiff as he jumped up and down on the bank, shouting at the top of his voice. We deemed it prudent to paddle over. He didn't seem to be astonishingly pleased to see us. "Do you know who that is that you've just paddled past?" he yelled. I looked at Geoff; he wasn't giving away any clues, so I looked back downstream at the angler. There might have been something familiar about the set of his shoulders, but at this distance it could have been anybody. "I give in," I confessed. "Who is it?" "Ian Botham" the bailiff replied "and I don't think he's going to be too happy paying all that money for a salmon beat just to have you two paddle through it." It seemed an unassailable argument. The bailiff wasn't finished with his quiz yet, however. "Do you know who's round the next bend?" The mind boggled. Off the top of my head I could probably think of about six thousand people who might be there, but not many who could afford to fish the lower Derwent. I thought Geoff might have the answer to this one, but before he could have a go the bailiff spoilt the game by telling us. "Lady Egremont" he exclaimed in triumph, "and she owns the bloody river!" I had to confess to being a little impressed, although it looked like we might



have a problem on our hands. It seemed like quite a long portage to the road – the A66 by Yum Yum's cafe. Have you ever tried to hitchhike with a sixteen foot open canoe and all your kit in the pouring rain?

Amazingly, we got a lift to Bassenthwaite Sailing Club, and carried on our way. What a pleasure to be able to sit in the boat and paddle without having to fight a current or portage weirs. All too soon we paddled into the outflow of the middle Derwent, which links Bassenthwaite Lake with Derwentwater. We were about 5km from our anticipated overnight stop at Derwent Hill, where the River Greta flows into the River Derwent. It was a hard struggle to make progress against the current, but at least we could paddle for reasonable stretches without wading. We pulled off at Derwent Hill just as it was getting dark. It had been a long day.

BODY CLOCK

The clocks changed that night, giving us an extra hour in bed. It didn't make a lot of difference to the way I felt, I was still convinced that I had someone else's body on. We set off up the Greta at 8am. If you've ever paddled the Greta you'll understand the apprehension which I felt. My mood wasn't helped by the fact that it started to snow as we entered Keswick. We got to the bridge by the Youth Hostel just as the blizzard was developing nicely. A look up the river suggested that further paddling progress seemed unlikely, as the torrent screamed towards us. Tracking was out too, and it didn't look all that inviting a river to attempt to wade up, dragging a canoe.

Our next real reference point was St John's Beck, which flows down out of Thirlmere into the Greta. We needed to get onto that, and thus onto Thirlmere. The problem was the next 6km or so of the Greta. Geoff suggested that he knew of an old disused railway line which runs parallel to the river in the direction we wanted to go. It has been converted into a cycle/walkway, and seemed ideal for our purpose. We rigged up the boat for an extended portage and got under way. Carry like that teaches you a lot about portaging that they don't tell you in books or films. It wasn't helped by the fact that our portage coincided with the finishing stages of the mountain marathon taking place that weekend, and the old railway line formed part of their route. Numerous runners came past us as we portaged up the river – the puzzlement on their faces plain to see.

Finally at 1pm, we reached the entrance to St John's Beck. The gradient eased off, and the river narrowed, meandering its way through a delightfully scenic valley. We were now heading due South, and in the distance, capped with snow, we could make out the real barrier to our progress; Dunmail Raise, the watershed which splits the Cumbrian fells. The beck quickly became shallow, but its raised banks, a defence against flooding, provided excellent pathways for double bow lined tracking; with a line to either bank we could manoeuvre the boat upstream at a good pace.

Even so, time was passing. There's a good 7km of St John's Beck, and the nearer to Thirlmere dam we got, the harder the progress became. Fences across the river; fallen trees; mossy boulders – all hindered our route upstream. It was an intense relief to see the dam overspill channel, even though it meant a brutal portage up through the woods, over the road, and down onto the Lake. It was pitch dark as we set off up Thirlmere, paddling through waves of fatigue. Conversation was desultory. Uppermost in our minds was the fact that even when we got to the far end of Thirlmere, we were still about 7km from Grasmere, where we planned to overnight. The paddle took exactly an hour. When we landed, it took two carries to get all the kit to the side of the A591. We left the boat by the side of a wall and set off with our packs up Dunmail. It was not a walk I would be in a hurry to repeat, but eventually the lights of the Achille Ratti Climbing Hut glowed out of the darkness, and then the view down into Grasmere Village itself. The snow eased up a little as we lost height. Finally, the temptation of the Travellers



Rest proved irresistible, and we slumped exhaustedly in front of enormous bar meals by the log fire. The landlord looked a little concerned at the image we presented, but took out money nonetheless.

We stayed at Martin Clarke's house in Grasmere, and did an early morning trip to bring the

canoe over. I didn't feel much better than the morning before, but the prospect of going downhill eased the aches and pains. We launched onto Grasmere about 9am and warmed up with the paddle over to the weir which marks the beginning of the River Rothay. The level was a little disappointing, but with one of us paddling and the other running down the side of the river we made good progress. We needed to. We had something like thirty kilometres to go to the finish, it would be dark by 4pm, and the biggest, hardest water of the trip was down on the bottom of the Leven. It would be less than sensible to try that in the dark. Come to think of it, it's less than sensible to try it in daylight.

RYDAL

Rydal Water was its usual beautiful, serene self – shrouded in mist. I felt like an intruder on the lake, and we hurried on down the river to Windermere. The coffee shops at Waterhead beckoned and we paddled over to the steamer terminal. "Can't land here, this is a private beach!" said the young lad repairing the rowing boats. Geoff was a little annoyed at this welcoming approach, but calmed himself with a large piece of chocolate gateau. The girl behind the counter obviously had us sussed. "Cups or Mugs?" she enquired. I looked enquiringly at Geoff. "You look like mugs!" she offered. Who were we to argue?

Windermere was along haul, but excitement mounted as we approached the entrance to the River Leven. If you've ever paddled the Leven you'll know why. The largest lake in England drains down into Morecombe Bay through the Leven. It's a big, rumbustious, challenging river, never the same the last time you did it. It's sporty enough in a kayak, but in a loaded tandem canoe it's enough to raise your eyebrows a little. The old whitewater racecourse is straightforward enough, but below Backbarrow Bridge there are some serious pieces of river. We only had one swim, but that was more than enough.

The river gets tidal at Haverthwaite road bridge, and meanders from there in huge loops down into the estuary above Greenodd. We caught the remnants of the outgoing tide across the tidal flats, finally making out the distant lights of Greenodd through the gloom. The trip was nearly over, bringing with it that curious feeling of mixed emotions – sadness that such a physically and emotionally taxing journey was coming to an end, and deep joy in the anticipation that I would soon be in a hot bath. I needed one.

**Barry Howell
did the trip
with Geoff Tidy**



ABOVE:
The trip begins
at Workington

LEFT:
Double
bow-line
tracking up
St. John's
Beck

BELOW:
Journey's end
at Greenodd

**BELOW
RIGHT:**
Lining down
the Leven



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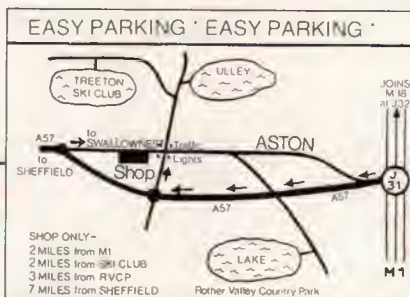
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Paddlers gear

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The obvious comparison for the WODI is the large BDH, their capacities being almost identical. The WODI does however have several extra features. This is to be expected though, as the use we put BDH's to, is only a side product from the pharmaceutical industry, while the WODI has been designed exclusively for watersports.

It meets the primary requirement, being absolutely 100% watertight, even after "a good trashing". This is achieved by having a threaded sleeve in the lids, housing an oval rubber gasket.

There is no top and bottom as such, as both ends are removable, this makes items near the ends easily and quickly accessible. Each end is different, one features a large handle, while the other has a smaller handle and a moulded eyelet suitable for putting a carabineer through. These handles make carrying the containers and twisting off the ends easy, even with cold wet hands.

Another benefit of these ends, is that they make tying and fastening the container in the boat easy. Such advantages do have compromises associated with them. The ends actually occupy a significant amount of space, reducing the room available for other equipment. The WODI does just fit into the Stunt Bat, leaving little room for any other gear. Another drawback mentioned earlier

is its weight, at 1.2kgs it is three times the weight of a BDH. This is not too noticeable once on the water, although if you are flying overseas it cuts quite heavily into the weight allowance.

Finally there is the cost: is it worth it? For the extra money you get a completely watertight container, that is exceptionally strong and easy to handle. What value is the peace of mind worth if it contains your precious camera and films?

RRP (inc VAT and P&P) £34.95
Available from: WODI Ltd, Canonsleigh Court, Burlescombe, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 7JF.

CANOE SAFE

Silicon chip implants schemes for pet security have been around for quite some time and are very successful. Thanks to a joint initiative between the manufacturers and the BCU office we are now able to operate a similar scheme for paddlers. All boats are at risk and unfortunately crime in canoeing seems to be increasing. The Canoesafe tagging system works by fixing an electronic tag inside the craft: this passive tag carries a unique number which is impossible to duplicate and can only be read by a scanner. Scanners are only available to police forces and recognised authorities (we have one at BCU HQ) One registered you are given a tag, registration certificate and your details are confidentially logged on a data base. The tag is the size of a match head and can be hidden anywhere in the craft as it is unobtrusive and waterproof. The scheme costs £18.00 to register for life. Additional tags can be added for £10 each. For more details send a SAE to BCU Office.



Merrill Sandals

Several footwear manufacturers now produce a 'super flip flop' for amphibious usage. This latest offering is much higher tech than the usual river rats footwear featuring more moulded parts and significantly better crossover straps. I found the straps more comfortable, if hotter than the nylon on my trusted old pair. The sole shows much thought and the run test proved more cushioning and support was evident. Well constructed, and keenly priced these fill a gap in Europe left by import difficulties of the original river sandal, the Teva. Worn with neoprene socks these are good option for casual paddling, and plodding around in the wet.

PS Reports from Katmandu report street corner produced Teva lookalikes at around £6 !!

£ 29.99 from Merrill, CCS Centre, Bristol, BS3 5RU 0272 636362



PLASTIC POLO KAYAKS

HEAD to HEAD

Pyranha RX 300 v P&H Revenge

Both kayaks are specifically designed for competition polo although doubtless they will be used for baths training of a more general nature.

Just as Wild water racing have 'gone plastic' the polo players now are looking for toughness and longevity from kit. As the ethos of Polo revolves around thrash and bash, as well as skill it is

inevitable that players wallets are smarting from the cost of a new composite boat per season. Clubs and pools are the traditional plastic purchasers and while the Rotobat and Aquatbat etc tried hard bless 'em they were never really high performance, although the Rotobat was the vogue short river boat for a time.

These two kayaks have come on different journeys to arrive at roughly the same end. Both are radical, both are cut low at the stern, have bow volume-bias and aim to meet the stringent Polo committee specifications, particularly on end radius. Both will sport padded bow and stern bumpers in their finished versions and fairly large cockpits. Both are designed to accommodate stern dipping on flat water for those fast pursuit turns and to be honest there is not much in it in terms of forward speed. So where are the differences?

The Revenge is a development from it's glass brother of the same name and is very similar in shape. It is a big brother however and will suit even the burliest polo player. The burlier the better in fact,

as the boat is very predicable and kind to mistakes. Despite that, I felt that the stern dips were easier than than the RX. Perhaps enough volume here for white water fun?

The RX300 looks to have more of slalom pedigree and is a quantum leap from the rotobat out of the same stable. It is lower in overall volume. This would probably suit the light paddler better: the edges are sharper and call for finer balance, although secondary stability is good. The RX was maybe a little quicker off the mark, turning quicker at speed and perhaps needs an experienced jockey.

So it's pretty much neck and neck, both good pedigrees and from designers showing a willingness to go closer to limits of the material. Good efforts from both manufacturers and a viable, cost-effective alternative for those who play hard.

At the time of going to press both the Pyranha RX300 and the Revenge are under scrutiny of a Stewards Inquiry over the foam end caps, Ron Vessey (Polo chairman) predicts a favourable outcome, and all

will be sorted out long before the coming European and World Championships. Some cosmetic changes will occur on both fillys before they are two year olds but the race is on. Verdict : photo finish.

It won't be long before they are available in white water rigs for the jaded short-boat paddler?



RX300

Manufacturer: Pyranha

Length: 298 cm

Width: 58.5

Cockpit: 71

Seat: Roto/Adjustable

Thigh Braces: Roto

End caps: Foam

Colours: Various

Price: £299-389

Revenge

Manufacturer: P&H

Length: 298cm

Width: 61

Cockpit: 76

Seat: Foam or Rota

Thigh Braces:

Soft foam mould

End Caps: Foam

Colours: Various

Price: £250-325



Paddler's Badges



On show at sheffield was a neat selection of hand made paddlers badges. Carol will make up a colour replica of any paddler in any boat at around £5.00 including post and packing.

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Please contact **Melvyn Jones**

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

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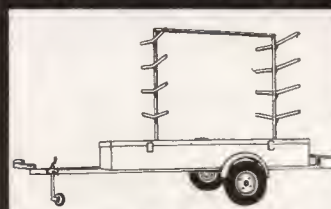
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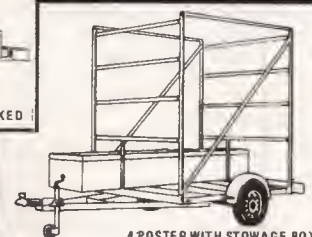


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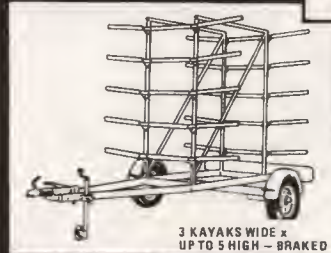
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Qualified watersports instructors required for May to October 1993 in busy lakeside location. Applications to P. Hodgson, Reivers of Tarsset, The Comb, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1RU. Telephone (0434) 240 245.

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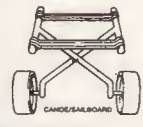
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Gaybo Stiletto K2 marathon usr (red/white) glass fibre, VGC, finished DW '92. Only 2 and a half years old £350 ono Tel: Dave 0489 583514 after 6pm.

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Canoe Fleet, 6-12 plastic GP Kayaks for Church Canoe Club contact Tony on 0737 822211

Any canoeists (aged 25 and over) interested in joining a group of fellow canoeists in late June/early July who are returning to French Alps for a 10 day white water canoeing and camping trip. Cost to be determined once the number of interested parties is known. Tel Terry: 021 486 1692

Dagger Crossfire in multi colours (crosslinked) must be good condition Tel: 0785 715347 can travel.

LOST/STOLEN

Set of named Kober tolight paddles around Tryweryn or at Llangollen on the Dee early January. Contact Tim: 0234 345500 Schlegel paddle at Feshie Bridge, 18th Feb Tel: 042772 662

FOUND

1 set of right handed paddles at Bala Mill falls Dec 92. Contact Bill Taylor : 0270 883183

C1 paddle marked "Bath Uni" after Tryweryn slalom last June Tel: 0788 575892. Lost and then Found. Warwick Partridge informed us of the loss of a pair of Schlegel paddles on the Usk, the day of the helicopter. These were found by Mr Breeze of Abergavenny and returned to Warwick, who would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Breeze for his time, trouble and help.

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CHANGES

by Simon Dawson

You will have noticed a few changes to Canoe Focus recently. One change is to put "Access News" inside the main magazine, not on a separate stuffer. This can only be correct as it reflects the importance of access to most BCU members. As the new chairman of the Access Committee it is my job to keep you informed. I will be working closely with Kevin Danforth, the Canoe Focus Editor, to use these pages fully over succeeding issues to explore the current issues in countryside access.

There are two main themes to the Access Committee's work. In the short term, how to use access agreements to get the maximum possible canoeing access for the membership under the current laws. Then in the longer term, how to run an Access Campaign to modify these ancient laws to the benefit of all countryside users.



WHO AM I?

Before we start, however, if I am to represent you within a democratic system such as the BCU, it is important that you know a bit about me, such as my experience and background in canoeing, and my motives for taking on such an apparently thankless task as chairman of the Access Committee.

I started canoeing as a schoolboy in Oxford in 1967, just as canvas was being replaced by fibre-glass as the method of boat construction. It soon became my main sport, and continued as a hobby through about fifteen years in the Royal Navy, where I worked as an operations officer in nuclear submarines. In canoeing I was mainly involved in WW touring and recreation, but as was common in those days, most WW tourists also competed. I have spent about fifteen years in the slalom divisions, and about five in white water racing.

CRACK & the SEIONT

Five years ago I needed a change

of scenery so I left the Navy and started full-time work in canoeing, based in Nottingham. That was also the time when I became active in BCU politics. It was the Seiont rally that was the motivation. This was a mass rally organised by CRACK to protest against physical assaults on canoeists in North Wales. The people who attended the rally will all tell you that it was a great event. I am sure that they had a very enjoyable time, but politically it was a disaster. The organisers had advice from experienced local paddlers saying don't hold it on the Seiont. We can tell you of many other suitable venues, but please not the Seiont. The rally went ahead despite this, and was held on one of the few rivers in North Wales where fishing rights are held by a club of local residents, and not by estate landowners. There was so much bad feeling caused by the event that the river has rarely been paddled since.

My personal experience of the rally was to spend half an hour wading beneath a bridge nego-

tiating with the fishermen to let us past, and then an hour trying to persuade a policeman not to arrest one canoeist who had abseiled down on top of a fisherman in the ensuing struggle, and knocked him into the water. It may all have been great fun for the canoeists taking part, but political results are not achieved by having fun, or by organising rallies for emotive reasons rather than sensible ones. It was clear to me that confrontation simply would not work. The only way ahead was to work towards co-operation with all countryside users, but to achieve this with well thought out political tactics, not emotive but un-planned mass actions.

In the five years since that rally I have been lucky enough to get involved in a wide range of the BCU's activities. Although most people may associate my name with Squirting, or Rodeos, or long obscure articles in CODE about the philosophy of informal recreation, in the background I have always been interested in Access. It is such a

complicated subject however that it has taken five years to serve my apprenticeship, and to begin to understand how it all works.

THANKS, MIKE

In that time I have developed a great respect for Mike Twiggs, the outgoing Access chairman. Mike has used his great common sense and integrity to build an access policy which is strongly supported by BCU Council and which has the respect of most canoeists. It is now my job to use the communication skills I developed in the Services to take this policy to the membership, listen to them, persuade them, and work with them to achieve the aims we all desire.

That's enough about me. In the next issue we will start to explore the BCU's Access Policy, and the development of this policy into an effective, political Access Campaign.

SIMON
DAWSON 



I should now explain the rather cumbersome title of the report!. The Expedition was sponsored by Del Monte who provided financial support and more importantly for some perhaps, gastronomic variety in the form of individual tins of Fruitini.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES The British Schools Exploring Society was founded in 1932 by the late Surgeon Commander Murray Levick, a member of Scott's 1910 Antarctic Expedition. Since that year the Society has organised annual expeditions to remote areas of the world with the aim of giving 16 to 19 year olds the chance to experience the challenge of adventure. As with all BSES ventures, Russia 92 aimed primarily to foster within individuals the personal discipline, companionship, confidence, and initiative, that is so necessary to modern life.

Within this overall objective the following aims were identified at an early stage in the Expedition's conception:

1. To conduct surveys of the effects of Acid Rain and Heavy Metal pollution.
2. To conduct a geographical survey of The White Sea bed and examine water mixing depth/temperature profile to a depth of 30m.
3. To provide an environment adventurous enough to stretch each member of the Expedition.
4. To encourage cultural exchange between ourselves and the Russians.

PREPARATION: JAN-JULY 92

Each individual selected to participate in the Expedition was required to pay his or her part of the costs. Raising this sum, £2,500 for Russia, is considered part of the challenge accepted by the Young Expeditioners (YE's). In addition, each member is expected to prepare themselves physically for the Expedition and a basic fitness programme is sent to each at an early stage. It is clear very quickly who has followed it and who has not!

With these requirements in mind a training weekend was held on the Isle of Anglesey some 3 months before our planned departure. The intention was to get everyone together, including the Russian YE's who had flown over especially, and give them a brief about the area, the equipment they would use and need, advice about fundraising, and introduce them to kayaking. Importantly, we also organised the Expedition into smaller teams (or 'Fires') which they would be working with throughout.

Overall the weekend was a success; there were the usual

pre-expedition nerves and excitement but people got on well, meeting the other members of their Fire for the first time.

My Fire, (Fire Five) were Katie Burton, Philip Greenfield, Sarah Gilbert, Kirsten Luke, Rachel Nedwell, Rupert Peacock, Fay Weston, to be joined by Vladimir, Vitaly, Alla, and Natasha from Kandalaksha.

**THE MOVE TO KANDALAKSHA
 18-20 JULY**

The Expedition next met at Heathrow on 18 July. Amid much chaos (getting 60 YE's together with all their assorted paraphernalia onto an aircraft is no easy matter) we took off in a rather elderly Aeroflot jet and landed at St Petersburg some 3 hours later. First impressions of the country were interesting. Externally the airport looked all but derelict when contrasted with the hi-tec feel of Heathrow, whilst inside the Arrivals Lounge there were almost no facilities at all. the luggage tumbler, for example, crept erratically through a rough hole in the outside wall whilst every passenger on the flight was simultaneously trying to retrieve their luggage! It took a full 3 hours to collect all our baggage and move to the awaiting coaches, and another 30 minutes to reach the student accommodation we were using in Pushkin.

That evening we encountered our first Russian bureaucratic glitch. The 40' container that was sitting in Kandalaksha awaiting us had not been cleared by customs, necessitating a 24 hour delay in St Petersburg whilst the paperwork was rushed through in Murmansk. To fill the time an impromptu coach tour around the city was arranged, but although we were able to visit a number of interesting sites, because it was Sunday they were all closed! As we drove around the city our first impressions gained at the airport were reinforced. Clearly it had once been a grand and modern place in which to live with wide streets and ornate facades adorning every building; now however, much of it has crumbled to a degree that we would consider uninhabitable. The roads are breaking up, the water is contaminated with Gardia and electricity supplies are unreliable; the State shops have few goods for sale, whilst ironically waving US Dollars at a black market street trader often produces results. It took just a few hours to see through the image of an economic masterpiece

that successive Communist leaders have tried to convey to the West. After a fascinating day we boarded the train that would take us to Kandalaksha, our equipment and hopefully, access to it.

The 22 hour journey was comfortable, each cabin having 4 bunks complete with fresh linen, and each carriage a wood burning stove to keep us supplied with hot drinks. We travelled for mile after mile through some dense and seemingly endless forest stopping at tiny villages for indeterminate amounts of time. We were halfway through lunch on Monday 20th July when the train stopped at the station called "Arctic Circle". A few of us were daft enough to risk getting left by the train, made a bee-line through the train to the sign on the side of one of the larger looking huts for a phot call! Goodness knows what the rather unimpressive hieroglyphics really said!

We arrived in Kandalaksha in the rain at about 1730, and by 2100 had settled into the gym of a local school which was to be our accommodation whilst we sorted out equipment out. After a day and a half of hard work we were finally ready to go, and 1415 hours in the 22nd saw us heading into the White Sea in a boat laden with bodies and equipment.

KAYAKING: 1-10 AUGUST

It is strange how quickly friends are made in a remote environment. Certainly when all Fires in the Expedition met up again for a day to reorganise ourselves for the next phase it was as if we were a large group of old friends meeting up for the first time in months! That night fires were lit and the Epic Adventures of Phase One were told until well into the night.

On Friday 31st we collected out Kayaks and went out into the bay to practice our self rescue techniques. With everybody happy with their drills we returned to Base Camp to pack our boats in preparation for departure the following day.

August 1st: at last we're afloat! Moving slowly around Base Camp Island to get the feel of our heavily laden boats we edged out into the open sea heading towards the island we had spent Phase One on. After stopping to stretch and replenish our water supplies, we turned west, aiming to paddle through a small channel around the southern tip of the island. Unfortunately the 'channel' turned out to be a large, rocky and very muddy bank. Not only was it mud however, it was a thick, black and very deep mud impregnated with the delicate smell of rotting seaweed! Wading through it carrying a fully laden sea kayak weighing over 100lbs is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition of Good Fun. Honest.

That night we camped on two islands no more than 100m across, joined by an exposed reef. I decided that we would use the larger to camp on and the smaller four our latrine, warning people that they only had an hour or so before the reef was covered by the tide. No prizes for guessing who left it too late and got wet!

We spent the next two days moving down the south coast towards Kovda in generally good weather broken only by occasional squalls. A note has to be made of an incident on the evening of the 2nd August when Dan, Rupert and I went fishing and actually caught something! Rupert's was too small to eat, but Dan and mine made an excellent breakfast the following day. We were to realise however that these 3 fish were obviously the only 3 fish in the whole White Sea as we caught nothing else during the entire Expedition.

The morning of August 4th dawned wet. It had been raining hard since the previous afternoon and most of our equipment was wet. Relieved to be afloat we made our way into Kovda harbour, stopping at a village just outside to buy bread and cheese. As we approached the village we met a middle aged lady rowing towards the quay who introduced herself as the wife of the Area Game Warden. She showed us around the village and then kindly invited all 10 of us into their house for tea where the Warden then agreed to let us use an island outside the harbour do we could attempt



This was only one of a number of BCU approved expeditions to take place in 1992, some even receive small grant support! For details and an expedition approvals pack please send £2.00 to BCU HQ.

the open crossing to the North shore of the Bay.

After a leisurely start to the next day we paddled out of the harbour to the island from which we planned to cross the bay. With an early start planned for the 6th our priorities were a good meal followed by bed. Up the next morning at 0430 in time to watch the sun rise in a clear sky over a calm sea. Conditions were perfect. By 0615 we were afloat and the 15km crossing went smoothly, taking almost 4 hours. We landed on a tiny island 100m off the coast and relaxed in the sun whilst waiting for the tide to turn.

As we paddled onwards that afternoon in perfectly calm conditions, Vladimir suddenly noticed a Beluga whale about 500m away. Cautiously we paddled towards it and within 10 minutes found ourselves surrounded by 6 of these wonderful creatures, one or two less than 50m away. For almost an hour we sat amazed as the whales sounded all around us, being able to hear them breathing and see their arching backs clearly as they surfaced. Belugas are seldom seen in Kandalaksha Bay at all, so to have seen 6 together was something special.

The rest of the kayaking phase went smoothly, although we were slowed down by headwinds during the following 2 days. We crossed back to the south shore on the 9th and were back at Base Camp on Monday August 10th having covered approximately 145km.

On the way back to St Petersburg we spent a day at Petrosavsk and took a hydrofoil out to the Kiji Islands, internationally famed for their intricate wooden buildings. The morning of the 26 August saw us back in St Petersburg with plenty of time to look around. We managed to visit the Hermitage, The St Peter and St Paul Fortress, the Tsar's Summer Palace at Pushkin, the Arctic and Antarctic Museum, and we even managed to catch a performance by the Petersburg ballet Company of Swan Lake in Catherine the Great's Theatre. It would be possible to write several pages about each, but there is not space here. There was also time of course to purchase souvenirs from the State shops and the street traders. The last couple of days flew past and the morning of 29 August saw us clambering onto Aeroflot flight SU637 and by noon we were home.

Conclusion For Fire Five the Expedition has been a huge success. There is something unique about an Expedition environment which replaces the pressures of modern life with an entirely different stimuli, enabling you to experience parts of your character you don't normally encounter. We have all benefited in many ways from the trip and during the coming months as we meet up again at the planned reunions we will be more aware of just how big an impression this Expedition will have made on us.

It remains simply for me to say a few words of thanks. We are very grateful to BSES without whom the trip would not have been possible, to Del Monte Fruitini for their sponsorship, and of course to our families and friends for their support.

JOHN RAMWEL





Ender

Editor's page

What does the future hold?

What does the future hold?: In this issue Donald Bean has given us a snapshot of the last sixty years... what of the next sixty? One interesting development may be fun for dry days: the microchip revolution has thrown up lots of adventure/role playing games and rumour has it that a canoeing module will soon be available for PC's and hand held game consoles. It is technically possible and several companies are exploring the market. Imagine: Dozens of classic white water runs from Nepal to the Nith will be on the menu of 'The Ultimate Hole Warrior': other options include World Championship Slalom, and Arctic Sea Kayak Survival. Sonic the Hedgehog on the Devises to Westminster. Some of this software is at the alpha demo stage: I am looking forward to reviewing it. By the time you read this I will have details of these products and news of a company in the States developing Virtual Reality Kayaking. Perhaps I will never have to get wet again! Not too long ago Laser Quest Arcades were a figment of 'Tomorrows World' imagination. If you are interested and want more information fax on 0602 821797 : please mark your fax 'Frail Pool Software'

IN YOUR JUNE ISSUE

RODEO SPECIAL

The rise and rise of hotdogging.

Kuala Lumpur Canoe Federation

GETTING STARTED

Top tips and Handy Hints for beginners and all the usual features.

REFLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF CHANGE

REFLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF CHANGE

Looking around the Canoe exhibition at Sheffield and talking to a great many of the paddlers and traders present I was struck by the change in atmosphere: previous years at Crystal Palace had been almost a ritual: an annual pilgrimage, even for those who journeyed from the south. I remember clearly my first Palace. The hustle and bustle. The traders wedged shoulder to shoulder. The Saturday queue. The Sunday rush for the double discount bargain. The big 'let's save some space on the van' sale. We relied on it, we waited for it. Now the jumble sale climate is much less evident: the canoe trade knows that survival of a specialised market depends on sensible prices and many traders at Sheffield offered keen retail prices rather than 'pile high, sell cheap'. This must surely be the way out of the particular recession the canoe world finds itself in. Signs of a recovery? I hope so.

VERTICAL PADDLE

One visual feature was common to both venues, the almost obligatory vertical moving paddle. Often spotted weaving around in the throng, the time-honoured tradition of buying a paddle and taking it for a long walk, was steadfastly upheld (sorry, bad pun) One notable thing missing from the main hall was the smell of hot swimming pool. The design of Pond's Forge lent itself well to keeping hot pool smells in the hot(boy was it HOT!) pool area and the main hall had a 'freshly laid carpet' sort of ambience. This helped

the 'professional' look of the show as a whole. Out went the homemade stands, in came the designer displays. Are we heading for a change of image here?

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Then... I remember early days surfing a Fibre-glass kayak in several woolly jumpers, a walking cag with the hood cut off, and a woolly hat over my thin helmet. Paddles were wood and spraydecks were nylon and worn in pairs to stand a chance of staying on. Softies wore tracksuit bottoms, real men wore football shorts, and divers wore wetsuits. We thought we looked the business... And now... If your kit doesn't match, you are an outcast or a novice. The equipment is a million times better, fits well, is colourful and not only sport specific: it is discipline specific. Around the stands we saw slalom vests, squirt decks, sea cags, waterfall helmets, racing wings and so on.

Could such a ritzy up-market show have been imagined even ten years ago? Personally I feel that this is the way we need to present our sport for the future if we are to grow, whether in Sheffield, Croyden, Edinburgh, Belfast or Bangor. Funds and resources for growth depend, to some extent on exposure in press and TV.

We are competing for funds in a world where image sells. Sheffield looked good and canoeing looked good. Here's to the future!

Kevin Danforth
Editor





THE NEW

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PERCEPTION

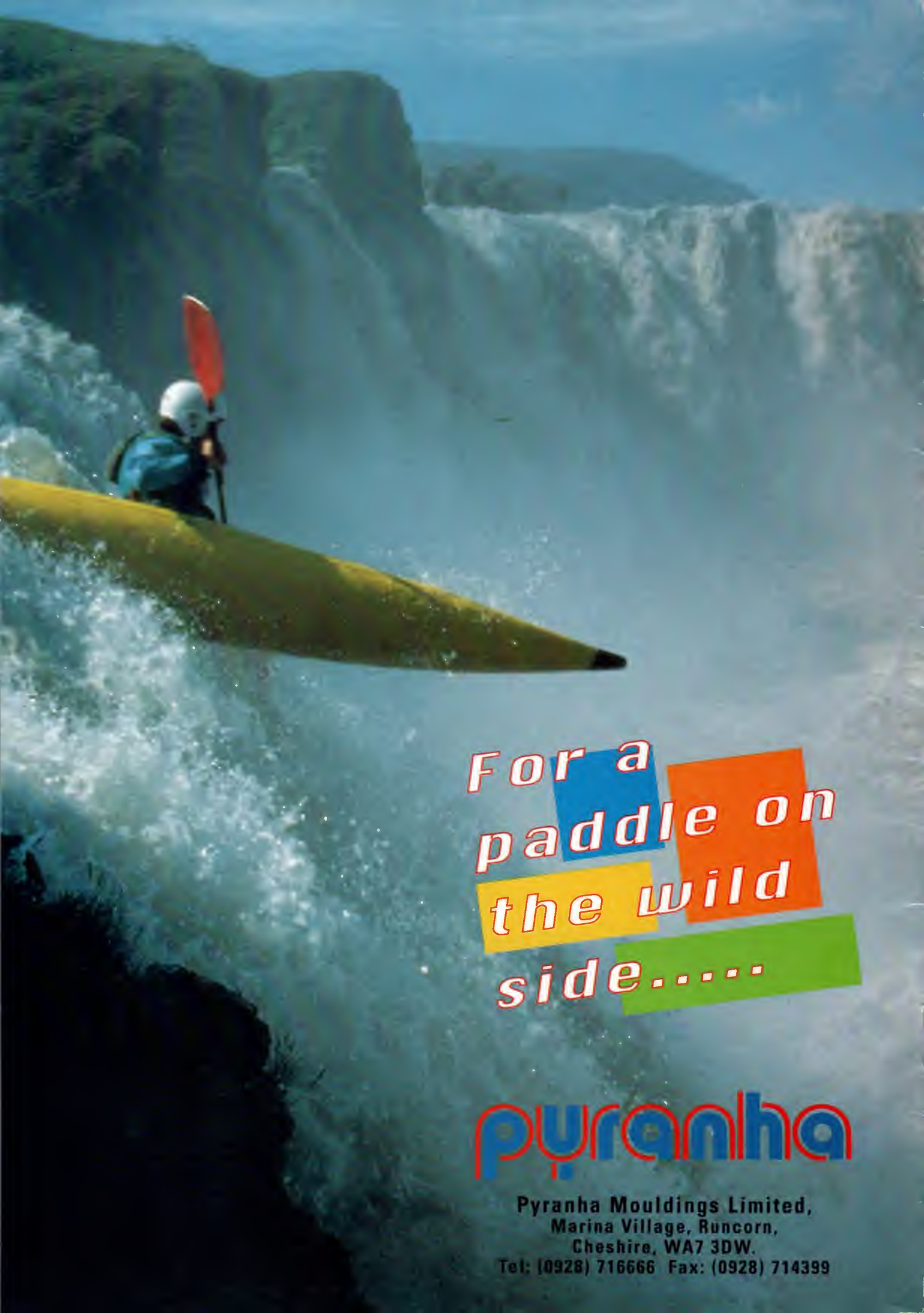
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