

THE CANOE SPORT MAGAZINE FOR THE NINETIES

Canoe focus

No 87. FEBRUARY 1994

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continental touring
douro river, portugal

jersey canoe club
greenland expedition

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**BCU Enquiries &
Editorial to**
above address

Director
Paul Owen

Editor
Kevin Danforth

(Regional Round Up edited by Carel Quaife)

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Manager**
Sandra Smart

Advertising Sales
Dean Coulter

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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 canoeists 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.

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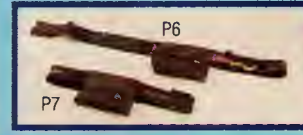
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Comment



BCU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The BCU AGM takes place on March 12 at Westminster Boating Base (full details enclosed). Although perhaps not the most stimulating of canoeing events it is a most important occasion and of particular interest this year will be the motion concerning eligibility which was discussed by David Gent in the December *Canoe Focus*. Also, the topic of federalisation will be fully discussed in an open forum where you can voice your opinion on whether or not to form an English Canoe Association, or is there another way of structuring the BCU to cater for all the aspirations of the home countries. Whether you attend or not please remember that democracy only works if you take part - so vote for your council representatives by returning the ballot papers enclosed with this edition of *Canoe Focus*.

European Canoe Association Formed

! Congratulations are due to BCU President Albert Woods who became the first President of the European Canoe Association at its inaugural meeting on December 11 in Rome. The meeting followed discussions at a variety of events during the summer months and the purpose of the new association is to assist the ICF in its work on the European continent and provide a forum for establishing technical interchange between its member federations. It is hoped that the new association will take a greater interest than the ICF currently does in the recreational aspects of the sport.

Canoe Exhibition

February is the time for the International Canoe Exhibition and this year the exhibition committee have prepared a bumper show with more stands than ever before. Back in London at Crystal Palace there is only one place to be on Saturday and Sunday 19 & 20 February. See you there.

ICF Television Workshop

The BCU are arranging for member companies of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to attend a workshop in Nottingham financed by the ICF in order to discuss canoe sport and the various ways that it can be portrayed on television. Hopefully this will lead to a far better understanding of our sport by the television media.

BCU Licence

Work continues on establishing a full BCU licence for all navigation's that require a separate canoe

licence and negotiations with the NRA are looking very promising for block agreements which will include the Thames, Medway and Anglian rivers.

Specialist Groups

A recent Sports Council publication sited the BCU as an example of good practice with its policies on specialist groups. In particular the disabilities panel with their strides towards integration not segregation, was mentioned.

Finance

As I complete these items of comment my mind is firmly on the BCU year end accounts and whilst it is too early to announce the outcome. I can say that whilst the organisation is not completely out of the woods yet things are looking good and with the exception of a couple of days the BCU bank account has been in the black since December 1992, a complete year!

Starlight Foundation

The Starlight Foundation is a charitable trust set up to help grant the special wishes of critically, chronically and terminally ill children. The fund-raising is sports oriented and previously funds for this worthy cause have been raised by running skating and cycling. Throughout 1994 Starlight is asking if there are any clubs and individual canoeists who could help them. as we go to press one or two high profile 'personality paddlers' are getting involved; more details in the next *Canoe Focus*. Meanwhile, if you would like to paddle for Starlight or get involved in any way please contact Peter Hewlett-Smith on 071 430 1642.

Paul Owen
Director



Notice board

Cheshire Ring

The 1994 Cheshire Ring Long Distance Race is to be held on the weekend of 2nd/3rd July. Starting on the Macclesfield Canal the race is along the Cheshire Ring of canals finishing some 95 miles and 97 locks later back where you started! The most popular class is a 5 x 2 relay but other classes can be accommodated including a one person non stop class and a challenge class for the less "committed" paddlers.

The race is challenging, the finish rewarding and the atmosphere is very friendly. For more information please contact the race organiser Miss Dawn Neville, 37 School Lane, Lostock, Gralam, Cheshire, CW9 7PT.

Wyedean Canoe Club

Mail to be addressed to Wyedean Canoe Club is to be sent to:

Karen Hutchison,
Wyedean Canoe Club,
1 The Cottages,
Plump Hill, Mitcheldean,
Gloucestershire.

Woodmill Canoeing and Outdoor Activities Centre

A £206,000 project to improve the specialist canoeing and outdoor activities centre on the River Itchen at Southampton has been agreed by Hampshire County Council's Sport and Community Sub Committee.

The Hampshire Outdoor Centre, Woodmill, owned and managed by the County Council, would offer overnight accommodation for the first time ever under the project, which also features a brick boathouse and a pontoon plus special access and facilities for the disabled, both to the building and on the water.

The second floor of the 150 year old water mill in Woodmill Lane would be converted into sleeping accommodation for 20 people, including staff. The third floor would be altered to provide a kitchen and games area, while proposed works to the ground floor include a toilet and shower for disabled people.

Woodmill, with a large fleet of canoes and kayaks, already attracts schools and adult customers to its wide range of courses and events, but the new extension and alterations would also open up the centre's facilities to school groups now excluded from attending because of distance.

Ugly containers now used for storing canoes would be removed to make way for the new boathouse with a workshop alongside. Landscaping would blend with the Older Urban Areas Regeneration scheme in Woodmill Lane.

The project is subject to planning permission and approval by members of Hampshire County Council's Recreation Committee. If approved, the work could start in November this year, to be completed by March 1994.

Woodmill is approved by the British Canoe Union and by the British Orienteering Federation. Other activities at the centre include rock climbing on an artificial rock tower, mountain biking and Dragon Boating. The Chairman of the Sport and Community Sub Committee, Councillor Grahame Smith, welcomed the project and said: "The improvements and new accommodation will enable people from other parts of Hampshire to enjoy the experiences of canoeing and other activities offered at Woodmill."

"We particularly welcome the addition of disabled facilities such as the new pontoon and accommodation on the ground floor."



Paddling for Charity on All Fools Day



Most people might think it takes a fool to jump into a canoe and paddle almost non-stop for 125 miles. On the 1st of April 1994, All Fools Day, hundreds of canoeists will be doing it for fun, for the competitive challenge - and for charity.

Also Good Friday, 1st of April sees the start of the

Devizes to Westminster Canoe Marathon along the lovely Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Thames. The 'DW' has been called the toughest canoe marathon in the world.

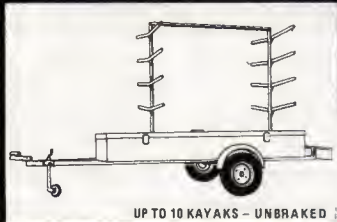
It finishes on the River Thames but most of its course is along the Kennet and Avon Canal, which celebrates its bicentenary in 1994 as part of

the British Waterways' Canals 200 celebrations of two centuries of canals in Britain.

Each year, significant amounts are raised for charities by DW canoeists. For this special year paddlers are being asked to obtain sponsorship for the K&A 200 Challenge', benefitting 3 charities.

Hitch up ... and go ... with

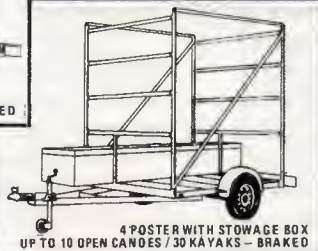
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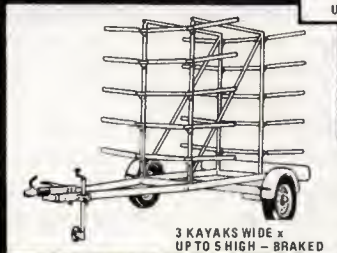
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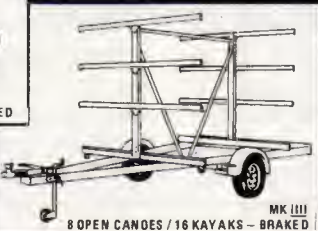
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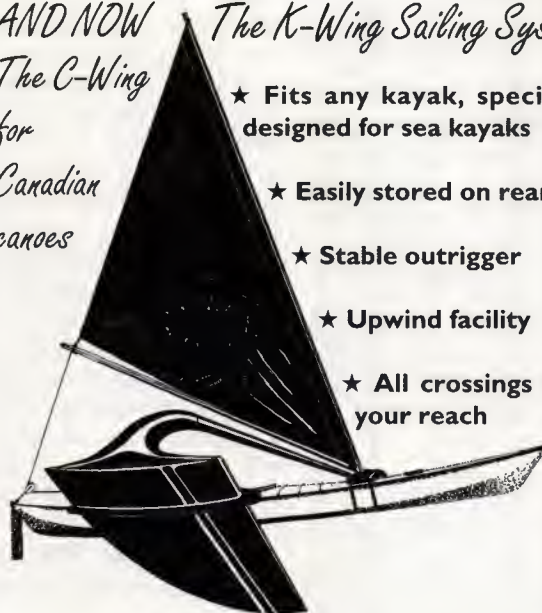
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Mike Phillips has recently purchased the Birmingham School of Canoeing from Greg Parkes. Mike has been managing the "School" since Greg and his family moved to Brittany, France in May 1993. Greg moved to France to open up his new holiday centre at Bellevue in Brittany, he is now concentrating on this venture and Mike has taken over ownership of the Birmingham School of Canoeing as from November. Greg and Mike will be maintaining business links running canoeing courses and holidays, both in the UK and France.

BCU Licence

In the re-negotiations of the Wey Licence there has been a very strong complaint that members are not displaying their stickers. Members are reminded that they **MUST** use the current sticker, backed by their membership card, on all waters covered by the BCU Licence or expect to be treated as having no licence.

INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION

Once again the exhibition is back at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. after last years' successful visit to Sheffield, many visitors will notice a number of new innovations. No longer will there be separate halls for trade and the voluntary sector, as all exhibitors are integrated in the four main display areas. A one way system will operate to guide visitors through all these different halls.

In the past there has been severe congestion around the food outlets on the South Balcony. To relieve this an additional refreshment area will be in operation on the North Balcony, making another venue for visitors to meet up. There will be a display of canoe building by traditional methods in one of the halls, which will also serve as a centre of interest.

The usual comprehensive pro-

gramme of lectures has been arranged, with lecturers from Germany and Russia presenting a truly International flavour. Combined with presentations from the Jersey Canoe Club's expedition to Greenland and a disabled group in Turkey, the lectures will be repeated on both days. Tickets at £1.20 can be obtained on arrival from the Exhibition Office.

Likewise this is where tickets for the 'Come and Try it' sessions are obtained (also at £1.20), and youngsters who wish to take part in this opportunity should remember to bring a costume and towel with them.

The pool programme concentrates on competition and following the exciting Dragon Boat bungee racing last year, two adult teams will race on Saturday, and two youth teams on the Sunday.



Kennet and Avon Canal Trust's Water Appeal **Multiple Sclerosis Society** **Starlight Foundation**



As part of their support for the 'K&A 200 Challenge,' canoeists can also win prizes for themselves:

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est amount for the K&A 200 Challenge'.

● The DW Charity Trophy awarded to the paddler or team raising the greatest amount for any charity or the 'K&A 200 Challenge'.

● DW Charity Draw - all sponsored crews can enter their name into a special draw

to win £500 for their nominated charity.

For further information, please contact:

Terry Kemp, Kennet & Avon Canal Trust. Tel: 0380-721279 (Trust Office) 0831-477641 (mobile) 0672-62131 (home).



British Diabetic Association



Volunteers are needed to join the staff of doctors and nurses on British Diabetic Association children's educational holidays in summer 1994. Each year over 600 kids come away to 20 holiday sites in the UK and abroad. 200+ staff are there to help out. You could be one of them.

A knowledge of diabetes is

desirable but not essential. Enthusiasm and a willingness to join in and help kids are your best qualifications. Travel and living expenses are paid to all volunteers.

If you would like to work for a week or two, please contact Graham Hood in the Youth Department at the British Diabetic Association on (071) 323 1531 who will supply you with more information.

Handy Kayak

Following the outstanding success of the English Handykayak team in Italy this year, a series of Sprint Training weekends have been arranged for people with disabilities who wish to pursue this sport. The squad has the benefits of expert coaching from National Sprint Coaches. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity contact the Co-ordinator for the National Handykayak Sprint Squad training: Brian Bennett 0905 756800 ext 60.

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PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

What have...

John Willacy (British Down River Team Member)
& Mark Wignall (Premier Division Slalom)
.....Got in common?

- A/ Both come from Garstang?
- B/ Both started canoeing under instruction from Dave Bagot of Garstang Adventure?
- C/ Both still shop for canoeing gear at Garstang?

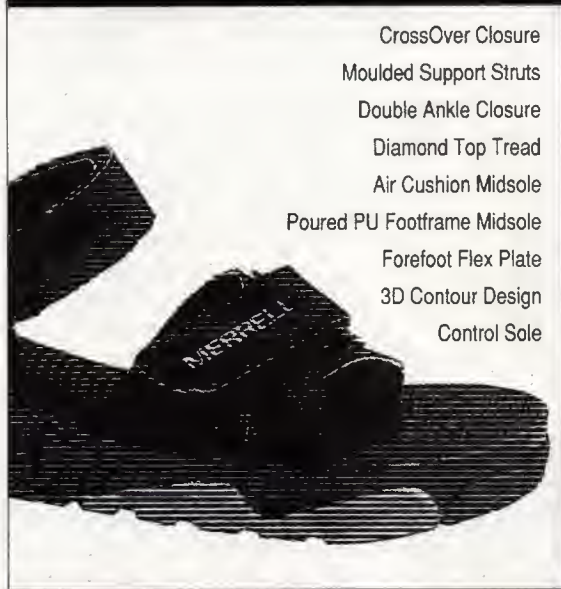
ANSWERS
A/ TRUE
B/ TRUE
C/ TRUE

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Dr D's agony column

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

Canoe Club Policy on Safety - From Canoe Focus 86

Dr D: Our club, like Derek Clitheroe's, is currently reviewing its policy on safety. In particular we are anxious about the situation where the club organises events for its own members, for example, an afternoon out on the canal, a weekend camp by the sea or a fortnight abroad using white water. We assume that courses run by the club by BCU Instructors for BCU qualifications comes under BCU rules and insurance, but it is these other events that form the main (non-competition) activities of the club that concern us. What responsibility, in law, do the organisers have? What responsibility, in law, do the participants have to the leaders? Is there any point in written disclaimers if the law over-rides these? Like most clubs we do not have a string of Senior Instructors to make these official events under the banner of the BCU rules. What we do have are very skilled paddlers who can lead with knowledge and skills to deal with the waters that we use and have detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of those taking part. As far as children are concerned our club rules makes them entirely the responsibility of their own parents. If the parent gives up that responsibility to another named adult then we suppose that the adult will act in 'loco parentis' taking the actions that any reasonable parent would take. Participants in club activities do so at their own risk, but in the knowledge that the club is taking every precaution it has within its means to make the activities as safe as it can within a hazardous sport. We would like to issue guidelines to our event leaders and guidelines for the responsibilities of the participant to the leader and the rest of the group in order to

improve everyone's understanding of risks and responsibilities. Do you have, or do other clubs have, any model guidelines for us to consider?

While I am writing I would like to offer a constructive criticism about *Canoe Focus*. It must be very difficult getting a quart into a pint pot and I think the magazine has improved enormously of late, but I venture to suggest that the balance is not right yet. There is a saying that 'take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves' that applies to canoeing. I understand that the BCU would like to expand its membership and appeal to more people. How is it going to do that if its magazine is aimed mostly at the skilled canoeist and the competitor? Our Canoe Club has many non-competitors and many canoeists at the 1 Star/2 Star level who are still a long way from a proficiency award and indeed may not want to progress much further at the moment. Where in your magazine are the articles for the newcomers that have just discovered canoeing? Where is the encouragement and information for parents whose children want to start canoeing? What about the family who go out at the weekend in their Canadian canoe along the canals, quiet rivers and lakes? What about those who mainly paddle in swimming pools? The activities of the occasional/ the Summer/the novice/ the fair weather canoeist may be boring to the competitor, but it is the life blood of our club and the starting point for the Olympic, National and International Canoeists of the future. Big trees from little acorns grow. If the clubs and the individual members in each region are the mainstay of the BCU why are

their activities confined to only one page? Why not have a page dedicated to one club in each issue? Why not a page entitled 'Novices start here'? Why not articles like 'A Sunday afternoon out', 'The lazy man's guide to the kayak', 'Alternative clothes for the Canoeist', 'How to make the most out of your club', 'How to fix a kayak on your car'. Run a competition with prizes for non-competition articles if you can't find someone's arm to twist to write them. I find that arm twisting is usually the best way.

Mike Simpson -BCCC

DR D replies :

In my understanding the law differentiates substantially between minors and adults. As an adult participating in an adventure sport any problems you have are your own, as it is assumed that as an adult you were aware of what you were getting yourself involved in and could make mature decisions for yourself.

If you are under formal instruction, particularly on a commercial basis, it is assumed you are being led/taught in the activity and it is the instructors responsibility to take care of safety matters and his/her students. In your club situation, if adults are with children in 'loco parentis' it could be construed that the leadership situation is formal.

In the case of minors they are ordinarily led/under instruction or are the responsibility of accompanying adults.

There are, as always, some grey areas and most BCU Affiliated clubs have rules and regs to cover themselves. I am sending you a copy of our BCU guide to setting up a club, which includes a model constitution. Extra comment and input is

always welcome, especially from the legal experts who paddle.

If, as you say, you have very skilled and experienced paddlers in the club it should be very simple for them to become BCU qualified : I know of parents who will not entrust their offspring to non-qualified adults.

Editors comment on Focus content:

Thank you for your input: Firstly, the magazine is not aimed at skilled canoeists and the competitor, it is aimed at BCU members and potential members. It is also written by members. I would love to receive more input aimed at beginners. The Top Tips pages are designed to address this need but as you will note the articles are written by very few people. Believe me arms are firmly twisted often to the point of being pulled off! We do run club pages: we await more.

Most of the comments you have made have been addressed in recent issues: If you look back over the last 12 issues I think you will see a wide balance. The old problem still remains, if I don't receive it I can't print it. An additional problem of twisting volunteer arms is that I am often told that the arm is busy doing something else: like holding a paddle.

In a nutshell, please send your articles: any of the topics you mention will do nicely : perhaps you have the time to write one yourself
Mike ?

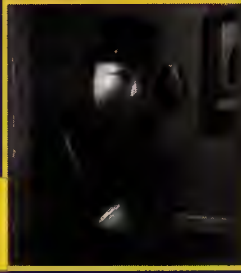


Separated at Birth?

This issue: Nottingham



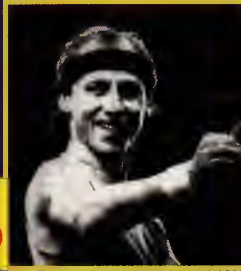
**The Fat Controller
(BCU Coach)**



**Graham Wardle
(Thomas the Tank
Engine)**



**Mark Knopler
(Current Trends)**



**Mark Devlin
(Dire Straits Guitarist)**



**Gerard Depardieu
(Canoe Focus Editor)**



**Kevin Danforth
(French Actor)**

**Turn to Ender page for
news of a competition**

The Solent's Premier Watersports Centre

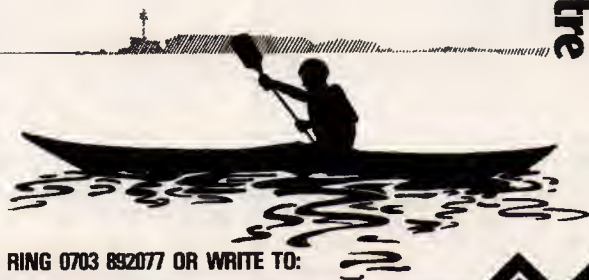
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book & video review

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All reviews by Kevin Danforth

Devizes to Westminster 1994 Handbook

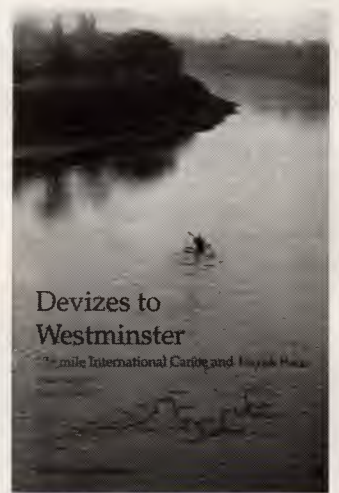
Available from BCU Supplies, Price £5.00

Now that the DW committee is a Ltd company the first obvious change to the paddler is the revamp of the information available to supporters and competitors. Everything that was in the old A5 format is included and a lot more besides. The nature and scale of the event is grand: the handbook is now also grand. From the emotive cover photograph of sunrise at Chiswick (emotive if you have been there and felt the pain), to the hard facts of the mileage chart the guide is thorough, factual and comprehensive. It includes a route plan for supporters (no excuses this time!) and information on everything from rules

to diet. Photos are included and the lock diagrams you need to tape to your deck are there for the copying.

Some may gasp at the cover price, but all you need is there in one useful A4 volume. The previous system of buying a handbook, and then other bits and pieces was just as expensive. All you need in addition now is the ability to paddle all night and all day for 125 miles.

Unfortunately calories are not included: perhaps the 1995 edition should be printed on edible rice paper to make it even more useful. When the going gets tough: eat the guide!



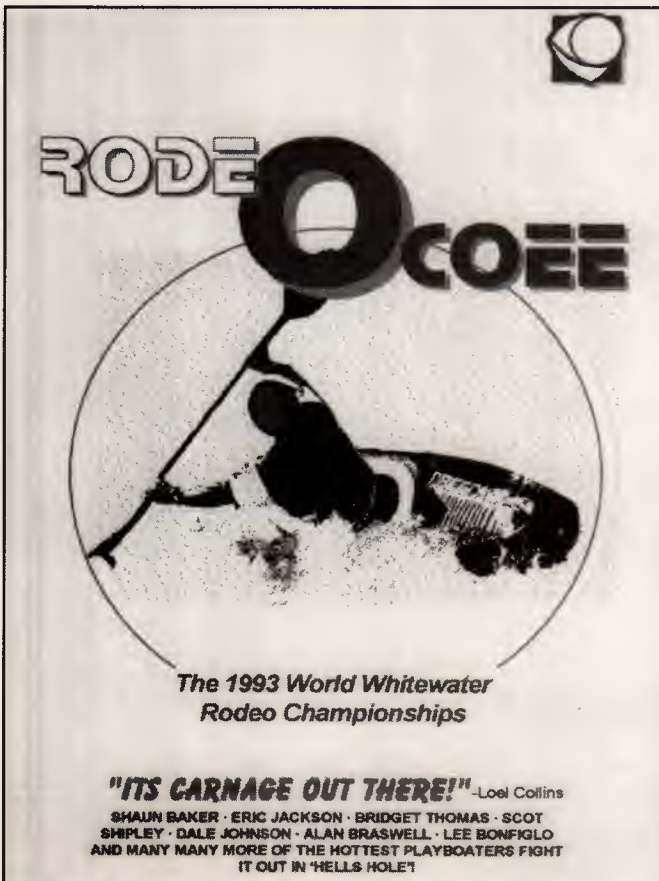
Ocoee: The World Rodeo Championships

Chrisfilm & Video: Available from BCU Supplies

You've seen the pictures, read the article, now see the movie. This hour long com-

pilation of playboating, competition, interviews and views of Tennessee gives a good insight

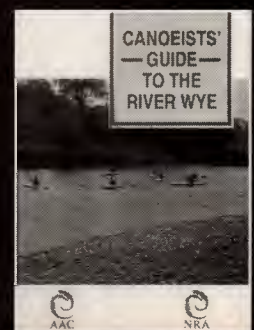
into what world rodeo was all about this time around. It shows the more positive aspects of the event and some candid insights from the paddlers themselves, often in the heat of battle. Shot by Alun Hughes, who seemed to be everywhere at once it is as true a snapshot as you are ever likely to see of an event. Shame he couldn't get a mike on the judges. Training footage is revealing and the actual competition material makes good TV. The Open Boat competition is for me the most impressive, showing what is possible but most UK playboaters will be keen on slow-motion replay's of the multiple retendo moves from the hot kayakers. Given a few hours it is possible to dissect world champ EJ's technique and style piece by tiny piece, and for those who want to copy those cartwheels it will be worth the effort. It's all there including squirt, women's and British crowd waving the Union Jack. A nice memento if you were there: interesting, informative and revealing if you weren't there.



The Canoeists' Guide to the River Wye

Published by the NRA (Welsh) and available from BCU Supplies

The established Wye guide has now been updated and reprinted and is essential reading for Wye paddlers. Even if you know the rivers it is worth reading as there is so much information intelligently presented in a neat format. Nice colour pictures, clear maps and a concise text covering all aspects of the river. Access, safety, health & hygiene, accommodation and a code of conduct are all included. Useful Information.



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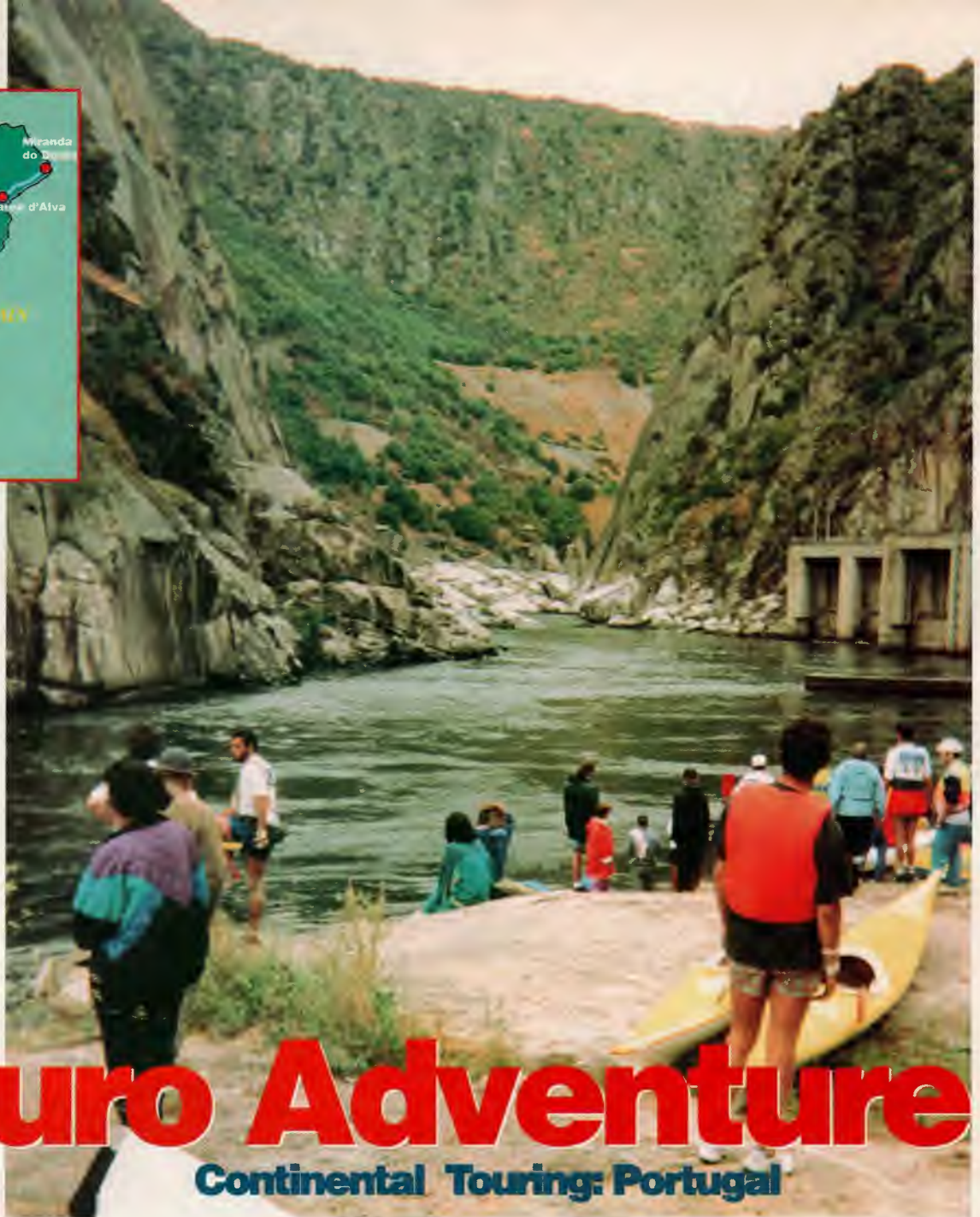


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**Right:
The
International
Canyon.**



The Douro Adventure

Continental Touring: Portugal

For the past eight years the Crackc Canoe Club of Lisbon has organised a canoe expedition on the River Tejo. This year they decided to change the venue and canoe 217km of the River Douro instead.

The River Douro flows from Spain through the International Canyon and the Port wine growing region of Portugal to Oporto. The expedition started at Miranda do Douro and Regua. There are 7 dams, 4 that have to be portaged and three with locks. Because of the dams the river is only grades one to two so there is plenty of time to admire the scenery. There were approximately 125 canoeists taking part in the nine day trip, of these, five were British, one Belgian and the remainder were Portuguese.

Having already canoed the River Tejo and having experienced the problem of having to ferry cars daily this time we flew to Oporto and travelled to Pocinho by train. There the railway ended and we completed the remainder of the journey to Miranda do Douro by coach. The organisers kindly arranged for us to borrow kayaks. These were brand new sea kayaks made by Nelo.

Portugese Army

Unfortunately for the organisers two weeks before the trip, the Portuguese army who normally cook the meals in a mobile kitchen and also supply mobile showers were shipped abroad, taking the only mobile kitchen and showers with them. Thanks to a lot of hard work by the organisers these difficulties were all overcome. This year a lady was assigned to our party to act as an interpreter. This was a great asset as our knowledge of Portuguese was very limited. We all appreciated her kindness and patience especially as she put up with nine days of remorseless teasing.

The distances covered daily were between 18 and 32km. From Miranda do Douro to Barca d'Alva the scenery was very spectacular as the river flowed through a deep rocky gorge with Griffon vultures soaring overhead. We began to think that they knew something that we didn't.





form). This station was so isolated that people thought that it was no longer used. A local restaurant brought an excellent meal out to us, after which we had ample opportunity to sample the local Reserve Port. It was quite a shock though, the following morning to be awakened by the early morning train coming thundering down the track with lights blazing and horn blaring.

Gradually the gorge became greener with terraced vines as we entered the Port wine region. The daily packed lunches became supplemented with fresh almonds, fresh figs and grapes that grew along the river banks. At Pocinho we encountered the first of the three locks. These are large sea locks that we entered through large metal doors and we were then gently lowered approximately 70m. We passed many Quintas or wine farms belonging to well known Port wine producers and we were provided with an excellent lunch at Cockburns. This was accompanied by white Port, wine and red Port to finish with. The 12 miles that we canoed afterwards were a lot easier but I doubt that we kept in a straight line.

All too soon we reached the last lock at Regua. The 15 mile morning session had been particularly hard through torrential rain and strong head winds, but the sun did manage to shine as we were lead the last few miles to Regua by the most senior member of the party, an 85 year old gentleman.

The trip had been spectacular and well worth canoeing but this was nothing compared with the friendship and hospitality shown to us by the Portuguese people. We will always have very happy memories of them and of Portugal. We owe a very big "Thank You" to all the organisers who gave up 9 days of their annual holiday to run this trip.

Peter Hughes
Margaret & Malcolm Palmer
Doreen Kennet
Roy Woodgate 

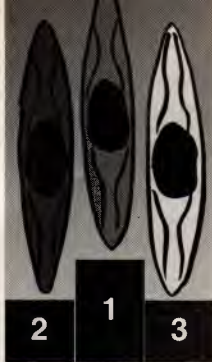
Far left:
Leaving the
lock at
Pocinho.

From Miranda do Douro to Barca d'Alva the scenery was very spectacular as the river flowed through a deep rocky gorge with Griffon vultures soaring overhead.

Below:
The British
contingent:
Peter Hughes,
Margaret and
Malcolm
Palmer, Isobel
Sequeira (sec-
onded for the
trip), Doreen
Kennett and
Roy
Woodgate.

The portages at the dams were obviously steep and quite difficult, especially when canoes suddenly had to be turned at right angles through narrow tunnels, but everybody worked together as a team and this made everything much easier. This part of Portugal is very remote and some nights we camped 15km from the nearest village, so facilities were very basic or non-existent, but a fireman's hose pipe makes a good shower. Some meals were provided by the organisation and some evenings they were at local schools or restaurants. One evening we camped at Ferradosa station (some of us unknowingly on the plat-





Competition *focus*

CHESTER WEIR RODEO 28th November 1993



**Trevor Straffon
In pain!**

Sunday the 28th was one of the most bitterly cold days of the year so far, a good day for a Rodeo! An early morning briefing held at Queens Park School Boathouse saw nearly thirty hardy contestants pleading with the organisers for mercy but to no avail. The heat places were allocated and an early morning practice session was soon underway.

Great Potential

Chester Weir is one of the lesser known Rodeo sites in Britain but it has great potential. The weir itself is a stepped affair that was actually too dry to play on, so the event concentrated on the pour over at the side. This fast moving jet, actually the outfall from a Victorian power station, is very similar to the one found at Chertsey



**Shaun Baker
Overall Winner**

Weir on the Thames. It poses similar problems to the paddler, who often finds himself reluctantly engaged in a never ending cartwheeling dislocation scenario. Paddlers used to Chertsey will also appreciate the feeling of being picked up and having your face rubbed repeatedly up and down a brick wall. Another humorous aspect to this weir is the upper jet of water that comes from the outfall, imagine squirting yourself in the face with a hosepipe in the middle of winter whilst trying to do something difficult. This was definitely an event for people with the right sense of humour. The practice session ended quickly with very few manoeuvres being performed, people were just interested to see what it might be like if they accidentally did get wet. Paddlers of the responsive Topolinos/Spuds unfortunately did better cartwheels than most and paid the price with several involuntary breakfast regurgitations floating around the eddy! The wind was picking up under Chester Bridge and conditions were deteriorating rapidly. Heats were finished quickly as paddlers hid in the eddy trying not to catch the judges eye and Rodeo etiquette reached an all time high! With the first round out of the way it was soon time for the finals. Several paddlers had by now established a bit of a reputation with Rodeo techniques particularly suited to this event. Trevor Straffon and Paul Riley had mastered the art of hiding behind the bridge support whilst

Shaun Baker and Paul Fletcher were actually playing the weir! Some people never learn!

As the final progressed the temperature dropped and so did the river. This part of the Dee is tidal so the distance the outfall dropped slowly increased and the stopper at the bottom got meaner! Shaun Baker had a tricky moment when he flipped upstream pinning himself on the wall. As he did so, he was later diagnosed as having a fractured rib but was so numb that he managed to finish the event. A searing final was eventually won by Shaun alternating between his Spud and Hurricane/Avenger with Paul Fletcher hot on his heels in a Carbon Kevlar Pyranha prototype. Lynden Wales put up a particularly brave fight and took the Junior prize whilst Greer Mackenzie overcame the torturous conditions to win the Ladies. By this time the sun had gone down and everyone breathed a sigh of relief as they crawled off the river to find whatever warmth and comfort was available on the bank. Unfortunately the earlier rounds had used all the hot water for the showers!

Very Successful

Despite the conditions this event proved very successful being as much a test of dedication as paddling skill with most of Britain's highly ranked paddlers turning up to do battle. The site itself has great character and typifies many of the more obscure sites that Britain playboaters find themselves paddling. I am sure that a lot of paddlers will already be psychologically preparing themselves for this event next year!

Thanks to the sponsors and organisers Playboater and Affinity Watersports and also to Ainsworth, Palm, Pyranha, Wild Water and YAK for their generous support. Also a big thank you to Queens Park School for the use of their facilities.

Written by Nick Mallabar based on a true story by Paul Fletcher.



POLO

At its meeting on 11 December 1993 the Executive Committee of the BCU Polo Committee decided that the wearing of faceguards by all players in BCU Canoe Polo competitions should be made compulsory.

This rule will come into force on the 1 September 1994, the delay is to allow players the time to obtain an appropriate faceguard. Prior to this date, as for the last six years, the wearing of faceguards is strongly recommended.

All such faceguards shall be designed and constructed to offer adequate protection to the forehead, eyes, nose, mouth and chin.

Any player or manufacturer requiring further confirmation of these rules should contact:

**Phil Bennett, Chief Referee
0902 883708**

RODEO RESULTS

Mens

- 1 Shaun Baker
- 2 Paul Fletcher
- 3 Malcolm Horner
- 4 Oliver Dyers
- 5 Paul Riley
- 6 Trevor Straffon
- 7 Lynden Wales
- 8 Paul Wilson

Ladies

- 1 Greer Mackenzie

Junior

- 1 Lynden Wales
- 2 James South

Novice

- 1 Pete Webb
- 2 Peter Harding
- 3 David Bentzen

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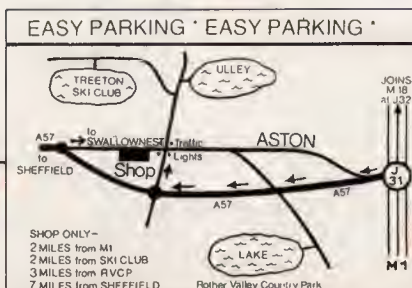
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Tees Side National Indoor Canoe Slalom

Sheffield - December 1993



Division 4 paddler
Photo: Tony Tickle

Consistency has been the trademark of Teesider, Andy Raspin, who took his third win in a row at the first ever National Indoor Canoe Slalom, run in the International Pool at Ponds Forge, Sheffield just two weeks before Christmas Day. Andy showed that his main strength was to be able to adapt to the water conditions, just plain flat that day and more used to having swimmers plough up and down the marked out lanes. His win in the men's kayak event was the most thrilling spectacle of the day when he just pipped Junior World Champion James Croft and "oldie" Russ Smith who finished in third place.

Around one hundred and fifty competitors from Divisions 5 through to Premier chose to take part in the event, sponsored by Teeside Development Corporation who took every opportunity to target their audience. The Tees Barrage, their new £50 million facility, is to open in the autumn of this year and is expected to transform an eleven mile stretch of the River Tees providing a wealth of water based activities. Included in the Tees Barrage will be an international canoe slalom course with a camping and caravan site adjacent.

Five times world champion, Richard Fox MBE, opened the event and was assisted by gold medal winning team mates Melvyn Jones and Shaun Pearce

in both a demonstration and a "Come and Try it session" held during the competition and just before their departure for the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year show. Chairman of Teeside

Development Corporation, Mr Ron Norman was an admirable pupil during his Eskimo roll instruction!

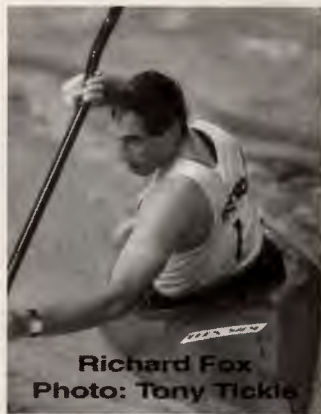
Heats and finals meant a whole day of competition which took place on a day when Sheffield, true to form, gave us a spectacular fall of snow which caused havoc on the roads for our journeys home late in the evening.

The women's kayak event too, provided us with the usual high drama and it was former British Champion Rachel Crosbee of Nottingham who took first place from Penny Briscoe, with current British Champion, Lynn Simpson taking third place.

Flat water specialist Bill Horsman won "gold" in the Canadian singles with the Scots pair, Stuart Pitt and Mike Millar

coasting home in the Canadian Doubles event.

Winners of the day in both Premier and Division one were awarded training grants in addition to their handsome glass trophies which were also awarded throughout all divisions and categories.



Richard Fox
Photo: Tony Tickle

Slalom News

Slalom Yearbooks

The 1994 edition - will be posted to all ranked paddlers at the end of January to addresses provided to Ranking Compilers during the 1993 season - this year, do please remember to inform your Ranking Compiler if/when you change your address.

No increase in entry fees this year for all Slalom competitors. Entry cards still obtainable from Mrs Irene Osborne, 9 Stanton Place, Mansfield, NG18 5PW - please remember to send sae.

New Year Message

To all veteran competitors - your own annual British Championships will take place this year along with the Div 2 to be run in July at Holme Pierrepont.

C2 crews

Watch out for the newly combined divisions - Premier and Div 1 now join together and also Div 2/3 - numbers in this category have forced this rationalisation.

Plastic Boaters

This year, we're doing a feasibility

study to consider several possibilities - a completely separate "Plastic" boat class - perhaps a separate divisional system? We plan to run a pilot scheme later in the year - if you would like more details or would like to take part, please send your views to Slalom Development Officer together with sae for details of any special events.

Bibs

If you are ranked in Divisions 4 through to Premier, you will know that you need to apply for your new 1994 bib well before you intend to compete. Application details are included in the Slalom Yearbook - still unsure of the procedure - contact SDO for details and please remember to renew your National Association membership in good time.

Associates' Division

This is strictly for those competitors who choose not to compete in the overall ranking system but who are still involved in assisting with the organisation or judging at Slalom events. Competitors receive an

end of year position based in their results in the Officials' events at any slalom - if you would like more details, please contact Roy Bradshaw, the Associates Division Compiler - tel. 061 427 7324.

Slalom Skill Award

Now in full swing - this is for any canoeist who wishes to learn and be subsequently tested on all the necessary skills required for slalom, which in turn, will help improve all round water skills. Successful candidates receive a lapel badge, a boat sticker and a certificate. Send sae for details of the syllabus to: The Scheme Administrator, 10 Crowland Road, Hartlepool TS5 2JJ.

Internationals Abroad 1994

A list of fixtures are now available, please send your request for entries to SDO early.

New Address/ Tel No etc:

Sue Wharton, Slalom Development Officer, The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Newark, Notts, NG23 5RZ. Tel: 0636 705363 Fax: 0636 701910.

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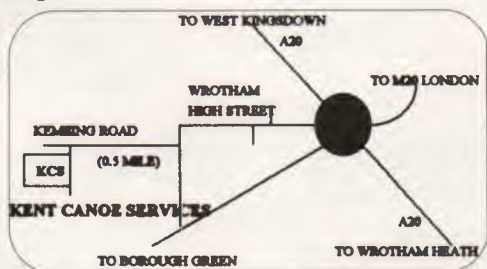
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B.C.U. Approved Canoe School run by B.C.U. Coach, contact Grant Scamell for the 1994 programme.

Map



Opening Times

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Wed - 9.30 - 12.30pm

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

Fri - 9.30 - 5.00pm

Sat - 9.30 - 5.30

Sun - Canoe Courses

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-just some of the events planned for this year at:-

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The British Surf Championships

What A Great Way To End A Great Season

After (two or was it three?) postponements due to lack of surf, I was half afraid to call the contestants together to try and run the 1993 British Paddlesurf Championships.

The venue of Widemouth Bay near Bude has changed dramatically over the past two years, (due to storms etc) the surf is still there, but it has lost its sand bars and helpful rips, so when it gets big, it becomes hard work to get outside the beachbreak. Add a nice offshore wind and those waves stay up a long time before crashing down in huge unmakeable sections. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going!"

Huge Margin

On arrival I was surprised to find really good surf plus the aforementioned beach break standing around two metres. The sigh of relief was too obvious and I lost my street cred for surf forecasting. Working out the heats and judging rota was done in record breaking time (before the surf could change its mind), and John Allan opened the event with his normal superior surfing style, winning by a huge margin and setting a precedence that was not going to be easily matched (but was) let alone beaten.

Gary Adcock, Mark Richards, Kevin Trudgeon, Simon Discombe all dinosaurs (sorry) from the 80's equalled John Allan proving age and experience still counts. We

Winner Simon Discombe with wife Sandra.

could have a Jurassic Park contest in 1994! Ian Plumridge helped every novice with advice on judging, how to get outside, how to get back in, then went out and beat them, but still offered encouragement, and tips during the heats.

Retirement

Shock exit was Clive Kerswell, after showing his return to form at both the Internationals and the North East, Clive back-looped, hurting back muscles and nerves, forcing his retirement. Luckily Clive is now fully recovered, but his Mega Jester is still in traction from a near folding under the seat, showing the force the tail of the kayak struck the bottom in the dump.

By the end of Saturday all the preliminary rounds were out of the way leaving semi finals and finals for Sunday. So we all retired to the Widemouth Manor for a social. The size of the surf took its toll at the social, it was unusually quiet, no rave gloves, no pants on heads, no fuzzy duck, very quiet, was Clive Kerswell being missed or was he lucky to be in casualty, doing the rounds he knows off by heart!

Sunday dawned rather too early and the van decided to have a lay-in. Phil Lucas and I adopted our 'All Blacks' prop forward pose and pushed the "thing" around the carpark until we found a suitable slope for the bump start. Ian Plumridge and his crew in the next van had similar problems and solved them in a similar manner. What a way to wake up!

Popped Shoulder

Semi finals came and went with few surprises, Mark Richards still looking for a final in his new boat. Gary Adcock was unusually "off the pace", Penny Allan, the thorn in the side of many male competitors and the unfortunate Simon Davies whose shoulder popped while holding a final place with five minutes to go, were the four losing semi-finalists.

Three ladies and two juniors combined to make their respective finals a "Grand Finale". Penny Allan stormed away from the rest of the field, with waves when she wanted and enjoying herself as she always does. Phil Lucas snatched the Junior title from fellow England Junior Andrew Wright with some



Above:
Clive Kerswell forced to retire showing the pain.



Right:
Ian Plumridge:
Hot Dog/Freestyle
Champion 1993.

good solid manoeuvres, including a rather novel reverse shoulder run, showing great form for the future. Phil owes his sister a big thank you, it was her MI370!

The Wave Ski final was a good tussle between Gary Adcock and another dinosaur Phil "Chippy" Carpenter. Gary getting the decision with his normal ride it to the beach, length is better than size (though I know a story about that!) way of surfing which made Gary the Ayatollah we all know. In third was novice Pete Yates. Pete made a good show in his first contest winning highest placed novice in kayak as well as his third in ski. Pete, along with Phil Lucas all come from the Kerswell school of surfing, some consolation for Clive.

The Hot dog-freestyle event was a solid win for Ian Plumridge, he had to use his reserve boat (plastic Sabre) and decided to play with the surf in and around the Camel rock reef, Steve Earl second, James Manser third with an enormous grin on his face. Never challenge this man to an act of daring in his Sabre, you'll lose! and he really does enjoy doing the unusual.

Laid Back Approach

The Open Final (the big one) run over twenty minutes was frantic. John Allan establishing an early lead. Ian Plumridge was taking waves (perhaps too many) like no

tomorrow, but still grinning. Chris Bray continues to impress with a laid back approach and had a great final ride once he warmed through. Simon Discombe started poorly but began to improve when the nerves settled, as defending champion he seemed to chase arch-rival John Allan over every inch of wave. As the final hooter sounded it was agreed it was tight, one judge scored equal first, equal third.

Sandra Discombe refused to total up the final scores, because she knew it was very tight. Three recounts and several minutes passed before I had to announce that Simon Discombe retained his British Title by 1 point over John Allan, Ian got third, Chris fourth.

Phew, it was over. Thanks everybody for making it a good contest, thanks Widemouth. I think the novices deserve a mention for going out and competing in 'expert' conditions. And the crowd, yes, we had an audience, thanks to the Lotus driver and his crowd.

I said that's it no more organising, chief judging or bottle washing for me, let the ulcers and blood pressure heal.

See you at Polzeath in March where I somehow ended up running a contest. Be there! Special thanks to Sandra Discombe for keeping the scores and making the tea.

Stephen Kerswell



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BCU Backslap!

Dear All:

Recently there have been a number of letters from people who feel it is their God-given task to slag off the BCU.

To these people, a few points.

1. The BCU is run by a few, overworked, paid people, who work all day for your benefit; this is what you pay membership for. I would like to thank them for all the times I've phoned up, at the wrong times, for help, and got it in a polite and helpful way. They are usually friendly and sympathetic; would you be after all the flak you dish out?

2. The rest, e.g access officers, do a huge amount for nothing. If you don't like it, why not get up off your **** and do something about it?

3. The BCU has 20,000 members. Most of the people I paddle with plan trips on cigarette packets. Could you administer 20,000 river loonies and a coaching scheme, along with races, access, legal bits 'n' bobs etc, etc? AND ALWAYS GET IT RIGHT?

If so, hi God. What is the meaning of life?

If not, the ones who DO try to do all of the above don't need your criticism.

If you begrudge the £20-ish it all costs, go elsewhere, it'll cost you about £100 for less of a service in the real world.

If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

Scot McCrone
Senior Instructor

WaveHopper



Dear Focus:

I have recently become the proud possessor of a Wavehopper - the new plastic wild water racing boat - and I cannot resist telling all your knowledgeable readers about such a beautiful, seductive creature. I've called mine Circe because it makes all other boats look like pigs. The real reason for my missive is to commend the bold move by the WWR Executive in developing the boat and to encourage others to use/acquire one and learn to race. I seem to remember writing to *Canoe Focus* a year or two ago suggesting slalom could increase participation by getting clubs to provide stock boats, thereby reducing costs to individual paddlers and

enabling competition on equal terms with respect to equipment. The WWR Exec seem to have stolen the march on slalom and made the idea a reality.

I hope it takes off because Wild Water Racing is great fun, it encourages seeing more of rivers than only one rapid and it helps aerobic fitness. Off water you could also use the boat for weight lifting!

Seriously, though, get your club to buy one or two so that everyone can be a WHOPPER.

P. E. Schur

Ed: If you look at the slalom news page there is some similar development in that discipline.



River Dart Access

Dear Focus:

I am deeply concerned about Adam Box's letter in Focus 86, concerning the River Dart.

Can we please stop pussy-footing about. If you have the names of canoeists/clubs that are

putting our future access in jeopardy, then please let us have the names in print: name, club and BCU number.

In September 1990, my club sent £100 to the Dart Access Appeal. So far we do not recall

seeing any audited account of income and expenditure. Can the access committee please produce these figures ?

John Kingsley
MARLOW
CANOE CLUB



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Ivory Towers

Dear Focus:

I have just finished reading the best ever copy of Focus ever printed. The ender of Dec 93 was brilliant; any committee member knows the Ivory Tower syndrome you mention. As a long standing (suffering) committee member I found myself grinning at some of your replies and almost wanting to reprint the whole article in our club newsletter. I feel this piece of positive journalism should be included in the BCU guidelines for clubs and committee under the "Health Warning". On entering the Ivory Tower you will become target practice for "Joe-Public-paddler".

The piece on Rodeo World Championships was equally superb, yet saddened me with the goodbye to fun, hello to sport finale.

As you so rightly say Rodeo reached puberty and its "hello cruel world". As a long standing surfer now involved in the backroom of this "free" sport, we are trying to re-inject fun by simplifying rules, relaxing laws and de-regulation (the 'in' word). All you Rodeo guys and gals should come to a surf contest and see what a monster you could create.

Rodeo must not lose the grin or you may end up like so many other "100th of a sec-

ond" sports - serious.

Of course the article that "really" made the Dec.93 issue was the "surfing in the North East" contest report. Brief, concise, good piccies and different. Good to see kayak surfing back in focus (pun).

Keep up the good work, Kevin and I'm sure many positive canoeists will follow you into the "Ivory Tower".

Stephen Kerswell
Treasurer Port of
Plymouth Canoeing
Assoc.
Chairman BCU Surf
Committee.

Editor: Thanks Stephen, it's good to hear from a satisfied customer. Some Rodeo pad-

dlers did compete in a surf competition last year but were bamboozled by rules they did not understand, or have prior knowledge of. You will be pleased to hear that domestic Rodeo will remain simple and fun on the domestic scene but I have heard that some GB squad paddlers are now in serious training for the 95 Worlds!

'YAKKITY YAK'

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Dart Permission?

Dear Focus:

In his letter regarding problems on the River Dart, Adam Box RAO Devon and Cornwall (Focus 86) raised three main areas of complaint.

While there can be no excuse for the behaviour of certain individuals on the weekend concerned, and the four Dartmeet section pirates, there may be an excuse for not having consent to paddle the 'Loop'.

On October 13th, I wrote on behalf of our club to Kevin Chamberlain LAO for the Dart requesting permission to paddle the loop section of the Dart on

weekends throughout the season, for a maximum group size of eight persons. At the time of writing this letter, December 15th, I have received no reply. I enclosed a SAE as requested and have now waited much longer than the four weeks mentioned in the guide book.

I can appreciate that access officers have a high work load, and a voluntary one at that, but I do feel it would be a matter of courtesy to reply one way or the other. In the meantime, what do we do? Do we paddle the section on the assumption that no news is good news? Do


we wait for a reply that may never arrive? Maybe other canoeists have experienced the same problem.

Perhaps a warden could be posted at Newbridge Car Park on weekends during the season to issue permits on the spot. I am sure I would not be alone in being willing to pay a small fee every trip to help fund this, especially if it meant I would be paddling "legally".

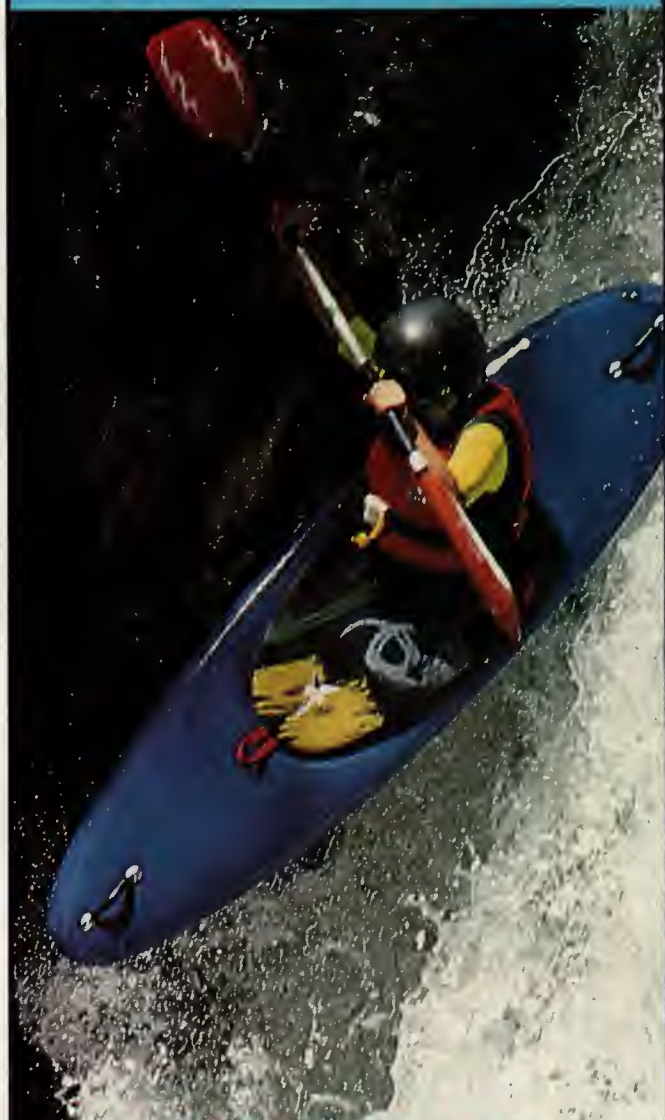
The warden idea would serve two main purposes, firstly to limit numbers using the river to a reasonable level, and, almost eliminate persons pad-

dling without consent, (there will always be one or two). Secondly it would eliminate the need to apply for consent four weeks in advance, (only to find your desired water level is not there on your chosen weekend), and maybe never receive a reply.

Many thanks to all access officers for all the work they have done and are still doing, who knows where we would be without them?

Craig Addison
Secretary,
Southborne
Canoe Club. 

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KAYAK EXPEDITION 1993



Right:
River bank
lunch stop

Taming the Tamur

This tale has its beginnings in October of 1992, when Helen contacted us with an "idea". To her surprise we all replied enthusiastically "Yes, I'm free for a trip to the Himalayas next October. What a great idea...let's do it!"

This "idea" evolved into the Ladies Himalayan Kayak Expedition, with a team of six competent female paddlers from Edinburgh and Durham. The plan finally took shape resulting in a month long trip to Nepal, with a ten day "warm-up" on 270km of the Sun Kosi leading up to our ultimate goal which was to claim the first British descent of the Tamur river (120km of grade 4 water) in Eastern Nepal.

Why all Female ?

So why an all-female expedition? The teams experiences of paddling have been in mostly male groups (it cannot be denied that kayaking is a male dominated sport), where, almost without exception, a male paddler would be taking the lead role running rapids, rescuing and organising trips. We felt that there are too few women in the sport and particularly in leadership and rescue roles, and often this was due to a lack of confidence and encouragement. What was needed was for a group of women to set an example and demonstrate that women can take the initiative to organise trips; take on leadership roles and learn necessary rescue techniques. So we volunteered!

1993 International Canoe Exhibition

Initially the trip seemed like a distant dream and it wasn't until the International Canoe Exhibition, where advice, support and enthusiasm seemed to come from all directions, that it really hit home that we were going. We had already received the official seal of approval from the BCU and now we went all out for sponsorship. With the high profile the expedition was likely to gain it was essential to be successful. To this end we organised as much as we could before arriving in Nepal. Responsibility for certain areas e.g. sponsorship and publicity, kayaking equipment, first aid and repair kit, food and banking were taken on by individual members. Most important of all we had to find time to paddle together, having never paddled as a group before. Training weekends were arranged over the coming months, including several where friends took us through typical rescue scenarios, rope work and basic climbing and belaying techniques. This was backed up with a formal weekend at Glenmore Lodge to revise much of what we'd been learning and pick up on any weak areas.





**White water
woman plus
wave**

Nepalese Rodeo

Our initial experience of Himalayan water was the first Nepalese rodeo on the Trisuli river, along with kayaking and rafting trips. This was a superb introduction giving us a chance to meet others who had paddled the Tamur and some of the rafters and kayakers we would be paddling the Sun Kosi with. The rodeo started some real hot shots and impressive stunts and was enjoyed by all: winners and losers, non-paddlers, famous, infamous and unknown alike! Sam was also quite happy coming second in the women's class.

The Sun Kosi can pretty much be summed up as a 95% mellow trip, 4% BIG rapids and 1% total trashing! Ten days was more than generous for this 270km run and we would have preferred slightly higher water levels. A fuller description of the Sun Kosi was given in the October 93 edition of Canoe Focus.

The Tamur

An overnight stop after completing the Sun Kosi followed by a bus journey (first class accommodation on top) to Basantapur set us down at the start of our three day trek over a 3,000m ridge into Dobhan where we would meet the Tamur. At last the team was alone, or almost!

We now had a sirdar, two head porters and six porters (with the job of carrying a boat each, several bags of kit each and their own belongings!) Three days turned into four due to the awkward nature of the loads being carried - no criticism of the porters, they were tiny people with leg muscles like Pop-Eyes arms! This leg of the journey allowed us to sample the Nepalese culture. Smiley Nepalese kids carrying each other around and constantly crying "Namaste" and "Give me a pen!"; dal bhat: a "lovely" dish of rice, watery lentil soup, spicy spinach and potato twice a day; and sleeping in smoky

Kathmandu

One day in late October, it all suddenly came to fruition and we found ourselves standing on the tarmac of Kathmandu airport. We stood blinking in awe at the white peaks rearing up in the distant haze and thought "WOW!" Miraculously our boats (which had flown out a week earlier) were waiting for us in the baggage claim area so far, so good!

Four days were devoted before we went on the Sun Kosi to sorting out various arrangements that could only be dealt with once in Nepal e.g. trekking and rafting permits, finding a sirdar etc. We soon learned that in Nepal nothing gets done "today" and bureaucracy rules.

A BCU EXPEDITION

This expedition was one of a number supported by the BCU Expeditions Committee and given BCU approval. This often unlocks the door to sponsors and can give an expedition documentary evidence of National Body support. Sometimes small amounts of real cash may be given from the committee's grant to help worthwhile expeditions, but help is dependent on your trip being a 'first' or exceptional.

For further details and an Expedition information pack send £2.50 and an A4 SAE to the BCU Office marked 'Expeditions Committee'

Pete (Slime) Knowles, Committee chairman,



comments on the Ladies Himalayan trip: 'one of the things that impressed me about expedition has been the excellent organisation the team has shown - yours has been a model expedition in many ways - well conceived, planned executed and - most important - happy, safe and successful!'

Please pass on the congratulations from our Committee to your team. That this was an all women's expedition is the cream on the cake and delights our committee. At last the macho, hairy gorilla expedition myth gets exploded! Please spread the word that we as a committee would like to support, encourage (and approve where we can) many more trips with women members.'



tea houses: the Nepalese haven't invented chimneys yet. We also experienced the treats of Nepalese festivals These typically start out with young children singing sweetly in the street, blessing their neighbours houses and conclude with the adults who have indulged in copious amounts of alcohol amusing themselves in lively street brawls. The local people were friendly and curious, in

ed were replaced by cold, damp and mist with occasional views to the valley below or the next ridge. On the fourth day we started to descend into the Tamur valley and the sunshine with occasional and exciting glimpses to the rapids far below. Our trekking and rafting permits were checked by a bemused police force at Dobhan who let us through for our last evening of dal bhat in a smoky tea house.

The next morning we dived into the first day of expedition food. Hot chocolate, dried fruits, fruit bars and marzipan; yummy! Some last minute packing and then we carried the boats down to the waters edge, followed by half the village. Mounting nerves and excitement was obvious with the normal noise and constant chattering replaced by silence. We hadn't paddled for a week and we hadn't handled fully laden boats at all. We knew the first day was continuous class 4 water and we could see rapids down to the first bend, but had no idea of what was round the corner. In the back of our minds we knew that this was it. This was what the last years efforts had been aimed at, we were on our own and if anything serious happened we were three days away from help.

We set off-attempting a few clumsy, amateurish ferry-glides and break-ins/outs, trying to overcome the tension and adjust to the laden boats. We regrouped and set off again, round the corner... a rapid...a regroup...another rapid already in sight. The tension eased and we began to enjoy the water, with each rapid

*We would like to give our thanks for support and sponsorship from the following:-
The British Canoe Union; Foundation for Sport and the Arts; Palm Canoe Products Ltd.; Cowies; Equator Expeditions; Edinburgh District Council; Carlisle Canoes; Pakistan International Airlines; Glenmore Lodge; Jen Duncan Memorial Fund; The*

particular the women would realise they were passing a group of girls and would stop and greet us in the traditional Nepalese way-hands in prayer and "Namaste!" Similarly in the villages girls would come up and bombard us with as many questions as they could manage with their limited English.

The clear blue skies and mountain views we expect-

following closely to the next one. By lunch time we had totally relaxed and we settled down to a feast of crackers, oatcakes, pate and cheese, washed down by a whole bar of chocolate (well done Carol, the food organiser). The only downer was that Carol and Kirsty weren't feeling very well so while we were all inevitably tired from concentrating, they were shattered!





Day two was a long hard paddle of mainly flat water and we were relieved to crawl under our tarpaulin, too tired to move even when we discovered we had pitched over an ant colony!

Day three started mellow and then began to get more exciting. It was on this day that we had our biggest epic on a grade 2 rapid, not surprisingly involving a man made object. In Nepal man made objects are mainly in the form of fish traps (akin to wooden climbing frames) which normally only extend part way across the river and can be easily avoided. Except we found two channels where the traps went across from bank to bank. All but one managed to avoid incidents and Debbie heroically saved the one boat that pinned.

Day four and we were on to continuous grade 4 water again and this time it was Justine's turn to feel sick. Adrenaline was running high and we had a few nice trashings including one stopper five of us had to roll out of (we named this "Cup of Tea and Five Sugars"). A final rapid, an easy grade 5, a short deep gorge, and then we could see the confluence with the Sun Kosi. It was all over, far too soon, but we were ecstatic - mission accomplished. We devoured our last expedition lunch at the confluence laughing at the various incidents of the past four days, before we floated down to the get-out at Chattra.

In the last four days we had run some big water, without needing to inspect too often; we had a few trashings and three swims - all easily coped with, nothing lost and no-one hurt. One of the best aspects of being part of a group of almost equal ability was that we rotated leadership constantly. Running a self-supported trip hadn't proved a problem - the boats perhaps had a slight tendency to back-loop more easily and be sluggish in eddy lines, but otherwise handled no differently. Overall we had a wonderful time and wished the trip had been longer.

Now we are back and while none of us would claim to be the best canoeists around, we have boosted our confidence in our own ability to lead, rescue and organise trips. Careful preparation, a good team, carefully chosen rivers matching ability and you have the recipe for a trip of a lifetime. So why don't you give it a go...

If you would like to learn more about our expedition or know of any groups that would be interested in a slide show/video presentation then please contact...

Samantha Turner
Tel work no: 031 317 7200 ext 288

Helen Rowlands
Tel: 031 667 1000

Debbie Hales
Tel: 091 374 3842



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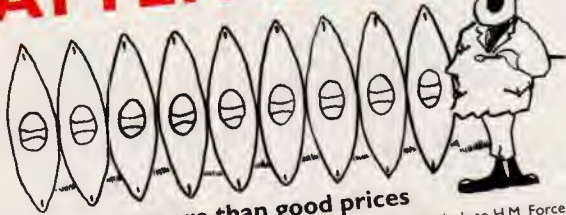
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Symposium

Calshot October 1993

The Sea Touring Committee Sea Symposium was once again held at Calshot Activity Centre. This time the weather was somewhat improved on last year's event. Approximately fifty people took part, listening to lectures by John Ramwell, Derek Hutchinson and Captain D Thompson. Most of the lectures though informative contained an element of amusement.

Dave Evans (STC Vice

Chairman) opened the proceedings, with his usual flair.

John Ramwell, gave an interesting insight into the work carried out for the British Schools Exploration Society, and the funding of the expeditions. John also touched lightly on sea access problems which appear to be manifesting themselves in various coastal locations.

Captain David Thompson, representing the Department of Transport, Surveyor General's

Organisation, Marine Safety Agency (designate) gave his highly humorous delivery of a serious topic, which presented by anyone else could appear boring. The slides, videos, and information leaflets though not targeting sea kayakers or canoeists, illustrated the latest ideas in safety at sea. Some of the equipment apparently recommended for use by people immersed in the sea would not be practical for paddlers to use.

Derek Hutchinson's lecture covered his experiences paddling the west coast of north America from Alaska to Mexico. Finishing with an event which took place in the Gulf of California. The whole lecture was graphically covered with superb colour slides.

One other highlight in the proceedings was the QEII sailing past to enter Southampton water. It looked as though pandemonium was about to break out as some people struggled to get a good view. There were no injuries or property damage reported.

The Secretary, Tim Franklin, had been co-opted to serve as Nick Hodson's replacement. Subject to election, Tim welcomed the opportunity of renewing his involvement with the BCU.

The Treasurers report showed that the STC had some cash in hand, and that the BCU had granted £500 for the next financial year. The Vice Chairman, Dave Evans, was re-elected unopposed. Tim Franklin was elected as Secretary unopposed, with elected members Peter Scott and Peter Clark being re-elected unopposed.

The Paddle - Sunday 3rd

After breakfast, those wishing to take part in a paddle were offered three alternatives.

1. A Solent crossing to Cowes, with a lunch stop-over before returning.

2. Lepe to Lymington return.

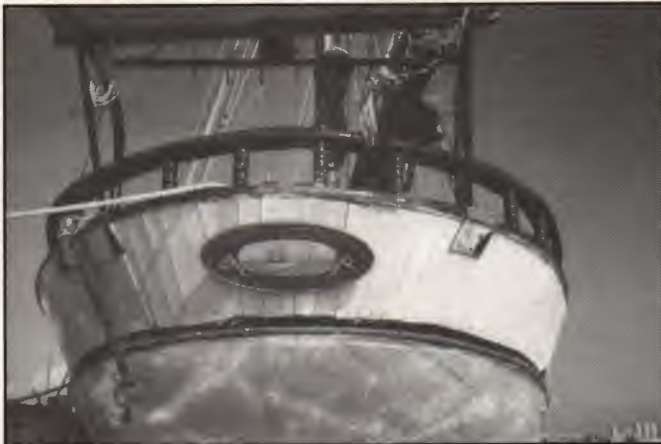
3. Lepe to Beaulieu return.

The majority plumped for the Solent crossing. Dave Evans agreed leaders for two groups each of sixteen paddlers. The outward trip was uneventful with light cloud cover, brilliant sun, force 2 wind and some ripples. Because of the fast trip across, the groups paddled up the Medina before returning, against the tide, to the estuary. Lunch was enjoyed on the shingle beach at Gurnard. The tide being full, there was no problem landing. After lunch ice cream and being suitable refreshed it was time to launch. The tide had dropped somewhat leaving a short steep launch into incoming wash.

For the return journey it was agreed to split the groups into four groups comprising eight paddlers each. The west wind had increased very slightly in velocity, which made the return crossing against the ebb, a little more interesting for some. Bramble Bank produced its usual moving water, making some of the kayakers perform some rather strange manoeuvres, as well as a few squeaks and groans. Landing back at Calshot was a scramble to pack away gear, and bid one's farewells to comrades before embarking on homeward bound journeys.

Thanks are due not only to the hard work put in by the organisers, lecturers but also for those who took the trouble to attend. Without the support of paddlers the symposia would fail. Hopefully, next years symposium will prove even more successful.

Peter A. Clark



Above: A well seasoned sailing vessel for sale in the Medina.

Right: Crossing the Solent, foreground Dave Evans (vice chairman STC), background Derek Hutchinson.





My favourite *paddle*



Franco Ferrero

My favourite paddle is to a small enchanted island off the West Coast of Scotland. A sea kayak is essentially a means of transport and a voyage is only really satisfying if it takes you somewhere worth being. This particular island is an oasis of calm, yet in its stark beauty it is somehow melancholy. You can almost sense the spirits of the people who, fleeing the clearances, chose to try and eke out a living on its barren soil. Yet it is somehow right that they are gone. The place belongs to the sea birds and the wind, the sea and the sky. We have no place there, save, perhaps, as a privileged guest. It is a place that draws me back time and again. I have been there alone and with companions; but I will tell you about the first time.

It was in the second half of June, I was on holiday with my wife Joan and my two young daughters. I had hoped to alternate between family days out and some good sea trips but the combination of poor visibility or gales meant that I had had to restrict myself to some cautious coastal paddles. The holiday was nearly at an end and despite such lucky breaks as seeing a Short Eared Owl, I was, being a typically self centred canoeist, frustrated by the fact that I had been unable to visit the offshore islands.

Break in the Weather

On the last but one day there appeared a small break in the weather. The wind was a steady force four and I would have to paddle 10 miles into a head-wind to get there. Of course that meant that the wind would be helping me on my return and the visibility, for the first time in a fortnight was crystal clear. It was now, or wait at least another year.

I don't habitually solo paddle, mainly because I enjoy good company and partly because most of the people I know who habitually paddle on their own seem to become a little odd! However there is no denying that it is one of the ingredients

When I was asked to write this article I couldn't make up my mind whether to write about my favourite river or my favourite sea trip.

However, the sea was my first love





that helped to make this journey something special. After my enforced inactivity, (in paddling terms), I revelled in pounding

and Kittiwakes, their cries deafening, flew in a great circle around the stack, all travelling in the same direction so as to

er human being, I shouted, so as to be heard above the incredible din, even though he was no more than a foot away from

Thousands of sea birds, Guillemots, Razor Bills, Puffins and Kittiwakes, their cries deafening, flew in a great circle around the stack, all travelling in the same direction so as to avoid collisions. Then add, as a backdrop, a fantastic view of the Western Isles, bathed in one of the most spectacular blood

into the oncoming waves, the sea spray flying into my face, almost instantly turned into salty encrustations by the drying effect of the wind and the sun, only to be washed away soon after by a larger than usual wave.

Tired but elated I arrived in the shelter of the lee side of the island. I noticed that a 'mist net', as used by ornithologists to catch and ring birds had partially unfurled in the wind and that a puffin was caught in it. I made a mental note to find the bird people and let them know as soon as I had landed, pitched my tent and rested a little.

Awesome Spectacle

After a much needed cup of tea, I set off to walk around the island in search of the owners of the mist net. I found them on the West side of the island stood together in a group admiring a truly awesome spectacle. Picture if you can, a huge sea stack, separated from the main island by a veritable chasm, only a few yards wide but a two hundred foot sheer drop to the angry waves below. Every conceivable nook cranny and flattish space covered in birds, nests and guano. Thousands of sea birds, Guillemots, Razor Bills, Puffins

avoid collisions. Then add, as a backdrop, a fantastic view of the Western Isles, bathed in one of the most spectacular blood red sunsets imaginable.

I must have stood, just behind and slightly to one side of the nearest person in the group for nearly half an hour before, feeling the need to share my feelings of awe and wonder with another

me: 'Amazing isn't it! The effect was out of all proportion.

Poor Ornithologist

This poor ornithologist, having deliberately marooned himself on this island for two weeks with a few choice companions, convinced that there isn't another human being for tens of miles, suddenly finds this coarse, salt

encrusted sea paddler, bellowing in his ear. Startled, he leapt into the air. I lunged forward and managed to grab him in time to stop him tumbling over the cliff edge.

Naturally, they invited me to dinner. After a very welcome meal and a couple of equally welcome glasses of red wine, we frittered the night away, till, about two o'clock in the morning, it was adjudged dark enough for them to get to work. I helped them for a while, netting and ringing Storm Petrels. These are tiny, frail looking birds, with webbed feet that are no bigger than your fingernail. It is hard to believe that such a tiny bird spends almost all its life in mid ocean, only returning to land to lay its eggs and rear its young.

My window in the weather was closing, so early the next morning I set off in a near gale. Running before the wind, surfing a following sea is my idea of heaven and it nearly made up for my having to leave the island so soon. I have been back many times since. The name of this island?

You didn't really think I was going to tell you, did you?

Franco is Head of Canoeing at the Plas y Bernin National Centre for Mountain Activities and will be returning to the Western Isles this summer when he is running sea kayak courses there. He assures me it is all work...but somebody has to do it.

Franco is a British Canoe Union Coach in both Sea and Inland Kayaking.





Regional round up

Chair's Chat

During the past two months I have attended several of the regional AGMs and enjoyed meeting so many members, who give up so much of their own time to work for canoeing, as well as members, who wish to debate the policies of the Union. It is clear that the future of the Union is in the hands of the members and the clubs and I hope that they will work with the regions to develop the sport in a co-ordinated way. I and most of the other regional chairmen will be at the Canoe Exhibition in February and will be pleased to talk to and meet with as many members as possible. Meanwhile I would like to wish everybody good paddling in 1994.

Ron Hodgson

Eastern

Thanks to event organisers, paddlers etc that supported the region through 1993. Please continue to send information for inclusion in regional communications. The 1994 regional calendar (see yearbook) indicates another busy year. E1's wishing to gain experience of staffing on regional coaching courses are reminded to contact Paul West (RCO). 1994 will also see the Eastern region development plan updated. If you have a local project which you want to see developed with canoeing in mind please contact Ron Hodgson (ER chair) asap. Funding for projects is more likely if included in the plans. The regional yearbook is now available, pick up your copy from the regional stand at the canoe exhibition or contact any committee member.

Judith Fynn

East Midlands

We would like to welcome you to the National Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace, it is an exciting time for us as we have produced our new regional Handbook. Please support us by buying a copy price £1.00 and also please read it and feed back to us your comments; things we have missed out; things we have got wrong etc. We can then improve it next year. We hope you will enjoy your own Regional Handbook and we look forward to meeting you at the stand. If you are unable to attend the Exhibition you can get a copy by sending £1.00 to Ann Hart, 1 Dene Wood Avenue, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3EU.

Pearl Mullholland

London & South East

Our returning chairman Brin Hughes was honoured by the English Regions Management Committee, when at Ealing Canoe Club on 4 December Ron Hodgson presented him with an English Regions Award for his services to canoeing. At our AGM there was no nomination for chairman so the post is vacant awaiting a keen and capable volunteer; nominations to Barbara Simmonds 0784 255085. Congratulations to Anna Fisher of Hastings Canoe Club for winning the Div II Ladies National Individual Pool Slalom at Ponds Forge on 12 December. Many thanks to Chris Childs for his years as Round-Up editor. Future items for inclusion to me please at 1, Staff Houses, Moor House School, Hurst Green, Oxted RH8 9AG; tel: 0883 714448.

Les Saunders

North

Congratulations (we think) to Simon Banbury on his elevation to chairman of the BCU Access Committee. 1994 touring calendar from Eddie Palmer 0434 270318. Details from S Derwin 0642 788799 for Tees Barrage and River Tee events at Stockton. For access to rivers and lakes in Cumbria please check with RCO Keith Morris before paddling 0946 861229. Sarah Shrimpton, editor of Northern Paddler, asks for reports, news, photos asap. Phil Puckrin, Humbleton OAA, 091 548 9856, invites paddlers and has full details of the Easter Monday event on the Wear from Durham to Finchale.

Mary Armstrong

North West

We had a successful AGM at Rivington after a day's activities including canoe orienteering and canoe sailing. This was followed by the coaching AGM and E2 examiner seminar where Geoff Good explained some of the thinking behind adopting the NVQ system. The North West has a mostly new committee including: Andy Cook, secretary, 0695 577226. Dawn Neville, Newsletter Editor, 0606 41106. Roy Hitchings, chair and RCO, 0270 69040. We still require a Treasurer, Slalom Officer and Vice Chair. If you feel you can help, please contact one of the above people. Please send Dawn any articles for your newsletter; it is the ideal place to advertise events. Regional pool slalom 8 January 1994; contact Mike Burt 0925 764818.

Andy Cook

Southern

Ian Davey was re-elected as vice-chairman and treasurer and Charles Hicks as chairman and BCU Council representative at the 16 November AGM. New in office are Jean Boatman, secretary, Chris Masters, slalom (0734 263820) and Steve Westcott, Touring (0252 330951). Details of the new committee were sent to clubs with the December Newsletter (No 20) together with the 1994 regional events programme. Contact Steve Westcott for events details, or send an A5 sae to Jean Boatman, Rosemead, Tidmarsh Lane, Tidmarsh, Pangbourne, Berks, RG8 8HA (0734 844470) for a copy of the newsletter. We need LAOs, especially for the Cherwell, Evenlode, Thames and Windrush. Volunteers to Steve Finch (0628 483252). Do drop in for a chat on the English Regions' stand at Crystal Palace.

Charles Hicks

South West

BCU membership has shown a substantial increase in 1993, now standing at 2,381 compared to 1,961 in 1992. In 1994 the region is promoting a full programme of tours and ranking competitions. Details from the secretary, address in Yearbook. A competition coaching weekend will be held in the spring, aimed at racing and slalom competitors. Details to clubs later. Over a recent weekend when the River Exe was in full spate, a group of inexperienced canoeists were rescued by the police at Bolham Weir. Remember, paddle within your abilities and check river conditions with the local access officers. Finally, committee members will be available to answer questions on the regional stand at Crystal Palace on 19/20 February.

Terry Cripps

West Midlands

Future events: Dove tour March 19-20, Teme toddle (grade 1) March 27, Avon doggy paddle (closed river Avon - open only for this sponsored event) April 17 contact Dave Bateman 021 772 3739 for details. Marathons in March - 6 Wolverhampton. 13 - Gailey, 20 - Lincoln, 27 - Cannock Chase. In April - 10 Leamington, 24 - Anker Valley, contact Secretary. Needed wild water representative on committee; contact chairman. New committee chairman Mike Nicholls 021 360 2136. Secretary Peter Jones 021 745 3415. Publicity Rosemary Preece 0684 563408 - Please send her any copy for the interclub newsletter, events, results, letters, for sale etc.

Rosemary Preece

Yorkshire & Humberside

When you read this we will be into a new year of paddling. Some will be looking for fresh challenges and fresh water. Others will be going back to old favourites like the Ure, Washburn and the Wharfe. Do not forget that we are visitors. Be courteous and considerate, not just to the locals but to other visitors. Remember one badly parked car or using a river outside the agreement can lose that river for us all. And finally, thank you to all those who have helped canoeing over the last year; landowners who allow access to their water, the Sports Council, the Federation of Sport and the NRA. We look forward to their continuing support.

Mike Twigg



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- OUT AND ABOUT, 11 King street, Hereford NR4 9BW, Mr. David Haines, tel. 0432-27084
- GARSTANG ADVENTURE, Unit 1, Pringle court, Thomas's Weind, Garstang Lancashire PR3 1LN, Mr. David Bagot, tel. 0995-602114



Access news

BCU LICENCE

For 1994 the following waters are included:

Basingstoke Canal.

Wey and Godalming Navigation. Rochdale Canal.

British Waterways Board waters as listed in the leaflet "Enjoy Britain's Waterways by Canoe".

River Severn between Stourport and Gloucester (13VVB)

River Trent below Derwentmouth (BWB).

Bridgewater Canal providing you are passing through only.

If you are based on the canal then you need a licence from the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

Stratford Avon between Alveston and Evesham.

The following waters were under negotiation at the time of going to press and it is hoped will be included from 1st of

April 1994. Refer to the April 1994 edition of Focus for up-to-date information.

Norfolk Broads and Rivers Wensum, Yare, Bure, Waveney, Thurne and Ant.

It is a condition of these agreements that the BCU identification sticker is displayed on the deck of your canoe and that you carry your BCU membership card to be shown if requested.

Members using these waters are asked to let the National Development Officer know if they have their licences checked.

Regrettably legal problems have made it impossible to secure the NRA waters for 1994 but negotiations are continuing with both sides seeking agreement.



River Teme

Access Update

The river Teme in Ludlow, South Shropshire has no official access agreement but it regularly used by hundreds of canoeists every month. Many outdoor centres use it for courses as do many West Midland clubs and individuals. The pressure on what is a very small river is immense and is leading to access problems with people who live alongside the river. Imagine living in Ludlow for its peace and quiet and yet every weekend hundreds of canoeists paddle through your garden, climb over your garden wall for river access, are very noisy, and yet when you try to reason with them they tell you to \$*%+£&?@!!! This is not in their imagination, but is really happening at one point in Ludlow!

The majority of users of the Teme are very responsible and understand the rivers problems.

The minority however are treating the river as if they own it, and if this continues will lose us all access to the river. Currently even the most harassed of riparian owners have no desire to ban canoeing on the Teme, but how long will this last?

The current most popular access point is the Linney Park below the castle, this is owned by the council and they have been very helpful to canoeists, even to the point of establishing a canoe launching jetty behind the toilet block. What they don't like though is canoeists leaving gallons of muddy water in their toilets, not paying for parking tickets in the summer, and showing their bottoms or worse to tourists when getting changed. With a bit of thought canoeists could alleviate all these problems.

The point of most conflict is Ludlow weir opposite the Shell petrol station. Here the owners have requested that canoeists do not get out onto the island

or weir unless it's an emergency. They also have requested that canoeists do not stop and play at this point but paddle straight on down stream. The weir is probably the best play stop on the whole river but it is better to be able to paddle this stretch, than to be banned from it completely. The river runs through their garden here so please treat it and them with some respect.

Finally the well used egress point at Ashford Carbonel also had problems. Please use the footpath marked on the OS maps to get from the river to the village. Please also park carefully in the village as some of the residents have been blocked into their homes by badly parked canoe trailers.

The only other problem (at last the end is in sight) is the number of canoeists on this large stream we call a river. At normal water levels I've had reports from locals that groups

as large as sixty to one hundred canoeists had been paddling. These are the sort of numbers you expect to see on the Welsh Dee on an open weekend, not on the Teme.

Please if you wish to bring a large group (ie more than twelve) then please give me a ring in advance to find out if any other large groups are on the river that day. If the river is less crowded you will have a better quality paddle.

Please contact
RAO: Mike Phillips, 21 Heathfield Road, Bewdley, Worcs, DY12 1JT Tel: 0299 401872

Only with your help we start to alleviate some of these access problems and begin to work towards a permanent access agreement. Many thanks to Sue Gibson the retiring LAO for all the hard work she has put into keeping our access to this river.



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A PETE IN EVERY

or Taking the Boat Back Home

The Jersey Canoe Club had mounted expeditions to Spitzbergen in 1973, Nordkapp in 1983. 1993 seemed too good to waste, so a party was formed to visit Greenland - home of the kayak.

So it was boats by seal, blokes by plane and helicopter to Sissimiut, Noses pressed against windows. No musk ox no reindeer. Wonders of camouflage, or poor choice of seats? Walk to campsite, erect tents, three tents of two, one not so handy in each tent, one Pete doubling up as a not so handy. Walk to town, locate boats and barrels. Hire lorry and shift to campsite. Unpack gear and vast amounts of food. Pack for journey. Re-repack. Leave experts to it, slip into tent and cut price tags and washing instructions off shiny new gear

Disko Bay

Twenty-four hours later we carried our boats to the Arctic Shore. Over a hundred unattractively packaged novice summers were shoe horned into the Aleut and eased out to sea. Our expert companions, mounted their laden steeds. Pursued by the sound of the Huskies Farewell we lendalled (Lendal Modified-crank paddles...splendid) our way down Sissimiut Fjord, past the traditional high-rise dwelling of the Greenlander, turned right at the ocean and headed for our first wilderness campsite, bound for Disko Bay.

This was not Plan A. Plan A had been the circumnavigation of Disko Island. This had been abandoned on local advice. Provisional Plan B was up the coast past Egedesminde, over to Disko Island, up its east coast, cross back to mainland and down to Illulissat.

The four B's

A routine, familiar to experienced tourers but new to me, soon emerged. Up after seven, breakfast, brew, bowels and boats. Leave about two hours after. Paddle for three or four hours, stop for lunch and the Attenboroughesque ritual of unzipping for relief. Paddle again, sort out water and a campsite. This was not an easy task. Greenland is not over-mapped, our scale was 1:250 000, all visible features looked much the same and a compass was as much use as a roulette wheel. I spent most days lost and lost in admiration at my companions; skills. Land, unpack, dress for 'drying off', pitch tents, fetch water, start meal, lift boats further out of



harms way. Eat, walk, photograph, giggle, sleep. Some days more, some less.

Whales Choir

Our campsites were generally superb. I had feared the worst, but the mossy tundra growth took a peg well and was comfortable to camp on. It grew on you, almost literally if you sat on it, its colours, berries, flowers and fungi providing welcome contrast to the browns of the general scenery. The water was as advertised for mountain streams. The sea views were breathtaking and the beaches usually held sufficient driftwood to provide for our needs and to allow for the enthusiasm of our bread-baking sub-section. The down side was usually the last twenty yards of our days journey. Most of the beaches were generously cobbled with rounded boulders about two feet in diameter, coupled with wet neoprene boots these offered nightly disaster to our loaded boats and possibilities for broken legs, back damage or hernia to their carriers. Happily such unpleasant moments were easily offset by those spent sitting on a mossy bank, overlooking a beach of Bounty bar beauty, dotted with natural ice sculpture, with a choir of whales sounding away in the background.

Our lunch stops were even more pleasant. Either tussock grass by a sandy beach on one of the host of small islands we passed, or the sheltered side of a large rock stripped of any barnacles or weed by the winter ice.

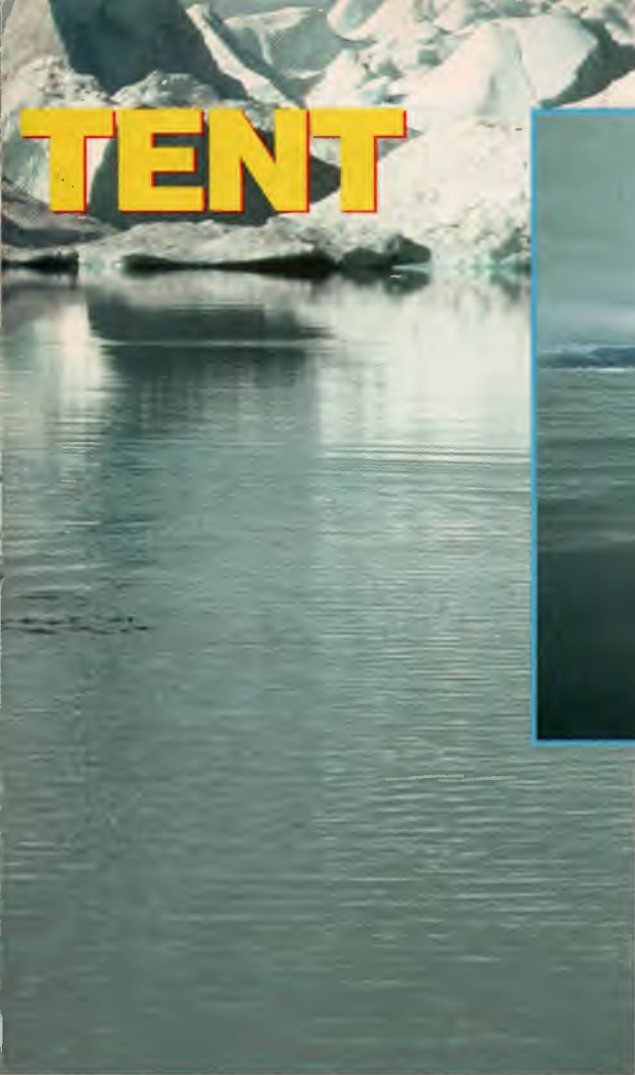
Between these bliss sessions we paddled. The whole party approached the early days of the journey with some trepidation. All the boats were carrying considerable deck cargo and none of us were sure how they would handle if the going became really rough. Fortunately we were either lucky, or well advised, or both. Much of our paddling took place inside or between a string of rocks and islands which ran parallel to the shore, whilst unpredictable tides and frequent headwinds made it demanding it was seldom intimidating.

The size and scale of Greenland was a problem.

Below: Lunch break in Tusungdlimp Ima.



TENT



Pete in front of Jacobshaver Island

Left; Pete H in ice. Jacobshaver Island.

The absence of any means of comparison such as trees or houses, meant that with eyes used to Channel Island waters we found distance hard to judge. What appeared to be an hours paddle often turned into an afternoon's slog.

Tide and weather were problems on open crossings. Weather is something Greenland has plenty of, five seasons, Most days! The switch from swimming costumes to full gear with two pairs of gloves can be very rapid. Our surest cloud spotters were regularly foxed. Prediction was impossible. On our third full day out we had to cross Nordstromfjord a fresh water feature about six miles in width. We started in full summer rig, poser's shades on, pogies off. Two hours later, swept off course in dense fog, we were relieved to land on a small island, having narrowly missed an unplanned detour into the Davis Strait. Fortunately the fog lifted sufficiently for us to make the choice between tackling some challenging tidal races and camping waterless in a former walrus abattoir. After a tight lipped paddle along a stretch of very inhospitable coastline we were rewarded with our first close encounter with an iceberg, followed by heavy rain and an evening fine enough to go walking.

Our next crossing, a week later, was delayed by fog but eventually hastened by our apparent pursuit by an economy sized iceberg. Our enthusiasm for the Disko Island crossing in uncertain weather, with ice added to advertised, but unspecified, tidal problems, began to diminish.

Mars & Monopoly

The weather, in the form of strong headwinds and horizontal rain, dictated most of our rest days. These had to be spent tent-bound with Mars and Monopoly. Even these were not without their bonuses. At one, Satorssuaq' for those anxious for more local colour, we were twice visited by a very brown Arctic Fox with an apparent taste for leftover curry Beanfeast and digestive biscuits. At the same time we were also treated to regular

overflights and serenades by the splendid and appropriately named loon.

The wildlife did not quite measure up to my romantic expectations. A tribute, I think, in these waters to the quality of the Mariner outboard motors, the firepower of the local population, and the good sense of the remaining animals in staying in hiding.

The arms of the town of Sissimiut bear a walrus' head (Arctic pun), but I was unable to employ my knowledge of the correct and humane way to dislodge the creatures' tusks from my kayak. Indeed the most savage sea creature we saw there was a local prawn cocktail at £6.50. Seals in the sea there were, but we saw more and closer in the markets. Whales seemed to be aware of their partial immunity and sufficient birds had used their wings to remain exciting. At Qagssiarssule (l.c) paddling up a long inlet we disturbed a white tailed fish eagle feeding and saw it the next day being mobbed by Skuas and Gulls. There were Eider Ducks, Udder Ducks, Puffins, Barnacle Geese, Black Guillemots, Arctic Terns and Snow Buntings aplenty, but of Little Auks, said to be the second most numerous bird on earth and whose droppings can stain whole snow fields red, there were only two - stuffed and in a glass case in Christianhab museum.

Our boats were stuffed with food. This was as well, for the fishy friends we had thought would supplement our diet proved hard to come by. Our line and tackle seemed to break very easily and only our resident firelighter, Peter caught any. Two were very tasty, the third so ugly that it was swiftly returned to the ocean. Perhaps more could have been caught from deeper water.

For the first two weeks we did have mosquitos. First gear on and last off was the head net. Every campsite looked like a bee-keepers convention. They were vicious! able to bite through a polar suit, determined to explore any orifice; they would rain down on the tent like vultures on a meatsafe. Deterrents did not deter. At one campsite we tried to escape by cooking and eating on a low rocky finger in the sea, but to no avail we were still, supper.

Our most reliable Arctic beast was the dog. Once a day, at least, we would come upon a rocky islet with a sledge pulling population of about twenty. They were always pleased to see us, I suppose we were fresh meat. On that basis we kept our distance.

From Sissimiut we paddled for more than a fortnight before we had more human contact than a friendly wave. By this time we had reluctantly accepted that Disko Island was not on. The debate now was North via Egedesminde or East via the curse of Franklin - a hint of an inland passage. Democracy had its say, idiocy played a greater part and we went East, through more islands some no more



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than a Dordognes' width apart, in brilliant weather and the clearest of seas, in this way we came to one of the numerous Christianhabs. We paused here for a taste of traffic going nowhere, beer and sliced bread. We visited the small museum where the curator regaled us with further tales of death by ice.

From this point on we were treated to an ice spectacular, crossing bays of the most magnificent bergs, they were huge, constantly changing their appearance as we paddled between and around. Aircraft carriers, floats from white pageants, oil platforms, castle gates, pyramids, sphinxes, palaces for ice princesses. They looked

Expedition Members: Peter Scott, Peter Hargreaves, Peter Wrigglesworth, Peter Howard Jeffs, Peter Bill Small, Peter Kevin Mansell.

so permanent, so safe, but lines and ridges, sea-cut and heading for the sky at different angles, told of their earlier existence and hinted that they would not always be this shape, or this way up.

The bays steadily became less frequent, the channels narrower, until, on a day of continuous downpour, the sea shrank to a trout stream. The boats had to be pushed or towed and the promised passage began to be attributed to a secretarial eyelash on the photocopier glass. Advocates of the eastern route became silent, portage or retreat? Quite suddenly we seemed to cross a tidal watershed, the water gradually deepened, the 'banks' parted, conversation resumed, we were back in the Bay. We camped that night within sight and sound of the Jakobshavn ice fjord.

The following day, in brilliant sunshine, we walked across the tundra to see the ice front and consider our route. Breath-taking! A production line for icebergs five miles wide, stretching back as far as the eye could see, to the glacier. The latest products, ready for release but still trapped by the fjord threshold, grinding together and shedding great loads of ice. We could only guess the length of the ice front it formed and leave the dangers of the crossing to our imagination.

Solitary Hunter v. Traditional?

Walking back we saw 'That Which No Longer Happened', gliding through the outer ice, powered by the fjords fresh-water current, crouched behind his screen was a solitary hunter in his kayak. Inspired, and anxious for local knowledge, we walked back past our camp to the nearest settlement. Illimenaq was en fete for the visit of the Danish fishing inspectorate, flags and fashion were

the order of the day for its eight two inhabitants. Cutting a dash in our Helly-Hansens and bog trotters, we chatted to the locals in their third language - English - and learned to our cheer that no locals paddled, death from ice was frequent, the fjord was unlikely to clear and that the best way across was the traditional way - with an outboard motor.

We arrived in Illulissar on a gloomy morning. The paddle round the ice front was three hours long, stomach clenching and awe inspiring. Our arrival in the busy port (halibut and prawns) was greeted with the cautious curiosity that men in Roman military dress might arouse in Aldershot. We were a thing from the past.

Qajag

In Sissumiut there was a qajag club, with a clubhouse, There seemed to be a growing interest in the sport and some members were in the Nook, competing in the National championships. In Illulissat things were further back. There was talk of a club, but all we found were three traditional kayaks in various states of repair. We had half expected offers for our splendid craft (Three Nordkapps, one Skerray, one Aleut) We were to remain disappointed.


Other aspects of traditional Greenland culture flourish. Most of the small wooden houses came complete for the photographer, with sledges and racks of drying seal and fish. Dogs were everywhere. Amundsen took his from this town but left plenty for the rest of us. Every afternoon howls would circle the town announcing the arrival of feeding time. Most days the crack of gunshot would announce the demise of a stray and the birth of a pair of boots - the traditional use of dog pelt.

In Ilulissat we were able to visit Knud Rasmussen's house (look at the map, see the film, try the bird), archaeological sites and the local countryside. Rasmussen was the Explorer of Greenland, maker of an Inuit language feature film, consumer (fatally) of puffin mari-

nated in blubber. We bought postcards and enjoyed a Greenland Friday night out. We packed our boats and despatched them. In the last week in August the nights began to lengthen, we had sunsets, lumpy rain and thicker ice in the morning. Time to go, less than a fortnight after our return the blizzards started.

Above:
Angat
campsite.

Below:
Ice near Angat.

Bill Small 





Paddlers gear

The Bruce Foil and Sail Rig

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Above: The foil functions both as keel and outrigger and in spite of being fitted on only one side it is equally efficient to windward or leeward.

Right: The great advantage of a sail is that you can plug to windward all day if necessary.



The growing popularity of sea kayaking and of canoeing in general have prompted the development of the Wing system, a 'strap on' system of a Bruce foil and sail rig. The foil functions both as keel and outrigger, and in spite of being fitted to only one side of the kayak. It is equally efficient whether to windward or leeward. The developments are the work of Chris Hare Marine and Solway Dory who are well versed in this class of work having been involved in the canoeing industry for many years and who recently developed the successful Trans Atlantic crossing canoe the Spirit of Cleveland.

The foil is a development of the work of the late Dr. Edmund Bruce, it is not a flotation device, having neutral buoyancy, but a dynamic system developing lift in a similar manner to an aeroplane wing and the faster it goes the more lift it will develop. When the wing is on the leeward side the lift is upward and when to windward the 'lift' is downward. This odd but convenient arrangement stems from the fact that

sailing boats do not sail with their axis in line with the course and it is the leeway angle that gives the foil its appropriate angle of attack.

Although primarily designed for sea kayaks the K-Wing will fit more or less any kayaks in a matter of minutes without any modification to the kayak enabling it to become a reasonably efficient sailing craft. It carries a twenty five square foot red nylon sail which can be reefed around the mast for blustery conditions. Even in strong conditions the kayak will run straight and level, the foil compensating for heel and leeway and of course the great advantage for the serious kayaker is that the rig will go to windward. The Wing Systems is a dynamic system but even when stationary the damping effect of the foil is such that it is quite possible to stand up in the kayak.

There is also a version that has been developed for open canoes. The C-Wing has a forty square foot red nylon sail which can be roller reefed around the mast, a line operated reefing drum is available as an extra. Again the gain in stability is striking, one can move about the boat quite comfortably and it makes an ideal rig for the family sailor or outdoor centres dealing with young people. The use of either rig will not interfere with the original use of the canoe in any way.

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 for fibreglass solo kayak. Age unknown.
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LOST AND FOUND
Ainsworth Paddle, orange blades with the
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Found on Dee Toller, 14 Nov, at Town Falls, 1
 Ainsworth Paddle. Tel: 0244 344669.

STOLEN
Topolino Duo, red with crease marks at mid
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Designed for the Wild Water Woman.



Many manufacturers could be rebuked for not catering properly for female paddlers in their many shapes and sizes. Palm have addressed this problem with the introduction of the Canyon 'S' buoyancy aid, which has been developed for ladies or anyone else that finds the standard Canyon a little long in the body. The body of the existing model has been recut and some of the components rearranged to allow a marked shortening of the buoyancy aid without losing any of the technical features.

Members of the Ladies Himalayan Kayak Team were supplied with the buoyancy aid to help provide feedback in the final stages of it's development.

Comfort and Fit (including swimming)

With three members of the team measuring in at 5'5" or under, the small size "fitted like no other buoyancy aid has fitted before". All six of us found that the cut and the fitting straps made the Canyon S a very comfortable and functional buoyancy aid. Movement whilst paddling was unrestricted,

but this is achieved without a corresponding loss of buoyancy. The level of buoyancy became apparent on the few occasions when a swim was called for, with the swimmers coming quickly to the surface despite the best efforts of some raft munching holes. The snug fit also meant that we had no problem with the buoyancy aid riding up and restricting vision during a swim.

In additions the shoulder and chest compression straps proved useful for further tailoring the Canyon S to our strange shapes. Once the buoyancy aid has been adjusted it would not need resetting.

Safety Features

The Canyon S has a front zip and two fitting buckles at the waist and upper chest. These provide a snug fit and would be easy to unfasten quickly should the need arise. The chest safety harness is secured by a plastic cam buckle, backed with a stainless steel load spreader. The metal loadspreader is incorporated as a fail safe feature which only needs to be used where a quick release is not required. It is for example invaluable when setting up safety

cover from the bank when the person providing the cover is using a short belay to position themselves over something very nasty. An added clip for tidying the end of the chest harness webbing was liked by some, but regarded as unnecessary and easily lost by others.

The Cowtail, Krab and Karabiner pocket are well designed with the elasticated tape providing the necessary length without the risk of entanglement. The large Krab allowed fast attachment to boat end loops. The whole system could be easily operated using one hand - an important safety consideration. The only improvement to the system would be to further extend the velcro to prevent the Krab from slipping out of it's pocket.

A plastic knife attachment point is provided. We used standard diving knives and jack knives and found that the tab did not assist with attachment. Several team members removed the tabs and devised their own systems for securing knives.

Pockets

We were happy with the amount and variety of pockets. For expedition use in particular, we found the back pocket to have ample room for chocolate, sunscreen, sunglasses, waterproof maps, and a small emergency first aid kit. Even after all of this there would still be room for a cagoule or a thermal. At that point you would have a nice bit of padding for lying back in the boat on the back deck. This pocket is easy to open yourself and the shoulder press stud is a nice finishing touch, but as expected you would need some help to get things out of the pocket and to reseal it after use. The pockets all remained sealed throughout many an impressive trashing - except on one occasion.

Of the two front pockets the bottom left was the most useful and provided enough room to store a waterproof camera. The great beauty of this pocket is an inside plastic loop for attaching expensive items such as cameras. This loop is built in with quite a low breaking strain as a safety precaution (so that the loop would rip out if a camera was snagged in a tree etc). The pocket also has a fastex buckle to reinforce the velcro seal. A nice thought except that

the buckle slips.

The top right pocket is small and presumably designed for carrying car keys or a whistle. Another internal loop would be useful here.

Summary

An excellent buoyancy aid for women or shorter men who are running rivers at Grade 3+ and who are involved in providing bank support. The Canyon S looks as if it will be very hard wearing. It provides maximum comfort and boasts a high standard of safety features in the chest harness and flotation provided.

Samantha Turner

Available from :

Palm Canoe Products,
Harbour Road, Portishead,
Bristol BS20 9BL.
Tel: 0275 842740

Lendal N

I have amongst my jumble of canoe related possessions a pair of wooden Lendal Nordkapp asymmetric paddles, circa 1975. I well remember using them for the first time. Precision jig and tooling had produced an engineered article complimented by a fine craftsman finish. They were a joy to use and handle, if somewhat heavy.

Some eighteen years on I have experienced similar pleasures with the nineties equivalent in technological advances from Lendal, namely their all carbon, modified cranked asymmetric Nordkapp paddles. The blades are based upon their tried and well tested Power-master range. They are laid up marginally heavier to contend with maritime elements, and are available in a range of colours to suit all tastes. Loom colour is as Henry Ford's famous saying, "...any colour so long as its black".

It's in the loom design that sea paddlers are likely to find the greatest benefits. The shaft can be

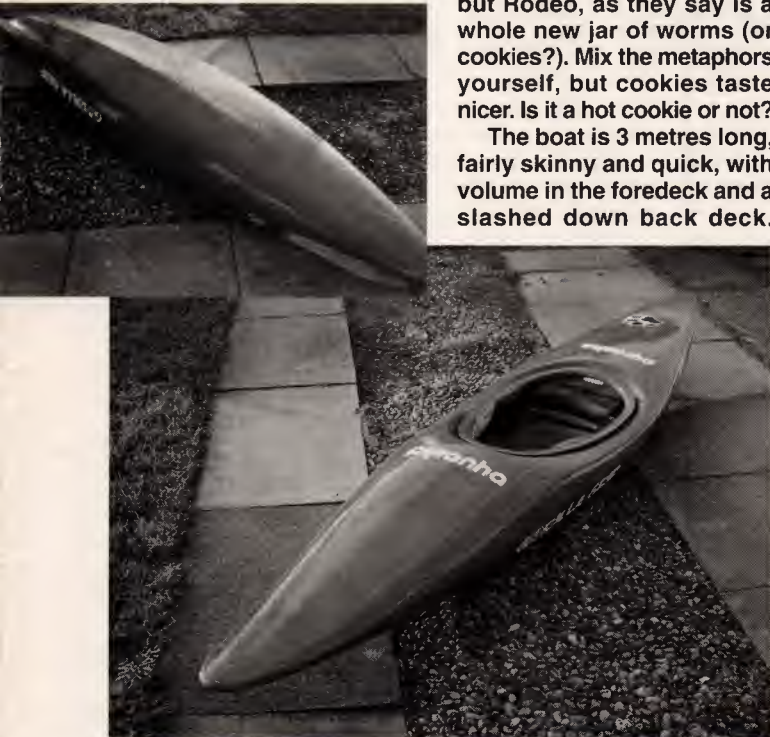


Pyranha Acrobat 300

Following intensive research and prototyping since the middle of last year, the Acrobat is the result of improvements and tweaking triggered by

both the feedback from Rodeo paddlers, and the close observations of the designer. This sort of dialogue has taken place in slalom and river racing competition for some time but Rodeo, as they say is a whole new jar of worms (or cookies?). Mix the metaphors yourself, but cookies taste nicer. Is it a hot cookie or not?

The boat is 3 metres long, fairly skinny and quick, with volume in the foredeck and a slashed down back deck.



Describing it like this makes it sound like a cut down slalom boat but whilst there is a pinch of slalom design in its history it is all new and designed around the stunts playboaters pull rather than working tricks with the limitations of existing designs.

The front volume gives predictable enders and pirouettes, with good airtime, provided you are not too heavy. The low volume stern allows held-tailies, screw-ups and cut backs. The boat is short enough and fast enough to allow cartwheels, in the right hands, at the right spot.

The most innovative feature is the hull design. This is all new. Hard chines on a playboat sound radical but work to assist lift in the bow whilst surfing. New different and suprisingly efficient. As an out and out surf kayak the acrobat will deliver. Would the surf rules allow it access? Shame if they don't, watch out if they do!

Stopper play is fine too, but probably needs a finer touch than most paddlers are used to. In fact paddlers generally will have to adapt to the kayak; it will do the 'out of the ordinary' for the out of the ordinary paddler and it will force the skill issue. Perhaps it is the first plastic kayak with more performance potential than most of the paddlers who will sit in it. Don't be put off by this, it will make you improve as a paddler and as a result play better. The usual Pyranha features are there, keyhole cockpit, full plate footrests, good end grabs, moveable seat. A real forward in playboating and the first production boat to come out of the World Rodeo Championship test bed.

Hot cookie? This one takes the biscuit. Get a bite soon.

Kevin Danforth

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depending on specification

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Pyranha Mouldings,
Marina Village,
Preston Brook, Runcorn,
Cheshire WA7 3DW
Tel: 0928 716666

ordkapp Paddles

supplied in a range of flexibility from that of a cast iron bar, grade 3, (without the associated weight), to the suppleness of a wooden shaft, grade 1F. A centre split-joint permits an infinite choice of blade angles, mine are set at 80 degrees

As a "straight loom" paddler I initially found the Modified Crank concept hard to grasp, (please forgive the pun), but once handled and used the blades set into a natural position. A definite difference is noticeable around the wrist area. I've now used my blades during several races and on one memorable trip to the Eddystone Lighthouse (24 n.miles). The usual wrist fatigue associated with such trips and races, seems no longer noticeable.

Overall paddle lengths can be supplied to suit individual requirements. With a weight of around 970 grams (2lb 2oz) long hours in the cockpit with raised arms are made easier with these light-weight wonders. Drip rings, (an old idea rarely seen these days)

makes a welcome return, if my dry sleeves are anything to go by.

Any criticisms? The blades are brittle and will not take to kindly to rock hopping, but since most of my canoeing is of a touring nature, my days of boat bouncing are few and far between.

The paddles are a distinctive improvement over their wooden forerunners. The same precision craftsmanship is noticeable without the extra weight. Clearly a set of sea blades for the nineties.

P.S Lendal have advised they will be changing their blade production to an epoxy process in the near future. This will result in lighter blades, less prone to chipping.

Nigel Hingston

Available from:
Lendal Products Ltd,
30 Hunters Street, Prestwick,
Ayrshire, KA9 1LG.
Telephone 0292 78558
Fax 0292 671298

Paddlers Gear Hot News:

By the time you read this you will no doubt be awaiting developments from the Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace, traditionally the shop window for new products. To whet your appetite here are some new products which will be on display there and which will feature full test reviews in April Focus.

Pyranha

Creek 280

A new short boat for running steep rivers, with all the usual safety specifications. It also has fast surfing hull features like it's cousin the Acrobat and will appeal to a wide range of white water people. Pictures show the prototype being hammered at Stanley Embankment!



Creek 280.

Palm/Dagger

Vortex

This looks an interesting general whitewater kayak for large persons. Nice to know that Dagger are catering for the fuller figure. Seriously; it looks a good bet for a touring/playing boat and could fill a niche in the market between the steep alpine/waterfall kayaks and the Crossfire. Daggers AQ is now a little sluggish for some and this new design appears to combine the best bits of the Crossfire and Response.

Perception

Wavehopper.

The wavehopper mentioned in our letters pages, and reviewed way back in Focus has received an award at a French marine show.

At the 33rd Salon Nautique in Paris the Perception wavehopper was presented with a highly coveted 'Mention Speciale'. The Federation Francaise de Canoe-Kayak (France's BCU) in conjunction with Canoe Kayak Magazine awarded the 'Grand Prix 1994 de L'Innovation' for what they feel is a well thought out/ quality kayak giving a major boost to white water racing.



IN YOUR
APRIL ISSUE

Crystal
Palace review

Getting started;
help for
beginners

BCU
Approved
Centres at
home and
abroad....

and the return
of the
Motorists
Page.....

Growth of Membership & Fair-weather Members Arrogance or Fact?

Dear Kevin Danforth

Being one of the fair-weather canoeists mentioned in this arrogant article, I find it sad and insulting that you have chosen to ignore why people have left the BCU or let their membership lapse.

It was exactly that kind of arrogant attitude that caused me to let my membership go. Sadly, there is no alternative to destroy your monopoly!

I also have my Mountain Leader status. Am I fair-weather for not belonging to the BMC? I have personal insurance (freedom of choice) for both. I regularly take people out on both activities, and believe that I am safe, but only the BCU keeps demanding money as membership to keep certificates to say I am safe. Does safe-ness depend on a membership charge?

Ironically I have enjoyed some of the other articles and had thought that the BCU had changed. There is more variety to appeal to all paddling types now, in *Canoe Focus*. You have successfully destroyed my new found confidence in the BCU. Well done.

Sue Rodway, Taunton

Dear Sue

If I have destroyed your confidence in the BCU, my apologies, the article was written as a heartfelt response to dealing with the aftermath of Lyme Regis in the BCU office and my personal irritation at the attitude of several hundreds (no exaggeration) of ex-members qualified demanding instant reinstatement (and of course instant revalidation) immediately after the tragedy. Is it fair and reasonable to expect someone who had last been qualified in 1978 to be reinstated with a ticket which would enable him to be trusted (at least on paper) with other people's kids on the water? Would that individual be capable of passing the same award in 1994?

Paper qualifications do not instantly provide safety nor does the ritual payment of a membership fee. The main reason that qualifications are dependant on membership is so that you are kept up to date and well-informed (Focus/Code) and that you are active, involved and a supportive part of over 8000 practising instructors of canoeing. If you think that dutifully paying a membership fee makes you a safe or good instructor, and is what the BCU are all about then you are not aware of where your fees actually go. A developing, progressive coaching service needs to be funded otherwise it cannot service it's members. Staff need wages.

My point was simply that some ex-members were re-joining in haste when really they should have been part of the team all along. Another important point to consider is that this policy was voted into place by NCC and Council, the elected representatives of the membership. If you don't like it, make a move to change it.

My point was a straightforward one, if a little to bluntly and directly put for some people: if you remain a member and support your sport through the BCU then it is reasonable to expect every benefit and a prompt efficient service. What actually happened after the Lyme bay tragedy is that BCU staff were pressured into dealing with the problems caused by people renewing membership (and qualifications) because it suited them at the time. Hardly fair. The problem did not stop there. The clamour for renewals unleashed a torrent of information calls 'Is Joe Bloggs a Senior Instructor?', 'I've "lost" my certificate and the boss wants to see proof that I am qualified' or 'I

passed my SI ten years ago but I never received my certificate and I can't remember who passed me' and so on....

The situation also unearthed a few bogus instructors and even fake certificates! In this climate I was making a point that continuous membership avoids problems all round, and does help us the BCU service our loyal members more effectively. Here is a sum: 300 lapsed instructors paying membership for 4 years at today's rate = £30,000. Makes you think?

It is misleading to compare one sports national body against another: often they are entirely different in aims and aspirations and the way they are funded: but if you must, here goes....

A better informed comparison with the BMC undermines your argument. To qualify as a basic Mountain Leader (summer) will cost you a minimum of £700 at today's prices. To qualify as a BCU instructor will cost you a maximum of £100 at top commercial rates. This leaves you £600 (24 years BCU membership or less if you choose Life Membership).

You have already paid a high rate for your BMC ticket and then you would have to pay BMC membership to get their magazine and benefits (or to be more correct, *High magazine* plus two pages of BMC editorial.)

The BCU is interested in why members leave but we do not have the time or resources to chase up lapsed members; we are too busy looking after the interests of those who continue to pay for a good cost effective service. This is a question of priority.

Am I arrogant or in possession of more factual information? Incidentally this letter was the only negative reaction to that Ender. Thanks to all those who wrote, rang and thanked me personally for being so direct.

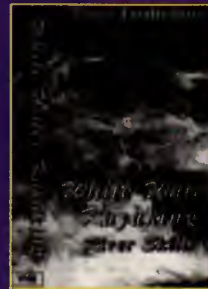
Enough ranting and raving: good paddling for 1994

Kevin Danforth, Editor



Separated at Birth? Competition from page 36

Just in case you thought Ender was getting too serious again here is a competition to get you going. There are video prizes for the best five entries, and Focus could run a regular series if you think it's fun. The video prizes are kindly donated by Rapid Productions



How many canoeists do you know who look just like someone famous. I know there are quite a number out there who look just likewhatisname.

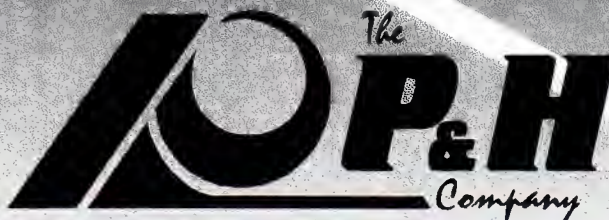
Just to start the competition off here are some Nottingham-based 'Separated at Birth' I thought I would put myself in first to save anyone else the bother....

Send your photos please to Separated at Birth, Canoe Focus, BCU, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 5AS

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