

THE CANOE SPORT MAGAZINE FOR THE NINETIES

# Canoe focus

No 88. APRIL 1994

Price £2.00

**sea kayaking:  
north west ireland**

**top tips:  
for beginners**

**my favourite paddle:  
ross faragher**

## ICE SPECIAL

**competitions, paddler's gear, news etc**

Photo: Kevin Danforth

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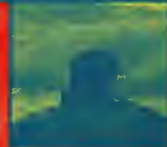
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Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. Please don't be put off writing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

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

**The next Copy date is the 26th APRIL 1994. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the JUNE issue.**



The hard edge assists lift producing lighter, predictable feel.

The flat section creates superb stability and improves spin when the boat is put on its side.

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**ACROBAT 300**  
WILL REWRITE THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMANCE FOR RIVER AND SURF PADDLERS.



# Comment



## WORKING FOR YOU

The BCU's officer's and staff are here and in the field to help you the Union's members, but like all similar organisations problems and misconceptions occur. One such recent misconception concerns the BCU Licence and the Access Policy, in general.

To put the matter straight the BCU Licence is not part of a black plot to trap all innocent canoeists into BCU membership. It is however, a sensible approach to ensuring that where River Authorities insist in Licences the BCU members are given the best available deal. Our overriding wish is for Freedom to Roam on all waterways free of charge. Unfortunately, we must recognise that this is not always possible and in this connection I am pleased to announce that the BCU Licence now includes the Broads. Paddlers who live and or enjoy paddling in upland areas have not been forgotten and have been catered for, although not in such a visual manner, with the BCU's significant investment in access work with the first Access Officers Training Seminar having been held in Hexham School. Similar seminars are planned in order to equip Access Officers with the necessary skills for their challenging role. The BCU has also been taking account of the implications of the Criminal Justice Bill and have ensured that canoeists views are being expressed.

## RON EMES DINNER

As we go to press I am pleased to announce that arrangements have been made to hold the Ron Emes Dinner in consultation with the Royal Canoe Club Founders Ball on November 18th in the Ballroom of the Richmond Hill Hotel, Richmond Upon Thames. Tickets will be available from the BCU Office at £24 per head and full details will be in the June Edition of Canoe Focus.

This will be an ideal opportunity for a good night out with your canoeing friends. (Just what Ron would have liked).

## INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION

Although exceeding the 1993 attendance levels I must confess to some disappointment at this years attendance at 8500. I would welcome your views and opinions on how the Exhibition could be improved and if you were not there perhaps you could let me know what would attract you in the future.

## ENQUIRIES TO THE BCU OFFICE

Yes, of course the BCU Office is here to serve you the members, but we are finding that many of your telephone calls can be answered by quick reference to your year books. With in excess of 4000 courses and over 500 other events the BCU 1994 Year Book is the local ready reference.

## SPORTS CLUB OF THE YEAR AWARDS

For the second year running the CCPR has confirmed that the Foundation for Sport and the Arts have agreed to support the "Sports Club of The Year Award". With a first prize of £10,000 the Awards offer an excellent incentive for the BCU to identify a canoe club which meets the following criteria and is deserving of such a prestigious award:

1. the quality of management

2. the vibrancy of the youth sections
3. the spread of membership
4. the programme of events and competition
5. youth coaching
6. facilities for participation by the disabled
7. an ability to cope with special difficulties, i.e locality, lack of facilities, and equipment etc.

Nominations were invited in the last BCU Club circulation and if you are interested please complete the relevant forms by the end of June 1994.

## RICHARD FOX - AWARD OF HONOUR

Richard Fox MBE, five times Champion of the World received the Union's highest recognition, the Award of Honour at the International Canoe Exhibition, Crystal Palace, Richard's achievements are legendary and have been well documented. His Award of Honour is in recognition of his outstanding contribution to canoeing both nationally and internationally. An example to us all. The Canoe Exhibition also marks the retirement from BCU Council of Brin Hughes, Brin's outstanding efforts in the development of the BCU Regional Structure and his stewardship on the Exhibition Committee are just two examples of Brin's outstanding work Brin Hughes - Award of Honour, we Thank You.



Above:  
Richard Fox  
receives  
Award of  
Honour from  
John  
Dudderidge

## AND FINALLY

According to an interview in the Daily Telegraph with Derek Casey the Acting Director General of the Sports Council, well structured sports are Netball, Basketball and Canoeing - news that we are doing something right !





# Notice board

## Wild Water Racing Coach

Written applications are invited for the post of part time National Wild Water Racing Coach.

The basic role will be to coach club coaches and competition trainers to ensure a continuing increase in standards in the UK. The role will also include both assistance with the GB team and at a grass roots development level using Wavehoppers.

Anticipated working period approximately 20 hours per week. Remuneration package of around £10,000 per annum. For further details and application form contact:

The British Canoe Union, John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS. Please enclose CV when returning application form.

## Richard Ward appointed Marathon Coach

Congratulations to Richard who takes on the part-time post of Marathon Coach. Richard is well known in sprint and marathon circles and will now be better resourced to help our long distance paddlers.

## The Handikayak Sprint Team National Co-ordinator appointed.

The BCU team of paddlers who are disabled returned from Florence in August last year with 6 Golds, 4 Silvers and 2 Bronze medals.

These were the first Handi-kayak events to be held in conjunction with an ICF Regatta.

Brian Bennett has now been appointed as National Co-ordinator for the team. He has instituted a series of one day courses at various venues.

There are no age limits and all paddlers with a disability are welcome to participate - particularly women.

Full integration is the BCU policy but separate provision and championships is seen as a means of achieving this end.

## APOLOGY

Our apologies to Dave Bentzen who won the Chester Rodeo, novice class, not third place as reported in February Focus. The error was not our fault this time: it was either data transmission problem, or someone got it wrong. Never mind Dave, you won, and we've now told everyone.

## Notes from January Council

I've served on Council for four years now and what changes there have been! My first report made snide references to half a kilo of paperwork. Now specialist minutes are sent on request only and this time I needed only 18 sides of concise, clearly laid out pre-meeting reading.

The agenda for each Council is now linked into our excellent development plan giving structure to the once rambling meetings. The number of women with voting rights is increasing steadily - two years ago I was the only one. In fact there seems to have been a general change in atmosphere. Not long ago most councillors attended wearing ties and even suits; now sweat tops, fleeces and trainers are commonplace - one gets a feeling that it is a meeting of people who are involved regularly in outdoor sport!

By the end of the meeting my optimism had risen still higher; good news was coming from all directions.

■ The Thames Tour won the International Canoe Touring Award

(who says our image is all competition and white water heroes?).

■ From the Foundation for Sport and the Arts list of the top 100 British Athletes no less than 7 are canoeists (from a whole range of disciplines).

■ Our Director, Paul Owen, has been elected treasurer of the British Institute of Sports Administrators.

■ We are in the black financially. This means we are in a position to begin to fund our development plan properly and to set up reserves against leaner times.

■ Much of our income has come from increased membership. Thank you if you have recruited members this year. Some (though not all) of the rise could have come from lapsed instructors dashing to rejoin after the Lyme Bay incident. When the case finally comes to court, I believe that the professionalism and high standards of the BCU will be highlighted and the need for a strong, responsible national organisation to look after the interests of all paddlers will be clear. Try to persuade

canoeists that you know to join us.

Nationally we have 20,945 individual members and 633 clubs. Taking star tests and BCU events into account it is estimated that nearly 42,000 people were involved in BCU activity last year in England alone.

■ The BCU is working closely with the CCPR to try to ensure that the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill does not adversely affect canoeists - though it is supposed to be aimed at "new age travellers, "rave parties" and hunt saboteurs, there is no doubt that in its present form parts of it could easily be used to restrict canoeists' activities, particularly where access is in dispute.

■ A constitution is being drawn up to establish Rodeo as a new specialist committee of the BCU.

Perhaps the general member's view of the BCU Council as a load of waffling old bores needs a rethink. We are going forward now due to well planned hard work.

Helen Mullineux 

## BCU LICENCE:

### Another 150 miles of water for Members

The Broads Authority have agreed to the inclusion of their licensed waters in the BCU Licence from 1 April 1994.

This includes the rivers Wensum, Yare, Bure, Waveney, Thurne, Ant and associated Broads, Dykes, etc.

Instant Membership does not allow use of the water prior to receipt of full membership and taster event arrangements are qualified. Event organisers should contact the National Development Officer for details.

Members based away from licensed waters will be pleased to note that the Council approved more money this year to assist access officers on upland rivers in their negotiations to seek more access.

## Canoe Polo World Championships Ponds Forge - Sheffield - July 1994

The Polo Committee are currently looking for any people who can offer their time and services to help run the first Canoe Polo World Championships at Sheffield in July 1994.

We will need a pool of volunteers to help with line judging, scrutineering, driving and the 'looking after' of foreign teams. Other jobs will also need to be done at the event. It would be beneficial if you could speak a foreign language,

but by no means, is it essential.

The tournament will be held between 5th - 10th July. Please contact me if you feel you can help (even for 1 day) or if you require more information.

Alex Longson  
Liaison officer - Worlds Committee  
1 Severn Avenue  
Gidea Park  
Romford  
Essex RM2 6EA  
Tel: 0708 743127

## Fatalities

It has been a particularly distressing start to 1994 with three canoeing fatalities in the first two months.

On Sunday 13th February Paul Gilbert, an experienced marathon paddler was on a routine training paddle in a K2 when a capsized near Windsor Weir resulted in Paul being swept over the weir.

In February Jeremy Alan Harber was drowned on the Winion in North Wales following a pinning in an undercut.

On Saturday 19 February, Colin Unwin of Stoke was drowned in the Fairy Glen, on the Conwy in North Wales again following an entrapment.

Sincere condolences are expressed to the families and friends of the three paddlers.

Canoeing accidents are being monitored by the BCU and a more comprehensive report on the trends will be included in the June Focus.



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## Stolen!

I do a lot of work with disabled people and children in canoeing and last week my KIWI in yellow was stolen from Newtown. The word KIWI is on the rear deck and I have adapted it to be more stable and tracking by fitting four one inch square wooden bars underneath. I shall be very glad if it is seen anywhere and let me know Tel: 0686 626806. This is a great loss to me because I have financed my own work up to now but this is too much at £220.

Idris Owen

## BCU Office apologies

If you are one of the unfortunate members who has tried for hours to get through to the office by phone and failed miserably, please accept our apologies. We have suffered a number of unexpected and lengthy power cuts which reduces us to one phone line, no computers, no lights and no coffee. Please be assured, the office is not habitually dysfunctional. The reason?

The resurfacing and drainage of the car park resulted in the classic workman's error: JCB through the cables! Imagine the comment when one of the workmen then asked us to boil his kettle as all work had stopped!

Apologies to all affected.



## Checking of Coaching credentials

Current BCU members who hold a coaching qualification(s) have them listed on their membership card.

Approved Centres have been notified of this fact, and it is being drawn to the attention of all enquirers. There is still considerable concern with regard to the qualifications of staff at activity centres. Hopefully the BCU system will make 'verification' easier for all concerned.

It should be noted that for some considerable time now, membership applications have been processed within the week. There are, of course, some exceptions, but these are very few and far between and if there is a problem, we need to know about it, in order to remedy the matter.

# photo spot

## SEA Award



Eric Totty receives an award from Dave Evans of the BCU Seat Touring Committee to commemorate his long service to the sport. Congratulations Eric.

## Trevor Bailey Award



Bob Porter of London and South East Region has won the prestigious Trevor Bailey Award. Bob is seen here receiving his award from Margaret and Nigel Bailey.

## Royal Visit to Service Paddlers in Cyprus



Last October Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip visited RAF Akrotiri on Cyprus and took the opportunity to talk to paddlers serving at the base. The photograph shows Andy Rees from the Station's Canoe Club discussing the canoeing activities with Her Majesty.

## Brin Hughes Award of Honour



Again from London & South East, retiring chairman Brin Hughes is featured receiving his BCU award of honour from David Gent, Chairman of BCU Council. The Award of Honour is the highest award for services to canoeing.

## To All Supporters of the Mike Jones Rally

Unfortunately, there will be no Mike Jones Rally until this winter. The Organising Committee has been working very hard on behalf of all the supporters to finalise a date and venue, but there have been insurmountable problems which have resulted in the Committee making the decision not to hold the event this year.

The Committee members are most disappointed to have to postpone the event, but with the usual high number of participants expected to attend the Rally must be, and will remain, the professionally run event that it deserves to be. A number of threads need to be pulled together to run a rally of this size, including good access and egress to a suitable river; reliable good water of a varied standard; a large campsite; a hall for lectures; the support of the local community and authorities; etc., unfortunately, it has not been possible to arrange this combination for this winter. The Committee did not wish to go ahead and run the event where there was

a real element of risk that the Rally would not run smoothly at a new venue. Such action could have the potential of bringing the sport of canoeing - and the name of the Mike Jones Rally - into disrepute and ruin the good name of the event.

Looking to the future, the Committee is exploring the possibility of hosting the event at a number of venues for the coming year. Hopefully, one of these will be found to be suitable and, when all the arrangements have been made and confirmed, an announcement will be made. It is obvious that the Committee cannot give any indication to supporters as to where and when these potential venues might be as a presumptive attitude would be counter productive to negotiations for access and allied issues.

The Mike Jones Rally Committee





# WHITEWATER

*The Canoe centre*

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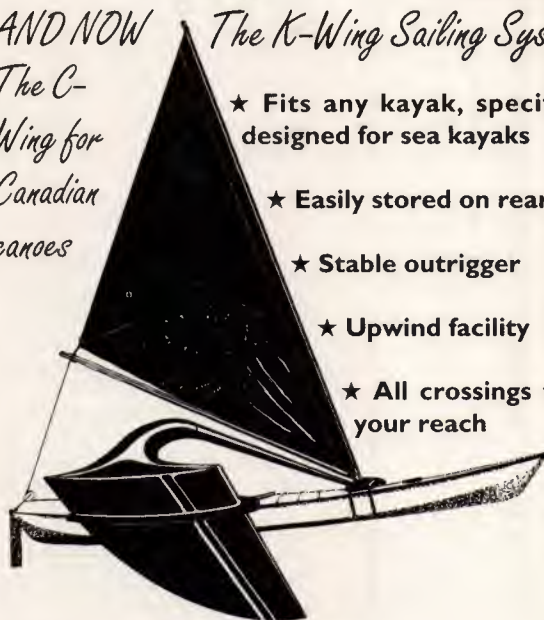
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*extending the frontiers*



## Personal Protective Equipment- the effect of the EEC Directive

The European Community Directive on Personal Protective Equipment was due to become effective on 1 July 1992. UK legislation extended the period when there would be no prosecutions until 1 January 1993. This was further extended until 1 January 1994. An amending motion then went before the European Commission to further move the implementation date until 1 July 1995. This has been accepted.

From 1 July 1995, therefore, MANUFACTURERS and IMPORTERS of buoyancy aids in the UK will become liable to prosecution if they place on the market devices which do not conform to the requirements of the Directive. This essentially means that they must have been assessed to the CEN standard.

Retailers, and employers who need to issue buoyancy aids or life jackets to employees, or Centres or Activity Holiday operators who need to issue them to paying clients, may continue after that date, to sell, or issue existing stocks, until they are exhausted, or have reached the end of their reasonable life and need to be replaced.

Whilst no legislation is planned to require the private individual to use a buoyancy aid or life jacket, it will not be possible, in due course, to purchase a device which does not conform to the European Standard, as it will be illegal for such to be manufactured or sold within the Community.

Some test houses have now been established, and some British manufacturers have already, or are in the process of having, their devices tested to the CEN standard.

## A 'Standard' for Canoes and Kayaks

The draft of a proposed set of recommendations regarding design factors and safety features of canoes and kayaks, is available for public comment.

The 'standard' has been proposed jointly between the BCU and the British Association of Canoe Traders.

Once comments have been received, and any necessary revisions made, in the light of those comments, the document will be issued in the name of the BCU/BACT and will replace BSI BS MA 94. It is hoped, in due time, that the document will be formally adopted by BSI, and negotiations in that respect, are continuing.

If you wish to comment, please send an A5 sae to the BCU office. Responses are required by 10 May at the latest.

### The issues addressed

The 'standard' is still based on the premise that a canoeist's safety is related to his or her personal competence to be undertaking the type and level of activity involved. Whilst it is possible to build in features that enhance rather than detract, from the likelihood of survival 'when the chips are down', the key to safe paddling is chiefly the training, experience, knowledge and personal ability, of the paddler.

### Minimum buoyancy

One significant change is the test for inherent buoyancy. This has been reduced to a requirement for a swamped canoe or kayak to support a 6.5Kg lead weight, suspended at each end. The boat must tilt no more than 3 degrees from the horizontal.

This has been measured, through experiment, to provide sufficient support to a swimmer.

The previous test, which required the buoyancy to support a 12 1/2 Kg weight at each end, was rarely attained, and was unrealistic.

Where kayaks are used on the sea, or for white water, there is a strong recommendation for 'total buoyancy' i.e. for inherent buoyancy to be supplemented with air bags, or similar to the practical maximum. Apart from speeding up rescues, and reducing the physical strain on those involved, (very important on the sea), total buoyancy greatly reduces the risk of being penned against an obstruction in white water.

### Construction methods

The recommendations acknowledge the fact that the vast majority of canoe building is now by sophisticated processes, using polythene and other chemicals. Gone, therefore are the detailed notes on fibreglass construction.

### Cockpit design

The importance of ease of exit is emphasised, but this has to be set against the need to effectively control a white water kayak with the lower body. The 'keyhole' compromise is therefore emphasised.

A new item is the inclusion of, and definition for, 'broach loops'.

There are 'pros and cons' for deck lines on white water boats, and guidelines are offered for when the paddlers choose to include them.

### Conclusion

The 'standard' is deliberately written so as not to inhibit designers. In some cases the problem is stated, with the alternative solutions, leaving the designer and/or the informed purchase to determine the favoured solution.

## New Canoe Event In Ireland

The re-opening of the old Ballinamore-Ballyconnell Canal in April 1994 has given access to the rest of the boating public what canoeists have always had.

The original waterway was constructed in 1846-60 to link the Shannon and Erne navigation's for commercial traffic. Within 9 years, progress, railways and people had moved on and the canal was abandoned.

Starting in 1991 the reconstruction/restoration of the canal started. Funding came jointly from the Irish and British governments - a total of 30 million pounds.

This now restored canal links two large waterways giving access to the largest recreational waterway in Europe.

On Saturday 28th May we hope to run an Open Canoe Rally/Race along the length of the new canal to celebrate the opening of this new waterway.

The race will start at Leitrim

Village on Saturday 28th and finish on Sunday 29th at the Share Centre, Lisnaskea. There will be special stages during the day - e.g. A Sprint Section, the Fastest Portage, A Slalom Section, and some surprise sections.

The race is exclusively for open canoes. Prizes funded by Mobile Adventure will include perpetual trophies.

A C10 Canoe had been developed for this race and is a stitch and glue wood fibreglass tape design. However, if you have a canoe that will carry ten people then you will be more than welcome to race it.

This event promises to be good fun, through beautiful scenery on a brand new waterway with the chance for extended cruising either before or after the Rally weekend.

For further information, please contact:

Robert Livingstone  
Share Centre, Smith's Strand  
Lisnaskea, BT92 0EQ

## The 2nd Tyne Tour will be held on Nov 4th - 6th 1994.

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- FREE organised tours on the Saturday and Sunday
- FREE videos on the Saturday afternoon/evening.

A video is also being made of this year's Rally. Tickets will go on sale on August 1st and will be limited to 1,000 first come, first served. First 100 Entries to Tyne Descent accepted. Cheques to "BCU Northern Region" should arrive with a large s.a.e. by August 1st. Details and tickets will be sent out, plus entry form for Race and Tours.

Organiser: Dean Maragh, The Watershed, Unit 1, Elliot Terrace, Mill Lane Industrial Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 6U

## Incidents at Sea 1993

Apart from the tragedy in Lyme Bay in March there were no fatalities among canoeists at sea during 1993.

The report from our Coastguard Liaison Officer, Mike North, District Controller for Liverpool, reveals that of the 32 call-outs identified, 18 were 'false alarms'.

An increased level of sensitivity covering the welfare of canoeists on the sea is, of course, understandable, in light of the considerable publicity given to the sad deaths in Lyme Bay.

It does mask the fact, however, that the last death of a trained sea canoeist occurred some 10 years ago, and even that was not the result of being caught out by the conditions.

There is, of course, no room for complacency, and every call-out by the rescue services is an expensive embarrassment. It behoves all of us to continue to ensure that our journeys are viable, and that we are prepared for every emergency - the basics of good seamanship.

Those responsible for leading novice and intermediate groups, have an enhanced duty of care.

### Liaison with HM Coastguard

A draft code of conduct has been

prepared, and will be launched officially in the near future. Its purpose is to secure a better level of understanding and co-operation between sea canoeists and HM Coastguard. We already enjoy very good relationships at national level, and in many local instances. It is hoped to achieve even better, and more universal understanding, with this voluntary code. In the meantime HMCG has produced a poster and leaflet aimed at canoeists who go to sea. Please send sae to the BCU office for a copy.

### The use of Radios

The CG leaflet advocates the use of radios. This is a recommendation, not a statutory obligation. The BCU has never opposed the carrying of radios by those who wish to do so, although many have reservations. The June edition of Focus will carry an article on their viability with a survey of the current market.

Our concern would be that too much reliance could be placed on a radio by the 'gear freak', who, having put him or herself into a perilous situation, would then discover that communication from a kayak cannot always be guaranteed!





# Separated at Birth?

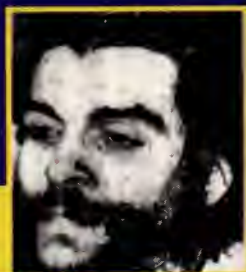
*This issue: North Wales*

**A good response by telephone and in person to this competition so far... keep 'em coming. More video prizes next issue**

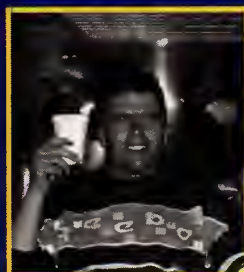
**This weeks winner is Ian Cave of Cambridgeshire who wins a copy of the video, White Water Kayaking River Skills, for spotting Che Guevara alive and well running the Canoe department at Plas y Brenin. Humphrey Bogart is also out and about on North Wales rivers .....**



**Che Guevara,  
Cuban Revolutionary**



**Franco Ferrero,  
Head of Canoeing,  
Plas y Brenin**



**Humphrey Bogart, last  
seen on a river in The  
African Queen**



**Phil Blain, Regional  
Coaching Organiser,  
North Wales**



*fully  
equipped*



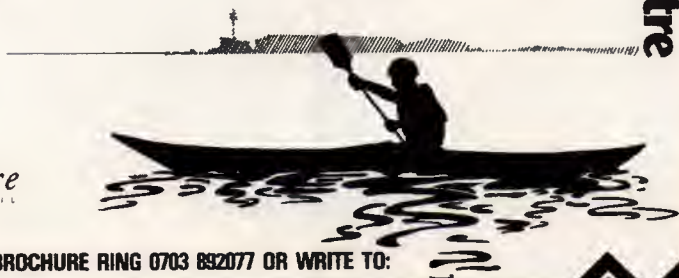
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# Club scene



**T**he Club in its present form has been operating for about five years, and is headed by our Chairman Elect Roy Hitchings, who also just happens to be the RCO for the North West Region. Nestling in the heart South Cheshire we have access to several placid inland waters, and only an hours drive away the white waters and coastal areas of North Wales.

Our current membership stands at a healthy 180, which includes, families, individuals, and most importantly tomorrow's paddlers, the juniors.

## BCU's guidelines

Canoeing at what ever level or ability is promoted under the BCU's guidelines, and to this end Dave Griffiths ensures that there are enough courses run throughout the year to enable one and all to better their paddling, and qualifications, but never compromising on safety.

Throughout the Autumn and Winter months we can normally be found in the nice warm confines of a local pool, courses range from Beginner, Rolling, Improvers, or just come and practice. We are certain that as a result of these courses Dave Griff has not only developed eyes in the back of his head but also in the soles of his feet, as even if he's upside down in a canoe he never misses a misdemeanour.

The culmination of these courses being in the Spring when we venture out and use some of the local placid waters, where the fun begins again in teaching new paddlers who may have aspired to rolling in the pool but are unable to paddle a straight line. From here depending on ability, we have Chester Weir, and other sections of the Dee.

## Annual Events

For many (if you'll excuse the pun) their first "taste" of moving water is at what has become one of our main annual events when in May we

exodus with the rest of the N W Region to Holme Pierrepont. Regardless of age, sex, ability, I can guarantee everyone looks forward to and enjoys the weekend, as during the evening our noisy social tent testifies. Come the Sunday evening we wing our tired way, possibly bruised, way home the talk is of how the "Muncher" won't get me next year.

Other regular events are Four Mile Bridge Anglesey, where we use the campsite adjacent to the bridge, paddlers, and non paddlers alike again look forward to this venue being so near to the sea-side. Mums and Dads can be found digging sand castles in the silver beaches of Rhoscolyn for their offspring, it doesn't matter that their children may be Rock Hopping in canoes around the corner!

Roy Hitchings has instigated an annual River Weaver Clean, which I am sure you will agree generates much goodwill between canoeists, River Authority, and other river users. As well as the practical side of the clean we have a LOT of fun.

Throughout the year many of us can be found on the rivers around

Medal podium!

On an international flavour we have the renowned Terry Hailwood of "Puja on the Ganga" fame. As well as paddling at the end of the World he has paddled in the Alps and last November in Nepal. (Which I think is just a bit further East of Anglesey).

## French Invasion

Staying abroad, at the Drawing Board stage it has been muted that we invade a French stretch of river probably within the first week of the Summer Holidays. That will be a novel "trashing" in a river and not being cold. What is the translation for "my spray deck got ripped off!"

Not all our trips are exotic, or white knuckle, at regular intervals we run placid water trips, which people like, T Bag, James Shrimpton, and Ian Westwood look forward to with relish.

Despite being inland there are Club members keen on Sea Kayaking and people like Pat Cullen, Gordon Sharpe, Ray Scales and a few others who paddle their funny looking boats which look better suited to the Arctic; must admit they keep us amused with their Salty Tales.

## Social Side

As well as the "Wet" aspect there is a very active Social side headed by our Sociable Social Sec and his wife, Bob and Carol Prichard, who keep the Club in touch during any rare slack periods.

Bob has taken us to the Pyranha factory where they showed us not only how the boats are made but even how Dave Griffiths's boats are mended.

Other events are Barn Dances, a Skittles evening, and Christmas Dinner all events where we get wet from the inside out, and budding entertainers (or exhibitionists) get up and do a bit. Weather permitting, we have "who can cook the most blackened sausages competition" under the guise of being called B.B.Qs, using some of our nice locations or even some unsuspecting members garden.

As mentioned earlier we have a Social Tent which is normally one of the first items erected, it fair bulges at the seams, do any tent manufacturers make tents with first floors? If the poles could talk they would amaze you of talk of stoppers as big as houses, and 1001 reasons why that roll failed.

A special mention must go to our main S.I Dave Griffiths, who has been instrumental in running the "wet" side of the Club, he has been the "push and shove" some of us have needed at times, motivating us all.

I hope this article has given an insight into our busy Club, if anyone would like any further information in the Club please contact me,

**Phil Edwards**  
0270 581514

*Happy Paddling, no doubt see some of you on the rivers.*



Wales, and at high tides certain bays around Anglesey, not forgetting The Swellies.

For some their first introduction to white water is in November when as a club we do the upper sections of the River Dee, despite their screams and protestations the inevitable question at the end of the trip being "When can we do that again?"

We have a keen Slalomist in our Club in Ian Strawson who very diplomatically does not laugh at our feeble attempts at Stone and Newcastle's Family Slalom. Ian is always on hand with advice and support. Who knows, perhaps one day we'll see him on the Gold





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# Just A Cape

Sea Kayaking



**A**s we cleared Inishbofin, I looked ahead towards Horn Head some 8 miles to the east, across a wide bay backed by the mountains of Errigal and Muckish. The sun shone down on the distant white cliffs and the flecked deep blue ocean gave no hint of the sense of remoteness to come.

Out of the north west - the island we had visited only yesterday - Tory Island, 8 miles off the north west coast of Ireland. Apparently the most remote of Ireland's inhabited islands, Tory, is quite remarkable, traditional and feels isolated. Our visit to Tory was shortened by a worsening forecast, so we retreated to Inishbofin.

Today, squally cumulus clouds were bearing down on us before a fresh north-westerly and I hope that we wouldn't be subjected to a similar squall to the one which came through and rattled the tents whilst we were breaking camp.

Leo and Jiminy looked on as we left the shore. They promised to watch over us on our passage to the Horn. The previous evening, Leo from Derry had invited us to his two-roomed traditional cottage to get some warmth, cook our freshly caught coalfish and share his evening.

## ISLAND LIFE

Jiminy now in his seventies, was one of those very special characters; thinning grey hair, a pinstripe suit and usually found smoking strong Irish cigarettes, he had been an Islander all his life and had seen a thing or two.

An open hearth and peat fire, combined with soft gas lighting transported us to a bygone age. . . we were privileged indeed. Leo and Jiminy both Gaelic speakers talked of decades of life covering the gradual depopulation of the Island, the competition and

humour between the Islanders and the evil menace of U-boats during the war.

In the heyday of the herring fishery, Jiminy had worked his 28' Drontheim, a traditional sailing and rowing yawl amongst the islands. The ageing Drontheims hauled up at the top of the slipway, testimony to changing times. The population was now reduced to 5 but swelled during the summer holidays - quite a change from the heady years when the island housed 140 in 60 or so houses.

Innishbeg, Dooley and Inishboffin, undistinguished from the west, are quite remarkable on their eastern flank. Teeming with wildlife including grey and Norwegian seals, sunfish, an abundance of fish and we understand, occasional pilot and killer whales. Superb cliffs, tunnels and caverns including a semi-circle of cliffs riddled with a labyrinth of caves known as the 'Binlahan'. This bowl, temporary home to a large Norwegian seal on the lookout for salmon was a haven for coalfish which submitted to the rod with consummate ease. We kept the three largest for dinner!

Shortly after we landed on Inishbofin Leo came to see us and offered the use of the old village hall. However, whilst we did use the hall for shelter, we camped beneath the small cairn and blue cross as Nick had some reservations about disturbing the dust of many years. After dinner, Leo also told us about the horrific story translated from Gaelic, of how the infamous Black and Tan troops had crossed the causeway on horseback at low water with the 'morning' on their backs and mercilessly slaughtered all the islanders save one young girl. . . the young girl who had given away the Islanders' hiding place. . . dark days indeed.

Looking back, we could just make out the figure of Leo but memories started to fade as more immediate priorities took over.

## A SENSE OF ISOLATION

As we cleared the lee given to us by the islands, the fetch increased dramatically. A bigish swell and nit much smaller wind waves started to focus the mind. Lisa was slight-





# another Horn

*in Donegal: North West Ireland - September 1993*

ly ahead and Nick to windward. I felt a bit sluggish and I was pacing myself gently, in anticipation of what the day would hold.

Ahead the seas looked reasonable, but glancing astern their full size became apparent, their long, whale backs masking the islands we had just left. Down to leeward a long surf beach with one huge, bare sand dune known as the 'Dooley' dominated the scene.

After an hour with a favourable stream under us, we had covered 4 miles. A squall passed astern, obliterating the sun, the ocean took on an altogether more sombre and intimidating form and I started to feel uneasy.

We gradually closed formation, half smiling glances offering mutual support. Nick came over to discuss the situation. Four miles back up a southern ocean of waves. . . chance a doubtful bay on the side of Horn Head. . . surf into a booming beach. . . or carry on around our very own Cape Horn?

Looking to weather, the next squall appeared some way off and Barry Howell's account of problems landing on a Northumbrian surf beach years ago, stuck in my mind. We opted to carry on, Lisa showing an iron determination and a cool head in the most isolated and dramatic situation in her experience, and probably mine too! A black Guillemot circled around playfully dodging the waves and the swell, no doubt bemused at our antics.

Our chart ran out at Tory Island and our half inch tourist map didn't really do justice to the size of Horn Head. It was much bigger and more remote than Anglesey's North and South Stacks - our more usual haunt.

Until we reached Bloody Foreland the chart had been really useful. We had set off 4 days earlier, just south of the fishing village of Burton Port, after being dropped off by Oisín a close friend of ours from Garton OEC near Letterkenny.

From Burton Port we had worked our way up through beautiful offshore islands, Nick and Lisa paddling Shorelines and me in a Skerray, in settled sunny weather. Up the northern side of Aranmore Island, talking to Pot men, seeing an otter and out to sell battered Torneady Point to catch a glimpse of Aranmore Lighthouse. The stacks of Torneady Point provided a dramatic scene with a heavy swell crashing relentlessly onto the cliffs.

Then across the 4 miles to Owey Island's superb pink granite cliffs topped by grass and covered by spray from the swell.

We stepped ashore at the sheltered landing spot on the north side of the island, a place which must have been the scene of many trials and tribulations in bygone days. The deserted village with old nets still in the outhouses was testimony to a once thriving herring fishery and a changing economy. I found an old cup which later once cleaned and polished, revealed itself as a fashioned copper cup.

From Owey across 3 short miles to the Island of Gola. The swell thumped up against the cliffs and the sea sparkled under the carpet of creamy foam. From Gola through a narrow, shallow sound to Umfin Island where we had lunch on a beach of perfect juggling peb-

**ALAN  
WILLIAMS,  
NICK  
CUNLIFFE,  
LISA  
PARKHOUSE**  
Alan, Nick and  
Lisa are BCU  
qualified and  
teach  
canoeing at  
Plas Menai, the  
National for  
Wales.

bles a haven from the tumult of the ocean.

The ocean around Umfin was littered with shoals known locally as 'bulligs' which cause a heavy break when a swell is running. Today the bulligs were covered in foam as the swell reared up and crashed violently onto the rocks below. A mile or so down to leeward we could see the telltale signs of the swell charging up the surf beaches.

On past Inishmeane, through the Strait of Inishirrer and its nearby kelp store and on up the coast to Bloody Foreland (so named because of a clash between Celtic tribes now lost in the mists of memory). Big swells crashed onto the disappointing low north west tip of Ireland. Once round the point, the Mountains of Errigal and Muckish dominated the scene on this new and unfamiliar coastline.

We were getting tired and still needed a safe place to land. Four miles further to Currenport, a small bay protected from the swell by a square-cut headland afforded camping on a boulder strewn beach beneath low boulder clay cliffs and our first and only camp fire of the trip.

## TORY ISLAND

Tory was on our list 8 miles away, deceptively close and something of a pilgrimage. Thursday dawned bright, sunny and windless but the forecast was of worsening conditions. The big ferry glide across the sound against 2 knots of stream was deceptive and as we neared the island, we gradually dropped off our transits; even so, 2 hours for the crossing was fair going.

Tory was a lovely place. We would have stayed the night

*Continued on page 16*





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## Just Another Cape Horn

but the 1355 forecast told of a W/NW 6/7 coming

soon. After failing to buy a postcard, we set off back towards the mainland and the Island of Inishbeg, the outermost of the string of Islands leading to Inishbofin.

### THE HORN

The sun reappeared and the scene improved as we closed the first part of the headland. Earlier we had decided to give the head a good offing in case of disturbed water or the danger of being driven to leeward by a squall.

Even though we were 500 or 600 metres from the cliffs, the refraction off the first vertical buttress provided chaotic conditions and I have to admit to quite a few fresh air strokes! We bobbed up and down like corks and occasionally waves would break over the kayaks; the clapotis was quite unsettling.

I began to wonder whether these conditions were suitable for one of Foster's Re-Entry Rolls or perhaps towing someone with a dislocated shoulder on an Advanced Sea Assessment. I think I'd want a demonstration before having a go myself though!

Back to reality! This was a serious business which required total commitment, concentration and not a little courage. There could be no self-doubt, only sound application of skill. The situation made me realise just how vulnerable we were.

The last half mile to the Horn took an age. We had a real need to succeed and to end the physical and psychological discomfort. Just before the Horn, one particularly large wave threw Lisa's boat right over my stern. A timely reminder that the ocean takes no prisoners.

And then it was nearly over. We were abeam the Horn and its distinctive white slab. One last backward glance at the dramatic and intimidating headland we had just paddled round. For a moment I was overcome with a sense of humil-

ity and gave thanks to Leo and Jiminy for watching over us.

### SHEEP HAVEN

Now the scene changed as we ran before the wind into Sheep Haven, surfing big waves which were steepened by the ebb running out of the Haven. To our right the impressive but gradually receding vertical cliffs which form the eastern flank of the Horn and to the left, the wide expanse of the Haven's entrance.

I was a little way ahead of Nick and Lisa when I stopped to look back and I was amazed at the way they were dwarfed by the seas and were frequently lost from view. This was no time to be separated so we closed formation for the last part of the journey.

Just over 2 miles after rounding the Horn we came upon a small island and we sat for the

*The last half mile to the Horn took an age. We had a real need to succeed and to end the physical and psychological discomfort. Just before the Horn, one particularly large wave threw Lisa's boat right over my stern. A timely reminder that the ocean takes no prisoners.*

first time with some relief, in still water. A challenging journey and satisfaction that we had completed it successfully.

Sheep Haven's wooded slopes, sandy beaches and sheltered bays were lovely and in sharp contrast to the harshness of the Horn.

We paddled on to the entrance to Dunfanaghys shallow sandy inlet and worked our way up the channel through small surf to the village, our final destination.

Three hundred metres short of the village, Nick and I ran out of water and we walked the boats, until 100 metres from the shore where we had enough water to paddle again. Lisa looked on amused as I fell out getting into my boat in six inches of water and Nick had to use a hand off the sand to stop himself from falling in as well.

A most undignified ending to what was a memorable, shared experience with friends, through part of Ireland's wilderness.





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# Genesis of a Wave



**W**ay out there, deep in mid-ocean, the air began to stir and a blush of ripples appeared on its surface and lightly move forwards with it. One of these ripples, feeling the air pressing hard on its back began to move faster and along with its numerous counterparts, gathered up more water into itself and grew in size. Soon the water was a 'poppie' of countless millions of wavelets, scurrying along in the breeze.

As the depression began to deepen, it drew in air towards its centre with a greater purpose; increasing the strength of the wind that was spiralling anti-clockwise into its centre.

The wave began to speed up too, but to keep up with the wind, it was forced to merge with its neighbour - it found it could move faster this way. Soon it was a tricorner peak of water the size of a mole hill, chasing and being chased by the rest over the surface of the ocean.

## Head High

As the wind continued to grow, the wave continued fusing with its neighbours, becoming ever larger in its efforts to match the strength of the freshening wind. Now head-high, the top of the wave was occasionally being blown off by the wind into hissing, frothing white horses.

And the wind gathered strength and blew ever harder. Reaching full gale, the wave was now looking mean: A full storey high, its face was steep and hollow and loomed menacingly over its deep, dark trough. At times its sharply peaked crest would tumble heavily forwards, trailing in its wake long trails of white froth, streaked out and serrated by the howling wind. Its surface was confused by countless smaller waves which criss-crossed its bulk.

## Millions

And of course it was not alone, millions of other similar jagged hills of water, some larger, some smaller were also powering forwards across the ocean, almost as fast as the wind itself.

Now at its greatest strength, the gale continued to blow for a number of hours onto the backs of this advancing system of waves. Along with the rest, our wave, although not growing much taller, continued to join forces with those around it. As they swallowed each other up, our wave increased its mass; its profile became rounder, the length of the trough in front and behind it began to lengthen and its shoulders began to make contact with those waves each side and those with the shoulders of the waves beyond.

Our wave was growing wider and was metamorphosing into a line of swell, still irregular and jagged for now, but the process had begun. All this while; from ripple, to wavelet, to wave the beginning of a swell, our wave had been moving through the ocean in the same direction as the wind and now, many hours later, it has already journeyed hundreds of miles from the point of its conception.

Meanwhile the depression, this great eddy in the air, had drawn in its full and was beginning to dissipate and drift away to the North. And so the wind abated.

The waves however remained, radiating outwards from the area of their generation and maintaining their speed.

## Emulating

As our wave/swell line travelled away from the wind source, it continued to seek the most energy efficient way of travelling through the ocean. This is did by emulating the lessons it had already learnt - that of combining and integrating with other waves. Its survival against the forces of decay ( gravity, surface tension and friction between its molecules) was ensured by travelling with minimal effort. And so it moved towards maturity. It became one of many long, low lines of swell, travelling in parallel and moving fast. Metamorphosis was complete. Our wave was now a Grand swell and had travelled thousands of miles.

Suddenly, something started to happen. The wave began to slow down and feel some of its energy drain away as something tugged at its roots. It had

passed out of deep Oceanic waters and had reached a Continental Shelf. As the water continued to get shallower, the wave continued to slow down, allowing those behind it to begin to catch up. This had a compressing effect on our wave and it began to be squeezed upwards and drawn closer to those in front and behind it.

This effect continued, until eventually land moved into view and our swell moved into its final phase; its front face shortened and steepened and its back lengthened, and it heave itself upwards towards its full stature.

## The Surfer

And there, waiting for it, was a small figure, sitting, paddles in hand. The surfer had been tracking its life-cycle, from its genesis to this moment and was now here to greet it.

In its final approach, the wave noticed the paddler fine-tune her position over the reef that was about to trip - up the wave and cause its crest to pitch forwards and spend its force on the rocks below in a

final act of violence. Reaching her, the wave felt her tickling her face as she accelerated up to planning-speed.

Rearing over to engulf her, the wave felt the surfer turn smartly off to one side and shoot out safely from the tube formed in the hollow of its face, and escape entrapment. The wave, now fading fast, was aware of her precise carves and turns on its face as she read its character and power with discernment; sensing, it seemed the potential of each and every one of the millions of ripples and waves that it had drawn into its life since it had started its journey many days and thousand of miles ago.

"She's good " the wave thought, enjoying the way she was expressing her skill and intelligence with such creativity, and feeling some how validated as a result. The wave had wondered why it existed and now, at its death had discovered its purpose. The meaning of its life.

Dennis Ball  
Dennis is the BCU  
National Surf Coach.

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# Access news

## New Chairman of Access

Simon Banbury, as our new Chairman of Access, has been getting about already. Recently he joined Jim Wilson (LAO) and Mike Mills (RAO) for the annual review of the R. Eden (Lazonby to Armathwaite) meeting. Many paddlers will be unaware of the continuing effort required to maintain our river agreements. The dialogue is essential as this meeting showed.

Having declined a gin and tonic we sat down to the business of the evening, the annual review. A very amicable discussion which aired the events of the previous season and without dispute reached agreement for another year and our request for a series of open days. Our performance on the river had not been faultless - there had been four parties guilty of bandit runs, intentional or otherwise, during the year. One of these had gone right through a shoot but the over riding response was one of an agreement which is running well. We aim to improve our record in the future but we have not disgraced ourselves in the mean time.

With the major agenda item out of the way we were able to chat on wider issues of mutual interest unlike the situation on the R. Kent where the NRA, National Trust an angling club and Levens Hall estate still refuse to actually meet us face to face over the access issue! The Eden meeting confirms a civilised approach by civilised people to the management of a limited resource in the light of potential conflict.

When a canoeist looks at the complexity of an agreement like the Lazonby to Armathwaite stretch he may wonder at the way it has evolved during the last thirty years. The dates seem unduly complicated but when one realises that the Eden is the southern limit of rivers which have a spring and autumn run of salmon the agreement makes more sense. The change in dates over the last few years reflects the major decline in the trout fishing at present with no theories yet as to why. It seems unlikely that increasing cormorant numbers will have made such an impact - perhaps time will tell. The reason for dates when the river is closed can be explained by the estates holding the shoots - and the last they need is a disturbance of the unbooked group of canoeists passing through!

Those who paddle the Eden appreciate the outstanding nature of this valley, with a stag sky-lined above sandstone cliffs or the call of a wintering peregrine patrolling its territory. Otters are re-establishing on this stretch and red squirrel numbers remain high along the wooded banks.

Jim Wilson continues to do a stalwart job administering the agreement and trouble shooting problems. We all appreciate the responsible way in which paddlers are using the river. Details of booking and dates can be obtained from : Jim Wilson, Carlisle Canoes, Wigton Road, Carlisle, Cumbria. Open days are Sundays 16th Oct, 6th Nov, 20th Nov, 11th Dec 1994 and 8th Jan 1995.

## Why Register The Wye?

The River Wye below Hay-on-Wye is one of the few public rights of navigation available to canoeists where licence charges do not yet apply. The former navigation authority has been defunct for many years. It is a beautiful river running through an excellent and varied landscape, enjoyed by thousands of canoeists each year. As is always the case with popular facilities pressure started to build up and users other than canoeists started to complain about the pressure they perceived.

Registration of craft on the Wye is now a probability. BCU officers are in negotiation with the NRA at national and regional level to get the best possible deal for canoeists if a registration scheme is instituted. Many canoeists are asking why the BCU is not fighting the imposition of registration, rather than just trying to make a registration system as canoeist-friendly as possible. There is an unpopular but simple answer to this: the NRA have the power under the Water Act 1989 to register craft on the Wye. How did we let this happen? Basically canoeists were out-gunned. For those readers, who want to know more, a short history follows.

In June 1987 the Joint Advisory Committee of the Wye Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty set up a one day conference in Abergavenny. Three BCU officers and the WCA Administrator attend-

ed; all contributed to the debates and the BCU National Development Officer was one of the speakers. The line taken was that canoeing is a major user of the river and that conservation is important to canoeists. Pressure on the Wye was a reflection of lack of access to other rivers, but any problems should be tackled by co-operation through a users forum rather than by the resurrection of a navigation authority.

The next significant event was the passing of the 1989 Water Act. This fell far short of what canoeists needed, but it was not for the want of trying on the part of BCU officers. Amendments and speaking notes in the required Parliamentary language were drafted by the Vice-Chairman of the BCU Access Committee. The standard of this work was such that it would have cost a four figure sum to have paid professionals to do it for us - the BCU is indeed fortunate in the expertise that exists within the membership. This effort deserved success.

In the event the amendments were not accepted. One comment in the debate by Standing Committee D, on the Water Bill (Column 690: 31 January 1989) voiced by Mr Michael Howard made some admission that there is a problem which needs to be addressed. He said:

"I recognise that the time is approaching when Parliament should take a considered look at the arrange-

ments for management of navigation on inland water, but that will be a substantial undertaking, involving many different interests, and it will need very careful consideration..... At present it would be inappropriate to prejudice the issue by giving the NRA general promotional duties incompatible with the present framework of interests and jurisdictions".

After the formation of the NRA under the Water Act 1989, the Welsh Region of the NRA in co-operation with the Sports Council, the Countryside Commission and local authorities set up the Wye Project and Andy Neale was appointed Project Officer. National and regional officers of the BCU and WCA co-operated closely with Andy Neale to ensure that the history of canoeing on the Wye and the rights and needs of canoeists were well understood. Both the BCU and the WCA sent formal responses during the consultation exercise and a further eight canoeing organisations and clubs are recorded as responding. In August 1992 the Wye Challenge report was issued; it was sub-titled "Towards a management strategy for the river Wye". The report therefore falls in line with the BCU approach to improving access through management. The BCU "Management of Access" document was sent to all BCU members with Canoe Focus in April 1992. Further copies are available in the BCU

office; please send SAE marked "Management of Access".

The Wye Challenge proposals include the introduction of a registration and identification scheme for all craft using the Wye. The NRA is proceeding towards implementing this proposal, which is within the powers they have under the Water Act 1989. The BCU is already in negotiation with the NRA to get the best possible deal for canoeists within the new legal framework.

A meeting of local canoeists took place at Symonds Yat on 23 February attended by local BCU officers and by Mr Paul Hilder of the NRA. He gave an up-to-date report on the Welsh NRA deliberations; a formal decision has not been taken to register canoes, but it is under consideration. The resistance of local canoeists to registration was made very clear to both the NRA and the BCU officers present. Proposals for a speed limit apply to motorised craft only. A BCU Local Access Officer is still needed for the lower Wye. This appointment is most important for promoting canoeists interests. We will keep members informed as the situation develops.

**Mike Phillips**  
BCU Regional  
Access Officer  
West Midlands





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- GARSTANG ADVENTURE, Unit 1, Pringle court, Thomas's Weind, Garstang Lancashire PR3 1LN, Mr. David Bagot, tel. 0995-602114





# Regional round up

## Chair's Chat

It was great to meet so many paddlers at Crystal Palace, both the volunteers staffing and providing the information for the English Regions and Access Stands and also all those people seeking knowledge about the happenings in their own and other areas.

The coming season is one of great potential, a strengthening and vibrant regional organisation all working to their own and to the national BCU development plans, developing new access and paddling opportunities as well as responding to the consultation documents issued by local authorities, the NRA and others.

Most of the regions have projects outlined, but unable to run due to the lack of member manpower. Volunteers and their valuable time are essential to the continued development of our sport for the benefit of all paddlers. Please contact your regional secretary (see yearbook) for full details.

Ron Hodgson



## Eastern

Agreement has been finalised between the BCU and Broads Authority to include the Norfolk/Suffolk Broads Licence in the BCU block licensing scheme from 1 April 1994. BCU members can now paddle the Broads at no extra cost, BCU cards must be carried and stickers displayed. Work is being carried out on sluice gates at Royal Quay, Coppermill Lock, Harefield on the Grand Union Canal in early 1994. Thames Water apologise for any inconvenience to canoeists. Copies of the 1994 Eastern Region Yearbook are available for £1.00 (+7" x 9" SAE) from Judith Fynn. The Regional Newsletter now has more County based information; individual members and non-affiliated clubs wanting to obtain copies should contact me.

Judith Fynn

## East Midlands

The new regional handbook is now available price £1.00. To obtain your copy please send your remittance to Ann Hart, Regional Chairwoman, 1 Denewood Avenue, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3EU. You can also obtain the leaflet giving details of the whole year's programme of telephone tours from Ann - free - please send request with stamped address envelope. There will be a family camping/canoeing weekend on the East coast - Mablethorpe - on the weekend of the 1/3 July 1994 details from Ann at the above address or telephone 0602 288413. A note for your diaries 24/26 June HPP Nottingham World Cup race. A Class "A" international - not to be missed even if slalom isn't your chosen discipline. It will be world class paddling.

Pearl Mulholland

## London & South East

A new site, an imaginative course for our indoor slalom, gave our sport a boost in mid-winter and provided good publicity in this area of Surrey/Kent. Tandridge Leisure Pool welcomed us with open arms; we had an excellent turn-out of 65 competitors and some fast times at all levels. The winner and consequently the 'team' for Crystal Palace were: MK1 Julian Thew, Andrew Wronski; LK1 Kate Henry, Louise Fothergill; C1 Nick Woolven; C2 Walling and Walling. This region is seeking to develop it's resources to the full in '94 and needs the support of all it's members. Please furnish me with useful, positive suggestions of how we can do this. My address is in the yearbook.

Les Saunders

## Northern

Tyne Tour '94 5/6/7 November. The region will be hosting this exciting and successful event again in November. Paddle the North Tyne including Warden Gorge, grade III, or the gentler South Tyne, grade II. The water is guaranteed! On the Saturday a race will take place from Wark to Hexham (12 miles). Prizes awarded in all classes. A limited number of tickets are available for this good value weekend at £8.00 which include three nights camping, race entry, a Ceilidh on the Saturday night, parking and shuttle buses. Send a SAE by 1 August to the Watershed, Unit 1, Elliot Terrace, Mill Lane End, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6UP.

Sarah Shrimpton

## North West

January saw the first issue of the new newsletter. Every club should have had a copy. For an individual copy contact me 0606 41106. We have a new access officer David Watkinson 0772 824502. Well done to everyone who travelled down to Crystal Palace; it was great to meet so many regional paddlers. Events - open canoe Dee tour Frandon to Chester camping 16/17 April organiser: Peninsula Paddlers 051 667 3458. Merseyside international canoe polo 28/29 May organiser Mike Moffitt 051 922 0760. Now is the time to clean up for summer (rivers, canals; contact environment officer Chris Cleaver 0625 878838 for guidance.

Dawn Neville

## Southern

The BCU have again bought block licences for members to paddle the Wey and the Basingstoke canal, as well as the local BWB canals. Our 1994 recreational programme starts on 24 April with an 11 miler on the Thames (Cricklade to Lechlade); on 8 May - the Basingstoke Canal Challenge (a charity time-trial over 9, 18 or 32 miles); on 21 May - a small circuit, mainly for Canadians, of the Thames and the Abbey Stream, from Chertsey. On 25 June - a key event - the 9 mile Basingstoke canal 200th Anniversary paddle from Crookham Wharf to the canal centre (BBQ after). Contact Steve Westcott (0252 330951) for full programme. Ring 0252 621381 for 1994 regional directories, price £1.

Charles Hicks

## South West

Sports Council grants to the South West committee and clubs have now been agreed for 1994. Congratulations to the successful clubs. 1994 is the last year of

Focus Sport, which has greatly benefited canoeing. In 1995 the National Lottery comes into effect administered by the Sports Council. Applicants should not approach the Sports Council before September 1994. Further procedural details will be given later. Forthcoming regional events for your diaries: slalom/marathon summer school 21/22 May. Contact Richard Ward, National Marathon Coach. Holme Pierrepont 11/12 June contact Nick Robinson, Regional Treasurer. Youth Afloat, at Poole Harbour 25/26 June contact Pete Pendlebury, Wessex RCO. See year book for contact addresses and telephone numbers.

Terry Cripps

## West Midlands

Marathon races: April 10, Leamington; 24, Anker Valley; May 8, Worcester; 29, Fladbury; June 12, Nottingham; 19, Soar; 26, Wye. Weekend April 30, Birmingham Century 100 miles. Details contact 021 745 3415. Slaloms: May 1, Martley; 22 Wynchnor Bridge; June 19, Stone. Details contact 0384 76855. Tours and charity paddles; April 17, Avon "Doggy Paddle"; May 7/8, Upper Severn canoe rally; 14/15 Acker's loop; June 5, Padlathon; 19, Wye Tour. Details contact 021 772 3739. For the young: West Midlands Paddlers Day, Bank Holiday 2 May, Sprint, Marathon, Slalom, Canadian Wiggle. Solihull BCY half marathon 22 May. Contact 021 745 3415. Sea weekend May 21/22 at Anglesey sea and surf centre - never sea paddled? Now's your chance! Contact T Bird 0922 491448.

Rosemary Preece

## Yorkshire and Humberside

The regional year book is being sent to all members in the region. Many thanks to Norman and David Taylor once again for producing this encyclopedia of canoeing information. Remember the telephone information line 0426 978654 for the latest information on events. Would clubs or event organisers ring Marianne Spender on 0422 882908 when you want include information on the line. Evening cruises on the Washburn start on Wednesday 13 April. Contact Don Player, 21 The Drive, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JF or use the regional telephone information line.

Mike Twiggs





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# How To (Dis) Organise A Club Canoeing Trip KCC Style

## 1. Wednesday Evening

Retreat from a heavy evening's posing in the weir to local hostelry and consume enough Morlands patent laxative to ensure the remainder of the evening is viewed through an alcoholic haze.

As the alcohol takes hold some bright spark recounts the tale of this 'Mega fantastic' newly discovered river somewhere in Wales that he was told about at another alcohol influenced gathering.

You all decide is a must for the coming weekend. (Don't let the fact that Wales is equivalent in area to that portion of the Amazon rain forest destroyed during the playing of a Sting single, and your informant can't quite remember WHERE in Wales it was, put you off).

Spend the remaining time until forcibly ejected from the pub sorting out who is taking who, in which car and at what time.

## 2. Thursday Evening

After a heavy day's posing at work, vague recollections of the previous evening's conversations begin to filter through to the conscious parts of the brain and questions start to form, did I say I'd take HIM?, what time in the morning?, where the hell is Wales anyway?.

Spend the rest of the evening increasing the value of your BT shares (which you'll have to sell to pay the phone bill anyway) as you slowly piece together the previous nights arrangements as you discover that of the ten people in the pub five remember nothing about it and are doing something else anyway, three have already been phoned by another sentient being and have arranged to go together, two weren't actually in the pub and are a figment of your imagination and the other two are quite happy to go on the trip but one has no car and the others's has broken down so it's up to you to drive.

## 3. Friday Evening

Is spent in relative calm until about nine o'clock when you remember about the trip tomorrow and the wetsuit is still fermenting in the boot of the car after Wednesday, the supply of Mars Bars is exhausted and you still don't know where the bloody river is.

## 4. Saturday Morning

Wake up in the morning half an hour before you go to bed and disturb wife/husband/good friend/cat/dog/ whilst trying to QUIETLY assemble gear in car in total darkness.

Drive around to pick up passenger No 1 - find him ready and waiting and load up. (This person is new to the KCC and will learn).

Drive round to pick up No2 - house in complete darkness, no sign of life. Knock gently on door with No1 in canoe helmet until No2 surfaces, load canoe into car and No2 onto roof rack as he had ten lagers and a curry last night.

Drive off into the sunrise (You know KCC do everything wrong) until you find greasy spoon cafe for breakfast. This serves two purposes, it fuels the inner being for the trial of strength and endurance to come and it allows you to blame the next three days sat on the loo on

the slightly dodgy sausages and not the dead sheep surfing the standing wave where you went for a swim. (On purpose, of course, to show the new lad how to do that tricky rope rescue.)

## 5. Saturday (after sunrise)

Meet up with the rest of KCC party at pre-arranged place at pre-arranged time. No only joking - accidentally bump into rest of group parked at side of road looking totally lost, one member looking forlornly at map, one looking forlornly under bonnet of car and one looking forlornly at breakfast in ditch. Use map to pick up breakfast and breakfast to fix leak in car radiator and off you go to the locally agreed access point to your new river.

Eventually find river only to discover it is;

- a. So low you would be better off on a skate board.*
- b. So wild your new plastic boat is likely to end up as part of next week's "Here's one I made earlier" on Blue Peter.*
- c. The location for this year's All Wales salmon fishing competition.*
- d. The "Mega Fantastic" dream river originally described to you.*

(N.B in case of (d) there will probably be a total eclipse of the sun, a passing flock of pigs will relieve themselves on your car and there will be a double glazing salesman waiting on your doorstep when you return home - but it will all have been worth it.)

## 6. The River

The most difficult part of the trip - organise the 'Car Shuffle', a logistical exercise to tax the ablest of minds, how to position a car at the end of the run and paddlers at the beginning before nightfall.

(This is now part of the exam for Senior Instructor as well as one of the standard questions on National Curriculum testing for six year olds).

Having decided in true democratic manner who will lead down the river, all launch and go off doing their own things pausing only to fish out swimmers from the river, Mars Bars from the dry bag and certain members from the nearest Tea Shoppe.

## 7. Homeward Bound

Cold, wet and weary, but happy our intrepid band of adventurers return to their car, to find that the keys for car A are locked in car B which is back at the start of the run. Loser of the ballot then hitch hikes back to car B in soggy wetsuit having failed the SI exam on a technicality.

On the way home we stop at a likely looking pub for food and drink to find it is the last place in the country still selling exclusively Watney's Red Barrel with Salmonella Burger and chips.

Still, the company is excellent, the talk of daring exploits on the fearsome river and who is going to write up the trip for that bloody Rag anyway!

Dave Sermon  
KCC

# Downhill Kayaking:

## *The Art of Canogganing*

A new discipline is emerging in paddlesports. Intrepid paddlers all over the world are discovering the thrills of downhill canoeing. My own first experience of this exciting pursuit was had in a small valley in Mid-Wales just before Christmas.

The previous day, my friend Toby and I had paddled the Afon Irfon, a beautiful river running off the Cambrian mountains near Builth-Wells. We returned to

spend the night with Toby's mother and two brothers in the Welsh Marches. Remarkably, given that it was Christmas Eve, the snow fell overnight and carpeted the valley. It was as we were racing outside into the early morning sun that the boats on the roof of the car caught my eye.

A magic day was spent learning how to steer and manoeuvre the boat, not to mention the skill of stopping it, no easy task

(the emergency method involves rolling the boat over and scrapping one's body along the ground). We also discovered that the driveway across the field made a perfect jump, forget enders and pop-outs - this is the route to really big air.

In time, as the sport develops we can surely expect to see Downhill Slalom canoeing at the Winter Olympics along with the Kayak Jump and Speed events.

So who's going to be on the British Team?

Sebastian James

*Applications are invited for experienced canogganists who wish to be considered for the British Topolino-Duo Bobsleigh team. Applications to the BCU Rodeo Squad, Ross Faragher, 91 Selbourne Avenue, New Haw, Weybridge KT15 3RF*



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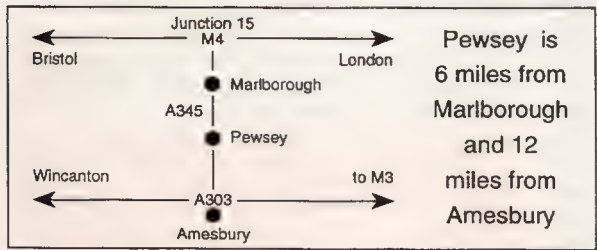
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# Paddlers gear

## Air Time for Paddlers

Recent developments in making things smaller and more efficient have resulted some paddlers trying out a new divers breathing bottle which gives 15 minutes of air in a self-contained miniature face mask. One GB Rodeo team squirtist has been training with the mask and claims mystery moves of longer than 90 seconds on Holme Pierrepont.

Contact Suppliers by Fax only 0602 821797 marking request 'Air-LP Gasp Mask' and a product specification sheet and list of stockists will be sent by return.

## Ainsworth Paddle Joint

On show at Palace was this unusual plastic gubbins; a paddle joint no less. If like me, you come from the Araldite and sticky tape school of bodging things together (including sick and poorly paddles) this all seems a bit high tech. This interesting concept in breakdown paddles features a screw thread and conical spigot arrangement which should enable limitless varieties of feather combinations and with some ingenuity and three halves (!) a variety of lengths. If that sounds odd have a think about it..... broken paddles reborn. I found the joint very positive, so positive that I had to find two stapping lads to get the thing apart again. Still, you wouldn't want it coming undone at the top of High Force would you?

An interesting but somewhat heavy attempt at solving one of the last great problems.

Available from:

Ainsworth Designs, Unit 35  
Industrial Estate, Consett,  
Co. Durham, DH8 6TY

Tel: 0207 580810

Price: about £10.00

# Outlander



**F**ollowing the success of the Sirius last year P&H have gone for the weekend/dayboat end of the market with the Outlander. As a short stable day cruiser it fits the part well with a good turn of speed thrown in, compared to the other short sea boats around. It is a bit beamy for my liking but this will suit most sea paddlers. Many of the longer sea-kayaks around are awkward in all but the most expert hands when it come to exploring caves and narrow inlets and rocky nooks and crannies are usually treated with respect in your own boat. The Outlander is very manoeuvrable and happy in tight spaces but also has enough oomph for longer sorties across the bay. The usual high standard of P&H finish is there along with the innovative rear deck recesses to house spare paddles. I wish these could be extended to accepting larger asymmetric blades as I don't get along too well with the long skinny blades. Maybe this is the next project? It is a great idea

and does stop the paddles wandering around the deck when you surf or roll. There is generous storage space for a short boat (488cm) and good hatch access: round VCP front Oval VCP rear. The keyhole cockpit is a step forward too giving good jump out potential for those difficult landings. Pete Orton has an accomplished design here, good for it's function with no frills, and pleasing lines as a bonus. For many this seaboat would suit most of their paddling almost all the time. **Highly Recommended.**

*P&H also won the best stand trophy at Crystal Palace, and their new brochure is full colour with some very arty photos. Almost a Pirelli calendar without the girls! Congratulations to Dave Patrick and his team.*

Available from:

P&H, Station Road,

West Hallam, Derbys DE7 6HB

Tel: 0602 327177.



# The Creek 280

The Creek is very much a boat for the modern plastic paddler: it's durable, short, safe, buoyant and at first glance, not radically new. The deck shape is Pyranha in the style that we have come to expect. Placed alongside the already successful Rotobat and Mountain Bat it would show its lineage and development without demonstrably breaking any moulds. It is only when you paddle it and turn it over a few times and look under the bonnet do you see anything more in the way of new thought.

Listening carefully to what the public want is the key to good sales, giving them what they want but better, is both clever design and forethought: although looking like the offspring of a more stylish Rotobat married to a Mountain Bat, the Creek is refreshingly different in both handling and performance.

The hull is a direct spin-off from the Acrobat rodeo boat, with similar chines giving both lift and stability. Short & fast is a contradiction in boat design, but the Creek is as close as you get to relative speed in something less than 3 metres.

Most British white water paddlers want something this short (or shorter) and ask for playability and space for a little rescue kit, flask & butties. The Creek performs well to this spec. and plays much better than I would have

expected. It will ender and spin and given enough paddler mass will perform tail end manoeuvres. Where it really excels is in rapid spins and carve turns, both in the rough and on the flat. Although a little narrow in the beam for those used to the spud, the kayak has enough volume where it counts and will suit a lot of river paddlers as their only boat. The view from the cockpit is nearly all water. The deck loop is just beyond your feet, which begs the question, is it possible to keep the good bits and come up with a shorter boat which will go as well? A Creeklet or Trickle?

Now to safety: keyhole cockpit with deck strap, new chunky end loops in the European style, and full-plate footrest. The shape is short and rounded but just avoids the 'jellybean' style favoured by the other European producers.

Enough safety, enough play, enough said. Highly recommended.

#### Available from:

Pyranha Mouldings, Marina Village,  
Preston Brook, Runcorn,  
Cheshire WA7 3DW

Tel: 0928 716666

Prices from: £399 to £475 depending on  
specification

## The Creek 280



# The Vortex

The Vortex is Dagger's latest whitewater kayak and has been designed with the larger paddler in mind. I fit that size-ist category and was more than interested in giving it a spin (spin-whirlpool-vortex, geddit?, please yourself...)

At 10 feet 8 inches long the American designers class it as a short boat, which it is, in the land of everything bigger. Over here it is a load carrying cruiser. As a whitewater tourer for the fuller figure it works well, and would be a great teaching boat, with room for kit and enough volume for rescues, but also enough performance to surf and loop when the fancy takes you. The Crossfire never really took off in this country as some felt the tail a little too grabby. The Vortex is a big stable brother by comparison, and sorts out quite a lot of the shortcomings of its sibling. It should score pretty highly here if paddlers want to trade up to some good hull speed. More thought has been put into seat and leg room than previously. The cockpit area is pretty roomy although not quite keyhole,

and the safety broach loops are a welcome addition and the simple end grabs are functional and easily replaceable. Footrests are Yakima as standard although there is a plate option. I found the performance good across the board, forgiving and predictable. This would be a good entry level kayak for white water, suiting yakkers of most weights although it has to be said that the meatier paddlers will get most play out of it. A certain amount of crude paddler mass is required to ender but high skill and modest mass would probably suffice.

Overall I liked its feel which is comfortable with no nasty surprises.

Functional with quite a bit of flair and wonderful graphics on the crosslinked version. Recommended for all but the featherweights.

#### Available from:

Palm Canoe Products, Harbour Road,  
Portishead, Bristol BS20 9BL

Tel: 0275 842740

Prices from: £440 to £530



The Vortex





# My favourite *paddle*

**A**s a Thames weir paddler, if you believe the opinion of most river based paddlers (mainly those living in North Wales) I fall into one of the following categories:

**A:** Can't run a river or read water.

**B:** Can't pass a wave or stopper without dropping in, preferably on to another paddler's head.

**C:** A paddler who's basic skills, if any ever existed were removed at birth.

**D:** A paddler, who, by virtue of the type of water most commonly paddled, must be fundamentally stupid and/or brain dead!

Well, despite the fact that I may fit into most of the above and I did seriously consider singing the praises of one of canoeing's great institutions, Boulter's Weir, (the Mecca of all great weir paddling. A place where great and brave weir paddlers are baptised and even greater and braver "river paddlers" "are scared \*\*\*\*less".)



## It's the Upper Dart!

Classified by Terry Storry as 5e, as with many guide book gradings, it's a bit generous, but the Upper Dart is without doubt one of the finest stretches of water in the land.

Starting at the confluence of East and West Dart and through to the Newbridge, it is a 7k run of Alpine style excitement set in remote Dartmoor where

epics if not river controlled can lead to a long and isolated walk across the moor or in extreme cases' shades of the Justin Bunn factor with helicopter rescues the only solution. (I would not however recommend that a neon sign is necessary for the Dart, in this case simply reading water and observation skills are sufficient to identify the ingress, egress and inspection/portage sections of the river.)

Starting from the Two Bridges car park complete with public toilets for those of nervous disposition the early stretches of the Dart seem tame and flat and you wonder why all the nervous smiles and laughs from the awaiting paddlers as they stow an extra Krab or long throw line into the back of their boats.

Once on the water this view of a tame river is soon dispelled as the mighty Dart gains strength and gradient building into a good grade



**Ross Faragher**

4/5 with more than its fair share of surfing waves, play spots, and powerful holes mostly of the man eating kind.

At this point I give no apology for failing to name and describe every fall on the river a practice that simply creates a perceived illusion of fear and trepidation for new paddlers to the river who must make a personal appearance to understand the game then form their own view complete with the obligatory pub story or two.

## High Points

Suffice to say the river has many high points albeit not necessarily in the shape of big drops but generally the more technical type of fall, shoot or rock slide each with their own personal idiosyncrasy's that you may wish to consider from the bank prior to running. The other outstanding water features associated the Upper Dart are the interesting stoppers, often boat looping size, and found at the base of most of the falls and shoots. On a more positive note the difficult drops can all be inspected from the track to river left and portaged if required by the same track (with no loss of face even in the peer group with attitude).

The main sections of interest begin to peter out shortly after a "dinky" fall named Euthanasia and the short boulder garden afterwards leaving a pleasant and restful grade 3 run out to the Newbridge car park conveniently supplied with its own public toilet, winter ice cream van and

100 other half naked paddlers preparing for the popular (grade 3) loop section of the Dart.

## Limited Access

On a more sultry note access to the Upper Dart is strictly limited to the months of January and February with a mere 24 paddlers allowed on the river each day. Access at weekends is generally only available by prior postal application and the payment of a small fee to the local access officer who's negotiations for a longer season are constantly frustrated by ill considered bandit runs at inappropriate times. (see Focus letters)

In the event that you should venture into this area then paddle the Upper Dart if you can and for a full weekends paddling don't forget there are many other Dartmoor rivers. I leave you to find these for yourselves as it wouldn't be fair to name all the good spots.

Good paddling!

O' and by the way I should have mentioned the startling natural beauty of the Dart valley with the its numerous birds and the otters rumoured to be found in the river.

That's if you have time to look of course.

**Ross Faragher**

**Ross qualified this year as a BCU Coach and last year competed for Great Britain at the World Rodeo Championships in Open Boat Class (Crash Dummies)**





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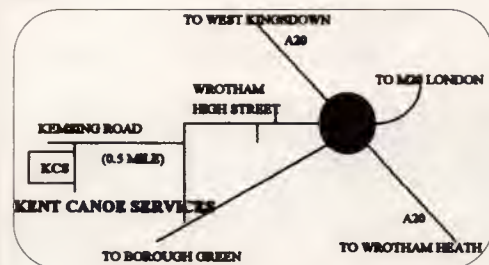
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Map



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# Dr D's agony column

Send your queries to Agony Column, Canoe Focus, BCU HQ.

## Coastal Advice

Dear Dr D

I am writing to request the possibility of some advice from one of your coastal advisors. Myself and a fellow canoeist are in the early stages of planning a kayak crossing of the English Channel between Dover and Cap Gris Nez, west of Calais. We intend to make the trip, accompanied by a 'stand-off' safety boat, some-time during the summer of 1995.

I would be most grateful for any advice you are able to offer, with regard to permission for access to beaches within the vicinity, as well as any special liaison which you would recommend in view of the busy shipping traffic in the area.

Mark Ibbotson

Doctor D replies

**What a good question, and one often asked. Historically the French Coastal Authorities have frowned on canoeists paddling across the channel, landing on their beaches, or even being offshore at all!**

**Recently they have been more accommodating, allowing well-equipped sea kayaks to paddle up to a mile off shore, and subject to special permission, from the FFCK and the French Maritime office in Cherbourg, venturing further. For a kosher Channel crossing you will need to write well in advance to secure formal permission from both offices**

**Our own Coastguard does not encourage Channel Crossings on safety grounds, as you would be crossing the busiest shipping lanes in the world, in a small slow craft. This could be likened to attempting to cross the Motorway in the rush hour in a wheelchair. British authorities do not have the power to prevent you paddling however, and can only advise. This reluctance should be put into context with the other intended crossings they deal with, (li-los, bathtubs,**

**home made rafts etc.) usually charity stunts. Her Majesty's Coastguard are always involved whenever something goes wrong and they do have to safeguard against the lunatic fringe. Generally they are very supportive and liaise with our BCU Sea Touring Committee. There are also tidal and weather considerations.**

**If you wish to proceed then let the Dover and Griz Nez Coastguards know. They will undoubtedly want you to be escorted by a suitable escort boat equipped with radio.**

**There you have it: The crossing has been made many times by self contained groups of kayakers, and longer unsupported crossings, (Felixstow-Zeebrugge, Portsmouth -Guernsey) have been done.**

**Provided you and your craft are seaworthy there should be no problem.**

**Useful addresses:**

**Prefecture,  
Maritime de la  
Premiere Region,  
Cherbourg.**

**Federation Francaise  
de Canoe-Kayak,  
17 Route de Vienne,  
69007 Lyon,  
France.**

**HM Coastguard,  
Dover.**



## The Weather

Dear Dr D

I am writing to you for your expert advice on a subject which has become all too sensitive to me of late. The weather up here north of the border is reminiscent of that of the Land of the Blue People. As a recent immigrant to the area I have found this climatic change to be detrimental to my enthusiasm to get out onto the rivers (of which there are some real gems locally). This accompanied with my sudden realisation that the big 30 is just around the corner has left me in a near catatonic state.

As you are one of the elder statesman of the boating fraternity you too must suffer from the infernal cold, maybe sometimes resulting in your accidental capsizement on courses you have run. I do not wish to fade away into flatwater obscurity as I feel that there are a few years left in me yet.

**What do you suggest?  
Nearly old, cold  
lecturer from Ayr.**

Doctor D Replies

**Yes, I must admit, the cold does get to me: but not half as much as young upstarts. The advancing years bring with them a natural increase in tumble home, that cute bulge around the mid-section, and a willingness to adapt a racing profile to a more comfortable, insulated form. It is a well known medical fact that resistance to hypothermia is increased by layers of body fat. Drink the local ale, eat haggis, tatties and neeps in abundance and buy a bigger spraydeck.**

**Capsizes are another matter and simply down to pilot error, irrespective of core temperature.**

**I can't believe you are still falling in after all this time. Remember, if you can't take the cold, stay out of the fridge!**

## Kayak Design

Dear Dr D

I am a very keen canoeist and love playboating and playboats, and so I enjoy designing them. I have designed a few and sent them to one manufacturer, but I would like to know how to design them properly. I would be grateful for your answer,  
**Ian White.**

Doctor D replies

**Ah... kayak design: one of the two last Black Arts. If there was an easy answer to this no-one would ever need to buy a boat, as we would all be making our own. Firstly there are several approaches:**

1. Find a kayak or three with bits you like, or work really well and make something similar. Watch out: copyright exists and court cases do happen. Usually people start with a design overview and work into it the features they want i.e., short boat, well rockered, medium volume, round ends, sharp rails or whatever takes their fancy and look at what people currently paddle and how those boats perform. Many 'new' boats are hybrids (mongrels?) of older successful designs.

*This is very much the hands on approach and relies on a good feel and understanding of the boat's performance, and a good eye/hand in the shaping department.*

2. Start with a straight line on a piece of paper and draw the 3D shape, a hundred cross sections, and a few long sections. Then cut out the sections on plywood and make a 'plug', a solid full scale model and cover it in wood strips, GRP, filler, etc. and smooth to shape. All work should be precise and the polished gleaming plug used to make a mould in GRP for composite boats, or prototypes, or cast in metal or ceramic for plastic boats. Then you have your finished shape ready to be fitted out and paddled... simple really. Just a few thousand man hours.

3. Get yourself some Computer Aided Design software and do the same thing on a computer. Same process but slightly quicker once the data is in, and accurate in calculating volumes and displacements etc. After you have spent many hours fathoming marine architecture. then make a plug.

4. Or...cheerfully bodge a plug

roughly to the shape you think it should be, then improve the various prototypes from that plug to a final refined vessel. Bon appetite.

In any of the above cases you will be heavily overdrawn at the time bank and will need many years of experience, both paddling and designing, before you are successful. The first three boats you make will be your apprenticeship, and you should brace yourself for heartbreak and disappointment, when your pride and joy doesn't do anything well but float. A dysfunctional design is known in the trade as a 'dog', and there are several about. Never mind, if you are sound of wind and limb, and strong of heart don't be put off; go for it and good luck.

If you want to sell your design, you will have to convince the manufacturers; not easy as they largely design for themselves: but some companies do buy in, especially if they can save a few thousand hours (and cash) in development.

Don't forget to copyright your designs.





Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today.

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# Tales from the Riverbank

## Dear Focus

I don't know what has been more depressing in North Wales this winter -the contrary water levels or the behaviour of other paddlers.

A group recently broke the 'tenuous' access agreement portaging/inspecting Pont Cynfg on the Afon Llugwy. They expressed their own lack of knowledge on the current agreement because "we're from London". This gem came from a lady who had just climbed over a barbed wire fence beside a large "No trespassing" sign. I explained the sensitive nature of this agreement to her and asked her to get off the land before the landowner observed her. The agreed access was only 50 yards down the road and clearly marked. She assured me they had "done it this way before" under the auspices of a very famous upstream outdoor centre. She then proceeded to have a shouted conversation with the rest of her party on the far side of the river, still in full view of the landowners' house.

Our place backs on to the Ogwen. I've watched a local University club (work it out, it's not too hard. . ) paddle this in fishing season, in very large groups, and when the river

is too low to give a good run but low enough to damage the river bed and wind up the locals. They aren't WCA members so remain in ignorance of local agreements and issues until they bumble into problems on the river.....

.....Another weekend day on the Conwy I counted 60 paddlers - the agreement allows for 36! A return to the ticket system would assist self-regulation by paddlers who do go on - we could see instantly if other groups had access;

Do we want to actively encourage increasing canoeing and canoeists on Welsh rivers when local centres, local university clubs and visiting parties alike demonstrate the above lack of commonsense and awareness of the issues involved? Finally, before I dismount the soap box, if you paddle Welsh rivers, find out about and benefit from local agreements by talking to local paddlers and joining the WCA.

Andrew Walker

*Editor: Will Neate, along with others, has also written on the same subject. Will suggests better liaison between University Canoe Clubs and the National Bodies. How about it students?... is your club affiliated ?*

## Member Charges

### Dear Focus

BCU, MLTB, BMC, RYA, AMI, NCF, BOF, BASI, ILAM, SPSA, BSA, SMLTB, RLSS, ST Johns Amb, (Cof CLG), NGBs, F.E.E.S, Sorry Fees, ok, not many have to be members of them all, not all of them require scheme members to be NGB members, not all of them cost to join, but the cost soon mounts and with the low pay that an instructor enjoys (?) is it fair?

Anyway the BCU doesn't own a monopoly. Look at boxing; can't win the WBO? start the WBC, or WBO or WBF (Alright I don't know which came first but each successive one is more divisive). Certainly I've noticed with climbing clubs if you suggest the detractors start their own clubs they slink off into the dark. But a fortnight later there they are slugging you off again.

Twenty five quid? \*\*\*\* the bank charges me twenty five quid to write me a letter. . think I'll join Surfers Against Sewage as well. Stand up and be counted.

Dave Naylor (T.I)

# River Dart Access

## Dear Focus

As local Access Officer for the River Dart, I would like to make the following comments in response to the letters in Focus 87:

Mr Kinglsey, Marlow CC; The intention of highlighting the problems which occurred on the Dart, was not solely to berate the individuals concerned, but to bring to the attention of all canoeists the need for reasonable standards of behaviour from all when representing our sport. The responsibility for this lies with everyone canoeing the river to endure that access agreements are not jeopardised by a few maverick individuals, not just access officers and the like. It would be much more effective if a large number of other canoeists expressed their disapproval of unacceptable behaviour, rather than rely on us and other authorities to highlight it.

Reference River Dart Access fund, this is part of South West Regional finances, and accounts are submitted to and audited by the Regional Treasurer. Copies and/or details may be obtained from him or myself on request. The Fund currently stands at just over £4000, with a Sports Council grant approved of a further £4000. A planning application is in progress for Holne Bridge parking, with expected initial expenditure of £9000.

Mr Addison, Southbourne CC; Having studied his letter of 13th October, I can assure Mr Addison

that a reply was made within a week of it's receipt. However, like a number of requests for access, it seems that the extent of canoeing on the Dart is not fully appreciated. Mr Addison requested permission for 8 paddlers from his club, for every weekend during the season, as the dates actually required depended on the water level. A response was made to the effect that:

In order to allow all canoeists a reasonable paddle on the Dart, permission for 200 boats per day is issued for the 'Loop'. On the basis that, in particular on weekends when the river is high, there are well over 200 people wanting to paddle, it would be unreasonable for any group to expect to paddle the river as a right, no matter how few paddlers.

In response to the fact that the Dart rises and falls quickly, I introduced a system whereby canoeists wanting access at short notice (i.e less than 2 weeks) could phone Mountain Stream Activities and subject to space being available be granted access straight away.

The system of code numbers to allow access, has not however been followed by a large number of canoeists this season. I must stress that to paddle the Dart 'Loop' you must display the numbers issued on each boat or person. Please make sure that you have both the number and a means of displaying the it before you leave home. There will

be much tighter checks next season - You have been warned!

Reference Mr Addison's suggestion of a Warden, I will just ask what the reaction would be, if having driven from Southbourne to the Dart, he was told that there were already too many people and he couldn't paddle?

Finally two requests from your Access Officer:

1. Please inform me of any incident occurring on the river, including serious injuries, lost or stolen boats and equipment, bad behaviour, obstructions and trip cancellations. It makes life very difficult for me when I am approached about an incident, and have to admit I know nothing about it. It may even be to your benefit, since equipment is often reported to me when found, but if I have no record of it's owner I can't get it returned.

2. When making an access request, please make requests by post whenever possible, addressed to 'River Dart Access' and with a stamped addressed envelope. Always specify the date(s) you require, the section of river, the number in the group and the leader's/club name and address and BCU number.

There will be a number of changes during 1994, so please watch for further information and read your access sheet when it is returned.

Kevin Chamberlain  
LAO River Dart



# River Tees Loss of Access

Dear Focus

The River Tees had enjoyed a reasonable degree of access over many years and as access advisor I had great hopes of extending the arrangements in the near future.

The events of recent weeks however have not only put the whole access agreement in reverse but I fear we have lost them altogether.

Systematically over the summer months of 1993 there were 150 breaches of the agreement, in the main, groups paddling in very sensitive areas, the Tees being a highly regarded salmon river. Discussions locally calmed the situation and paddling arrangements were made for access over the November to March period.

The final straw came over the first two weekends of this month (Feb) when a large group of paddlers numbering over thirty came to the Tees, ignored the access points, virtually ploughed up a village green with their minibuses (tearing down tree branches to put under the wheels of bogged down vehicles) and gave the verbals to locals who quite rightly were upset over the situation, and quite blatantly ignored the Canoeists Code.

Not having witnessed the scene myself I am not in a position to apportion blame, but there were a number of University buses seen around the area pulling canoe trailers and at least two canoe clubs (neither of which used the agreed access points) Need I say more!

I should add at this point that a number of other Clubs and individuals did seek advice on river levels and access points for this weekend.

I am all in favour of being a free spirit and I would dear-

ly love to see the Tees return to the halcyon days when we had no need of agreements etc but sadly life is no longer like that, we live in a shrinking world where we have to share resources and at least respect the other man's view.

This latest debacle has stripped me of any credibility when negotiating access I am now unable to persuade riparian owners that we can be a responsible group of sportsmen and women.

I am given to understand that many groups including some of those mentioned do not belong to are affiliated to the BCU and so have no direct access to the comprehensive network of BCU River Advisers.

Finally a lot of confusion over access arises from a number of published river guides which give access points to a number of rivers which are certainly outside those points agreed to on behalf of all canoeists.

Before the shouts of "who are you to negotiate on my behalf" ring out please consider the alternatives, because it's those alternatives which have most probably lost us the Tees.

To have any hope of retrieving the situation we must try to stick to the arrangements:

1. Paddling all year High Force to Middleton in Teesdale Pass required.

2. November 1st to End March Middleton to Whorlton Via AGREED ACCESS POINTS ONLY.

3. No access at anytime (except for WW races) from Eggleston Bridge (involves going over private property).

Please contact LAO for details of access points and river levels.

Len Smith, BCU LAO River Tees.



## Home Thoughts from Abroad

Dear Focus

I work and live abroad. Coming back to visit my family, I find a small pile of Focuses waiting to be read. When I've finished, I sit down to write this.

Letters which criticise suck. They're depressing (Am I criticising the critics?). To my knowledge no other sports magazine has a readership so negative about the content of a magazine which represents their interests. A good idea is to leave the criticism to people who are paid to criticise. Our effort and precious time is better used in creativity.

When we take a look at other countries, Britain has one of the most comprehensive organisations, representing canoeing of every type. Many federations only cater for Olympic competitors. If you have ever tried to prise a response from the federations of other countries, it is very difficult.

Britain is extremely fortunate to have an organisation like this. Until I had worked away, I did not appreciate what the BCU or Focus were working for. I was in the disgruntled Senior Instructor league. Suddenly finding myself without the support of the union or the magazine it became obvious what role they play. It may not be as easy to recognise for people who have not been detached from the BCU but you don't appreciate what you've got until you haven't got it.

A positive approach is needed by all members. "It's not what your magazine can do for you, it's what you can do for your magazine." We're lucky: it is our magazine and we can contribute.

I'm sure all this has been said before, in some form or another, but wouldn't it be nice if this letter was the last in the long line of criticisms?

B Dingwall

## My First Time In A Stopper

STAR Dear Focus

LETTER We set off to Welshpool where we were going to paddle the part of the longest river in Britain the River Severn. It took us one and a half hours to get there. There was beautiful scenery on the way with Red, Yellow and Orange leaves on the trees.

When we finally arrived we had a look at the river and then we had to wait for everybody to come. The first two people to appear were Ian and Austin Jones. Once everyone was there we set off for Newtown which was where we were going to get in.

When we were all at Newtown we

got changed and got in. On the first part of the river were a lot of rapids and right at the very bottom of the rapids was a stopper. I went down and hit the stopper sideways WHOOSH!!! I was under the water, as you can imagine I panicked a bit, but in no time at all I was out having swam in my very first stopper. After I was fine apart from my boat it twirled in all different directions but when I got the hang of it I was fine. Rapids, rapids we went down lots of rapids.

We saw loads of birds and beautiful coloured trees I was really fascinated. The next part of the river was a weir so we got out and had lunch then decided it was too hard and dangerous to get down so we got in at

the bottom of it. It was still choppy but not as rough as the weir.

After this we paddled on a bit further. Then we came to some really heavy rapids which were by a bridge but I was ok because I had lots of good friends around me and my Dad. After all of this a man called Dave Perry jumped out of his boat because he was practising something. When we finally got to the end we got out and got dry; fetched the car and drove home. I would like to thank my dad and friends for taking me.

It would be nice to see more children out paddling because its fun!

By Samantha Peter  
(Aged 10)

## Dumb & Daft Joe Public?

STAR Dear Focus

LETTER Thank you for your colourful Canoe Focus magazine no 86. I see at the foot of the front cover

you boast a readership of over 20,000 well done! Now to my reason for writing to you - Do you agree that some of the 20,000 may not understand some of your abbreviations? and can you imagine someone picking up a Canoe Focus Magazine who knows nothing at all about the sport! I'm sure they would be put off by all the jargon and in speak.

Please can you remedy this failing, by including a section in every issue for dumb, daft and uninformed Joe Public. For example, a list of canoe descriptions i.e C1? C2? K1? K2?, Slalom etc, which vessel do they sit in or kneel in? Please illustrate in simple sketch form, all types of canoe and paddler and label clearly in easily understood language.

I am one of the ignorant who would benefit.

John Leslie Smith

Editor: Point taken John. As you will see from this issue we have started a beginners series. Space restrictions prevent Focus carrying masses of novice information but this is available in abundance in other BCU publications, such as the comprehensive BCU Canoeing Handbook, and the Become a Star Canoeist reviewed on the Book and Video Page.





# b o o k & v i d e o r e v i e w

All Books & Videos reviewed here are available at discount from BCU Supplies. Ring 0533 830659 and ask for a brochure if you have not received one in your Focus Mailing

All reviews by Kevin Danforth

## Cold Wet and Alive

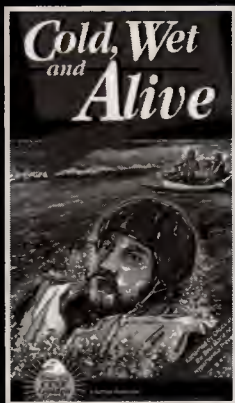
Available from BCU Supplies.



At last a training video which clearly outlines the problems and risks of Cold Water immersion and hypothermia. Despite the melodramatic title everything you ever wanted to know about getting cold and wet is here in a very watchable and straightforward presentation.

This would be an excellent resource for BCU course organisers at all levels, but particularly qualification courses.

Enjoyable, factual and spot-on information. The video was produced with the aid of a US Coast Guard grant, probably for less than the cost of one helicopter rescue.....makes you think doesn't it? Essential Viewing.



## Canoeing and Kayaking:

American Canoe Association Instruction manual.

Available from BCU Supplies.



It is always interesting to see how another country does things and how their systems and organisations work. This is their equivalent of our BCU Canoeing Handbook slanted towards the aspirant instructor. As such it hits the mark pretty well. The layout, chapter topics and terminology are very different to our own but the basic principles of teaching and safety are identical. There are lots of ways of skinning cats but the outcome is usually a skinless cat.

Really good content includes:

Conditioning-stretching and warm up for paddling, lesson organising, rescue and a whole chapter on certification.

This is a 'must read' book for aspirant BCU Instructors and gets the point across clearly. Essentially it doesn't matter what you call a stroke as long as you can teach it successfully and it works. There is a lot worth thinking about in this book and whilst it is not perfect, or as comprehensive as some of the resources our BCU Coaching service produce it is a very useful 'add-on'.



ISBN 0-89732-136-7

## Darkside of the Waves Cresting the Restless Waves

Paul Caffyn

Available from BCU Supplies



Paul Caffyn is known amongst British sea paddlers as a long distance junkie, even by their standards. Having circumnavigated Britain he has gone off to the far east and Australasia and kayaked around Japan, Australia and New Zealand. I expect after every long paddle he has a bit of a rest and writes travelogues like these two books, detailing his adventures and thoughts on trips to Stewart Island and the circumnavigation of Long Island. The third book of the New Zealand trilogy is also available now. If you like salt water and a good read, settle down in the safety and dry of your own home and enjoy the journeys.

A good maritime perspective from a small boat  
Highly Recommended



## How to be a Canoe Star: A Guide to Taking Your Star Tests by Kath Wright

BCU Publication



The most commonly asked questions of the beleaguered BCU instructor is 'what do I have to do to pass my one/two/three star?' and 'what should I buy and how does it work?'

Kath Wright has laid out all you ever wanted to know On Kayak Star test in one easily affordable book. Even if you never want to sew that three star badge on your buoyancy aid or swimming trunks there is a wealth of information here for newcomers to the sport. It bridges the gap between the comprehensive BCU Canoeing Handbook and the stark Synopsis of tests and awards, providing clear diagrams and easily read text, in layman's language, rather than paddler

jargonese.

Price: £4.95 non members, £3.95 members plus £1 p&p

This is a valuable resource for instructors too, saving a lot of long winded explanations of the basics. For the badge hunters the syllabus of each level is clearly stated, along with what the examiner is looking for. No mysteries here and rightly so. The biggest plus of all is the conciseness and clarity, good information well presented. Kath should be congratulated on assembling so many top tips and handy hints. Hopefully this book will be the first of many in the same format.

Essential reading for beginners, highly recommended.

ISBN 0-900082-05-4



ISBN 0-9597823-0-3  
ISBN 0-9597823-1-1





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VISA





# Motoring focus

M Severn?

The return of the popular page covering the trials and tribulations of mobile paddlers, their wheels, their trailers, roof racks and related topics.

## All Terrain?

Little did I realise just how much my motoring was an inherent part of my canoeing until I discovered the journalistic aspirations of the contributors to Focus. Reading of the passionate embraces of Citroens and ERF tippers, of the abrasive effects of Silicon Dioxide bought back fond memories of my former pride and joy - a 1969 series 2a air portable Land Rover which had been an inherent part of my outdoor activities.

Parting proved a painful necessity since economic fortunes meant I could no longer support it's addiction to diesel fuel. As the new owner tried to comprehend the intricacies of four gear levers I found myself recalling many memories of our relationship and of how ideal she was as a vehicle for a canoeist.

Each journey offered wonderful opportunities for canoe training. The steering and gear

shifts offered excellent trunk rotation and arm muscle training. The ventilation system offered excellent climatic conditioning as leaky floorboards, roof and door seals allowed a wide range of meteorological conditions to be experienced. This could be the trauma of cold water dripping down my neck at just the moment when maximum concentration was required, or the need to peer through a haze of water vapour and spray. In winter conditions of course this could very often create a wonderful simulation of the marine environment as the salt laden spray off the roads entered the vehicle. I must of course not forget the truly amazing opportunities for training in diagnosis of hypothermia.

Driving her necessitated skill and planning. Hard braking was not unlike shooting a waterfall - press very hard on the foot ped-

als and pray. Gear changes - double declutching requires hand foot co-ordination that canoeists sometimes need. And as for cornering... the knees had to be braced against the steering column and door to stay in the seat.

Dents and scratches? No problem since the more she got, the more macho she looked - rather like our battered kayaks. And as for the problem of malodorous wetsuits and last months sandwiches - well they really were rather insignificant compared to the pervasive odour of sheep droppings and diesel...! All easily cured by liberal interior applications of the pipe.

So far as I can recall her technical limit was probably grade two or three white water provided the route was no deeper than three feet, but summers lack of water rather than rendering rivers un-canoeable rendered them dri-



veable although the access and legal situation precluded any serious attempts at the upper Tees by motor.

Whilst I never actually rolled her I certainly got her well pinned in various holes. Perhaps the greatest indignity was that of being rescued from a three foot ditch that was subtly located in the midst of a vast array of nettles. The tow line being attached to a passing Vauxhall Cavalier!

**Embarrassed from North Yorkshire**

## Bulk Business on the Ardeche.

Just when you thought you had reached your limit with the club trailer, or decided you were taking liberties with the payload of your roofrack, it is worth having a look at how commercial operators in France cope with moving open canoes from bottom to top of the River Ardeche. These mega trailers are the norm and the French drivers drive like French drivers do...in other words, as if they weren't pulling a trailer, and as if they are driving a Ferrari at mach 8. Makes a trip to the Mike Jones with seven kayaks on the roof of your Ford Escort seem normal and sensible doesn't it ?



## Boats, beer & Banter in Czecho



We had a marvellous family canoeing holiday in Czechoslovakia. It was characterized by lots of people, lots of boats, lots of talking and lots of beer. We moved campsite downriver daily and gradually got to know people as our different routines intermeshed and our pace of life was relaxed.

Their concept of recreational canoeing was epitomised for me by two characters who were travelling with their double bass

carefully lashed on top of their camping gear. Guitars were commonplace. Obviously capsizes were not even contemplated.

What astounded me was the transport that came to retrieve the various groups at the end of the week. While it may not be everyone's bottle of beer it is certainly an approach that provides recreation for many at a minimum cost.

Ann Hart





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The Genuine Article



**PHOENIX**

This Phoenix has truly risen up from the ashes. After the total destruction from the fire at the works in August 1993, we are delighted to say that we are back, and after the excellent response at Crystal Palace, are looking forward to the coming year.

As before we offer the highest quality neoprene spray decks all made to the original **BUSHSPORT** designs. To add to this year's list we now offer neoprene zipped or unzipped marathon decks, nylon decks with neoprene waists and an exciting range of bright hypalon colours.

We would like to thank everyone for their support during the past year, traders and customers alike.

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# Competition *focus*

## SLALOM SNIPPETS

### CANOE SLALOM MAKES ITS POINT

British Canoe Slalom is dragging itself into the 21st century. Visitors to the International Canoe Exhibition could not fail to pick up the optimism displayed on the Stand, for the first time in its rightful position in the Main Hall. New skills awards, new coaching structures, a greater understanding of competitor needs must continue to ensure that the tradition of Great Britain winning medals at every World Championships continues and that the base of the pyramid receives the right level of support and encouragement.

### WHAT A GOOD SHOW

By the time you read this, the 1994 season will be in full swing, if you're new to slalom, do send for a copy of the 1994 Slalom Yearbook - at £2.50 inc p&p from BCU Slalom Committee, The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark, NG23 5RZ - it contains all you need to know about slalom and is the only publication containing the approved and correct version of the full 1994 Calendar of Slalom events. If you are working from another version, please check dates and venues with Slalom Development Officer, before travelling!

### SEE THE WORLDS BEST AT NOTTINGHAM

First of the five event World Cup series takes place at Nottingham during the last weekend in June - around 40 nations are expected to compete, so make a date, come and join us!

### TWO GREAT PRIZES - TWO GREAT JUNIORS!

Delapre Blades and Phoenix of Nottingham donated product prizes to the best junior man and woman newcomers to Division 1 - Howard Farley of Delapre and Joel Scott of Phoenix presented the awards personally at Crystal Palace to Daniel Cook of Stafford and Stone Canoe Club and Rachael Snutch of Lincoln. WELL DONE AND THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to all the Volunteer Organisers of the Ranking Events held throughout the UK during March to October - without you and your club, there wouldn't be a Ranking System!

### AND FINALLY...

If you'd like to know more about Slalom, how to get started, how to learn Slalom Skills - pick up the phone or write to Sue Wharton, Slalom Development Officer, The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark, NG23 5RZ Tel: 0636 705363

## Tees Side National Pool Slalom Championships -

*Crystal Palace 19/20 February 1994*



Peter Orton, Regional Winner

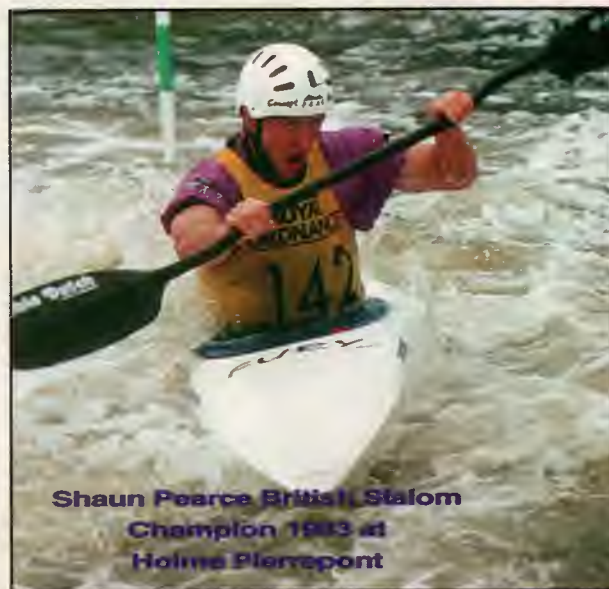
Around 80 competitors took part in the annual knock-out competition held alongside the International Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace. Sponsors, Tees Side Development Corporation were also present at the poolside and witnessed the immediate excitement created for spectators and racers alike during the head to head confrontations which brought the usual thrills and spills with incredibly close racing throughout both days of competition. Organised by Don Raspin and John Pooley and a dedicated Team, Saturday's event, the English Regions Team Championship, saw the East Midlands Team win outright and take the Slalom Sports shield with a final score of twelve points with North West and the Northern Region second and third with 21 and 22 points respectively. Andrew Wronksi representing London SE region took individual gold and the men's kayak title, Heather Corrie and Pete Orton, of East Midlands, the Regional Women's and C1 Championship and Pete Janes and Andy Dancer of Southern Region, paddling together again for the first time in 18 months won the Canadian doubles title.

Sunday saw the qualifiers from the Regional event competing against the invited paddlers which included our own gold medallists from the 1993 World Championships - Melvyn Jones and Shaun Pearce and Olympic Gold medallist Lisa Micheler from Germany competing as guests.

It's amazing what pressure can do - self inflicted or otherwise! Competing in front of a packed house brought out the best again in Shaun Pearce who with steel-like determination whacked the opposition and took the National title, although not without a very close shave in an earlier round against Melvyn who had travelled from Augsburg especially to compete! On the other hand, Teesider, Ian Raspin amazed us all by spinning in the wrong spot which resulted in immediate disqualification and total disbelief in his own action. Lynn Simpson and Lisa Micheler raced the final of the women's event which Lynn won without fault and Richard Davenport beat last year's winner Pete Orton in the Canadian Singles class. Janes and Dancer took the National doubles "gold" and in fact made it a doubles weekend to remember having become Regional champions earlier!

Ron Norman OBE, Chairman of TDC and on a flying visit to Crystal Palace presented the trophies to the winners. Canoe Slalom is proud to be working together with his Corporation whose investment in the new Tees Barrage scheme will result in both a new purpose built Slalom Course at Stockton on Tees due to be officially opened in Spring 1995, and many new facilities for watersports enthusiasts.

Sue Wharton 



Shaun Pearce British Slalom Champion 1993 at Holme Pierrepont



# Lynn Simpson in the Hot Seat



## When did you get involved in canoeing?

At the age of 8 when I joined Hull and District Canoe Club. I started slalom along with my brother Neil and we moved up the divisions together, both being promoted to Premier after the 1987 season.

## Have you any other interests?

I haven't much time to spend on anything other than my canoeing and studying. I'm in my final year at Nottingham University studying BA Economics, but I do like to keep up

with current affairs, going to the cinema and the occasional party. I am enthusiastic about everything that is important to me and I feel that I live life at one hundred miles per hour all day, every day.

## When did you first achieve selection to the British Team?

In 1986, when I went to Sweden with the Under 16 group. I won the Junior Pre-Worlds title in 1989 and made the transition to senior team easily in 1990. I did, however, have a huge disappointment in 1991 when I failed to make the Senior Worlds Team, although that in itself was a big learning experience, making me grow up and take a whole new outlook on life.

## Are you confident for the future?

Yes, I have a tremendous belief in myself. This year, I aim to pass final exams for my degree and to become World Cup Champion. I only do the sport for myself and what I achieve is for me first, although the happiness and pride I see in my parent's eyes comes a close second.

## What about 1995?

I look forward with excitement to Nottingham 1995 - the home girl going for gold. I also look forward to 1996 and want to go to the Olympics knowing that I have a realistic chance of a medal. Up until then, canoeing will be my priority, but after that, I would like to make a career for myself using my economics degree.

## How do you cope with the lack of finance in the sport?

People ask about the financial rewards in sport. I support financial rewards as sports people are professionals at their job, but I accept that all sports cannot attract big money. I canoe because I have great fun, and when I stop having fun I will know that it's time to move on to something else. I have the opportunity to travel, which I really love. I have had great support from my home village of South Cave, Brough and recently, I have become a member of the Top 100 Club and have been awarded generous grant aid from the Foundation for Sport and

## THE UK'S TOP SLALOMISTS FROM THE 1993 SEASON

### K1 Men

Shaun Pearce  
Paul Ratcliffe  
Rob Wright  
David Crosbee  
Ian Raspin  
Len Shackleton

### K1 Women

Lynn Simpson  
Joan Jayes  
Maria Lund  
Penny Briscoe  
Rachel Crosbee  
Emma Player

### C1

Richard Domoney  
Mark Delaney  
Bill Horsman  
Peter Bell  
Chris Wilson  
Toby Morgan

### C2

Phillip Green/Stephen Green  
Stuart Pitt/Mike Millar  
Andrew Roden/James Roden

## Plastic boaters watch this space

Remember we're working hard to see whether you would like to see a separate divisional system but, we need your input and feedback too! Looking around the exhibition in February, there were some super all purpose "plastic"

boats with designers just willing slalom to take these on-board. Thanks to Graham Mackereth of Pyranha and to Nigel Murray for their comments! More please to Slalom Development Officer, address on page 38.

# POLO at the PALACE 1994

## YOUTH

Eight youth teams competed in the final rounds of the canoe polo championships at Crystal Palace, on the Saturday of the International Canoe Exhibition. In the quarter finals close fought matches between Kirkaldy and Kingston Kayak and then St. Albans and Viking both went to sudden death extra time, before Kirkaldy and Viking emerged as winners. In the other two games Friends of Allonby and Bere Forest both won comfortably against Meridian and Penine respectively.

Both semi-finals were exciting games with FOA winning 1-0 against Kirkaldy and Bere Forest beating Viking 2-1 to meet in the final. This proved to be another close, well contested match, which went to

extra time before Friends of Allonby emerged as 2-1 winners.

## WOMEN

The women's matches were all on the Sunday and Mutineers met Woodmill in the first semi-final. Woodmill held on to a one goal lead to within forty seconds of full time when Mutineers equalized and then went on to win the match in extra time. St. Albans, the defending champions, beat Wimpy Dragon 2-0 in the other semi-final.

Mutineers and St. Albans have met many times in the National Championship Final and this game like all the others was closely contested. Mutineers missed a penalty before Caroline Parkes opened the scoring for St Albans, Annie

Wright equalised in the second half but Jackie Marlow's goal a minute from time gave St Albans victory for the third year running.

## OPEN

The first round games on Saturday saw all the seeded teams safely through to the quarter finals, though Avon Assassins put up a spirited performance against Meridian before going down 4-2.

The other two games were played on Sunday and whilst Viking won their game, Woodmill, the reigning national champions, were beaten 3-2 in extra time by Wimps, in one of the most entertaining matches of the weekend.

In the first two quarter finals St Albans beat Humbersiders 3-1 and Luton beat Dudley also 3-1. In the third game between Meridian and Bere Forest the score was still level at 1-1 after extra time and it took a penalty shoot-out to decide the game in Meridian's favour. Wimps continued to cause the upsets in the fourth game which went to extra time, this time knocking out Viking, winners of this season's Open Div. 1 League.

Luton's Simon Davison scored an early goal against St Albans in the first semi-final and it was well into the second half before a concerted effort in front of the Luton goal produced the equalizer from Clive

Rackham. With a few seconds remaining a long range shot from Alan Vessey just clipped the bar and yet another game was destined for extra time before Gregor Smale scored the winning goal for St Albans.

Wimps well deserved run finally came to an end in the other semi-final against Meridian. Chris Arrowsmith opened the scoring for Wimps but just on half time Sooty Harrison equalised. With no goals in the second half, the game went to extra time and another Sooty Harrison goal put Meridian through to the final for the very first time.

St Albans, having cheered their women's team on to victory, were looking to complete the double but despite some good attacking moves from both teams the score remained 0-0 in the first half of the final until with just ten seconds remaining Alan Vessey scored for St Albans. Another goal by him followed two minutes into the second half and St Albans really began to stamp their authority on the game. Clive Rackham and Gregor Smale both scored before Paul Hammond pulled one back for Meridian. Then with just thirteen seconds to go a long ball from Alan Vessey reached Clive Rackham in front of an undefended Meridian goal to make the final score 5-1.

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# Profile

## A focus on National Outdoor Centres

**G**etting started in canoeing with the right sort of tuition can save the novice paddler time and quickly learn some short cuts to being skilled. There are many routes to getting started but the best way is with BCU qualified instruction either in a club, or attending a course at one of the many BCU Approved Centres around the UK.

Here we profile three National Centres who provide a range of courses to suit both beginners, and more experienced paddlers, and a wide variety of BCU awards and qualifications.

## Plas y Brenin

Plas y Brenin is the Sports Council National Centre in Snowdonia, North Wales. It enjoys a fantastic position, situated as it is, just off the A5, with stunning views of Eryri, or Mount Snowdon. Just upstream of the centre is a large lake called Llyn Mymbyr. Its outlet, the Afon Gwryd, which joins the River Llygwy (grade 2/3) a few hundred metres downstream, runs within 10 metres of our canoe store and all the wild rivers of Snowdonia, the Tryweryn, the Dee and the coastline of Anglesey are within easy driving distance of the centre. When I took over as Head of Canoeing and Kayaking in February 1993, it was on the understanding that I would be given the support necessary to achieve the following aims and objectives: 1. To restructure our courses so that they meet our students needs in the nineties. 2. To upgrade the equipment and facilities and keep them bang up to date. 3. To improve and develop Plas y Brenin's relationship with the BCU Coaching Scheme in terms of being a resource for coaching development.

### Courses

Our philosophy is that anyone who has been on one of our courses should go away feeling that they have had tremendous value for money because they have enjoyed themselves immensely and improved

more as a paddler in terms of technical ability and knowledge than if they had gone elsewhere. Because we are not a commercial centre we are able to make quality our main consideration. We set out to achieve this ideal in a number of ways. By employing high quality Coaches and suitably experienced Senior Instructors, who's skill and enthusiasm I consider to be our main asset and having high staff to student ratios. By having modern equipment and first class facilities and by putting a great deal of effort into planning and preparing our courses. This year as well as our usual Introductory and WW Sea and Surf courses we are offering three levels of courses, (introductory, intermediate and advanced), safety and rescue courses and coaching weekends, in each of the specialisms of WW Kayaking, Sea Kayaking and Open Canoeing. We are of course also running a very full programme of BCU Coaching courses, from Supervisor to BCU Coach. As well as our main courses, for 10 weeks of the summer we run something we call our extra programme. This consists of hiring in for this period some young instructors, who after a period of training run a series of half day 'Try Canoeing' sessions. We regard this as being a very important part of our contribution to canoesport as a recent

BCU survey showed that the vast majority of adults who take up canoeing were introduced to the sport whilst still at school.

### Facilities

as part of a new complex which includes a climbing wall and sports injuries clinic we have had a major upgrade of our on site facilities. Our training pool has been re-housed so that it is now a proper indoor pool with adjoining shower and changing rooms. The building is light, spacious and well ventilated and during February / March the pool is being completely re-tiled. We also now have a brand new purpose built canoe/kayak store positioned in such a way that it is only a few metres to the trailers or the waters edge if you are paddling locally. Just to add the finishing touch we have re-decorated the Canoe Lecture Room. It is worth pointing out that both the pool and lecture room are available for hire when they are not required by our courses and could greatly enhance a club trip to North Wales.

### Equipment

Staff from Plas y Brenin are heavily involved in helping manufacturers test and design various products and students on our courses often get the chance to see or use state of the art prototypes.

### BCU Coaching Scheme

We are very keen that staff at Plas y Brenin be involved in the development of the coaching scheme and for that matter any aspect of coaching or canoesport. Although some of these things fall directly within Plas y Brenin's Sports Council remit and can be done in work time, most of it has to be done in our own time, just like for the vast majority of people who contribute to our sport. So I would like to pay tribute to Loel Collins, my right hand man, who as well as competing, (he came eighth in the open canoe class in the World Rodeo Championships), is now help-

ing to coach the British Rodeo Squad. On a sadder note, one of the first opportunities for Plas y Brenin to use my experience to assist our sports governing body was when my services were made available to the BCU to assist in providing expert witness after the Lyme Bay tragedy. Plas y Brenin is committed to help organise and host a number of coaching and safety symposiums and workshops in the near future on behalf of the BCU. We have also been involved in contributing material for the new Coaching Directory. Coach Development Course Along with a number of other coach trainers, the canoeing staff at have been very involved in the development of the Coach award. The courses were very successful last year and there has been so much interest this year that we have had to lay on an extra course at Easter. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ross Farragher, Ray Goodwin, Nigel Hampton, Dave Reid and Dave Stevens, all of whom recently gained their BCU Coach Award.

### The Future

Over the last two years, the number of people coming on Plas y Brenin canoeing courses rose by 113%. We intend to ensure that this trend carries on, by continuing to evolve just as our sport is. Amongst the many ideas under consideration for 1995 are 'Further Training' courses for Senior Instructors who wish to develop their coaching skills in particular areas but do not feel able or ready to commit themselves to a Coach Development Course. If on reading this article you feel that there are aspects of canoesport that we ought to be providing training in, please don't hesitate to get in touch and let me know.

**Franco Ferrero,**  
Head of Canoeing  
Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig,  
Gwynedd LL24 0ET  
Tel: 06904 214



Plas y Brenin swimming. Photo: Franco Ferrero



# Plas Menai National Watersports Centre

Plas Menai is a modern purpose built Centre which specialises in watersports. Excellent facilities are available including single and twin bedded en-suite rooms or lower cost house accommodation. The Centre has a Bar, indoor heated pool and recreational facilities.

A wide range of courses are available for individuals and special courses are organised for groups.

The Centre's experienced and well qualified staff specialise in coaching everyone from beginners to playboater and expeditions to instructor qualifications.

The staff believe canoeing offers a special kind of freedom and their aim is to get participants close to nature to appreciate it's beau-



Typical student.

ty whilst helping them to learn new skills and techniques and developing their awareness of safety.

The Centre has a wide range of equipment including a fleet of general purpose boats, a pod of Play Boats, Canadian Canoes, Surf Skis and an extensive range of Sea Boats.

The Centre is surrounded by some of the most varied paddling conditions in Britain.

Immediately off the Centre is the sheltered Menai Strait and just down the way the constant white water of the Swellies. To the West, the rocky coast line of Anglesey with its estuaries, surf beaches and towering cliffs and to the East Snowdonia with it's lakes and rivers. The Centre's minibuses carry groups to locations like Rhoscolyn, Treaddur Bay, North and South Stack, Puffin and Llanddwyn Island and the Lleyrn Peninsula. We also use North Wales rivers such as the Tryweryn, Dee, Llugwy and Conwy for white-water course.

Amongst the wide range of course on offer the Centre runs beginner, improver, playboat, family and youth course. Special courses are available for those with disabilities apart from proficiency and instructional award programmes for which the Centre has a very good reputation. Plas Menai is also well known for it's specialist Sea Kayaking courses and in particular expeditions around Anglesey and two annual specialist trips one to the West Coast of Scotland and the other to Donegal on the North West coast of Ireland.

Alan Williams, Chief Instructor

Plas Menai National Watersports Centre, Caernarfon.

Gwynedd LL55 1UE Tel: 0248 670964

## Glenmore Lodge

Glenmore Lodge, the Scottish National Centre, nestles snugly at the foot of the Cairngorm Mountains in the far north of Scotland.

Initially established as a centre for mountain based activity, the Lodge has in recent years evolved a diverse and exciting water-based programme which is earning it an enviable reputation throughout Europe for quality coaching and leadership.

Kayaking and canoeing at the Lodge is a "summer" activity - our Arctic Scottish winter rules out paddling for all but the "desperadoes" of our sport. Our season kicks off in April to catch the Spring melt and carries on until the end of October when early frost makes thoughts turn to axes and crampons rather than paddles and boats.

The Lodge is ideally situated within easy reach of Britain's finest canoeing water. Be it open canoe expeditions on the nearby Spey; heart-stopping white-water descents of the Findhorn gorge or wilderness journeys on our remote Highland lochs; we have on our doorstep endless opportunities for skills improvement and sheer white-knuckle adventure.

Our canoeing and kayaking course are unrivalled anywhere else in Britain, superb rivers, breathtaking scenery and expert tuition combine to make them a once-in-a-life time experience.

Our main remit is to provide high quality training for those who wish to lead or to instruct others in outdoor activities and with this aim in mind we work closely with the appropriate governing bodies for each activity.

Over the years we have built

up a close and mutually beneficial relationship with the Coaching Committee of the Scottish Canoe Association and together have evolved training and development programmes specifically tailored for Scottish paddlers. This relationship is further cemented by the 10% discount on courses which members of the SCA enjoy!

Being a mountain based centre it is inevitable that our canoeing and kayaking activities are largely inland river based. Our white-water programme picks up novice paddlers and takes them right through to an advanced level.

The "jewel in the crown" of our Scottish based courses is our Scottish Rivers Grand Tour. This is the ultimate white-water fun week when we set out to run the best white-water rivers that Scotland has to offer. Definitely not for the faint-hearted, our Scottish Rivers Tour is hard to beat!

Our 1994 Alpine Kayaking program will be based in the Austrian Alps and will extend the same level of coaching service and leadership to those who wish to embark on an Alpine paddling career.

Our open-canoe courses stick very closely to the travelling ethic which is embodied in the open boat. Our Spey Descent offers a 70 mile self-contained journey down the scenic River Spey, from source to sea, while the Lochs and Mountains course uses the open canoe to travel to natural highways of the North West Highlands and to spring-board ascents of some of the fine peaks of this area of Scotland.

Coaching Scheme course form an integral and very important part of our programme and we offer the

full range of Inland awards from the Instructor Award up to Coach Award. A particular feature of our Senior Instructor Courses is that they are run over a 5-day period rather than the statutory two. This additional time allows us to give intensive training and practice in skills performance and to analyse in depth teaching styles and coaching approaches appropriate to the Senior Instructor Training in one week.

A brochure describing all our course can be obtained by contacting the Lodge (address below).

However, if you feel that none of our standard courses exactly fits your needs and requirements we can design courses specifically for your particular needs if you have a particular aim in mind. For example, in the past we have provided rescue courses for the 1993 Ladies Himalayan Expedition, specific white-water training for members of the Norwegian Kayak Federation and this summer will be involved with the Danish National Youth Sprint Squad.

We like to think that our instructors are the best around. They are all hand picked for their professionalism and commitment to the sport they teach. All have extensive experience in a wide range of activities. Specialist courses are staffed by either BCU/SCA Coaches or Aspirant Coaches with the extensive paddling and teaching experience that implies.

On a Glenmore Lodge Course you are in good hands with staff who are adaptable and responsive to the needs of each individual.

If you have any queries about any of these courses or would like a course tailored to your needs, please contact Sam Crymble, Head of Canoeing or Martin Burrows-Smith, Chief Instructor

Sam Crymble

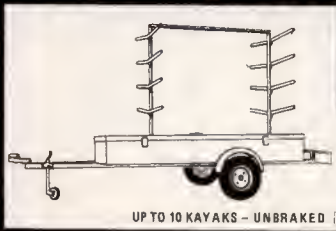
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Loch Collits directs proceedings



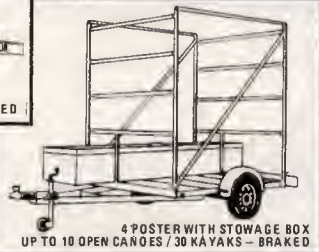
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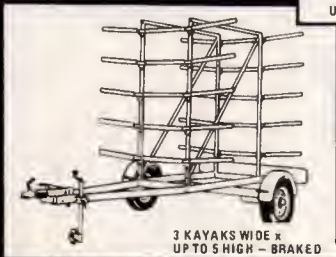
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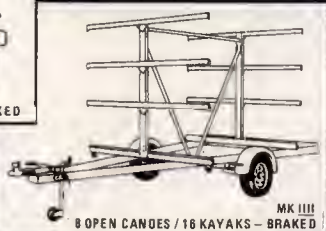


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### FOR SALE

**Dancer Red** including gasket deck, very good condition £250 ono Ring 0203 348513

**Corsica S** Yellow 18 months old, full plate footrest, £250 phone Helen 0904 670487

**Dancer** yellow, good nick with thigh pads, airbags and bow cap; YAK deck and glass loom paddles. The lot for £230 ono. Please phone .021 354 8610 (West Mids)

**M1415 Tourer**, yellow, VGC. Fitted with rudder and comes with skeg option £200 contact Mark: 0634 252876 (Kent)

**Reflex** Plastic Teal Green VGC £200 ono. Slalom C2 Gaybo Synchron, tatty but sound £50 ono. Tel: 0203 667101

**Prijon T Canyon**, full ww spec & air bags, VGC £200. Fibreglass Everest, good condition with spraydeck & paddle, good general purpose boat. £75. Tel: Dave 061 434 3559 (Manchester)

**Dancer** VGC plus new neoprene spraydeck £200 ono. Pyranha Master ww spec £150 ono Tel: 0602 893659 (Notts)

**Selection of 10** general purpose canoes, some in need of repair. Ideal for scout group or youth club £150 or reasonable offer for the lot. Tel: Dave Ledger 0780 720041 ext 7319 for viewing (Leics)

**M1300 Pro** ww playboat, x-link, purple £160 ono or consider swap for general purpose plastic kayak. Also Snips fibreglass kayak & paddle £50 ono. Tel: 0527 878533 (Worcs)

**Baldarka** with spray deck, split paddles in good condition £250 ono Tel: 051 625 1762 (Merseyside)

**Talon K1**, cream & red, carbon construction. Used only 8 times, excellent condition £650 ono Tel: Colin Sillitoe 0525 378707 (Beds)

**Nordkapp HM**, immaculate, knee tube, Chimp foot pump, Bushdeck to fit, £500. Nordkapp HM, immaculate, knee tube, Chimp foot pump, C trim rudder with foot bar control. WW deck to fit £500. Lendal Nordkapp paddles - 2 pairs: 210 right, 2 pairs splits 210cm Right. All four pairs as new £50 per pair. 0273 835475 pm (Brighton)

**Ace Europa** with airbags, backrest, YAK spraydeck and paddle, All in good condition £175. Fibreglass kayak, very stable, ideal for first timers, excellent condition including spraydeck, air bags and paddle £100 Tel: 0787 211214 (Suffolk)

**K1 Discovery** marathon kayak, blue and white, Diolene, light weight, excellent condition £175 ono. 2 Snipe GP Kayaks. As new, hardly used £140 the pair ono Will sell separately. Tel: 0923 247430 (Herts)

**GRP Kayaks** approximately 20 kayaks available, mixture of Alphas, Whispers and Olympos. Prices from £10 to £40 each. Tel: 081 940 5550 Anytime.

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**K2 Mystere** complete with handles and spray-decks, newer used £600 ono Tel: Bourmouth 0202 575553

**Extreme Slalom kayak**, carbon kevlar, very good condition, £250 ono. Premier III slalom kayak, cut down, full kevlar, suit girl or lighter paddler, good for beginner, very fast £150 ono. C1 slalom canoe, hand made by canoe club, good mould, never used £35 Tel: 0902 846669 (Staffs)

**Pyranha Rotobat**, full ww spec, immaculate condition £270 ono Tel: 0272 465258

**Norkapp HM**, yellow, deck lines, hand pump, 2 sealed hatches, retractable skeg £450 Tel: 0734 690688

**M1 370** £120. Fibreglass polo canoe in need of repair £50 Tel: 0332 383698 (Derby)

**Perception Reflex** (Plastic), purple, good condition £250 ono or consider swap for Dancer or similar in good condition Tel: Jo or Ali 0787 210895 (Suffolk)

**Corsica S**, red, full plate footrest & backstrap. Used but plenty of life left! Spray deck included, offers around £275 Tel: 0530 510830 or 0904 659499 ask for Nigel.

**Fjord sea kayak**, as new with retractable skeg. Spray deck and storage bag. Offers £600 Tel: Ali 05394 44679 (Evenings only)

**Rotobat**, full ww spec, x link, good condition £175 Tel: 0257 482672 (Chorley)

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**Perception Reflex**, (Blue) ww spec, air bag £130 ono Tel: 0403 732521 (W Sussex)

**2 M1380** excellent condition, hardly used, full plate footrest, backrests, £180 each. Ace Valetta, ww spec, well used but good condition 'sharks fin' footrests £120 ono, fibreglass slalom kayak, old design £30 ono, fibreglass BAT needs some repair £15 Tel: 0773 821743 (Derbys)

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**Pyranha Rotobat**, Crosslinked, yellow, ww spec, good condition. £230 ono. Tel: Dave Webb 0372 466385 (North Surrey)

**Mariner Sea Kayak**, full spec £450, Weekend Sea Kayak, also full spec £320 Tel: Paul 0947 893333 (9-5) 0947 893278 (after 5pm) (N Yorks)

**Perception Dancer**, yellow, ex condition, 12 months old £250 Tel: Hinkley 0455 613130

**Nookie ww extreme**, 2 piece Dry suit, used once £130 ono size M-L. Tel: 021 472 4349 ask for Mr Read or Miss Miller.

**P&H Mack Slalom C2**, front left/rear right offset, kevlar/carbonhull, good condition £300. Gaybo C2 ww river raocer - rear left/front right offset, well used, but still watertight £80. Tel: Steve or Phil 0905 427905

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**Europa**, natural colour, VGC, fitted toggles £150 Tel: Tim 0865 776631 (eves)

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**K1 sprint** (Marsport Eagle Flight) Kevlar Hull, hardly used, feb 1994, purchase £600 ono Tel: 081 332 9385 (eves) 071 936 5412 (office hours)

**Pyranha Mountain Bat**, ww spec, airbags, backrest, full plate, footrest inc, £250 ono Tel: 0492 641375 (llanwrst)

**Pyranha Master ww spec**, 1 year old very good condition, £220 ono Tel: Paul 0482 814197 (Hull)

**Pyranha Magic Bat**, good condition £240 Tel: 0455 846810 (Leics)

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**Sea Kayak**, reasonably stable weekend boat e.g. Selkie. Tel Andy 05394 88333 (day) 05394 41661 (eves) (Cumbria)

**Pyranha stunt bat**, good condition, preferably x-linked, multicoloured especially, although all offers considered. Call Tracey on 0239 851794 (Wales area)

Enigma and Spud, must be in good condition, contact Ruth Fletcher 0403 258830 (West Sussex)

**Spud**, any condition considered, good money for good boat Tel: 0245 323271 or 0245 923216

**Duo Topolino** wanted please, tel: Sue on 0494 447853

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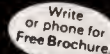
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# top tips

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## Starting in the Canoe

By Ray Goodwin

This is the first of a series of articles aimed at the beginner.

**I** watched my two young nephews play in my open canoe; for two days the boat took the place of cardboard boxes as they voyaged to the farthest reaches of my lawn, taking in Africa and Australia on the way. On the third day I tied a rope to the stern and allowed them the freedom of the ropes length in a knee deep creek. The canoe spun in circles but they never noticed in the intensity of their concentration.

It is the versatility that I love with this craft; the same boat that my sister and brother-in-law, absolute novices, paddled successfully on their first outing, my nephews had bashed around a puddle and I had taken on multi-day trips across the highlands as well as paddled on grade 3/4 water. Few other boats can cover this range.

### Buoyancy Aid and Paddle

After you have begged, borrowed or bought that boat you will need two further items of basic equipment, a buoyancy aid and paddle. For a first paddle a robust quality is required; some form of plastic construction for the blade. A good dealer should be able to recommend the correct length and size is critical. If you are a size 7 shoe can you imagine going walking in a size 10 boot? Having got your plas-

tic waterbashers you have a good working tool but you are playing with something dead. As soon as possible get hold of a wooden paddle and only then will you truly understand one of the joys of the open canoe and hear 'the song of the paddle'. My own favourite is a beavertail by the Greyowl company; reasonably tough yet sensitive to every movement, it is my deep water paddle.

Now you have got both boat and paddle choose your first practise site with care. Upsets on flat water are rare but even when not fooling around they can happen. Choose a small lake or a wide river in summer conditions, a place where in a buoyancy aid you could easily swim to the bank and where you could just as easily travel upstream as well as down. As with kayaking the buoyancy aid is an essential and although

the expert may on occasion take theirs off they are then in a situation where the simplest of errors could lead to loss of life. Never allow children afloat without a buoyancy aid.

### Trim and Paddle Strokes

Two of the key features of successful paddling in an open canoe are trim and paddle strokes. Without people the boat would float level; level trim. However in many situations and especially first time in the boat the canoe should be floating with the bow slightly higher than the stern. Make the bow lower in the water and she will steer like a pig; and anyone involved with pig farming will realize just how bad that is!

Back in '91 I was guiding a trip on Lochs Navis and Morar and met up with two fellows doing the same trip; good company, keen

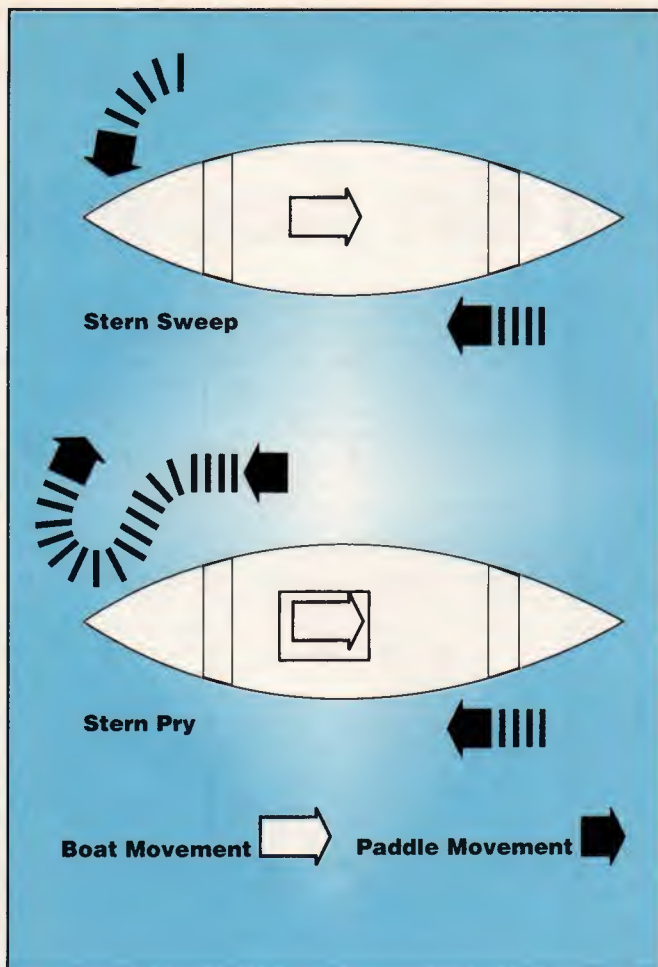
as mustard, a plentiful supply of beer and no understanding of trim. These two chaps of vastly differing weights. The smaller of the two confessed to not being able to steer even after months of effort. Partnered as he was the bow would be much deeper in the water and almost impossible to control; the solution, as they were carrying camping kit, was to move all the heavier stuff (just the beer would have done), towards the stern to counter the bigger fellow up front. In an unloaded boat the front person could ignore the seat and kneel nearer the centre of the canoe. The trim differs in many situations particularly paddling solo and in a wind but just start off with the nose higher.

### Vast Repertoire

Watch an expert paddle and no two strokes will be identical







but an ever shifting combination of the 'standard' strokes. Indeed kayakers often have difficulty in understanding the need for the seemingly vast repertoire of strokes in the canoe text books; however, what you don't know you can't use and every stroke has some advantage over all others in a certain situation.

With two of you in the canoe you will probably feel like switching paddles from side to side. This will get you going but is very inefficient and tiring. After an initial short go you should aim to have each of you paddling on opposite sides and sticking to that side! One hand should be over the top of the paddle the other part way down the shaft. In this initial go, all the steering can be done by the stern paddler the bow paddler providing power only.

Two steering strokes will suffice to get you going. The stern sweep is started by reaching out at right angles to the boat on a line with your shoulders. Then placing the blade in the water, the paddle shaft almost horizontal, sweep it slowly through the water to the stern of the boat making an arc of 90 degrees. Make sure the whole blade is under the water. Concentrate on making the stroke go to the stern of the canoe as the last little bit gives the most powerful turn. You

may find it helpful to keep your eye on the blade while you are getting used to the feel of this stroke but remember it is a steering stroke so you will soon need to rely on feel alone and watch where you are going.

The sweep stroke will turn the canoe one way: the stern pry will turn it the other. Do a power stroke alongside the canoe but continuing past your body to the stern. By trailing the blade in the water at the end of the stroke you can use it as a rudder. To increase the power of the turn brace the shaft against the edge of the boat and lever the blade outwards. However, like the sweep, the most powerful turning force is generated close to the stern; several small prys are more effective than one that goes way out from the boat. The stern pry is the first of many variations on a theme and although powerful does slow the forward motion so you will soon wish to other strokes to your skills.

Hopefully these two strokes will be enough to give you a taste for this most addictive and versatile of crafts.

**Ray Goodwin**  
Ray qualified as a BCU Coach in 1993 and works freelance in North Wales. You can contact him for tuition on 0678 520653



**ender**  
Editor's page

Originally tailender was dreamed up by me to be a light hearted sign-off to your magazine where fun, and occasionally controversial things could be said. Over the recent months it has evolved into an extension of the letters page, for those longer letters which cannot be ignored, or which bring up matters of policy and interest to most readers. Last issue I apologised for standing on the soap box again over the coaching/membership issue. This issue it is access which is the subject, triggered by BCU member Roy Bradshaw's letter on the following page.

## BCU Myth's explained: Eating the Elephant

Last year I attempted to reverse the trend of Anti-BCU propaganda by printing hard facts. Again and again I hear paddlers say the BCU is completely ineffective: they can't even sort out THE Access problem. What do you expect? The Access problem I suspect is so deeply rooted in our quirky British mentality that it will take more than a bunch of volunteer paddlers to change the concept of ownership. I personally believe that William the Conqueror is to blame. When King Harold succumbed to a poke in the eye with a sharp stick and lost the home fixture at Hastings, Billy divided England up into pieces amongst the boys, who installed themselves as Lords of the Land and it has remained much the same ever since, even amongst the peasants. Man is a territorial mammal and has land ownership deep in the genes.

As such the phrase 'get orf my land' has been handed down over the centuries. Access is not a simple canoeists problem, but a deep rooted British problem: do you really think we can solve it overnight?

Some landowners view the invasion of canoeists across their land in much the same way that you or I would view a brass band setting up in our garden on a Sunday morning at breakfast time. I am not into brass bands at all: I don't understand them and I can't be doing with the row. If however, they were silent, unobtrusive and stuck to the bottom of the garden (and promised not to tread on my herbs) I wouldn't be to put out. My youngster might even find it interesting enough to want to take up trombone.

Where landowners are unhappy with canoeists they often do not understand what we are about. Anglers are easily understood: no problem.

This is where the BCU comes in. River by river, owner by owner we need to let them know about what we want to do and where, and how we can co-operate so that everyone is happy. Here consistency is needed. Credibility is undermined if we agree not to paddle in the mornings and limit groups to six, if the local University turns up with three minibuses after breakfast. Unfortunately if you are not a member you will run the risk of fouling up patient negotiations by your ignorance of the very negotiations and process which is working for you.

Having stated that Access is more a problem of sociological reform it is an elephantine task to change a millennium of feudal practice.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Access is still addressed at local level with riparian owners talking face to face with BCU Local Access Officers (paddlers) who try to decide amicably a way forward.

If you want to help solve the access situation (and we would like to be able to paddle all rivers at some time) then pay your ridiculously cheap basic membership and at least become an informed part of an increasingly large and growing body paddlers. If you sit on the outside carping about the shortcomings of the BCU in addressing the problem you are holding back the process which will give you what you want!

Unfortunately soapbox again. How about some other topics?

Good Paddling

Kevin Danforth, Editor





# Roy Bradshaw on Access

## Dear Focus

It is not unusual for hard-working Access Officers to deplore the behaviour of some canoeists, the recent article concerning the Dart for instance. It is unfortunate that after all their efforts they do not appear to be getting the support that they deserve from the canoeists they are trying to represent. The simple answer is that the majority of canoeists are unaware of access agreements by not being members of the BCU.

It is my opinion that it is not the canoeists who are at fault but the apparent attitude of BCU Council, who, whilst encouraging Access Officers to struggle with the situation at local level, fail to give any obvious impetus at National level. Let me give some examples:

1. A few years ago, following problems with travellers camping on private land, a Member of Parliament proposed making trespass a criminal offence. Immediately the Ramblers Association responded and received national coverage of their difficulties. The BCU said "we'll wait and see". Granted the final bill was not as disastrous as initially proposed, however the BCU failed to take advantage of the opportunity to inform the public of our situation.

2. The BBC ran a series of programmes intended to outline the various problems within sport. They contacted the BCU, the Anglers representatives and also CRACK. The Anglers refused to take part if CRACK was represented, yet another excuse not to get involved with negotiations. The BCU failed to take the opportunity to point out that this was precisely the problem they had to deal with and instead of presenting our case to the nation the episode was dropped.

3. It is possible that the recent Lyme Bay tragedy would never have happened if suitable inland rivers were available to the centre. However, when this was pointed out to the BCU they carefully avoided the access issue and failed to take the opportunity of using the incident as a reason for informing the public of our problems.

4. Dealers are encouraged to promote the BCU but there is probably little in it for them. Most customers are not ready to make a major

commitment to canoeing and can see no reason for joining the BCU. So how do they get this access information? It has been suggested that with Focus being virtually self financing it would be possible to offer a form of membership, that only provides the magazine, for practically nothing. Such a membership could be given away with every boat sold, and we could then boast a membership probably ten times that we have now. The Access problems would have been advertised to an even greater number of people, because for every child that has a canoe there is usually a mum and dad. Perhaps we would have got ten times the response to the "Write to your MP" campaign, but council said no.

5. Following the "Write to your MP" campaign, it is obvious this should have culminated in a mass rally at Westminster, possibly in conjunction with the DW race. Nothing has been done and another opportunity lost. Council may argue that nobody offered to promote such a rally, but it may be because others have had our experience.

After talking to other club's representatives in the North West, we decided to run an inter-club slalom event, and, through a letter to Focus, asked anyone interested to contact us. One letter we received was two pages long from a member of Council saying, basically "you don't do anything on your own initiative". Quite simply this means it is up to Council to promote the BCU in order to encourage others to join and then become aware of the Access arrangements being made, but of course they don't.

As a BCU member and a member of an affiliated club, I sympathise with the Access Officers and regret that the greatest proportion of their efforts results in their telling me when I cannot canoe. As a canoeist, it is very difficult to counter the argument of many:- "When ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise". Until BCU Council recognises that it is essential to take every opportunity to present our access case to the public, regrettably the efforts of Access Officers are going to be largely ignored.

**Roy Bradshaw**

## Comment from the Access Chairman

The BCU Access Committee held the first annual training weekend for access officers on 5/6 March, designed to give impetus to officers working in the upland river regions. Canoeists want to paddle rivers where there are very many different riparian owners and where a public right of navigation has not been proved or may not exist. Negotiation, not confrontation is the way ahead; with agreements the problem of trespass does not arise. The BCU is working with other Governing Bodies through the CCPR on the new Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill. The current advice of the CCPR parliamentary agents is that the Bill is only concerned with new age travellers, anti-hunt saboteurs and the like. The Bill does not set out to criminalise trespass. Criminal proceedings would only be taken if a second and criminal offence was committed whilst an offender was trespassing. The situation is being watched.

If Roy Bradshaw went to a meeting of riparian owners he would find that the mere mention of the CRACK pressure group could torpedo negotiations. The BCU was correct to distance itself from any media induced discussion with CRACK and the anglers; instead of being a failed opportunity I think in hindsight this was a good move.

Access to the countryside is entering a new phase due to increased recreational demand; the limited resource has to be managed and shared equitably between those who work, live and play there and used responsibly. This is the reason for the current BCU "Management of Access" policy circulated with the April 1992 issue of Canoe Focus.

The ongoing lobbying campaign is starting to identify MPs who are sympathetic towards our cause and plans; the BCU will keep those MPs informed on access matters to prepare the ground for future legislation. The campaign was not designed to give instant new access laws as it will take many years to achieve a change in English law, which would not have been helped by a confrontational rally outside the Houses of Parliament.

Without seeing the text or knowing the signatory of the alleged letter to Roy Bradshaw from a member of the BCU Council, I cannot comment on his allegation above. For him to go into print without substantiating his accusation seems scurrilous. We in the North East used our initiative and organised the highly successful Tyne Rally, with universal support.

There are many ways to present access information to canoeists at large and I admit that the BCU can do better at this. Canoe Focus, access answer phones, NRA help and liaison with other bodies are ways forward; better communica-

tion is the direction that the BCU Access Committee is taking and the March LAO/RAO training weekend has been a very important first exercise.

**Simon Banbury**

## Comments from National Development Officer

This cheap membership idea has been advanced several times before by Roy Bradshaw. The proposal was carefully considered by the BCU Membership Review Working Party in May 1992. The suggestion was not adopted for the period 1 November 1992 to 31 October 1995. The next membership structure review will take place in time for any changes to be implemented on 1 November 1995. This suggestion is in the suggestions file awaiting the review.

## Comments from the Editor:

### Lyme Bay incident:

Are you seriously suggesting that if there was free and easy access to all inland waters, no one would paddle on the sea? As the director of a coastal based centre for five years I introduced complete beginners to canoeing on the sea without incident. I also had the choice of every river in the county, mostly due to the efforts of BCU LAO's. Many other centres do likewise throughout Britain on a daily basis using appropriately experienced and BCU qualified staff

who are well able to cope with any problems their group might have. Lyme Bay is sub-judice so I am unable to comment directly just yet but I fail to see how you can link it with any Access issue. Incidentally the sea and coast does have canoeing access problems.

### Free Focus:

I don't know where you get your information from but Focus is most definitely not free. It costs the BCU over £30,000 per year to post it to members for a start. This is also the reason for the light paper we all dislike and put up with.

BCU does not pay for design and printing costs as these are met by advertising revenue but this is still not "gratis"... it is a commercial business transaction. Although the BCU does not directly pay for printing, the printer does still need to be paid. As do I, the editor for the 25% of my time putting the magazine together. Packaging and handling charges are also real and tangible costs which need to be found. Sorry to be so cynical but nothing is 'Free'

If you selectively filter the odd snippet of information in this way it might be interesting to apply this logic to other aspects of life... how about not paying your water rates because the pipe system is already connected to your house and water is obviously free because it drops out of the sky?





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