

# Canoe *focus*

No 83. JUNE 1993

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**Canoe Focus**

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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 canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers.

**Technical Information:** Contributions are acceptable in clear 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 slide). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. A help sheet is available for potential contributors. Please send a SAE to the Editor.

The next Copy date is the 28 JUNE 1993. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the April issue.

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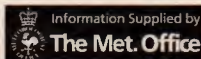
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# Comment



## VICE PRESIDENT


 It is with great pleasure that we can announce that Geoff Sanders MBE the previous Chairman of Council was appointed a Honorary Vice President of the BCU.

Widely respected, Geoff coped with the many diverse interests represented on Council and successfully managed to steer the Union in the best interests of Canoeing as a whole through a period of twenty years.

Whilst we shall miss Geoff's stewardship as Chairman he joins David Wain as a Vice President and he will continue to influence and shape policy particularly for young canoeists.

A full appreciation of Geoff's work will appear in a future edition of FOCUS.


## LYME REGIS TRAGEDY

 A full report on the Lyme Regis tragedy will be made when all of the findings of the inquest are known. However, whilst it would be inappropriate for me to speculate in advance of the legal proceedings it would be equally improper for us not to comment at all.


The last edition of CODE carried a brief report and this edition of FOCUS covers the incident in as much detail as we are permitted to give.

Clearly the focus of attention is on us and all of those who pursue outdoor activities and we would like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to take special care when pursuing their activities.

## RON EMES DINNER


 The Ron Emes dinner will take place near Worcester on Saturday September 18th. This coincides with the Hasler Finals which will take place on the Sunday at Fladbury.

## TREVOR BAILEY AWARD


 It is hoped that the Ron Emes dinner will become an annual event and that it will be the venue for presenting the BCU's annual awards including the Trevor Bailey award. Announced in a previous issue of Focus the Trevor Bailey Award for endeavour is targeted at the hard working official or coach and several recommendations have already been received. If you have a nomination for this

award then please write to the Director at John Dudderidge House.


## INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

 The ICF Board of Directors will be meeting in Manchester from June 3rd to June 5th. The BCU is proud to be associated with the meeting which will be hosted by Manchester 2000 the British Olympic bid.


## POLAR HEART RATE MONITORS

 We are now able to offer another benefit of membership to competition paddlers training using Polar Heart Rate monitors. As part of a sponsorship deal we now are able to provide printouts of data by down-loading your training session through our computer. The system will be set up and running at BCU HQ by the time you read this. This facility is also available through squad coaches. For further details send SAE to the office marked POLAR/BCU.

## EVENTS

 Several major canoeing events will be held in Britain during the next few weeks. On June 26th/27th the Round London International Marathon Grand Prix will take place and on the 3rd 4th & 5th July the Polo European Championships will be held at Ponds Forge in Sheffield. The first official International Tour in the UK recognised by the International Canoe Federation will take place on River Thames from July 25th.

## AGM

 The BCU AGM was held in March and the following BCU members were elected to Council :- David Gent, Helen Mullineux, Mike Wood, Alan Laws and John Handyside. Following the AGM the Council elected David Gent as its Chairman for the forthcoming year.

David was previously the very active Chairman of Yorkshire & Humberside Region and he has been interested and involved in all aspects of the sport from touring to competition.

Paul Owen



# Notice board

## James Turner fund



James Turner died of cancer. He bequeathed the proceeds of the sale of his house to the BCU to be used for the promotion of canoeing among people who are disabled. Small disbursements are made from this fund in accordance with James' wishes. Donations are invited to swell the fund, so that an even greater number of worthy causes can be supported each year.

Please send your gift to the BCU office marked 'James Turner Fund'.

## Polo on big breakfast

Members of Stubbers and Meridian Canoe Club featured on Channel 4's Big Breakfast Show. Ogy Morris was interviewed by Presenter Chris Evans at the Lea Navigation at Old Ford Lock in London. This was Chris Evans first time in a kayak and although nervous conducted the interview in his normal style. Fast and furious action followed.

## Deaf canoeists

Deaf canoeists made history at the International Canoe Exhibition at Ponds Forge a demonstration took place of how to teach canoeing using British Sign Language. Simon Scandrett, a Youth and Community worker at a Centre for the Deaf in Bristol led the half hour demonstration. Simon was supported by Geoff Davies, Paul Gibbard, Neil Gibson and Keith Ripley. Poolside support was provided by Joy Davies, Viv Kendrick, and John Swallow. The same team are working on a resource video to help others teach canoeing by signing.

## Lancaster club

Lancaster Paddlesport Club is a new canoe club in the North West specialising in competition. Focussing mainly on Marathon, Sprint and Wild Water Racing it will follow the Placid Water Scheme philosophy for beginners and cater for all ages. Weekly time trials on the Riverv Lune.

The club will be running a Marathon Race and tour on 20th June 1993 following a single loop incorporating the River Lune, the Lancaster Estuary, and the Lancaster Canal. Eight short portages and seven public houses for those of you doing the tour. This is a new event not advertised in the yearbook.

Details from Andy Parry on 05242 62680.

## March Council and the 1993 AGM

This year, the BCU Annual General Meeting and the associated Council meetings were held at YMCA Lakeside on the shores of the Lake Windermere. For the first time it was possible to attend the meetings and paddle too!

On Saturday morning, the mist quickly evaporated from the surface of the lake and a light breeze tempted me (and two or three others) to have a try at sailing open Canadians – it's good fun to make a canoe go that fast. Two brave souls tried sails and outriggers fitted onto sea kayaks.

Reluctantly we packed up and joined our drier colleagues for the first Council meeting. It was disappointing that only about half the Council members showed up.

### PROFIT

The good news, no, the BRILLIANT news was that the BCU has made a PROFIT this year and the account has been in the black since December. This means that debts of honour still owing to the committees can begin to be paid off. The Director was thanked for his hard work and congratulated for his good budgeting.

We still need somewhere to house historic canoes until they can be displayed: does anybody out there know of a suitable place?

The Marathon rep voiced his disquiet at the deletion of the 10,000 metres race from international events and it was agreed to press the International Canoe Federation to reinstate it.

In the past, a seat has been available for an elected member of Council on Sports Management Committee. The future of this was called into question as non-competing members have little specific knowledge and thus little to offer, but if the elected member is involved in competition, then his (or her) branch of the sport gains an extra vote and unbalances the committee. Council decided not to withdraw the seat immediately, but to give the matter some thought and consider it again. This year, the seat could be left vacant if there were no keen takers.

There was no nomination for treasurer for the forthcoming year. John Liddell's workload is too great for him to hold the post but he will continue to advise us. If a suitable candidate becomes available s/he can be appointed to the post by Council.

From a starting point of dissent, negotiations have brought con-

sensus on the issue of White Water Rafting; in Wales rafting will be covered by the Welsh Canoe Association, in Scotland by the Scottish Rafting Association and in England by the White Water Rafting Committee which will come under the umbrella of our ACRMC. The three bodies will work together to establish recognised standards for raft guides and will consult each other should a British Raft Team be required.

The membership of the BCU increased by 3% last year – many other sports have decreased membership during the recession.

The Annual General Meeting was held in a beautiful room overlooking Lake Windermere and twenty of the forty nine people present said that they were combining attendance at the meeting with some paddling during the weekend. We must have paddling with the AGM more often!

Geoff Sanders spoke to the Annual Report (circulated with February Focus) and finished with expressing his gratitude to all the volunteers who keep canoeing going and growing in Britain. If you help in any way to get paddlers on the water from instructing to making sandwiches it's YOU we're thanking.

Council is made up of nominees from 13 specialist committees (recreational and competitive), from the English Regions and from Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland. In addition there are 10 representatives elected directly by members of the BCU. Half of these posts are up for election each year.

In recognition of his many years of service to the BCU and the amount of time he still puts into work for us, Geoff Sanders was elected unanimously to be an Honorary Vice President of the Union.

### ELECTION RESULTS

The results of this year's election are:

- \*Dave Gent-221 votes;
- \*Helen Mullineux-205 votes;
- \*Mike Wood-190 votes;
- \*Alan Laws-185 votes;
- \*John Handyside-184 votes;
- Geoff Sanders-173 votes;
- David Train-163 votes.

\*= elected

There were 43 spoil papers.

### DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The forum topic was ably and interestingly led by Dave Gent. The subject was The Next Four Years – The BCU's New Development Plan. The eight priorities to be tackled are: Improving Access; Coaching; BCU Publicity and Information; Finances Increasing Membership; Priority to women, young people and disabled people; Participation in recreation; paddling Developing; Competitive excellency programmes.

Dave explained clearly how the plan was to be carried out, but that is worth an article to itself. If you want a copy of the development plan, please send SAE to BCU HQ (£1.50).

Copies of Full Council Minutes are available to BCU members on request and receipt of SAE at HQ.

In the evening, five open canoes headed across a mirror-like lake between the steeply rising fells to the nearest pint of beer, and I discovered that if you sandwich meetings between canoe trips, the whole thing becomes infinitely more pleasurable.

On Sunday the River Leven, though short of water, was available and three Councillors (including both women council members) made a swift descent before lunch.

Helen Mullineux



Fred was President of the SCA from 1980-1990 and was a prominent figure in negotiations with the BCU over the Federal Agreement of 1979. He was also a member of the BCU Exec for a number of years and was (and still is!) a widely respected figure in the canoeing world. He is now President of the Scottish Sports Association. The photograph shows him being presented with the BCU Award of Honour by SCA Honorary President Duncan Winning.

### FRED NELSON AWARD



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## Glenmore Lodge



The new secretary of the Sea Kayak Group UK is Roger Springfield at 10 Tyburn Avenue, Springfield, Milton Keynes MK6 3HZ or 0908 674966

**Oldham & District Canoe Club** need BCU qualified instructors to join and help out urgently, please contact Andy Cooper, 5 Middlefield, Norden, Rochdale, Lancs or on 0706 526305

The 1993 River Usk Canoe Race will be held on Sunday 11th July. Details from Ian Rogers, 11 Tennyson Road, Newport, Gwent or 0633 273092 or 0633 259612

The River Wey leaflet issued at the Canoe Exhibition, Ponds Forge has been revised. If you want one please send a SAE leaflet to BCU HQ

Lakeside YMCA are organising Women Only courses: contact Margaret Siverns on 05395 31758

## CHESHIRE RING LONG DISTANCE RACE

Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th July 1993

The race is 96 miles and 92 locks long and must be completed in 24 hours. It covers the Cheshire Ring of canals including the Rochdale Canal through Manchester City Centre.

Classes included singles and doubles non-stop, two paddler, four paddler, and ten paddler relays, racing and touring boats.

Finish times range from the record of 14hrs 26m to just under 24 hours.

For further information send a stamped addressed envelope to-

Wilf Scarrott 53 Dickens Lane, Poynton, Cheshire SK12 1NN

## The Great Circle Route



Dave Halsall and Steve Murgatroyd are planning to paddle an open boat fifteen hundred kilometres around the country linking the inland waterways of Great Britain. The proposed canoeing trip was first put forward by William Bliss as an academic argument in the 1930s and described as the largest possible journey by canoe using the countries inland waterways.

The journey has never been completed. British Waterways administer most of the water they will be paddling and during 1993 BWB are celebrating CANALS 200 as it is 200 years since the majority of the canal system was built. Dave and Steve will be tak-

This summer, boating enthusiasts across the UK will raise money for the Third World charity ACTIONAID by "GOING TEN FOR AFRICA". Social clubs, individuals and families will all be involved in frantic activities that climax in the first ten days of October. GO TEN is sponsored by Barclays.

"GO TEN asks the public to raise money to support our work in ten African countries by being sponsored by friends, families or colleagues to undertake a sporting or leisure activity ten times. Whether it's paddling ten different boats in a day or canoeing ten miles, we hope GO TEN will be great fun for everyone," says Russell Richards, the Campaign Coordinator.

GO TEN is a great challenge for you and your friends during the summer holidays. Why not

canoe on ten consecutive weekends with ten different people?

For ideas, information about what's happening in your area, and a fundraising kit call the ACTIONAID/Barclays GO TEN Helpline on 0800 10 10 93 after May 1st.

Money raised will support ACTIONAID's work with some of the poorest children, families and communities in ten African countries. ACTIONAID helps people to improve their schools, water supply, health care facilities and farming techniques.

As little as £1 can immunise a child in Kenya, while £10 can teach an adult in Ethiopia to read and £100 can build a school and provide the necessary teachers and books in Malawi.



## THE RON EMES TROPHY

When he was Guest of Honour at Solihull Canoe clubs annual dinner in 1991 Ron spoke with obvious nostalgia for the "Long Distance Racing" of the 1950s and 60s and showed considerable interest in the clubs plans for a 60km canal marathon.

Following his death in February 1992 the Club asked Mrs Margaret Emes for permission to name a trophy in his memory and she agreed that

whilst canoeists recent memories of Ron were as President of the British Canoe Union and First Vice-President of the International Canoe Federation and of his MBE for a lifetimes service to canoeing which was so justly deserved his early contribution to the development of what became Marathon Racing should also be commemorated.

In his "Long Distance Racing" days Ron competed with con-

siderable success in doubles and it was therefore decided that the Ron Emes Trophy should be awarded to the winners of the Open K2 in the Solihull 60km Canal Marathon.

The trophy is a traditional challenge shield mounted with a framed photograph of Ron and the Club hopes it will prove a fitting tribute to his memory.



## SPORTS AID FOUNDATION GRANTS INCREASED

The Sports Aid Foundation is an independent non-profit making organisation which exists to raise funds to support athletes of proven ability with their training costs.

Over the years, a substantial number of canoeists have benefited from SAF's generosity. In fact, we are usually fourth or fifth in the league with regard to the total sums paid to help a particular sport.

The Foundation for Sport and the Arts has recently donated £786,000 to SAF, which has enabled them to increase the level of this year's grants, from which 16 of our international paddlers are benefiting. The Foundation had previously donated £314,000 to aid competitors in the Winter Olympics - a total of £1.1m in less than 18 months.

Gareth Marriott (Olympic C1 Silver Medallist) Ivan Lawler (World Marathon K1 Champion) and

Stephen and Andrew Train (World C2 10,000m champions) are in receipt of elite grants - awarded to those who are sound medal prospects.

Recently, also, SAF have introduced Development Grants, to assist Juniors and late developers with good potential, and 9 of our paddlers have been put forward for consideration.

For those with potential, who fall just outside the criteria for international grants, there is a Sports Aid Foundation fund in each region. Enquiries regarding this should be made to the BCU's regional SAF liaison officer (address from the Regional Secretary, whose name appears in the BCU Members Yearbook)

The canoeing sports which are supported by SAF are: Marathon, Racing, Slalom and Wild Water Racing



## Pond's Forge Raffle Winner

As usual the Canoe Polo Committee organised a raffle at the International Canoe Exhibition. This year the first prize was a Roto Moulded Polythene Polo Kayak, the RX300, kindly donated by Pyranha. The picture shows the lucky winner Paul Flannagan (left) receiving his prize from Phil Bennet the Vice Chairman of the Polo Committee.

Paul lives in Bournville, Birmingham and is a member of Rapid Runners Canoe Club, who play at Sparkhill Swimming Baths on Friday evenings. He has been paddling for 8 years, spending most weekends on river trips to all parts of the country. The high spot of his canoeing career to date was a paddling holiday in the Alps in 1992.





# OBITUARIES

## Rob Briggs 1942 - 1993

### Halifax Canoe Club - Trainer, Friend, Inspiration, Dedicated Canoeist, Advisor, Good Egg!

Tuesday, March 9th, 1993 at 9.00pm. Rob had just come off the River Calder at Sowerby Bridge. Whilst changing in the clubhouse he collapsed and on admission to Halifax Royal Infirmary, suffered a massive fatal heart attack.

As one of the most highly qualified coaches in Yorkshire, Rob held the following certifications:



Senior Instructor Inland  
Examiner Grade 3  
Inland Advanced  
Sea Advanced

He was still imparting these skills to a new generation of trainee instructors and junior paddlers on the evening of his death.

Whilst being a single man, Rob had a large circle of friends and fellow canoeists, who held him in high esteem and valued his opinions and guidance. Never one to mince his words, he always wanted

to do the right thing, for his trainee canoeists and his fellow club members.

Rob's leadership, guidance and encouragement will be sadly missed by all canoeists who knew this individual, caring dedicated - Loyal Man.

**Laurence Bell Halifax Canoe Club**

Laurence is organising a memorial fund:  
0484 426562 work, 0482 426641

## Stephen Hope

It is impossible to measure the feeling of emptiness that we all have following the untimely loss of Stephen Hope in a motoring accident.

Stephen had devoted the past five years to the sport of canoeing.

His legacy is that hundreds of young people have been inspired by his infectious enthusiasm for the sport which has shone through his coaching example.

Stephen entered and enriched many young lives with his love for canoeing taking little recognition or reward. What more can you say about someone who achieved so much in such a short time - Stephen would have been nineteen in June this year.

When we are on the water Stephen will always be with us.

**Rory Edwards and All at Barton OPC**



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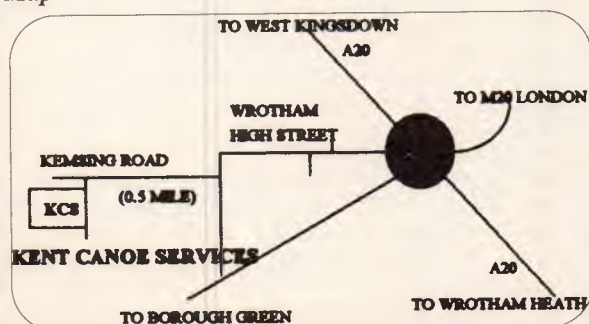
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Map



### Opening Times

Mon - Closed

Tues - 9.30 - 5.00pm

Wed - 9.30 - 12.30pm

Thurs - 12.30 - 8.00pm (**Late night shopping**)

Fri - 9.30 - 5.00pm

Sat - 9.30 - 5.30 / Canoe Courses

Sun - Canoe Courses

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# Women's page

## WOMEN AND RODEO

by Mandy Castle and Claire Cheong-Leen

### WANTED

The Women in Canoeing Advisory Panel wishes to set up a working group to concentrate their efforts on the area of publicity and promotion of women and girls in canoeing. If you are interested in being involved with this please contact Anne Palmer 0455 841847.

### WOMEN

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WHITewater SAFETY?  
DO YOU WANT TO TEACH OTHER WOMEN THE SKILLS?  
ARE YOU A 4\* PADDLER?

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If the answer is YES to all 3 of the above questions please contact Geoff Good as soon as possible on 0602 821100

At the time of writing, the last rodeo held in March at Hurley was recognised as being an overwhelming success. The huge entry of nearly 100 competitors was over 905 male; the ladies event has been so popular as to require separate heats leading to a final, despite the increasing popularity of rodeo competitions over the last two years. It seems that many women are steering clear of rodeos, but why does rodeo paddling delight so many men and yet so few women?

### COMPETITION

There may be some substance to the argument that some women do not enjoy competition, but there are many keen competitive sportswomen in other sports so why is this not represented at rodeo events? Indeed, most of the female rodeo paddlers enjoy the motivation, camaraderie and excitement generated by competition and success need not be measured solely against one's fellow competitors but also against oneself. A good personal performance can be just as satisfying as winning prizes. A more likely reason for women avoiding rodeo paddling is the flamboyant image (it is, after all a spectator sport!) and possibly the somewhat cool temperatures involved.

It is a myth that rodeo paddlers need to be big and butch since, assuming a reasonable level of fitness, technical skill should overcome the necessity for muscle power – some successful rodeo paddlers are very petite.

Unfortunately (or fortunately!), most of the rodeo events in the UK and abroad are based at sites of grade 3+ water. The flow of the water is fast, the surf wave may be steep, the stoppers are usually big and access may not be simple e.g the Bitches. A bit of determination, enthusiasm and 'bottle' are just as essential as a good roll, reading the water and of course, an ability to show off!

### NOVICES

Newcomers to the sport enter as novices but compete alongside experienced competitors on the same water conditions. Unlike slalom, where one can start as a novice and gradually progress through the divisions to bigger white water, rodeo paddling imposes a relatively high starting point. This initial demand on personal competence may deter some potential female paddlers but it should be noted that the number of women who compete at rodeos does not reflect the number of women in canoeing who are capable of doing so.

So, what benefits might you discover through rodeo paddling? Firstly, events are very friendly and provide a

good opportunity for meeting people – many of whom become permanent friends both on and off the water. Watching fellow competitors and paddling in the company of different or new people provides an opportunity to broaden one's horizons and develop new skills and ideas. Taking part is fun, highly motivating and generally very safe. Perhaps one of the most important though underlying aspects of rodeos, which is not always acknowledged, is that rather than being a separate sport for high profile, fame-seeking paddlers, it is more an extension of recreational white water touring or river running. One day, all that practice in the hole at the Bitches, Pierrepoint or Hurley could be handy on a river when looping out of a stopper could be more of a necessity than a novelty.

### MALE ENVIRONMENT

Many women who currently compete spend the vast majority of their paddling time in a very male environment. This is not a political statement in the somewhat over inflated issue of women in canoeing. As in most sports, in order to progress it is necessary for the individual to paddle with those better than his/herself and such role models may be male or female. The macho image of male whitewater paddlers perceived by some women (and men!) is a rather narrow vein and women should acknowledge and take advantage of the encouragement, friendship and respect (earned on merit) that their fellow male paddlers have to offer.

In the past two years the standard of the ladies' competition has increased and the huge gap in the levels of ability between the mens' and womens' events has diminished slightly. However, we still have a long way to go in order to reach our full potential. Sandra Schmidt of Germany has already demonstrated that women can achieve and compete on an individual and equal basis in an 'open' rodeo competition. In the World Rodeo Championships in 1991 she not only won the ladies event but came 7th overall.

Womens' rodeo in the UK should strive to reach the standard of the mens' competition and take note of the high standard of female whitewater paddlers in other countries such as Germany and the USA. There is no shortage of support from our fellow male paddlers and the only limits on our paddling ability are those set by us personally.

### COACHING

The result of more women competing would be an overall improvement in confidence and standard of female whitewater paddling and may even have spin offs by empowering women to progress further within the coaching scheme. Since the pathway to rodeo paddling is usually via whitewater recreation it is likely that the benefits of rodeo competition will lead to better, safer and more enjoyable whitewater paddling for us all.



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# top tips

and handy hints

## Marathon

A POSITIVE APPROACH

*Alan Williams is the BCU's Olympic Racing Coach. He has been a division 1 Slalomist, Wild Water Racer, Surfer, and Sea Tourist in his time.*

Alan's outstanding success was in the field of Marathon and Sprint Racing, however, with his partner Steve Jackson, Alan was world K2 10,000m Champion in 1983, and won over 20 international marathons.

In this article, he addresses the opportunities, and potentials for disaster, which occur at portages during marathon races.

### THE JOYS OF PORTAGING

Most marathon races have portages. Some people love them and some hate them. Like most things, portages can work for or against you. The first thing to remember is that each portage should be tackled with a specific aim. This means that two identical portages a few miles apart might be taken in totally different ways. It really is a bit pointless sprinting for several hundred metres then running the portage as fast as you can. You will only end up waiting for the rest of the group to catch up in order not to 'break' too soon. It sounds silly but we see it happen every weekend.

Deciding what you intend to do before you reach the portage is an essential part of a successful portage!

The most common requirement will be to simply stay with your ability group. Assessing your ability within the group will

normally give you the answers to what you should be trying to do. We have all seen races where one paddler hurtles across, with both paddlers paddling out at the same time. As with most things, when you are comfortably within your limits, things go well. This gives us a Golden Rule, of which there are many.

#### Golden Rule

**Always Portage within your own limits. In the early stages of a race you may find that the first portage is quite hectic. This is because too large a group is unwieldy, the best paddlers have less control, and the weaker paddlers try hard to reduce the numbers down to a level where they are likely to find a good wash to sit on.**

It is not unusual to see outstanding paddlers sitting back in these early stages, letting middle ranked paddlers make the running. This usually changes just before the first portage, with the best paddlers coming through strongly. The lesson here is clear.

#### Golden Rule

**You must conserve your energy. Some one else will always be happy to lead. If you do not have**



Preparing to Exit

**the power to stay with the race on the first portage you will be very lucky to ever get back with the front group.**

All paddlers should know how far it is to the next portage. They should also be quite sure on where they want to get out. Generally, the sooner you get out, the quicker it is. Part of the skill of marathon racing is making, or tricking, your opponents to portage in a place that gives you an advantage. For example, a good paddler will often pretend to portage early, only to increase his or her boat speed as the person outside seeks to overtake, finally leaving them nowhere to get out.

Not every one can control the race to this extent, so it is important to look at what actually happens. With larger groups the paddlers on the outside have a disadvantage! If the group portages early, those on the outside will paddle past the group. If the group paddles as close to the portage as possible then the outsiders will need to drop around the back.

It is important that you don't do this too early. If you do the group will speed up and you will be off the back. (If you are not the strongest you need this like a hole in the head).

#### Golden Rule

**Weak paddlers should not drop around the back until the lead paddlers have passed the start of the portage.**

When portaging it is best not to come into the portage like a bull in a china shop. Disembarking under control is the start of a good portage. Normally you should keep as close to the river bank as possible. This forces paddlers who want to overtake you to run on the outside. To do this they will need to be much better at running. It is not unusual to see paddlers catch up other crews by running harder. By the time they have drawn level, the crew that has been caught usually only has to increase the pace slightly to hold the lead. The overtaking crew needs to pass by completely in order to have the



**K1 Exit**

## TO PORTAGING

*by Alan Williams*

choice of where to put in. It is quite a good ploy to start with a steady run, then increase your pace as someone catches you up. The overtaking crew is unlikely to be able to do a magnificent portage and then paddle off at top speed. If they can then you are in the wrong place! The outcome is more likely to be that they draw level but fail to

When re-entering the water it is normal to put the stern of the boat in first. This prevents the rudder being damaged; by being dropped onto underwater obstructions. In crew boats the back person should be in the boat first. This stops them from pushing the stern of the boat out. When the front person gets in the boat will be



**Portage**

pass, or that they get past and wind themselves in their attempt leaving you with the option of putting them under pressure on the water.

Considerable energy can be wasted trying to pass a crew that has the inside advantage. To control the entry point, the overtaking crew needs not only to catch up and draw level, they must also completely overtake. If they do not, then the inside paddler may run to the end of the portage and take the last available space for re-entering the river.

### **Golden Rule**

**The inside gives greater control when portaging.**

more stable. It should be possible for him or her to place one foot in the boat and push off. This gives the boat a good angle for paddling away, and also a slight momentum.

### **Golden Rules**

**Rudder in First. Back person in First. This is a good time to think about what to do with your spray deck. There are arguments for and against undoing your spray deck before reaching the portage. If you are comfortable in the group, the choice is almost irrelevant. On the other hand, if you**

**are near your limit, concentrate on your paddling. You have to stop paddling for the boat to stop, there will be plenty of time to undo your spray deck.**

After the portage the back person in K2 should have plenty of time as soon as they get in to do up the spray deck, while K1 paddlers and front paddlers will normally do their spray deck up after they have got the boat moving. The likelihood of someone putting their boat in on the outside of yours is increasing all the time you are stationary.

### **Golden Rule**

**Don't jeopardise your position by stopping to undo, or do up your spray deck**

Many paddlers are unsure whether to carry their boat by the cockpit, or whether to carry our the boat on their shoulders. Marathon boats are now so light that only quite long portages need a shoulder carry. Of course, when the boat is carried on your shoulders you have the added advantage of being able to empty water as you run.

When approaching portages the front person in crew boats should be out first. It is not unusual to see the front crew members tip the back person in. In their eagerness to get away they don't always allow sufficient time for their crew member to get out of the boat. The best approach is for the front crew member to get out, hold the cockpit or front handle and wait for the back crew member to lift his or her end. This only happens when they are ready to run. Trying to start before this will normally lose you time.

### **Golden Rule**

**The front cannot leave before the back is ready. Although this sounds obvious, the next time you watch a race you will be amazed how often this is tried.**

When running the portage it is important that the boat is balanced. With K1's the paddler normally knows where to hold their boat to maintain a balance. With K2s the back person should hold the boat at the back of their cockpit, while the front crew member maintains the balance by moving his or her grip. This can be anywhere from the front to the back of

the cockpit. Remember that you will need to change this grip, particularly when the gradient changes.

### **Golden Rule**

**Share the weight of the boat for better portaging**

Paddlers are sometimes uncertain whether to put their paddles in the boat when portaging. Again, because boats are now so light, it is only on extremely long portages that you are likely to benefit. On anything less than 250 metres portage you will probably be quicker carrying your paddles in your hand. Remember that it takes time to put paddles in and take them out of the boat. Other crews will see that you have dropped back and may attempt to drop you. There is also the risk of paddles coming out when you are running. Even if they don't break you will lose time retrieving them.

### **Golden Rule**

**Only Put Paddles in the boat for very long portages, where you are not under pressure.**

A lot of damage occurs when boats are dropped while portaging. The boat should only be lifted over its crew's heads when there is no alternative. It is quicker, easier and safer to simply step over the boat, either as you get out, or just before you get back in. When K2s are passed over the paddlers' heads, water rushes from one end to the other. This can cause injury, or considerable damage, if the boat is dropped.

### **Golden Rule**

**Keep the boat level and low, do not pass it over your head unless there is no alternative.**

To advance from here we would need to look at individual situations and decide on the best approach for ourselves. Most portages present different problems to different paddlers. Remember, a good runner can afford to be a little laid back about their position when approaching a portage, whilst a very strong paddler may feel quite happy, not worrying about a bad position, secure in the knowledge that they can easily catch up.

**Alan Williams**



# SALT WATER, MALAYSIAN



Regatta Course, North of Kuala Lumpur

**Main Picture:  
West Coast  
Beach close to  
proposed  
symposium  
venue.**

**I**n June of 1992 I received a letter from the Kuala Lumpur Canoe Association asking for some advice. They were planning to visit the U.K, wanted to paddle to France and were having difficulty understanding the communications they were receiving from Paris. How can you explain the illogical French restrictions concerning sea kayaking to a group of people 6,000 miles away. I only live 14 miles away and have been trying to fathom them out for years.

My reply by return was forget France and come to Jersey. They arrived just in time to experience the worst summer weather for years. Even with the limited paddling that they were able to accomplish it became apparent that they were keen canoeists and the group had some skilled members. Following on from their visit to Jersey I was invited to go to Malaysia to look at their facilities, discuss some future projects and run some coaching sessions.

## FROM FOG & COLD TO JUNGLE

The fog and cold of a January day at Heathrow was quickly forgotten as the heat of a Kuala Lumpur evening seeped into the aircraft. This was definitely warm weather paddling. The first visit was to Jeram Besu, about 150 kilometres north east of Kuala Lumpur, where a white water centre is being developed. A short section of grade 4 is the precursor to a delightful 5 kilometre section through the jungle. Nowhere really difficult but always interesting.

The first building has just been erected and the plan is to have changing rooms, chalet accommodation, boat stores and other facilities in place by the summer of 1993. The lasting impression of Jeram Besu is of the enthusiasm of the paddlers and the locals alike for the new development. Having paddled the top rapid and remained upright I was greeted by a cheering and clapping crowd of about 100 people!

## SEA KAYAK SYMPOSIUM

In 1994 the Malaysians are planning to organise a Sea Kayaking Symposium and hopefully attract paddlers from outside their own country. The proposed venue is a tourist

complex in the State of Malacca at the base of a large headland which looks towards Sumatra. The mangrove swamps close to the beach remind one that this wouldn't be the normal European sea kayaking event. The state government of Malacca were very supportive of the idea and hopefully an attractive package can be put together which will entice paddlers from abroad.

## KAYAKS BY THE HUNDRED

Canoeing and kayaking in Malaysia in many respects are still in the early stages of development but in other ways their achievements have been considerable. The circumnavigation of peninsula Malaysia has been completed, the Malacca Straits crossed to Sumatra and most significantly an expedition through the Straits of Sunda which included an ascent of Krakatoa. All of these paddles were undertaken in locally built double kayaks which seem to exist in their hundreds in the region.

Sport in general in Malaysia is receiving a large amount of government assistance, partly due to the fact that the country is the venue for the 1998 Commonwealth Games, and Canoeing is receiving its fair share of the funding. For example, just north of Kuala Lumpur a racing course is being developed on a reservoir. The architect visited Holme Pierrepont for some of his ideas. There also appears to be much easier access to government officials than in the U.K. Whilst there I met the Minister of Sport, the senior civil servants and the Prime Minister.

Whilst in the country the people I met couldn't do enough to make the visit enjoyable. Their commitment to the sport of canoeing and their pride for the country came across in all that they said and did. Within Kuala Lumpur the main people involved are Shaharuddin Hassim, Tan Tiam Hock and Subramaniam Raju. Their drive and energy providing the stimulus for the future of the sport.

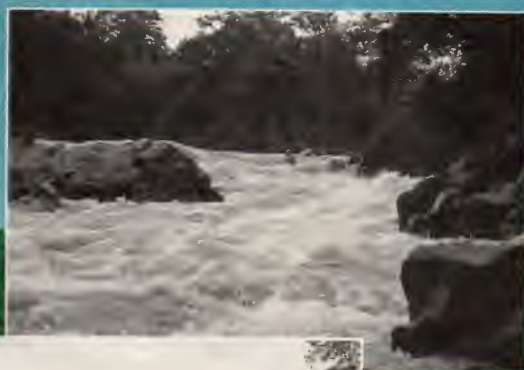
Hopefully the Symposium will take place in 1994 when paddlers from other countries will have the chance to experience the opportunities that Malaysia has to offer. Whenever people decide to visit though they can be assured of a warm welcome.

Kevin Mansell

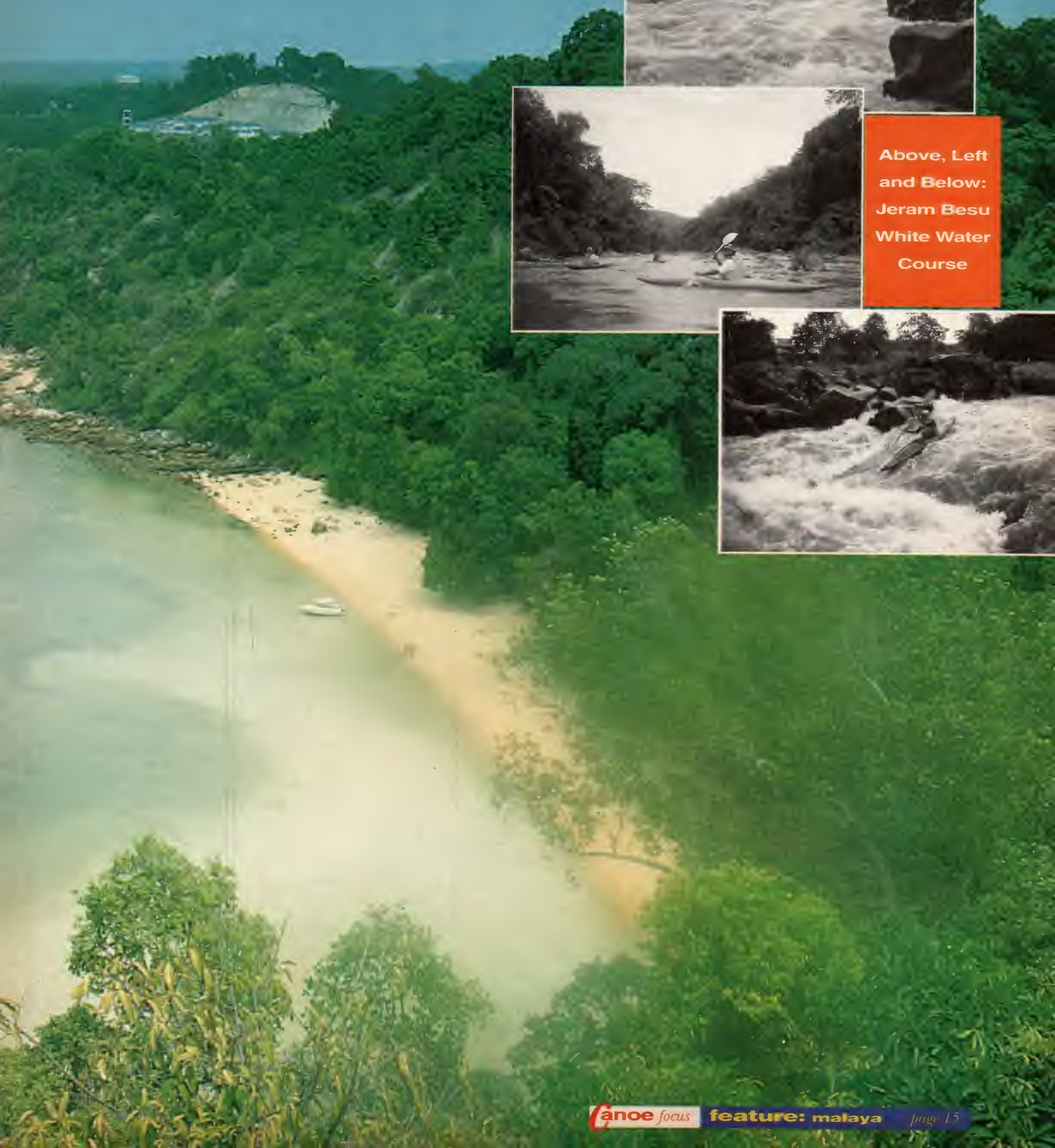


# STYLE

## *Kayak Kuala Lumpur*



**Above, Left  
and Below:  
Jeram Besu  
White Water  
Course**



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# Competition *focus*

## DEVIZES WESTMINSTER 1993

*Sometimes you finish – sometimes you don't.*



**A**fter the heavy rain of the winter it was feared that there would be no 'water' for the race but the rainy days a few days before 'the' race had swollen the canal and river. For the first time in several years it was a very wet Devizes with people trying to get ready to head towards Westminster. Hurried final plans were made under umbrellas and in cars to avoid the rain. One by one the competitors headed off – we (Colin Middleton and I) didn't leave until 2.00pm so there were only a few boats left.

Having already paddled the Devizes – Newbury route we were extremely pleased to see that the swollen canal had helped to disperse the thick green weed

that had severely hampered our training run. However, all the support crews were horrified to see the mud. We had already to make the long run at Wootton Rivers and our brave support crew followed suit and were heard to exclaim expletives as they ended up covered from head to toe in mud!

Whilst we were paddling towards Newbury the juniors, veteran/juniors and K1's had already finished for the day and we had to clear our minds as they would have been washed, cleaned and fed!

### SUPPORT CREWS

Our support crew kept us informed as to where everyone in the race was so when we had to make a pit stop at Kintbury due to rudder problems (how unusual) we were not worried. The support crews around us were amazed at how quick and efficient our support crew were (well they are extremely experienced).

As we got back on the water and continued towards Newbury the race was clearly unfolding behind us. The C2's of Andy Guest and Joe Lyons and Jones and Slater were having a real battle with the male K2's battling out not too far behind.

We were cheered on by the juniors as we passed through Newbury – that was so reassuring. However only a couple of miles out of Newbury we were over taken for the first time by Andy Freeman / Ian White. This some what concerned us as we were concerned that we had totally miscalculated the tide. But our ever present support crew reassured us and we felt fine as we watched them paddle off into the sunset.

### IN THE DARK

The thought of paddling the canal in the dark had always frightened me so we had decided just to paddle it in the dark on the race. I was pleasantly surprised how easy it was to make headway – despite the low bridges and meanders. Being a local I do know the canal really well so none of the bridges, bends and portages surprised us.

Thatcham was that next time our rudder began to trouble us and it gradually began to get worse despite the T.L.C (tender loving care) of our support crew.

Despite having rudder problems we were still 'in touch' with the Danes a mixed K2 crew of Thygesen and Sondergaard (Thygesen holds the ladies K2

record) and the battle for the male K2 was really intensifying behind us between Cooper and Murray from Richmond and Thornton and Alston from Elmbridge.

Sadly Guest and Lyons the C2 pair had to retire due to injury.

### CHEERING

There was a really large crowd at County Lock and it was lovely to be cheered on by my fellow club members from Reading and Leighton Park Canoe Club. Colin and I both felt fine and were flying – Oblivious to the disaster which was to strike. We let out a large cheer as we turned right out of the canal onto the River Thames and it was flowing fast and rising. Our joys of the added current were dashed some 2-3 miles later when our rudder wheel finally gave up the ghost at Sonning. I was mortified not only was I the fittest I had ever been we were on for about 18.30 hours and it would have beaten my best time by far.

Living only a couple of miles from Sonning we headed to our house. After a bath – (where did all that mud come from?) Colin, my partner Steve Ellard and Rob Fletcher (part of the support crew) headed back to the Midlands but the rest of us were

### SERIES PRIZE WINNERS

#### K2 Seniors

Capps & Heath (ACU) 11:45:06

#### K2 Juniors

Jensen & Richardson (Nottingham/Richmond) 11:19:20

#### K2 Ladies

Addington & Mullins (Reading & Leighton Park) 17:24:57

#### K2 Veterans

Gow & Neve (REME) 13:36:29

#### K2 Mixed

Gray & Hall (Reading & Leighton Park) 13:48:13

#### K1 Seniors

Dark (Bradford-on-Avon) 11:42:48

#### K1 Juniors

Beazley (Barking & Dagenham) 13:22:36

#### K1 Veterans

Tomlins (Reading & Leighton Park) 13:20:52

#### Canadian Doubles

Jones & Slater (Poole Harbour) 14:15:47

#### Services

Capps & Heath (ACU) 11:45:06

#### Senior Teams

Bradford-on-Avon

Dark, Missen/Day, Bowerbank/Fielden, Lewis 36:22:38

#### Junior Teams

Warren, Bannister/Webb, Webb/Woosnam, Davidson/Davidson 48:42:02

## Newbury Marathon races

Newbury Canoe Club's Waterside Series of marathon races celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, with 332 different crews entering one or more races in the Marsport sponsored series. Over the four races, there were well over 700 entries.

The four races were:

14th February Great Bedwyn to Newbury (14 miles) 28th February; Newbury to Aldermaston and back (18 miles) 14th March; Pewsey to Newbury (23 miles) 28th March; Devizes to Newbury (34 miles)

The fastest time overall was posted by the K2 Junior winners, Jensen & Richardson (Nottingham/Richmond) who beat allcomers with four very fast times.

Last year's Senior K2 winner, Simon Dark (Bradford on Avon) paddled K1 this year with equal success. Swapping trophies with Simon was last year's Senior K1 winner, Alan Heath (ACU) who teamed up with Duncan Capps to win Senior K2 this year. Capps & Heath also won the Services Trophy which Alan won on his own last year. Maintaining the sense of déjà vu, Karl Slater and Peter Jones (Poole Harbour) retained the Canadian Doubles title, and Bradford on Avon again won the Senior Team Trophy.

There seems to be a trend developing with fewer Juniors entering and more Veterans; where is the new blood that LD racing needs?

Despite that, there were some new faces, with Warren winning the Junior Team trophy, after it had spent several years in the hands of Bryanston School.

## MARATHON NEWS

### The Upper Thames Race

Reading and Leighton Park Canoe Club are organising "the canoe race you have always wanted to do and they have never run" it takes place on Saturday 9 October from Lechlade, the highest navigable point on the Thames to Reading. It consists of 67 miles with 23 locks and a variety of classes. The race is of historical interest as it covers the route of the first ever long distance canoe race which took place in December 1867 on a course between Teddington Lock and Putney. Details from Alan S Holmes, The Cottage, Church Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, RG2 1HB

### Junior Development

Marathon and Sprint National Coach Richard Ward is promoting a junior development plan to nurture young talent in marathon and sprint. This will include junior development squads, more events, an information newsletter, and a continuing programme of coach training. It is envisaged that the placid water coaching panel may form the basis of a coaching structure for the regions. Richard needs volunteers to assist in implementing this development plan if you feel you can help him contact him on 0363 774841.

### Sella Descent & Spanish Marathon Race Series

The 1993 International Sella descent in northern Spain will be held on Saturday 7th August this year followed by a week of various marathon races. The BCU marathon committee have produced a 35 page booklet of background information to the series which is intended for team leaders or individuals visiting the Spanish series for the first time. Copies are available from David Enoch, 102 Bingham Road, Radcliffe-On-Trent, Nottingham, NG12 2GT at a cost of £1.00 each. (Cheques payable to D. C. Enoch)

wide awake so knowing that other team members from our club were out there we headed off to find them. Knowing what time they (Wiky Lester and Nick Daniels) had been through County we headed off to Windsor to meet them.

### SWOLLEN THAMES

The Thames had swollen considerably, so much so that instead of going across Romney Island into the weir stream we had to advise crews to go through the lock. About 20 minutes after arriving at the portage Wiky and Nick went through. They had 'lost' one of their support crew cars, so instead of cheering them on we got into action with Dave Green at the helm (Dave was my partner from 1992). As we followed them down the river we had the opportunity to cheer on what had been our competition. Wiky began to get cold so we had to find what kit and food we had left in the car to help her out. Wiky is extremely small and thin and she looked lost in hellies and a tracksuit that was designed for some one of 6' 4"!

The river continued to rise rapidly and it really assisted the crews.

### BEAUTIFUL MORNING

Dawn rose and brought a beau-

tiful morning. Having only ever seen Teddington from the River (despite my disappointment at ending the race) it was lovely to be part of the large crowd on Teddington Island. We watched the Danish mixed K2 come through and cheered them through. We saw the close competition between the Richmond and Elmbridge crews closely followed by the Royal Engineers. At Teddington the distance certainly begins to tell and its the last pit stop and leg stretch (numbous bumous certainly is the Tideway disease!)

On the Tideway the race between Elmbridge and Richmond really intensified. The cheering from the bridges got louder as we neared London. At Westminster we watched the Danes finish, breaking the record by about 20 minutes; saw the Elmbridge crew finally beat the Richmond crew by only a couple of minutes; saw the Poole Harbour C2 finish with their supporters waving their large flags; but for us the greatest pleasure was seeing Wiky and Nick finish.

Not long behind them was Lesley Addington and Jacqui Mullins from RLPCC who had not only won the ladies veteran race but they had won the ladies race – brilliant for two 46 year olds (you have to catch me first girls!)

No time to sleep as we head-

ed back from Westminster to follow the junior and K1 race. The river was still rising and watching the stage finish we saw the river rise by several inches. The juniors were finishing and Tony Richardson and Stephen Jenson well in the lead and on the way to a new junior K2 record.

Jerry Rogers came in with what looked like 3D warpaint on. He had hit his head on a low bridge just outside Newbury and it was not until the finish did he get 3 stitches! Brain Greenham and Glyn Wallis in the Junior/vet race had a good second day as did Sonja Bapty and G Mackenzie who were way out in front in the ladies race.

### NEW RECORDS

Day 3 of the race confirmed the positions with the final day – the race on the Tideway – confirming that Tony and Stephen had set a new junior K2 record with Brian and Glyn setting a new junior/veteran record.

With the race now over for 1993 and the results published, the planning for the committee for 1994 begins. Having said prior to the race that this would be the last, having not completed, I feel, well there is always 1994... so perhaps... DEVIZES TO WESTMINSTER 1993



## WILD WATER RACING - WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - SELECTION EVENT

Selection for the Wild Water Racing World Championships took place on the Tryweryn, in Bala, over a course of similar length to the World's course at Mezanna, Italy.

Strong winds and snow capped mountains (in May!) set the scene for a very closely fought race in all classes. With only four places available in each class the standard of competition was exceptionally high, tension had been mounting over the months of preparation and the early seasons races, which all contributed to the selection process.

In every race there are winners and losers, commiserations must go to those who fought so hard but unfortunately didn't make it, the commitment they have shown can only benefit British Wild Water Racing with Bala '95 Worlds just around the corner, and of course congratulations must go to the following paddlers who were selected. We wish them all every success in the World Championships in July, let's bring back some medals!

Wendy Blackman



#### TEAMS

##### K1 Men

Neil Stamps  
Alan Tordoff  
Ian Tordoff  
Neil Blackman

##### K1 Women

Andrea Clayton  
Julie Ashton  
Cynthia Berry  
Karen Porter

##### C1

Mackon Singh  
Rob Pumphrey  
Mark De Freitas  
John Willacy

##### C2

Dave Belbin/Phil Caunt  
Simon Twigger/Scott Simpson  
Andy and Iain Clough





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## SLALOM NEWS

### French exchange request

Male slalom paddler, aged 14, interested in most sports, looking to stay with an English family with boy in similar age bracket with same interest. Hopes to come to England towards the end of July and return to France by 20 August. Main objective is to improve English and can offer winter skiing in France in return. Contact Nicolas BAILLON, 3 Place des Jacobins, 38130 ECHIROLLES, Grenoble.

### Slalom Courses

Keen to improve your slalom skills and over 21? Coaching courses for all in this age group – Sowerby Bridge on 9 October and another date and venue to be arranged in the South – Contact Sue Wharton, Slalom Development Officer.

### Canoe Slalom Information

Like to try a canoe slalom and want more information – send for a slalom yearbook and a starter pack – total cost £2.50 inc pp from BCU Slalom Committee, 117 Preston Road, Chorley, Lancs, PR6 7AX.

### British Teams

Busy Year for British Teams Senior Team will compete at World Canoe Slalom Championships in Mezzana, Italy, July 7-11, where Shaun Pearce will defend his World kayak title and GB representation is expected at all five World Cup events being held in Europe, Canada and USA.

British Juniors will compete at the Pre-World Championships being held at Wasau, Wisconsin USA.

Come along and support the British Team – why not combine a trip to the Worlds with your European Tour – there's plenty of accommodation nearby, camping, apartments and hotels – Sue Wharton has some details – Tel: 0257 262051

### Club Register

BCU Clubs – did you know that if you have three paddlers on the National Ranking lists and are affiliated to the BCU, you can be included in the Club register and receive information



# SLALOMISTS DO BATTLE HOPING FOR A TICKET TO MEZZANA

Around 30 of the best arrived at Grandtully to do battle for possible selection to the World Championships Team to compete on the River Noce, at Mezzana in Northern Italy in early July. Selection to this Team also meant selection to the World Cup series Team to compete in the five event series throughout Europe, into Canada and finishing in the USA.

Only Gareth Marriott, GB's Olympic silver medallist, pre-selected to the GB World Championship and World Cup Teams was spared the pressure of competing for a place and chose to go to the USA to finalise his preparation for a winner's medal this time! Shaun Pearce, current Men's World Kayak Champion had to fight for a place in the World Cup series team despite his pre-selection to the World Championship team.

The Selectors followed the successful Olympic Year's selection format – 2 races in three days, and crossed their fingers when deciding to use the River Tay, a spate river, not renowned for a constant water level. The small but effective work force ran their usual efficient event.

Points used gave credit to top placings, and were awarded from the winner downwards, however, it wasn't just results

that counted, all performances have to satisfy Sports Council criteria relating to International standard.

Testing courses set by Alan Edge and Ken Langford added to the pressure already generated by the occasion and in the first of the "Blue Riband" events, it was Ian Rospin who stormed home first, tow seconds up on Pearce and Fox, with Jones, current British Champion just.02 behind!

The second event saw Jones take the edge with a superb second run knocking Ian from the top spot. Ian's younger brother Andrew took third place with Fox, in his seventeenth selection series in fourth place again and Pearce in 5th.

Final positions gave GB the same team as in 1991 – Shaun Pearce, Ian Rospin, Melvyn Jones and Richard Fox MBE. Young Andrew Rospin came within a whisper of selection.

Lynn Simpson and Rachel Crosbee dominated the women's race and Mark Delaney shared the Canadian singles honours with the surprised Toby Morgan. The Canadian doubles class, now much depleted, saw brothers Iain and Andrew Clough and Philip and Steven Green take the honours.



**K1 Men:** Ian Rospin, Tees KC; Melvyn Jones, Arrowcraft/Stafford and Stone Shaun Pearce. Team: O'Neill, Richard Fox, Nottingham

**K1 Women:** Lynn Simpson, Nottingham University/P&H; Rachel Crosbee Nottingham/Arrowcraft, Maria Francis, Stafford and Stone Heather Corrie Manchester

**C1:** Gareth Marriott, Arrowcraft; Mark Delaney, West Lothian; Toby Morgan, Shepperton; Bill Horsman, Dupont

**Canadian Doubles:** Iain Clough/Andrew Clough, ICI; Philip Green/Steven Green, Olney Slalom Paddlers; Stewart Pitt/Mike Miller, Forth CC World Cup Series Team

**GB Intermediate Team selection** took place at the same venue with its own thrills, spills and nerve tingling excitement.

## NATIONAL POWER FUNDS RASPIN'S QUEST



British team slalom paddler Ian Rospin who lives and trains in Nottingham was recently pleased to learn that after approaching National Power with regards to sponsorship, they have agreed to help him into the 1993 World Championships in Italy with the possibility of furthering the relationship through to the 96 Olympics if things go well.

Ian who is World ranked no 4 said "With a sport like ours that doesn't capture the media coverage quite like football and tennis, I feel very honoured that a big Company like National Power have committed themselves to help support an athlete in our sport. I hope I can repay their generosity and show other companies that there is mileage in a venture like this."

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# Dr D's agony column

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, John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 5AS Tel: (0602) 821100 Fax: (0602) 821797

## WHAT DO I BUY?

**Dr D:**

I am thinking up taking up canoeing as a hobby, probably mainly on rivers and lakes, but occasionally on the sea. I have passed my grade one in a kayak. I would like to buy a decent canoe, but I haven't got a clue what to look for in a canoe. Could you please tell me what to look for in canoe and send any information on kayaks that you have. Also, what are the advantages and disadvantages for each particular canoe? Would a kayak be the best canoe for me and should I do another course for another kind of canoe? I am fourteen.

**CHRISTOPHER PAGE**

**Dr D Replies:**

Your best bet is to go along to your local BCU affiliated club and try a number of different craft under the supervision of experienced BCU qualified instructors. Most clubs have a pool of loan equipment and offer very cheap (sometimes free!) tuition. Don't buy until you are sure you are happy paddling something which suits the types of canoeing you enjoy, and you won't know that until you try it. I am sending you more information.

# Attack of the Killer Swans

**DEAR DR D:**

I am a younger reader (14 years old) of Canoe Focus and find it very beneficial so I wanted to get some advice and warn other readers about swans.

The other day I was canoeing along a back water in Oxfordshire when we came to a pool. At the entrance there was a male swan all puffed up; we thought he was just showing off so we paddled past him across the pool and then behind us we heard flapping and splashing. I looked around and saw this enormous swan coming at my head! The only way I could prevent it attacking me was to hit it with my paddle (sorry animal lovers but it was life or death) and it was temporarily stunned. I then paddled for all my life was worth but I heard it again and the same thing happened. This repeated itself over five times over the space of 200 metres. I later realised that the swan

was protecting its nest but I have never been so scared before and I was very shaken up.

So never go near a nest or puffed up swan. Assess the area before entering it.

What should I have done in that situation?

**LUKE DENNO**

**Dr D Replies:**

Sorry, Luke, but my sympathies lie with the swan. Swans are good mothers and around this time of year are aggressively protective, but you now know that. Follow your own advice and avoid nesting swans. Get out and portage if necessary; you are less of a threat on land. There are cases on record of serious injuries ie broken arms, sustained in swan attacks. On a final note, please don't paddle around duffing up wildlife... canoeists are clean, green and environmentally aware.



# Spanish Sea

Byron Fossey asked about sea canoeing on the Northern Coast of Spain. Some years ago I took part in an expedition to that part of the world. Although our intention was to undertake the very trip that he is proposing to make, we eventually went further west and paddled from La Coruna, around Cap Finisterre to Pontevedera.

At that time (1981), no one we met had ever seen sea kayaks or had even seen people paddling on the sea and were greeted with amazement when we turned up at villages on the coast. No doubt quite a few people have paddled the coastline since, but at that time,

Spanish paddlers were keener on LD and sprint racing and left the sea well alone.

The coastline immediately west of Santander is rugged, with high cliffs punctuated by sandy beaches. Although there are many holiday resort along the coast and the area is busy in summer, it is sufficiently "wild" to present few problems with beach camping, as long as a degree of common sense is used.

We were told that the Spanish military were very touchy about persons getting near their bases, due to activity by ETA, the Basque separatist movement. They were likely to, and indeed

had, shot first and asked questions later when small boats had approached their naval base east of La Coruna. So if the Spanish Navy turns up, do what you're told and don't make any sudden movements!

The biggest problem is getting fresh water, as no stream can be considered as a source of drinking water. However, even the most isolated beach will have a bar and the smallest village will have a shop that opens until ten or eleven at night, so getting supplies should be no problem.

**RAYMOND GRIFFITHS**



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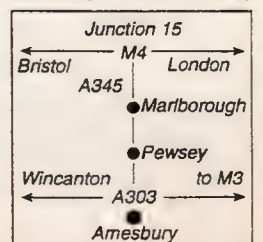
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# RODEO

Will I need a rope and stetson?



## EARLY DAYS

On the 14th and 15th May 1988, the first UK Rodeo was held on the Bitches Rocks, Pembrokeshire. Organised by the Twr-y-felin Outdoor Centre the event was based on a idea from the US and was put together in the UK by a particularly unscrupulous group of characters. It attracted approximately 20 competitors and U.K. Rodeo was born. In the early days the most spectacular moves were stopper riding, 360's, paddle spins and pop outs. Competitors just showed off their river running and surfing skills. (Yes! Plastic pig paddlers with skills). Since then Rodeo or Playboating events have progressively grown in popularity, skill and frequency into a well known element of canoeing which is open to all. The standard today is far higher not only at the top of the sport but the average standard is continually increasing as more people get involved in Rodeo.

Rodeo is now recognised by the B.C.U., events warrant write-ups in the canoeing press, manufacturers such as Palm and Playboater are making Rodeo equipment and sponsoring events. So rodeo has certainly moved on from 20 paddlers playing at the Bitches in 1988! To Define Rodeo: "Paddlers using their river running skills to demonstrate an aesthetic performance with the aim of attracting the judges' interest and being deemed the most original, interesting and consistent paddler". A bit stuffy perhaps? I prefer: "Paddlers having fun playing on waves or stoppers and trying to impress the judges". Yes, Rodeo is fun and a competition as well. In fact, the whole point of Rodeo is having fun whilst paddling, smile and you gain points in this competition which still has its roots based in river running.

The Format Rodeo events are held over 1 or 2 days. The events are run in heats of 6 to 8 competitors with each heat lasting 10 to 15 minutes. The best two paddlers from each progress to a similar format semi-final followed by a sudden-

death final, during which the finalists are progressively eliminated leaving the best and most knackered paddler as the winner. This general format applies to all classes of Rodeo: mens, ladies, novice, junior and veteran. Competitors in different classes often compete together but separate prizes are normally awarded for each.

## WHICH BOAT ?

The events have two categories; float and squirt boat. The most popular by far is the float boat with an average entry of 60 paddlers whilst the more extreme squirt boats normally attract 10 to 15 paddlers, many of whom paddle in both float and squirt. Most competitors can perform 360's, popouts, enders, paddle spins and basic 180 pirouettes. At the top end paddlers consistently perform all these skills and more whilst linking different moves during the same ride on the wave and maybe adding aerial paddlespins, hand paddling, juggling or even standing up whilst surfing a wave.

## WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

There are 3 main Rodeo venues,

namely Nottingham HP, the Bitches and River Thames, whilst other events are being held on rivers such as the Dee or during weekend tours like the Jones Rally. Look in the BCU yearbook for the new Rodeo section to find full details of the main events. Well now, we've covered what it's all about, and you are interested.

So how do you get started? You need no specialised equipment or boat, any basic W.W.Spec. Craft with your normal paddling gear will fit the bill, however, the boat will need to be fitted to your body with knee and hip padding a big advantage (without a good fitting boat with each aerial move you fall out on landing and the swim that often follows makes a good performance difficult). Obviously, should money be no object certain hull shapes perform considerably better than others - aeroquatics, spuds and stuntbats to name but a few of the available rodeo craft. Plastic is also an advantage as the boat's nose can take a pounding on the bottom but glass boats perform just as well if they are all that's available.

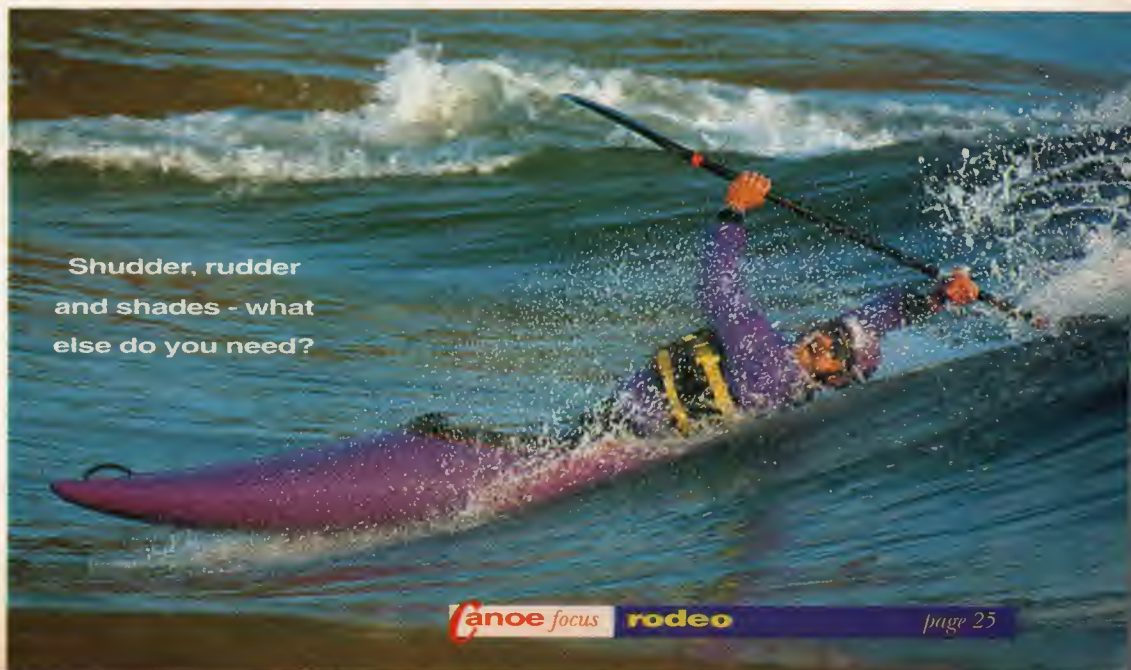
## SKILLS

Once equipped, make sure that your rolling in is up to scratch and armed with your boat and good roll you are ready to start. So find a nice green surfing wave or stopper and set to practice your skills. Work on your balance and the ability to read the water so you can effortlessly and accurately place your boat into any position on the wave or stopper. As your skills develop move on to popouts, 360's, enders

and the other basic moves. As your skill level increases your confidence will come and your ready to enter your novice event. Put on your best smile and use your skill to impress the judges. To advance within Rodeo there is no formal coaching system and most paddlers improve with experience and by padding with friends who push each other to a higher standard. A limited number of courses are available at centres such as Twr Y-felin or as advertised in the Year Book, but you simply cannot beat river time and experience to get to the top. Maybe as a challenge to some of the senior coaching scheme members more rodeo style courses could be run and in so doing the average S.I.'s white water skills may improve as well as training new rodeo stars. So where is it all going? Well, I think we have got it about right so far.

The competitions are still casual enough to be friendly, fun and challenging for the competitors and I hope this will long continue. I fear however, that as Rodeo increases in popularity then like all great sports the competitive edge will take over and a more clinical approach akin to the current Slalom events will emerge. In the meantime let's hope that we don't forget what Rodeo's all about and continue to have fun playboating in a competitive situation. Thank you for your time and I hope to see more new faces at this years events, notably the official BCU RODEO at Holme Pierrepont open tour in Nottingham on the 4/5 June.

Ros Faragher 



Shudder, rudder and shades - what else do you need?

# RODEO

Championships from Pembroke

MAY 8-9 1993

NO BITCHING AT THE BITCHES

The event held special significance from the basis of the British Tea Championships to be held October of this year.

In spite of the obvious im- friendly informal atmosphere than sixty paddlers meet on Saturday lunchtime.

Judges introduced, the programme set the place on the evening t

Baker airborne for first place

## THE TEAM FOR THE WORLDS IS :

### Mens

1. Shaun Baker
2. Justin Bunn
3. Paul Curren
4. Andy

### Middleton

5. Ray Hudspeth
  6. Paul Fletcher
- Wildcard: Jason Buxton

### Ladies

1. Victoria Young
  2. Claire Cheong-Leen
- Reserve: Louise Wigmore

**F**rom the customary position on the rock the judges, Martin Plain, Pip Croxford and myself, adjusted nether regions, sharpened our one pencil, borrowed a whistle and the contest began. More with a trickle than a blast as it turned out, the women's heat began on the stopper feature as soon as there was enough flow to produce a pop-out. Later the girls asked for (and got!) another heat on the stopper as they felt that they had not a chance on the best flow. We agreed a re-run on the Sunday and the Saturday heat would also count. It is hard to imagine any other

sport, let alone canoe event, where the judges and competitors could discuss the event and move the goalposts so quickly and amicably.

As soon as the women surfed aside the men's heat commenced with the first two moves highlighting the rising technical standard over the few short years hot dogging has been around. Shaun Baker's flamboyant pirouette was followed immediately by Paul Currant's slow motion 720 degree pirouette with smile. The standard throughout was as high and lots of new faces thrashed it out with established 'Bitches'. As dusk fell we had, with some difficulty split the field to two semi-finals.

The punishment for those who had done well was to get up in the middle of the night and do it all again on the morning tide: first semi at 6.00 am (yes, the judges were awake as some of us had forgotten to go to sleep!)

### HEATS

If the heats were hard the semi's were tougher and any six paddlers could have made it. In the end the last eight were

as the best-placed paddlers would  
to travel to the Second World  
in Ducktown, Tennessee, USA in

importance of the occasion, the usual  
presided over the group of more  
ing at Twr-y-Felin outdoor Centre

paddlers divided into heats and  
scene was set for the heats to take  
lds.

an even split between old hands and rising stars. The final took place on the Big Wave and the Stopper with equal points weighting. Before that the women had the same two features on which to strut their stuff. The wave predictably rejected those who weren't strong enough to sprint through the squirrely eddy with the right mix of aggression and accuracy. Vicky Young was the only female consistently making the wave, in a glass surf kayak. Other girls in slower AQ's and corsica's struggled although some did get into the trough and showed flair. Disappointingly Penny Allan, the surfer did not fare better. By the time the girls sized up Part Two: the Stopper, many calories had come and gone, (mainly gone) and there were some tired weary moves produced in the stopper. Plenty of flow, plenty of umph and nothing to throw at it. At the end of the day Vicky Young took first with Claire Cheong-Leen second. Newcomer Louise Wigmore showed much promise but was unlucky to miss out by one point after what was effectively three heats!

### MEN'S FINALS

The mens final produced a spectacular Wave section. The standard stuff was produced at first, paddle twirls, crossovers, hand surfing, shudder rudders and the like until the leading protagonists realised that to spilt the placings they would have to produce the unusual. Justin Bunn started it by attempting to stand up whilst surfing, Paul Currant stood up in a stunt bat, but as usual on his home water, Andy Middleton revealed his repertoire: he stood up, he waved, he drank coke and he juggled three ball before narrowly(!) winning. On to the hole. It is fair to say that the guys had more spare calories in reserve than the girls and the final was fast and furious. It is fairly clear to the judges that it is now not enough to perform a quick smiling pirouette or tail-ender and collect your



**TOP:**  
Wave from the  
wave  
**ABOVE:**  
Selected for the  
worlds  
**BELOW:**  
The judges take  
up position  
**BOTTOM:**  
Action at the  
Bitches  
All Photographs  
by Heather Gunn



prize T shirt. Linking moves is now the order of the day. Cross-over moves from squirt and slalom include screw ups and tailies as transitions to other moves. The best paddlers consistently produced three and four move rides. Eventually Justin Bunn and

Shaun Baker were left to fight out a head to head. Justin had shown steady form throughout the weekend and the best air time whilst Shaun had shown experience in producing the best move at the right time. This was the case in the head to head, with Baker continuing to produce, with or without paddles and Young Bunn simply running out of moves.

On Sunday lunchtime a free, frank, and open discussion on the way forward for Rodeo within the BCU was discussed and arrangements to send the selected team abroad considered. Rodeo remains fun, informal and competitive at the same time. I am not sure how it remains as friendly and hassle free but I am glad that it does. Long may it continue.

### PLACES

There are still world championship places available for Open Boaters, Squirtists and Closed Deck C1's.

If you would like to try out for the team the selection dates are as follows: 1. Squirt: Nottingham Rodeo 5-6 June 1993  
2. Open and C1: Rodeo Squad training weekend 12-13 June

Contact Neil Murray, Rodeo Team Manager on 0734 778090(work) or 0344 50245 (home) for more details.

Kevin Danforth 





# b ook & video review

Reviews by Kevin Danforth

## Something Amazing: Cape Wrath to Cape Horn by way of Peru

Rebecca Ridgeway

Published by Hodder & Stoughton London

Price £16.99

Rebecca has packed more into her 25 years than most people do in several lifetimes. This book is a personal biography of the unusual upbringing and adventures to date. The daughter of round-the-world yachtsman and Atlantic rower, Jo Ridgeway and an only child her formative years have been unconventional. Reared on the galeswept Ardmore peninsula amongst former crofters, without roads or electricity for the first part of her life she could hardly fail to have adventure in

the blood. Spending the childhood summers at the Ridgeway adventure school and the winters on expedition with her parents Rebecca has a tale to tell. The book is more about her life than the actual kayaking trip, but is none the worse for that. The human interest here is deeper in the expedition which is really more of a milestone in her personal journey. From finishing school at Gordonstoun to cycling the Andes and running the New York marathon she reveals her considerable personality.

Her special relationship with her father is explored and the background to the trip and the expedition paddlers are covered in some detail. The Cape Horn trip was only the second after Frank Goodman's and Rebecca became the first woman to complete the trip.

The kayaking has been well reported and featured in Canoe Focus in 1992. What about the inside story on the personalities and dramas on the trip? Why did the Ridgeways enlist Nigel Dennis's expertise and

training? Why was the trip put off a year? How did they get so much backing? The book is too readable to give all the story away here. It is interesting to say the least! My advance review copy did not have photographs but I am sure they are of the same high standard as the writing.

*Recommended: A refreshing change from the run-of-the-mill format expedition book.*

Kevin Danforth



## Canoeing Safety & Rescue

Doug McKown

Published by Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary. Imported by Cordee, Leicester

Price £8.95

Written by a paramedic canoeing instructor, with a past record of running training courses for all and sundry, I expected the book to be more gunho - rescue orientated than safety minded and whilst the technical content does not omit much, SAFETY is what this book is all about. The man has been around and knows his stuff: there is much here that all paddlers could do with having expe-

rience of. I am often uncomfortable with those who spend most of their canoeing time thinking of theoretical accidents, incidents and ways of dealing with the chance discovery of an epic problem waiting to be solved. This thoughtful manual does not fall into the trap. The chapter on hazard recognition is excellent and the author throughout elates personal tales of minor mishaps and mistakes. Doug makes

the point that there are very experienced paddlers who cannot cope in basic rescue situations because they have no experience or knowledge of the few techniques and tools which should be practiced. Fair criticism in some parts. Good quotes: 'safe canoeing is a state of mind...and the philosophy of accident prevention.'

Compiled for the Canadian and American market it deals with large

volume river and wilderness problems, as well as standard situations. The advice is sound and cleverly laid out: good diagrams, clear pictures. Heaps of sound advice presented in an easily understood narrative.

*Highly Recommended: Essential information you cannot ignore at a reasonable price.*

Kevin Danforth



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sport challenge combining mountain biking, cross country running, rock climbing and white water rafting. We're looking for an all-rounder, a canoeist who would be fast, capable and confident in a raft but can also turn their hand to scaling rock faces, running up and down mountain tracks and ride a mountain bike down thrilling slopes. Teams from five countries will compete in this three-day outdoor spectacular; the two British teams will include sporting celebrities as well as amateur athletes selected through Canoe Focus and other magazines. As well as three days of competition under the glare of local TV cameras, there will be live music entertainment, a laser show, stuntmen, paragliding demos and lots of local razzamataz. Plus you'll get your face in Canoe Focus when we report on the event later in the year.

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West Bridgford,  
Notts NG2 5AS  
Tel: (0602) 821100  
Fax: (0602) 821797

## SURF RATS

**Dear Focus:**

I feel I must write to you on the somewhat childish and immature article produced by a Mr. Dennis Ball in April's edition of Canoe Focus, titled 'Rats, Surfing and the Silly Season'.

Firstly can I say that Mr Ball has rather a negative way of telling people what not to do, by trying to make a serious subject 'funny', and secondly to say that his idiographic view of surfers, and by surfers I mean proper surfing with a surf board, is utter rubbish. However, this stereotyped view that Mr Ball has painted for the rest of the country to base their opinions on is of secondary importance, no doubt he has unfortunately encountered some of the more less desirable surfers, and elaborated

his views on the one encounter.

What I feel very strongly at is the negative way in which he has given people bad advice to ignore, this obviously isn't how to teach people about the society that exists in the water, and all he has done is to promote a '--- you attitude' - captions like 'Ignore signs! They are for the intelligent', 'Develop an attitude', and 'Make your presence felt'.

I have surfed all year round for the last six years, and I life-guard on a Cornish beach during the summer, which is subjected to all sorts of craft, and although there is no love lost for wave ski-riders and canoeists, we are there to do

a job, and that is to save lives and if that means paddling out to save them on a rescue board in a five foot north westerly swell we do it.

Now with Mr Ball's 'Attitude', which of course must be ignored, your average canoeist hurtles through the bathing area, decapitating and maiming, which of course we have to deal with.

If this is the approach taken by Mr Ball during his courses i.e telling people what they should not be doing, rather than what they should not be doing! Then I can only hope that they don't show up at the beach that I patrol. Surely it is better to produce an article that summarises intelligent behaviour rather than give ideas for people in an alternative article.

I would like to see this letter published in your magazine if possible, as I feel Mr Ball has made some very unworthy and immature comments.

Thanks for your time, and see you in the surf - Wave on.

**Robin Howell**

*I think you've missed the point here; the article was written tongue in cheek. Dennis was attempting to embarrass the inconsiderate minority amongst paddlers who do not know what a 'drop-in' is. He was actually trying to help you! You sound to have an anti-paddler attitude yourself; how many actual decapitations do you deal with in a season? Humour is a funny thing isn't it. In surfers parlance, 'lighten up, dude... Wave on'*

**Ed**

## Access and MP's

Simon Dawson's article "Changes" in the April issue prompts one or two comments. First I welcome anyone who has tried the "Seiont" approach and realised some of its drawbacks. This does not mean I disapprove of the Seiont Rally, at least it got canoeing access into peoples minds, something it is very essential to do. I have enclosed a copy of my local newspaper, there are two articles in it, one praising Chris Bennet of Manchester Canoe Club for saving a surfing man's life, and the other a local council decision to ban canoeists from a town centre reservoir, "as it may encourage others to copy them". What more must one do to get canoeing accepted?

Last year the Access Committee suggested we should all write to our M.Ps. Over two years ago I moved to a new district, and my M.P., in a welcoming letter, offered to help with any problem I had. Straight away I informed him of our access problems. By chance, our club, while running a social weekend on the Wye at Symonds Yat, with all the objectives laid down by

the Sports Council (encouraging the young, ethnic minorities, women, families, etc, etc) had face more opposition than normal. I informed my M.P. and my letters are sent on the Environment Minister, which means, as the Ministers are changed fairly regularly, you simply get a differently phrased, un-informed, unhelpful reply. So what has been the follow up of the "Write to your M.P Campaign", are we to have an annual rally on the Thames outside the Houses of Parliament? Without publicity of the Seiont variety, something has to be done to raise the public awareness of our situation, or must the publicity be in the form of disaster reports as in the recent Lyme Bay case? Perhaps in this instance access to a suitable river would have saved these canoeist's lives.

Finally Focus, Access is our most important issue, far more important than crashing or rusting cars, so why hide the issue away at the back of the magazine.

**Roy Bradshaw,  
Manchester Canoe Club**

*The BCU Access committee is making slow but real progress. If enough paddlers continue to lobby MP's they will come to realise the strength of feeling and have to come up with something better than the stock reply. It will also speed up the changes that are needed.*

*As far as the access situation playing a part in the Lyme Regis case is concerned, the two are totally unconnected. Any attempt to connect them must be pure speculation and without knowledge of the facts.*

*I can assure you, Roy that Access is not hidden away in the back of the magazine: a recent change of editorial policy is to include Access information within the magazine rather than a loose insert (which I know people dislike). In any case some psychologists maintain that more than half the population start casual readers start magazine at the back!*

**Ed**

## Getting Started

**Dear Focus:**

**As a recent member of the BCU and a relatively novice canoeist I have noticed that one obvious absence from Canoe Focus are articles providing instruction for novices. What about one page each issue explaining some basic procedures which are no doubt obvious to the more experienced? Articles on heroic kayakers battling against the extremes are fun to read but not very encouraging for newcomers!**

**Anon**

**A fair point : Any volunteers from Coaching Scheme Members ? Next Issue we hope to feature a 'Tops Tips' on getting started in Open Boat.**

**Ed**

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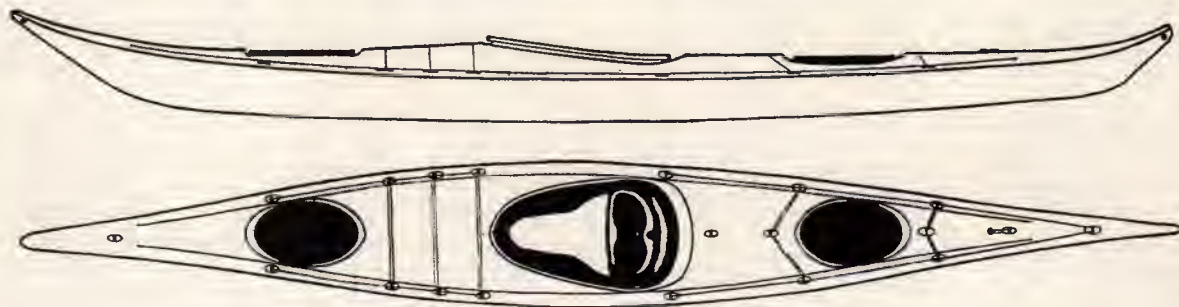
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# Regional round up

## eastern

The ER Coaching Panel and the ER Executive wish to thank Dave Coggins for his efforts and commitment on behalf of coaching in the region; Dave is retiring after 10 years as RCO, but continuing as LCO (Essex); see CoDe for election notice. All regional clubs and organisations are asked to name an officer to promote activities for people with disabilities; send details to the regional secretary. Following a highly successful rescue award course run by Herts Corps of the BCU Lifeguards Norfolk are establishing a county BCU Lifeguards unit. Herts can also offer training and assessment for canoe safety test and rescue awards and also the 8 hour aquatic first aid; see ER yearbook for contacts. ER newsletter is now available direct to BCU members for £2; cheque (or stamps) to me.

Judith Coffin

## east midlands

CALLING ALL ORGANISERS... What would you like to see about your club or discipline in next year's Regional Handbook? Think about it now and jot down your ideas. We want the handbook to have useful information for paddlers who have been around for years and be encouraging and understandable to newcomers to the sport. CALLING ALL CLUBS... Representatives are welcome at Regional Committee meetings. The next meeting on 30 June at Melton Mowbray will have a short agenda so that we have time to listen to you. CALLING YOUNG CANOEISTS... Representatives wanted from each county to respond to a questionnaire on British Canoe Youth and help develop our regional plan. CONTACT Ann on 0602 288413 (Don't all ring at once) FOR EVENT INFORMATION ring 0602 850930. Let's make the Derwent Rally on 6 June the best yet and show real support for the ACCESS CAMPAIGN. The July 2-4 camp at Leicester is open to all but especially women and families; boats provided; facilities for disabled. Contact Keith Sykes, our new RCO, if you would like a SKILLS UPDATE SESSION in your area: 8 Marlewood, Cotgrave, Nottingham - 0602 894267

Ann Hart

## london and south east

The "Three Regions River Guide", containing information about the Southern and South West Regions as well as our own, was launched at the Canoe Exhibition. It is available from the regional secretary at £4 to members and £4.50 to non-members. The Westel Tourist Trial was held in April and was very well attended. The youngest paddler was 10 and the oldest 74. Basingstoke won the shield for the club with the most entries. The region has taken delivery of two new K4s, now located at Bewl Bridge. The money came from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts. A regional polo league has

been formed with the first games being played in May.

Chris Childs

## north

Contributions, reports and orders for Northern Paddler should be sent to Sarah Shrimpton, 0434 381966 (fax 381341). Ray Hudspeth, 2 Birch Court, Prudhoe or regional chairman Eddie Palmer, 0434 270318 have details of the touring programme. The British Transplant Games at Killingworth are on 24 July and Nick Doll of Newcastle CC needs offers of help. Paddlers are still needed for the "Durham Cathedral 900" canoe raft-up record attempt.

Mary Armstrong

## north west

A great deal of emphasis is being placed this year upon environmental issues; Chris Cleaver has developed a complete environmental action plan and is always willing to help clubs or individuals to organise Stream Cleans etc. Chrjs can be reached on 0625 878838. Cathy Perkins has details of a whole bunch of slalom events and she can be reached on 0782 817566. Macclesfield and District are now accepting entries for the Cheshire Ring Race. This can be taken either as a flat out race or as a leisurely family event in one of the touring classes; details can again be obtained from Chris Cleaver. Polo is also a growing division of the sport; Dave Reynolds has full details of training courses and competitions. So if you fancy giving polo a whirl, contact Dave on 051 489 7286. Good paddling this summer!

Mike Weaver

## south

Our March 1993 Newsletter reports on progress made by Southern and South East Regions in persuading the NRA to embark on a programme of improving facilities on the River Thames for play-boating, white water practice and canoe touring. An A5 SAE to me at Canal Cottage, Crondall Road, Crookham Village, Hants GU13 0SY will get you a copy. What a pity Focus did not feature this success story. The remaining regional recreational events are: 5 June (key touring run) 12 miles on Thames, Longridge to Windsor (0628 483252); 6 June, Portsmouth area - introduction to sea canoeing (0252 713818) and 5 September (ditto) from Lepe, near Calshot (06285 26701). The Aldershot Lido pool slalom fun event (0252 330951) is on 25 September.

Charles Hicks

## south west

ACCESS LOBBY. Have you written or contacted your MP yet? If not, please do so at once! Please send copies of any replies to John Cockram, Wessex RAO. Many of your Regional Committee will be at Canoe 93 at Pewsey Sports Centre on 19/20 June. This will be the largest exhibition in the South of England and many of the major canoe traders will be present. There will be a polo tournament, information stands and "try it" sessions, plus on Sunday afternoon the presentation of

the D-W trophies. A mobile unit of boats suitable for beginners or the disabled has been presented to the Region by Wessex Water Plc and is to be based at Frome. The unit is available to groups from the Wessex Water area by arrangement with Graham Wamecke at Frome. This year's SW weekend at Holme Pierrepont will be 12/13 June; varying water levels up to full release, coaching, competition and meet up with your friends; special reduced rates! Details from Jon King 0272 650987.

Dennis Walls

## west midlands

Following the successes of tours, Haslers and slaloms so far this year, here is the next crop: Dingy Dawdle 4/5 June; Montgomery area; contact 051 336 1049. Pershore Camp Weekend 31st July-1st August; tours, shopping, fun for all the family; contact Clive Pearson, 23 Lewis Close, Drakes Broughton, Pershore, Worcs. Regional Sea Weekend 9-11 June; Anglesey Sea and Surf Centre, Holy Island, North Wales; assorted paddling and non-paddling events and coaching courses; contact L Matthews 0384 258492. Sutton's Severn Tour 18 July; Hampton Loade to Bewdley; contact Mike Nicholls 021 360 2136. Worcester Doggy Paddle 5 September; 16 miles Bewdley to Worcester; contact B Cox 0905 773689. Regional Slaloms - Stone 20 June; Wychnor Bridge 4 July; Luddington 18 July; contact M Walker 0384 76855. Regional Marathon Races - Nottingham 13 June; Soar 20 June; Wye 27 June; Shrewsbury 4 July; Burton 18 July; Ironbridge 15 August. Bell boating - Neptune of Nuneaton have done a 276 mile charity paddle to Tower Bridge and back; Fladbury had a Bell Boat Regatta on 29 May. We need a new Regional Access Officer; offers to any committee member please. We hope no one was inconvenienced by the shortening of the Paddlathon. The Open Canoe Centre of Birmingham is now open; contact Dave Bateman 021 624 6297 for courses. Bewdley Canoe Centre has been taken over by Wyre Forest Canoe Club; contact K Cadwallader 0384 897498.

Rosemary Preece

## yorkshire & humberside

Entry forms for 1993/1994 Polo session have been sent to all the teams. Entries should be in by 10 July. Any team or club who has not received entry forms should apply to the overall team organiser, Karl Day, 25 Spa Mill Terrace, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield HD7 5BD telephone 0484 845605. The river Washburn recreation cruise days and competitions have now all been finalised and a list of all the release days can be obtained by sending a SAE to Don Player, 21 The Drive, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JF. Evening release days are on Wednesdays 7 July 4.30 - 9pm, 18 August and 15 September both from 4.30 - 8pm.

Marianne Spender



## Chair's Chat

**The BCU AGM at Windermere saw the launch of the new BCU Development Plan, once more emphasising the "Key" role the regions have in the future development of the Union. Although under-resourced the regions bring together all interest groups, publish newsletters and yearbooks, develop local facilities and represent canoeing on a wide variety of quasi-government and other bodies. A particular part of their work is in the area of young people (the future of our sport) and in ensuring that the needs of women and those with disabilities are considered at events and facilities. It was great to be able to paddle with and talk to members at the BCU AGM in the north and at the BCU Lifeguards Convention in the south. I look forward to renewing acquaintances at the Lifeguards Championships at Plas Menai in September. During the summer I hope to see and meet many more members on the water enjoying our sport.**



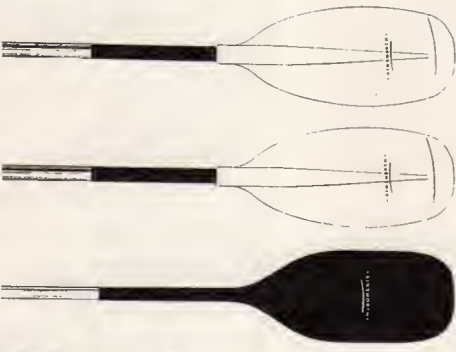
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## **Time and Tide and Corryvreckan**

**“A seething maelstrom of broken white water and whirlpools whose roar can be heard miles away . . .” is how one of the yachting guides describes the Gulf of Corryvreckan. It continues, “The Gulf has claimed many vessels down the centuries, and who shall live and who shall drown is said to be determined by the Cailleach, the witch who controls the race . . .”**

**D**espite my understandable cynicism regarding the last comment, it is with some trepidation that I ventured forth on all my visits to Corryvreckan. The drive from Cumbria is some four hours, so when you go don't forget the barbeque and wine box!

Although endless alternatives exist in relation to this paddle, my favourite paddle round trip starts and finishes in Crinan. It is quite feasible to visit the Garvellachs in a day, though a more relaxed journey is simply a clockwise circumnavigation of the Island of Scarba.

### **DORUS MOR**

Paddling on an early flood tide (1 hour after high water Dover) the first helping hand of the stream is felt after only two miles, when approaching Dorus Mor, a deep unobstructed channel where due to spring stream rates reaching eight knots, small whirlpools, patches of deceptive calm, swirls and overfalls are ever present. Beyond Craignish Point, a complex series of eddies exist as the tide finds its way over the reefs between Reisa - ant - Struith and Coiresa.

The next couple of miles crossing the sound of Jura can be

relatively calm giving the mind time to peruse the concept of reaching the point of no return. The jaws of the eastern end of the Gulf Corryvreckan loom closer by the minute as you are carried along at speed whilst trying to gauge the North/South drift by taking transits at every available opportunity. The reason for this is that the level of excitement you will experience in the Gulf is determined by your position relative to Jura and Scarba.

### **CORRYVRECKAN**

In a similar way to the Pentland Firth, it is quite possible by choice of timings and route to pass through Corryvreckan sipping champagne without spilling a drop. Equally for the more adrenaline orientated souls, the same day but with slightly different positioning can produce conditions to satisfy the appetite of even the most extreme seagull-eating sea kayaker. The former can be achieved by arriving at slack water which can last only a quarter of an hour and by sneaking through this “window” whilst the Gulf lies dormant. If the build up is all too much or you just fancy a leg stretch, the bay off to the right on the SE tip of Scarba which goes by the name

of Bagh Gleann Ò Mhaoil is the most gorgeous suntrap with a bothy enjoying what must be one of the most enviable locations in Scotland. There are several caves to explore by kayak to the east of this bay (an activity together with rockhopping, which always gives me great consolation for never having been able to afford a yacht!) however, beware not to be swept round the headland as the Northerly going stream will easily outpace all but the fittest and your circumnavigation will have all of a sudden to become anticlockwise!

For the fastest and most exciting passage, the Gulf of Corryvreckan should be approached 2 hours after high water Dover in mid-channel, however, it must be emphasised that this is a serious undertaking and if any form of Atlantic swell, having been built up after several days of Westerly winds is suspected, this route and timing would be unthinkable.

### **CAUTION**

My initial perception was judgement of the sea state invariably err on the side of caution on entering the Gulf and as calmer waters, (though still dotted with confused eddy lines and surging

boils) can be found by hugging the shore of Jura or Scarba, this is often my favourite “chicken shute”.

Ironically, by staying close to Scarba, you pass over the cause of much of the ferocious turbulence, a shelf extending south west a quarter of a mile from the shore which reduces the depth of the channel suddenly from over 130m to less than 30m.

### **“OLD HAG”**

This is where the notorious “Old Hag” whirlpools is supposed to suck unsuspecting craft down into her vortex, however nothing could be farther from the truth. Although whirlpools do exist in Corryvreckan, they are only as serious as those experienced in Dorus Mor. The larger “whirlpools”, have non-rotating foam-flecked circumferences, caused by irregular upthrusts of water forced up from the depths, this phenomena viewed from above look remarkably like whirlpools, although their effect is precisely the opposite.

Far more serious a threat comes from the overfalls, which even in calm conditions, can exceed 5m in height with breaking crests, extending across most of the Gulf and out to sea for 5

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Contact

*Freefree*

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miles, beyond the Garvellachs, I will leave it to the imagination what the conditions are like when the tidal stream runs into a westerly wind and swell, but the pilot claims the roar of collapsing crests into deep angled troughs can be heard in Crinan six miles away.

### SURFING SESSION

By taking the southern route, an overfall which can best be described as a complete wall of water, is encountered extending right across the Gulf from the Northwest tip of Jura. Once again, by varying your route, you can keep completely dry, have a superb surfing session on the long green waves or, in mid-channel swallow copious volumes of the Atlantic as you disappear from the view of your

*sea otters and seals can be seen basking on the rocks which together with superb sunsets can easily justify the extra mileage.*

colleagues. One advantage of this southern route is that it leads via the cave – indented low cliffs to several sheltered bays along the NW coast to Jura where some time spent in reconnaissance of campsites for future lager trips will reap some beautiful locations such as Glengarrisdale Bay, from where a walk along the cliff tops is rewarded by superb views across to Colonsay and Mull.

### SEA OTTERS AND SEALS

Leaving the turbulence of Corryvreckan behind, I would recommend a rock-hopping route right under the cliffs of Scarba amongst the dipping and diving sea birds of Scarba, however more often than not, I have found myself still playing in the roller coaster wake of the Gulf, being swept west away from

this fabulous scenery which is continuously lashed by clear turquoise seas. A couple of miles round the Scarba coast are some idyllic lunch stops and campsites, Port an Eag-uillt being one of my favourites. From here, it is possible to follow the stream to the 1500ft summit of Cruach Scarba. Three notable lifeforms frequently encountered on Scarba include of course the ever thirsty Scottish midge, the ever hungry survivalist abandoned by his course leader and more often than not other sea kayakers enjoying the views across to Lunga and the Garvellachs. A notable diversion if you have the time is out to this latter group of islands where sea otters and seals can be seen basking on the rocks which together with superb sunsets can easily justify the extra mileage. Further north again are old slate

quarries on the island of Belnahua, but the shallow waters of this area lead to tidal streams far in excess of the maximum forward speed of a kayak, so the advice is to do your homework before you attempt such a visit.

The route back to Crinan may be started 5 hours after high water Dover if you are to retrace your steps back through Corryvreckan or by waiting another couple of hours, by heading through a channel at the Northern end of Scarba called Grey Dogs which can provide some excellent white water entertainment. From here, head back hitching a free ride on the Southerly stream towards Dorus Mor, passing another excellent

campsite on the western shore of Garbh Reisa before arriving back in Crinan to complete the trio.

For me whether I have come to my favourite paddling area for a therapeutic break from work, for a “stag paddle” as I did several years ago or simply as many sea trips are done on a reactive whim, this area above all emphasises to the extreme the saying the “time and tide wait for no man”.

**Dave Taylor is a BCU Coach Tutor living and working in the Lake District. He also likes water without salt.**





# Good Morning Vietnam

**Above:**  
**Action on**  
**China Beach**  
**Right:**  
**Greg in Saigon**

**O**ver seven beers, seven cokes and a bottle of rum, Colin apparently persuaded me to go to Vietnam. (He had to remind me in the morning as I was booking my air ticket to India). "Can't you remember last night in Tom and Jerry's? (the local bar in Kathmandu). A quick change of tickets and we were on our way.

Everybody had told us that "There's no way they will let you take kayaks into the country". That was the easy part compared to our plan to kayak the Red River (Song Hong).

A week of hassles in Hanoi, a sixteen hour, over priced, hard seated, pickpocketing, overnight train journey, and a short, bumpy bus ride and we had made it to Lao Cai, by the Chinese border.

## DULL GREEN

The Locals dressed in dull green, ex army clothes, hadn't even seen tourists before, never mind our kayaks. The local police weren't to be put off by these strange plastic things. The usual demands for "Passports and Travel Permits" followed. Obviously

they were unable to read English, our passports were returned and we retreated to a local cafe, tired and exhausted.

A quick caffeine fix of thick treacle-like coffee soon revived us. It wasn't long before the Chief of Police turned up. Speaking some English and a lot of pointing to our documents it didn't take long for us to realise our permits were not valid.

Colin with passports in hand, waved goodbye from the back of a motor bike as he set off back to Pho Lu to sort our little problem out, with the Chief of Police for the area. Leaving Greg and myself under house arrest in the cafe.



## POLICE STATION

After a few hours we started to wonder what had happened to Colin, after six hours we were getting concerned. Eight hours later he turned up looking very tired and hungry; over noodle soup he explained the situation. We could only stay one night and it had to be in the Police Station, some New Years Eve this was going to be! And just to add insult to injury we had to return by bus and train to Hanoi. This was definitely time for plan B!

So off we went, heads bowed, hands in pockets following the police and our kayaks through the dark, dusty streets of Lao Cai, to the Police Station. Once inside we sat there feeling sorry for ourselves, discussing what we could do for plan B, when we were beckoned into another room.

## PERFECT HOST

Expecting another confrontation, we were surprised to see a vast array of fish dishes, salad, chicken and rice. The police chief who had argued with us all day was now the perfect host. Whilst laughing at us trying to eat with chop-sticks, the local rice wine appeared. Colin being teetotal felt obliged to try some and it wasn't long before he was running out of the room with his hands covering his mouth. Greg and I decided to get the police so drunk that they would let us kayak the river, but we toasted everything that we could think of, Greg fell over and I was struggling to stand up, it was during one of these toasts that one of us toasted:

"The First Kayak Descent of the Red River!"

Then things turned nasty again. Colin being fairly sober decided to drag us away. Plan B had definitely failed!

I was rudely awakened by Colin standing in his kayaking gear whispering "Come on Rob, we'll go whilst it's dark", not feeling to healthy, I told him what he could do with his idea, and if he wanted to go in the dark, that was up to him.

Half an hour later I found myself creeping out of the Police Station. We were just thirty yards from the river when the Chief of Police appeared. His



**Above:**  
Dalat - vegie  
food  
**Below Left:**  
Greg in Saigon  
**Below Right:**  
Old woman in  
Hoi-ann  
**Bottom:**  
Rob in  
Hoi-ann  
**Bottom Right:**  
Children in  
Saigon

Vietnamese smile broke through his normally stern face and he shook our hands and wished us well.

Soon we were floating down the river, away from the hassles of Lao Cai. It wasn't a raging torrent, but with a great place! Old bombed out bridges and friendly locals inviting us into their houses for tea.

Moving down the country we spent time surfing at China Beach, paddling various river estuaries, watching the locals fishing and their way of life is an experience not to be missed. The central highlands area of waterfalls and rivers that needs more exploring? And Saigon (Ho Chimin City) full of bright lights, restaurants and bars, a place to relax and look back on an exciting five weeks.

**PADDLERS:**  
Greg Bell NZ,  
Colin Hill UK, Rob  
Hind UK.  
We would like to  
thank the follow-  
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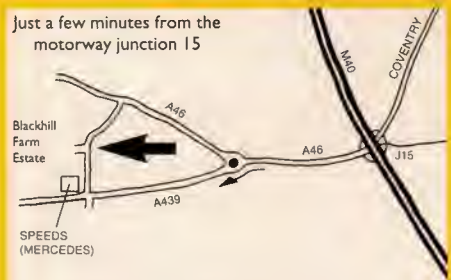


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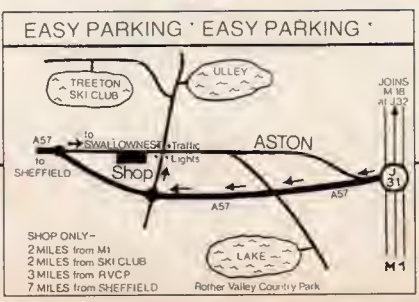
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# Paddlers gear

## FIELD TEST REPORT Palm River Rescue Ropes

**LOCATION:**  
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Several single day trips in UK

Palm's new selection of four river ropes (2 Throw Bags and 2 Rescue Ropes) covers virtually every conceivable use of a rope on the river. As you would expect, from Palm, the bags are well made and well thought out. Palm have listened to the feedback from paddlers and have managed to produce a flexible system that should suit every boaters need from the Alpine Tyro to Club Instructor.

### 1 PERSONAL BELAY LINE

The first bag we tested was the 15m Personal Belay Line, it has been designed as a second rope that can be used with a chest harness for some rescues, it is a small flat bag that fits in the back pocket of the Palm Buoyancy Aids but the "string" is too thin to use as a throw bag.

The bag flies in the same

way a brick doesn't but as a belay line it is an ideal length and givesample scope to set up most belays. A Karabiner attached to the bag end of the rope is a real help and when not in use stores well in a pocket on the outside of the bag.

### Conclusion:

A helpful additional bag, for the room it takes up, a real bonus but not a throw bag R.R.P £29.99

### 2 THE BULLET BAG

The first proper throw bag and very aptly named. This bag contains 15m of yellow 10mm floating line. This rope is specially made for Palm to be flat so that it packs easily but won't lose its diameter when loaded, a fact many swimmers commented on, it is identified by a purple strand in the rope and tested to over 1000kg. The bag is well

made from hard wearing Cordura in a bright purple and yellow that is easily visible. The bags flotation is held between the outer bag and the inner lighter nylon bag that also provides the neck. The flotation holds the bag open and makes it easier to pack and for the rope to come out when thrown. (The smooth inner bag also helps). The fastener is an ingenious elastic system that is easily operated with cold hands and is secure enough to ensure you won't have 15m of rope swilling around the inside of your boat. The rope is tied into the bag and also crimped with a metal clip. The bag is reinforced, at the base and where the rope passes through, with tape and rust free eyelets. The bag is small enough to be thrown javelin style easily or underarm if you use the nylon neck. When thrown over arm it does literally fly like a bullet as fast and as accurate. (It also fits well in the water bottle holder of the Dagger Kayaks).

### Conclusion:

This bag throws well, is accurate, compact and well made. (My preference of the bags tested in fact) I'm keeping this one R.R.P £24.99

### 3 THE RIVER RESCUE BAG

A larger version of the bullet Bag, it is constructed to the same design but scaled up to contain an extra 10m of the same rope. The increase in size does make it more difficult to throw overarm but the nylon neck makes the underarm throw easy. as with any item of rescue equipment practice and training are invaluable, with practice this bag became very handy especially in larger rivers. It is really too large to carry on your person but does fit well behind the seat of your kayak.

### Conclusion:

A good bag for canoeists and kayakers alike, suitable for use abroad where larger rivers are likely, with practice will become a useful rescue tool, a good partner for the Personal Belay Line.

### 4 BANK SUPPORT BAG

The final bag in this set is a 'monster', this Bank Support Bag contains 40m of the 10mm line, the rope is yellow with black marks so it can be identified as separate to the purple flecked rope of the two throw bags. A nice touch when performing complex rescues, the extra length removes the need to pass knots in a system and the clear identification of the rope helps when you have endless piles of rope on the bank. The bag is quite large and made in the same style as the throw bags though it is not flared nor does it have a nylon neck. You'd need an arm like Fatima Whitbread to throw this, it isn't a throw bag so the flare and neck are not essential.

### Conclusion:

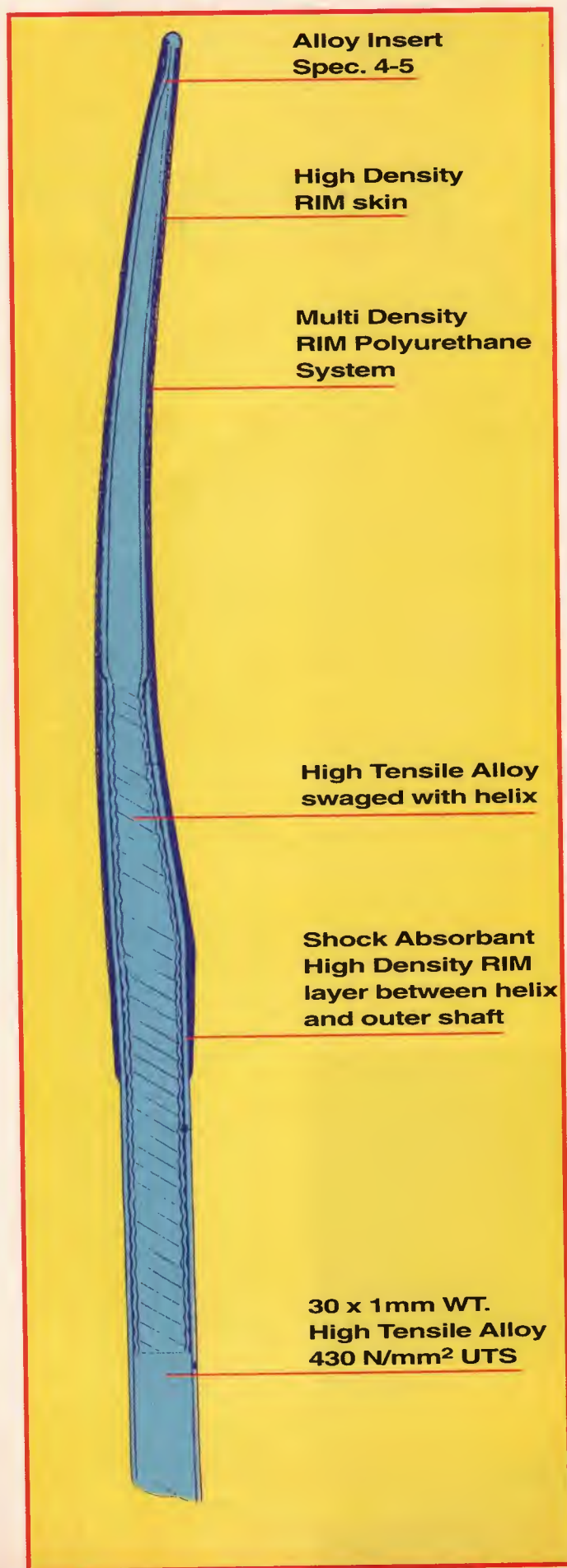
A large bag, handy in a canoe, possible too large for everyday use in a kayak. The kind of thing you may choose to take if the river needs it, pre-setting drops or expecting a major epic! R.R.P £44.99



Loel Collins



# Ainsworth K100 All-round Spec 5 Paddles



I have to admit that ever since I owned a pair of the early black RIM paddles from Ainsworth, I've had an image of their paddles as entry level or basic. This was because the blades had an annoying habit of bending and/or snapping. I'd also heard reports that these new paddles still suffered the same problems, however, after several weeks of testing it's clear that they are a distinct improvement over previous designs and mark the coming of age of the new Ainsworth products.

## WHAT'S NEW

So, what's new about them? Well, for starters there's the carbon fibre shaft, there's also a new blend of plastic used in the blades that is stiffer and tougher, there's a moulded in metal rim to improve wear resistance and toughness when rock or concrete bashing. Add to this a modified structure where the shaft transitions into the blade to provide extra stiffness. This all adds up to give the impression that careful thought and design have gone into the production of these new paddles.

Enough of the technical talk, what are they like to paddle with? The reception they got was good and their distinctive black and purple appearance sets them apart from other paddles in this class. The shaft is just springy enough to give the paddles a really responsive feel yet not be too stiff as to drive you screaming to the hospital for wrist replacements. The shaft comes with a shaped grip nicely offset to relieve the load on your controlling wrist and is covered in the usual heat shrunk covering. The actual blades are marginally shorter than on other whitewater paddles giving them a smaller area and felt good in the water even when paddling flat out. This should make them appeal to people who find current whitewater paddles a bit of a handful, yet allow those gorillas out there to use a more precise and effective paddling action.

## STRENGTH

So, did they bend? Well, in a word, no. Despite many thrashes on the whitewater course at Nottingham and several rock bashes at local weirs they survived intact even coping with

being used by my club at a pool session. My only criticism of the paddles was that all the stickers fell off the first time I used them and that the blades still have marks on them from supports used during manufacture to hold the shaft in place. They do impact visually on the blades, although they won't affect the strength and integrity of what is an otherwise well finished and good quality set of paddles.

The Spec 5 paddles perform well and proved to be very tough in use. Given the extremely competitive price, it looks like they will provide some long awaited competition in the top end of the market for recreational paddles.

Alan Binstead



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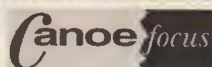
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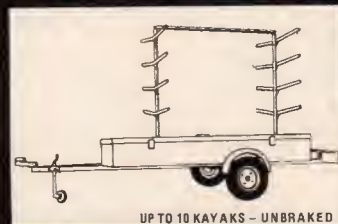
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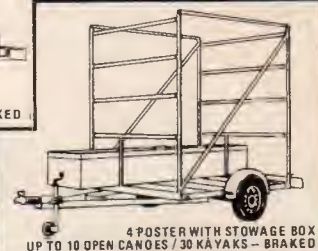
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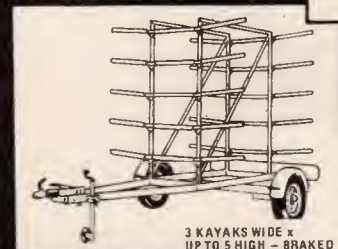


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# Access news

## HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO YOUR MP?

There are three main items this issue. First, and most important, there is the lobby of MPs (see left hand box). Despite all the work, mailshots and exhortations put out by the Access Committee, the vast majority of members have done absolutely nothing. It is vital that we let the MPs know of our views. Please examine your conscience and get active. The other section gives an update on our recent Access Committee meeting. All of the Regional Access Officers meet twice per year to co-ordinate what is going on. I thought it worth giving you some idea of what we talked about.

Finally there is BCU membership. The BCU now has a firm policy that access information should only be given to BCU members. Some people have questioned this, thinking that we should help to expand the sport by giving out information freely to all. The reason why we don't is based on our "Management of Access" policy. Whilst there are still some parts of the world that are empty and unspoilt, large parts of the English countryside will soon be putting up "house full" signs. Although the single passage of a small group of canoes will cause negligible damage, the uncontrolled passage of two or three hundred canoes each weekend may sometimes have some effect. The same rule would apply to walkers, or mountain bikes, or horses, or anglers. No matter how careful individual users are, the countryside can eventually be affected by simple wear and tear. For this reason the BCU is not campaigning for a law which allows uncontrolled access for all. As responsible countryside users we want to obtain effective management of the countryside. This means balancing the needs of all users, both those who own or work in the countryside, and those who use it for recreation. It means sharing out the resources fairly and equally. And it means balancing the needs of all these users with the

need to preserve and protect that same countryside for future generations. But if there has to be effective management and control (and few dispute the need) then it is best if that management is done by canoeists, for canoeists, and not imposed on us from above.

This is what the BCU is setting out to achieve. If you think carefully about the implications of this policy you can then see why the BCU has decided to pro-

vide the access service only to BCU members.

Firstly, managing access has costs, and it is right to ask that the users of an access service should pay their share of the cost of providing that service, by paying a subscription. Thirteen pounds fifty per year does not seem too much to ask.

Secondly there is the matter of information. If we as canoeists are to manage our activities effectively, we must communi-

cate with each other. We have to pass on information to each other, debate the issues, and come to decisions as to the best way ahead. How can we do this without a membership structure, mailing list and meetings which allow this to happen.

Finally, and most importantly, there are the legal or contractual issues. As a BCU Access Officer I and my colleagues are democratically elected, and we carry out a policy which has





been debated and voted on. We have a constitutional authority to enter into agreements on behalf of our members. An authority recognised in law. As Access Chairman what legal or moral authority do I have to enter into agreements on behalf of non-members? They have not given me their authority to do act on their behalf, nor have they agreed to abide by any agreement I make. I could not even supply the names of the people I would be representing. It is simply not practical for the BCU to enter into agreements on behalf of people who are not members of the BCU, and in many cases it would be legally questionable.

In a fast changing world we are faced with a number of challenges in the near future to do with the management of access. There are great benefits to be had if we can meet these challenges, but success will require a lot of effort and commitment from a great many people within the BCU. It is reasonable to insist that the benefits of meeting that challenge, such as use of the access service, should be restricted to those who shown their own commitment to the BCU, by becoming members and joining in the work.

### ACCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

There were 7 Regional Access

Officers at the meeting on 24th April, plus Jill Bolton (White Water Rafting), Barry Howell (Sea Touring), Dave Halsall (Environment Panel) and Ralph Tyas (Vice Chairman). Carel Quaife from BCU HQ was also present to offer assistance and advice. Canoe Exhibition We discussed the Canoe Exhibition at Sheffield, and the Access Stand. This is the best opportunity in the year to talk to the membership and get feedback. Long serving Access Officers remember past years when we reeled away from the stand with ears pounding from criticism. The situation is improving, and virtually all comments in the last two or three years have been positive. Thanks to those who made time to talk to us.

### ENVIRONMENT PANEL

The Environment panel provides advice and expertise in this crucial area. We discussed ways to give the panel support and a higher profile. It was agreed to fund publication of an environmental handbook, giving advice on the BCU's Environmental policy, and on how to incorporate environmental awareness into the way that we carry out our sport. We also agreed to start work on a survey of published academic research, on how canoeing affects the world we live in. To fund this we used part of the

Access Donation Fund (the one that you can pay in to when you renew your membership).

### LOCAL ACCESS OFFICERS

The most important discussion was about Local Access Officers. As we move into the management of access their job is getting slowly more important. We will run two LAO training courses next year (we train instructors and slalom gate judges, why not LAOs?) and we discussed ways of paying their expenses such as transport and phone bills. Other points of interest were: The Holne Bridge access point on the Dart is now closed due to replanting (more details later). Jill Bolton is now on the committee to represent recreational rafting (ie non-commercial touring in the small 2-3 man rafts). A fund is to be set up to receive legacies from wills and other donations, allowing land to be purchased for canoeing access. The River Wey has been added to the BCU licence, and we are negotiating on the Thames, the Medway, and the Anglian region rivers.

That's all for now. In the next edition we will discuss the Dart and the Lune, two heavily used rivers, and the sort of techniques needed to manage the problems of popularity.

Simon Dawson  
Chairman.



# GRANDTULLY

Access to the River Tay between Aberfeldy and Grandtully has been the subject of much discussion of late and the reason for writing is to set the record straight.

The SCA leases the south bank at Grandtully, at the Slalom site, from the top fall to the Bridge, from Tate & Lyle PLC who own a large stretch of the River Tay. This access allows foot access only – not cars or bikes. Please park all vehicles in the station yard which is approximately 2 minutes walk from the river. The north bank at the falls is private land and access is only granted for the construction of courses and for judges during competition.

Access above Grandtully is permitted at the recognised SCA access points at Edradynate (north bank) and Wades Bridge, Aberfeldy. However following a spate of complaints from local riparian and landowners, relating to the heavier than normal use prior to the March river race. The SCA Executive, in order to ease the congestion, took the reluctant decision that during the busy Easter period this

access would be closed to competitors in order to restrict the vast numbers of competitors in the area to the slalom site. This move was welcomed by the landowners as a positive gesture towards their fishermen. It is likely that the access will be closed to competitors during the weeks preceding and following major competitions in future (e.g Div 1/Premier Slaloms, Div A WW Races etc)

The Tay is becoming a very busy river with canoeists, fishermen and rafters all wishing to pursue their sport and all canoeists are asked to use their discretion and be on their best behaviour at all times, otherwise we face the loss of the whole river for canoeing.

There are many other fine rivers for canoeing in Scotland, apart from the Tay; why not obtain a copy of our "Guide to Scottish Rivers" priced £4.00 (including p&p) from the SCA office and try some other white water?

Margaret Winter SCA  
Administrator



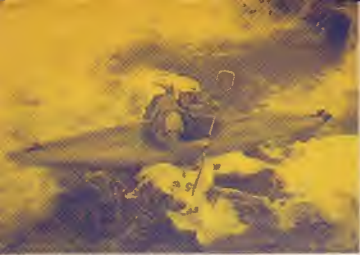
## HELP NEEDED

**1. Jill Bolton is retiring as committee treasurer, and we need to find a replacement. If you have some financial skills, if you like the sound of our management of access policy, and you would like to help to put it into place, why not volunteer. Phone me (0602 868803) for a full job description.**

**2. We need contributions for the new Environmental Handbook. Do you have ideas or experience in environmental education, or the promotion of environmental awareness? Do you have any ideas on the monitoring and control of our affect on the world we live in?. Could you make any other contribution? The Handbook editor is Dave Halsall, 24 The Fairway, Blaby, Leics, LE8 3EL (0533 777788).**

**3. Finally, can any computer freaks convert Amstrad 9825 discs to IBM, and thus prevent me having to re-type the East Midlands River Guide ?**

**SIMON DAWSON  
ACCESS  
CHAIRMAN**



# Ender

Editor's page

## Canoeing and the Media

Over the last two months our sport has been brought sharply into the public eye through the Lyme Regis Tragedy. Part of my job is dealing with the 'media' in all its forms. This is always interesting, often revealing and sometimes distressing. Over the last two years I have talked to many fellow journalists with a wide range of briefs and attempted to put across the fact that canoeing is the most fun you can have. Tragedy brings out the best and the worst in some people, occasionally simultaneously.

Many voluntary officers around the country were inconvenienced by the pushy press. Every hack from the smallest local paper to the 'national documentary film crew' was on the case. Many paddlers put up with late night phone calls, inconvenient calls at work, even 'doorstepping', the standard tool of privacy invasion favoured by the tabloids.

On behalf of the Union and paddlers everywhere I would like to thank all those voluntary officers, coaching scheme members and staff who patiently dealt with the good, the bad and the rude, often at a minutes notice. Those who dealt with the loaded question, and had privacy invaded because someone said 'interview him, he goes canoeing' No one put a foot wrong and the media coverage portrayed canoeing, particularly the BCU, as responsible and a voice of reason. The coaching scheme members of the South west deserve a special mention. Well done.

On a positive TV note :this year already we have had Canoe Polo on the Channel 4's Big Breakfast, White water kayaking on 'What's up Doc' and Sea kayaking on Activ8. More TV is in the pipeline with European Polo, and the World Championships. Positive media for the good of the sport : let's have more of it.

Kevin Danforth, Editor

## The Lyme Regis Incident

What is obvious, and of public knowledge, is that the whole episode was related to the group being taken out to sea by an offshore wind. Why the exercise should have gone so badly wrong, in apparently straightforward conditions is, of course, what remains to be established by the court, and official enquiries.

A 'panel of experts' was convened, consisting of Martin Meling, Chairman of the BCU's Sea Touring Committee, Sam Cook, Chief Instructor at Beverley Park Outdoor Centre, Nigel Dennis, proprietor of The Anglesey School of Sea Canoeing, Franco Ferrero, Head of Canoeing at Plas y Brenin, Nigel Hingston, the BCU Sea Touring representative for the SW Region, and Howard Jeffs, of BACT.

This group listened to the evidence which was available from the Police and provided a unanimous opinion with regard to the reasons for the accident having occurred. That opinion is confidential until declared in the Coroner's court.

Of further public knowledge, however, is the fact that the young people concerned did not simply fall into the water and die. They were immersed for a considerable period of time before hypothermia set in. The result of the autopsy will be declared at the inquest, which is not likely to take place until the autumn. The most likely cause of death was hypothermia, or drowning because of hypothermia, but the difference is not really of great significance.

It is worrying to find that our sport is so poorly understood by many in authority. Enquiries concerning safety come in daily. In the main these are not related to canoeing on the sea. It is as if there is a feeling abroad that simply to fall out of a canoe is to invite instant demise !

The fact of the matter is that until this tragedy, to the best of our knowledge and belief, no complete beginner, whilst under instruction and wearing a buoyancy aid, had ever before been drowned. This is out of a field of at least half a million people a year being introduced to the activity in some way.

The reasons for this sad incident having occurred must, of course, be properly investigated and determined. The avoidable must be avoided. Regretfully, however, because a certain happening is particularly newsworthy, its significance and relevance is inevitably distorted.

Geoff Good

### IN YOUR AUG ISSUE

Historic Canoes Feature

Open Boat for beginners

World Champs Slalom and Wildwater

European Polo Champs

and more

## THINGS THE BCU COULD BE BETTER AT: Number 1: Telling members how lucky they are:

Here are the real costs of Basic membership:

Third Party Insurance (if you can find a broker who won't laugh in your face) .....	£37.00
BWB Waterways licence.....	£47.00
Canoe Focus (6 x £2.00) .....	£12.00
Yearbook (£3.50) .....	£3.50
Members Discounts (usually 10p in the pound) .....	£???.??
Information service (Who else can tell you what you want to know ?) .....	Members only
Over 300 voluntary officers working on your behalf and full time staff in three offices (BCU, SCA, and WCA) .....	Members only
Total Real world prices.....	£99.50
BCU Basic Membership (Which includes all of the above).....	£13.50

It looks like we are not too hot at maths either ! I am presently compiling a comparative list of Membership schemes from other sports : if you belong to another governing body could you please let me know what you pay and what you get for it ?



PS For readers who faxed us after the last issue: Frail Pool Software is an anagram of April Fool. GOTCHA !



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