

THE CANOE SPORT MAGAZINE FOR THE NINETIES

Canoe focus

No 89. JUNE 1994

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sea kayaking

zimbabwe's
eastern highlands

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Canoe Focus

The official magazine of the British Canoe Union

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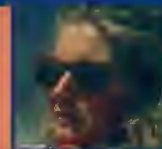
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Before going to Africa he was told the Zambezi was the only river in the area; read on...

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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 ASSCI 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 JUNE 1994. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the AUGUST issue.

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Comment



Major events

Summer is here and we hope you are experiencing some fine paddling weather. Whilst enjoying your own activities I hope that you find time to visit some of the major events that we are hosting this summer:

★ **June 25 & 26 The Slalom World Cup, Nottingham**
The best paddlers in the world will come to Nottingham to take a look at the course in preparation for the 1995 World Championships.

★ **July 6 to 10 Polo World Championships, Sheffield**
The first ever World Championships in the exciting discipline of Canoe Polo.

★ **August 23 to 29 Wild Water Racing World Cup, Bala**
The river Tryweryn provides a fine setting for the downriver specialists who will use the World Cup to suus the river out for the 1995 World Championships.

Commonwealth Games - Manchester go again!

Following their unsuccessful bid to host the year 2000 Olympic Games, Manchester has been nominated as the English bid for the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The bid is particularly strong and it is considered very likely that in the Queens 50th Anniversary of her succession to the throne the games would be awarded to England. Following the BCU's efforts in assisting Manchester with the Olympic bid I am pleased to reveal that Sprint Canoeing is one of the core sports in their proposals for 2002. In addition they have agreed to include a Marathon event, although this is subject to approval from the Commonwealth Games Federation.

National Lottery

Next year really is going to bring good news for the World of British sport. 1995 holds the promise of a large amount of money being available for sport, courtesy of the National Lottery. Realistic estimates put first year National Lottery sales at around £2.5 billion. Of this between 48-50 per cent will be used for prizes, 12 per cent will go in tax to the Treasury and 12-15 per cent will go in operators costs and profit. The remaining 23 - 26 per cent will be available to be divided equally between the five so named good causes. These are sport, arts, heritage, charities and the Millennium fund.

Sport can expect about £125 million per annum and the four home countries Sports Councils are nominated as the distributing bodies in the National Lotteries Act. The Millennium fund has been established to finance major new projects to mark the year 2000 in style and these may include sports related schemes. In addition the charities that will receive funding may be sports related, the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation for example.

It is likely that applications will be accepted from January 1995 and full guidance on the how to apply will be available in the late Autumn. Lottery funded projects are likely to range across the whole spectrum of sports facility provision: local, district, county, regional, national and international. Priority will be given to targeting a significant proportion of total funds to projects that will benefit the whole community. It has also been indicated that money is likely to be restricted to capital projects. The lottery funding is not supposed to replace existing funds but will be additional to it. However, no grant will be 100 per cent of the total cost of a project.

Focus questionnaire

Our editor is busy preparing a questionnaire for distribution with the August Focus to gather your views about this very important aspect of our communications. If you have any comments about the content of Canoe Focus then please jot them down over the next couple of months so that you are ready when the questionnaire appears.

Trevor Bailey Award

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

TSB re-launches the National Sports Development Account

The National Sports Development Account offers the earning power of a high Interest Deposit Account together with the typical features of a cheque account. The special features include :-

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- ★ Interest is calculated daily and applied quarterly
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- ★ Instant withdrawals without loss of interest.

Membership Structure Review

We are preparing a full file of members suggestions for the membership review which will take place in time for presentation to Council in March 1995. If you have any ideas for Working Party, please send details by the end of June 1994, to the National Development Officer at the BCU office explaining what changes you favour and why.

VAT on club membership subscriptions

You may have read in the press of changes in the VAT liability on personal subscriptions. The new arrangements will have the following effect upon VAT registered non-profit making members sports clubs :

★ Subscriptions from individual playing members for the supply of services "closely linked" to sport will be VAT exempt but the exemption will not apply to visitors, guests or temporary members. However, the supply of residential accommodation, catering and transport are also specifically excluded from the exemption.

★ Although the subscriptions from paying members will be free of VAT the club will no longer be able to reclaim the VAT paid to its suppliers where the goods or services are for the benefit of playing members.

The new regulations have a retrospective effect to 1st January 1990 and customs will invite claims for nett overpayment of VAT since that date. However, the mechanics of operating a "partial exemption" can be very complicated and clubs who are VAT registered are advised to ask for a copy of VAT leaflet 706 (Partial Exemption)

And finally:

Remember the AGM? Ron Rymer, Mike Twiggs, Colin Kempson, Alan Williams and Ralph Tyas were elected/re-elected to the BCU Council with Colin Kempson and Alan Williams being elected as the members representatives to the executive committee. The motion concerning commercial interests was carried without opposition and Albert Woods and David Gent were re-elected President and Chairman respectively.

Paul Owen, Director

Below:
Paul Owen
plus dugout





Notice board

BCU Yearbook 1994 Corrections

Yorkshire and Humberside Information Line is 0426 978654. To add information call Marianne Spender on 0422 882908

Page 39: Access Officers

Upper Calder: David Gent 24 Staups Lane, Shibden, Halifax, HX3 7AB Tel: 0422 362588. Lower Calder: Kevin Johnson (address as stated)

Page 51: Marathon

Aug 14: Aldwark York. No 72 is not the correct contact it should be no 80 in the organisers list, David Gent, 24 Staups Lane, Shibden, Halifax, HX3 7AB. George Oliver's telephone is 0602 819758

Page 49: Wild Water Racing.

The contact for the 27 Nov Dart is not No29 it is No28. The contact for the 27 Nov Calder is David Gent as above

Page 40: Pennine Canoe Club

Include in the index of items R, T, V, W, Y/Z

British Waterways Safety Strategy

British Waterways are in the process of developing their safety strategy. The BCU has been asked to comment on any areas where canoeists have safety concerns either now or in the future and to say what is the basis for any such concerns. British Waterways would like information on any serious accidents or near misses on their waters, many of which are not otherwise reported. What do canoeists think should be their safety priorities and how could they do better? Please send any comments or information on incidents to the BCU office for the attention of the NDO, who will respond to British Waterways in the middle of June.

Qualification to Race

In order to compete in all competitive events a COMPREHENSIVE BCU MEMBERSHIP is required. It is your licence and insurance to compete. Those competitors with BASIC MEMBERSHIP will be charged for an Event Ticket. Membership can be upgraded to avoid the payment of Event Tickets.

Annual General Meeting

Forty four people present, ten non-Council members. There was no opportunity for canoeing this year, despite the Thames flowing by the meeting room. The large waves and fast tidal flow looked tempting to some of those present, but time did not permit adventures...

The Chair, David Gent, reported that we'd achieved the launch of the development plan that was introduced at last year's AGM and as a result, we had not only maintained our Sports Council grant when many other sports are being cut, but they actually increased our grant to implement the plan. We are now widely recognised as a governing body that delivers the goods.

BCU members can canoe on the Broads now without buying a licence. We have improved the training of our Access Officers and members are now offered a much better service.

We would like to thank the BCU office for the tremendous role they have played since the Lyme Bay tragedy caused a large number of lapsed coaching members to demand instant reinstatement!

Membership of the BCU has hit 20,000 which is excellent (and not only as a result of lapsed coaching members getting a sudden urge to return to the fold!)

Competition has had an excellent year with winners in Rodeo, Racing, Slalom and Wild Water Racing. Richard Fox has now retired after his fifth world championship win - an extraordinary record. He was given the BCU Award of Honour, not for winning, that is its own reward, but for all he has bought to the sport in many ways over many years.

On the recreation side, the lifeguards have had a brilliant year, showing good organisation and a positive input into the sport.

There has been an expansion of touring, and sea touring has promoted the good image and standards of the BCU.

Over the last ten years Council and Exec. have had to take tough decisions regarding finance. This has now paid off; we have had an exceptional year and have now been in credit for the past 14 months. We can now back the internal debts and grants owed to committees and go forward with the implementation of the

development plan. Paul Owen is thanked for his work on our finances, involving many hours of his own time.

Notes from the AGM and March Council

Council - The Daily Telegraph reported that canoeing has one of the best organisational structures of any sport and the Sports Council booklet 'Sport and People with Disabilities' puts forward the BCU as an example to be followed in this area - so we can't be getting it all wrong!

The debate on federalisation continued (should there be an English Canoe Association within the BCU?) The Exec. favour more "Englishness" in the BCU and a clearer definition of the English Role, for example with regard to competition. They rejected the concept of the ECA as causing unnecessary duplication. The Exec. will determine plans to achieve this - there will be a working party chaired by Charles Hicks, so if you have any views on the matter please contact him.

There will be a National Canoe Day in May/June next year with the theme "Clean Up a River". Further information will be made available with regard to health and safety - also discuss plans with landowners etc. The NRA will probably be able to support your efforts with gloves, a skip and so on if you approach them.

The criminal justice bill, though it does not criminalise trespass, has among its 150 clauses, a new criminal offence of aggravated trespass which could be misinterpreted to stop some canoeing activities. We are lobbying MPs and have the support of the CCPR. Please go and see or write to your MP.

Rodeo now has its own committee and they will have a seat on Council. This will have to be co-opted until the next AGM as an official motion has to be put.

A European Canoe Association has been set up with Albert Woods as President. This is partly in response to the Asiatic Countries and the Americas setting up groupings as power blocs in the International Canoe Federation. The ECA wants to have a role with regard to international competition and to push the ICF into recognising its recreational role.

We need to gear up to apply for money from the government lottery. It is mainly intended for capital projects, but this could include access rights.

Ballot Results

There were a large number of spoilt papers this year, partly due to a number coming in signed p.p (on behalf of) members. This will be addressed. There were 534, 107 spoilt papers. Albert Woods was elected unopposed as President Jerry Rogers was elected unopposed as Honorary Treasurer

For Council:

Ron Rymer	213 Votes
Mike Twiggs	206
Colin Kempson	205
Alan Williams	201
Ralph Tyas	175

Not Elected

Roger Fox	171
Ron Thorogood	165
Eddie Palmer	129

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Council Special Business

A motion was passed removing the rule preventing people with commercial interest in canoeing from serving on BCU Committees. It has become too complex an issue to be workable, especially in the light of sponsorship. Now people must declare any commercial interest at the beginning of a meeting if it is relevant to the agenda.

There was a long discussion on the federal issue with many different but reasoned view points offered.

Council Posts

Reconvened to resolve posts in light of the election results.

Chair: David Gent
Vice chair: Alan Laws
Chair ACRMC: Mike Twiggs
Chair ERMC: Ron Hodgson
Chair SMC: Alan Laws

Co-opted to Council for rodeo:

Steve Whetman

Honorary Vice Presidents:

David Wain
Geoff Sanders

Elected members' reps:

ACRMC Ron Rymer
SMC Alan Laws
Exec. Alan Williams and
Colin Kempson

English Regions reps:

ACRMC: Mike Twiggs
SMC: Charles Hicks

The full names of the management committees are: English Regions, Sports and Access, Coaching and Recreation, in case you were wondering!

Important Racing Notice

The Longridge Hasler Race is now Sunday 16th October and NOT the 9th October as published. Details from Paul Toomey, 37, Hildreth Rd., Prestwood, Bucks HP16 0LZ

New Access Officer

The Access officer for the River Avon (Bristol) is now Angus Geddes, 142 Beatrice Street, Swindon SN2 1BD. Angus also reports that canoeists are failing to obtain permission for the Limpley Stoke access. The landowner is fairly favourably disposed towards paddlers but permission must be sought before crossing his land.

Jubilee canoeing Foundation



The Jubilee Canoeing Foundation supports and promotes ventures for youth canoeing and canoeing for disabled people.

This year the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation starts a campaign to raise the public awareness, especially the canoeing population, of its existence and role. Part of this new image is its logo designed by Tony Tickle of the Tickle Group.

Over a number of years the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation has supported ventures for young people and people with disabilities by giving Grants; to clubs for the purchase of equipment supporting projects or initiatives that encourage participation, sponsorship of expeditions both at home and abroad.

The Jubilee Canoeing Foundation is a Registered Charity (No. 1525484), however, it is not a bottomless Fund! The demands upon the funds far exceeded the amounts of money available, and efforts are required to increase these funds. It is in the interest of the BCU and the Canoeing Industry that there is an involved population of canoeists and, furthermore, each would benefit from a growth in interest. Additional funds to the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation would enable it to meet the demands of those bidding for their funds, thus increasing the numbers of participation.

How Can People Help
You can help directly by sending your donation to the Jubilee

Canoeing Foundation at the BCU. You can also; Hold a Fundraising Event. Dedicate the proceeds of a competition each season. Donate equipment to be used in Raffles. Organise a Sponsored Event.

To encourage participation in this fund raising venture all clubs and trade sponsors etc will be given certificates of sponsorship. Were given all the donors will have the right to use the logo and phrase "Supporter of the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation" for an year.

Finally, from time to time other monies are bequeathed to the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation for the trustees to administer their distribution. Why not make a bequest in your will for the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation?

New Horizons -

Patron Chris Bonnington CBE

Though everyone always says that there is no reason why disabled people should not join in adventure sports, very few people actively recruit them. I did. This led to the successful "New Horizons" expedition to Eastern Turkey which paddled down the Coruh River and competed in the World White-Water Rafting Championships.

The success of this trip led to a great deal of interest. The team has been offered a place in this year's World Rafting Championships on the Zambezi and an invite to paddle the Katun River in Siberia.

Both are exciting options, but, mention Nepal and the Sun Kosi River and your average paddlers eyes light up. Expeditions are all about fulfilling dreams. This is the motivation for this trip.

The venue will not be the only change. "New Horizons" gave the paddlers the chance to turn into expedition kayak paddlers and rafters. These people with disabilities now know the logistics and problems of taking a group with mixed abilities down a white-water river. Armed with this new-found knowl-

edge it is their turn to run the expedition.

The team will be led by two disabled paddlers, Dave Higson (British Canoe Union Senior Instructor) and Dave Tuttle (helmsman of the raft in Turkey and one time Scottish White Water Racing Champions). The rest of the team will be old hands from Turkey and others new to expedition paddling. This mix of abilities will cause no problems because of the development of double kayaks and oar-framed rafts. These extend the excitement to the non-expert disabled person; with an expert in the rear of a double kayak or at the oars of a raft, novices can experience the excitement of the harder rapids that a solo kayak paddler might take years to master; the novice can also try piloting the lesser rapids, safe in the knowledge that the expert can take over should the need arise.

However, to cover all eventualities, I will lead a group of expert safety kayakers to chaperone the expedition in its fourteen day descent of the river.

Dave Manby

The 5th Oxford Kayak Triathlon

Falcon Rowing and Canoeing club in Oxford will again, this summer, be hosting a gathering of the finest UK kayakists for the clubs annual kayathlon. With, this year, the added interest of the race being a part of Falcon's 125th anniversary celebrations.

The three-part marathon, being held for the fifth time, is a combination of a kayak race, followed by a bike ride, with a run to finish. The winning time is normally about two hours. The entry fee is a modest ten pounds. For which the participants get a good race, a tee-shirt and refreshments. Tee-shirts and winners trophies are donated by Oxford City Leisure.

A SAE to Peter Travis, 3 Fane Road, Oxford ORZ will get you an information sheet, in due course.

What's on

CONTACT

Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium; 30 Sep/2 Oct
Gordon Brown on 0294 832745

Coquet Island Sea race; 19 June

John Rae, 33 Meadow Riggs, Alnwick, Northumberland
0665 603176

Washburn Tour; 4/5 June
Ray Todd, 0532 823742

Torbay Classic; 4 September
Dick Dyke, 0803 663282 or Carole Walters 0803 854738

Tryweryn Rodeo; 11/12 June
Dominic Irvine, 0943 607998, or 0831 374426

Tryweryn Tour; 23/24 July
WCA/Tryweryn (not as shown in BCU Yearbook)

Nottingham Rodeo; 4/5 June
Ross Faragher, 0932 341626

Conwy Ascent; 12 June
J. Wynne Freer, 0492 540908

Open Canoe Sailing Group Meets,
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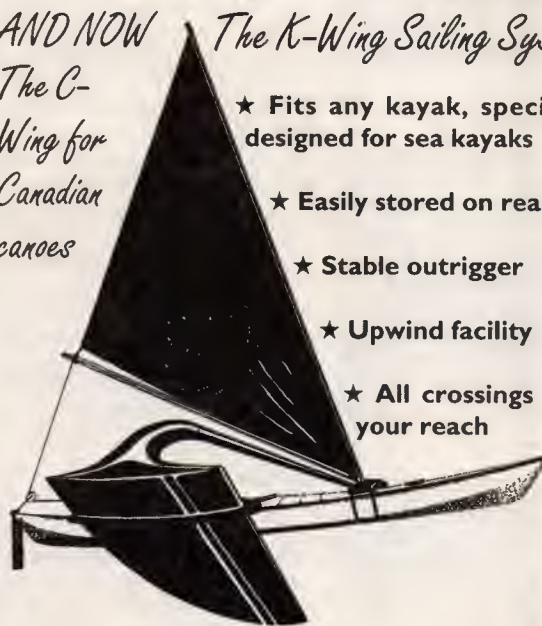
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Top 100 Club

The Foundation for Sport and the Arts continue to support our sport in a big way with yet more cash grants to clubs, organisation and individuals. A new initiative is the formation of a "Top 100 Club" of Olympic and World contenders, who will receive funding. The 100 club includes five paddlers: Gareth Marriott, Shaun Pearce, Melvyn Jones, Lynn Simpson and Ivan Lawler.

TSB Sports Development

TSB has re-launched its special account tailored to sports clubs and organisations. High interest is paid on balances over £1000 and free withdrawals and credits are allowed. For further information and application forms please contact Jane Brooks at CCPR, Francis House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DE. 071 828 3163

Midland School of Sport

The Midland School of Sport will take place again at Holme Pierrepont from 14-18 August 1994. The School caters for those of high potential living in the East or West Midlands who are under the age of 18. Slalom, Wild Water Racing and Racing are the three disciplines concerned.

The Regional coaches will be issuing direct invitations to potential candidates. If you feel that you merit inclusion, please write to the Director of Coaching at the BCU Office.

Channel Tunnel

Paddlers heading for the continent by the new under sea route need to be aware that there are restrictions on height (1.85), nor are trailers acceptable until the single deck transporters come on line in 1995. As the height restrictions rule out transit vans, campers and anything on roof racks, it looks as if the service will not be canoe friendly until then. Further enquiries to Eurotunnel customer services 0303 271100.

World Masters Games

Canoeists looking to compete in the Worlds Masters games have only until July to get their entries in to the Games Headquarters in Brisbane.

Entries close on the 15th at 5.00pm so if you are travelling to Brisbane and the Gold Coast for this event, contact WMG, 40 Creek Street, Brisbane, Q 4000 or telephone 07 405 0900

ICF Award

The Caravan and Camping Club will be presented with the prestigious ICF Touring Award at the World Polo Championships in July. The award is in recognition of the Thames International tour reported in Focus October '93.

Calling All Marathon Race Paddlers

Marathon Racing Certificates

The Racing Certificate Scheme is designed to promote marathon canoeing as well as providing funds for the its grass roots level. Each certificate costs 50p and the cost of it is included in the race entry fee. There is a counterfoil on each certificate for the competitor to fill in their name and address

and the completed, returned counterfoils are put into a draw which takes place every three months. The prizes are for the winning person a new racing canoe/kayak and the issuing organising club £100.

For race organisers it is important to ensure that all competitors receive their certificates at check in and that a clearly labelled box/envelope is provided for completed counterfoils. All the counterfoils must have the name of the race and the date inserted when they are issued. The completed counterfoils should then be returned to: Mrs. M. Owen, 14, Milldown Avenue, Goring-on-Thames, Reading Berkshire RG8 0AS (Race certificates can also be purchased from the above addresses at 50p each

and should be ordered 14 days prior to the event.)

Certificates must be issued at the events published in the Canoe Racing Handbook such as

a. Divisional races approved by the Executive Committee

b. Races and time-trials approved by the Executive Committee not in the divisional system, such as staged marathons, descents ie Royal K1, Richmond K2, Thamesides, Watersides etc

c. National Championships

(page 107 Canoe Racing Handbook 1994 refers)

In addition organisers are encouraged to use certificates for any handicap races in their club or region. The certificates are in fact the race levy.

Clubs can apply for a grant from the Marathon Committee if they write with their clearly set out request to David Green, Marathon Committee Secretary, Poole Cottage, Long Barn, Credition Devon. Grant requests are considered by the Executive Committee and a decision made as to the award, if any, to be given.

International Tour 4 de - Bruges Kayakdoortocht

This international event is a tour held every March and organised by the Bruges Kayak Club, it was this year being held for the fourth time. The initial part of the paddle being 13km in length and through a rural landscape, is along the Blankenberge Waterway to where it joins the Ostend to Bruges Canal. This may possibly be the best opportunity for canoeists to complete this section of water, as it passes through an extensive nature reserve.

The Club are to be congratulated for hosting such a well run event and for being so hospitable to those of us from Milton Keynes Canoe Club who made the trip. In all there were over 350 canoeists from a number of countries who attended.

See Page 22 of your BCU Yearbook for details of other selected European events yet to be held.

The Father of British Canoesport?

Kevin Mansell (RCO Channel Islands) has turned up some interesting research on the beginnings of the sport in this country with a newspaper cutting from the Jersey Loyalist, 17 May, 1830. It details the first sea kayak seen in the islands, in which a Mr Canham travelled from Cherbourg to Alderney and then from Jersey to Portsmouth.

This predates the exploits of 'Rob Roy' MacGregor by 35 years ! and also predates Kevin's crossing between Portsmouth and the Channel Islands by a hundred and fifty years. Does anyone know of other early British Canoeists?

Crystal Palace Raffle Report

Thanks to the generosity of a number of dealers we were able to hold a very successful raffle to raise funds for the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation at the International Canoe Exhibition in February.

The prize list, prizes and winner were as follows

1st 17' Peace River Cruiser Open Canoe - MobileAdventure 269, Jenny Parker, Sittingbourne

2nd Electric Outboard Motor - Plastimo 679, Steve Cook, Henley on Thames

3rd Pair of Single Blade Paddles - Eurosport 628, Stephen Readman, Worthing

4th Rucsac - S.D.S 624, J Cox, Sussex

5th One Years Free BCU Membership 399, Gary Blackman

6th Sweater - Marsport 448, Bob Ottley

In total the Raffle raised £800

Sponsored Paddlers



In these difficult financial times some of our paddlers are fortunate to attract generous sponsors. Recent recipients sponsorship deals are

Helen Barnes has attracted Citroen cars who have supplied here with the loudest kayak on the circuit and a Citroen ZX Advantage hatchback.

Ray Goodwin, BCU Coach, whose commercial coaching efforts are supported with equipment from Mobile Adventure of Leicester

Ian Davidson, slalomist, aged thirteen from Billingham has received £1500 from The Northern Electric Foundation for Sport.

Sponsored Region



The Sports Council (North West) has provided a £7,000 grant to the BCU North West

Region to promote the sport and introduce at least 300 young people to competitive canoeing in the next year.

Wales Fatality

Helen Smith, was drowned after pinning on a fall on the Nantcol river in Wales, whilst paddling with a friend. Our thoughts and sympathies are with her relatives and friends.


NW Brown:

Change of Address BCU Insurers, NW Brown have moved to Richmond House, 16-20 Regent Street, Cambridge CB2 1DB. Telephone is the same 0223 357131

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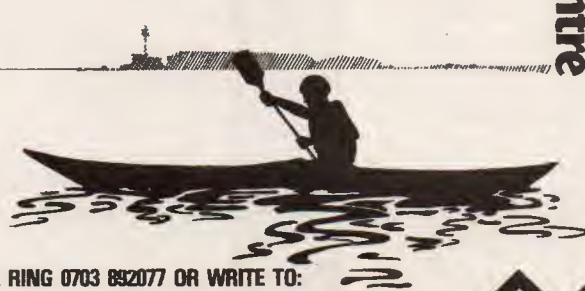
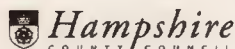
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Dr D's agony column

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

How do you Load Yours?

Dear Dr D

When I get off the water I strip off, climb into the front of my car, wrap myself in a towel and desperately try to warm up. To be honest I do this even when I'm not cold. It's possibly a desire to crawl back into the womb; the memory recalled by all that water surrounding me.

Food is the next object of my desire. Maybe Maslow was right with his hierarchy of needs: food, shelter, etc. But if he is correct in claiming that we strive for the basic needs first, why did I just spend the last two hours freezing my butt off in a state somewhere between terror and elation?

I used to sip strong coffee too but I broke my unbreakable flask. A seventy foot fall finished it off. It did not help the prowess of the climber it glanced on the way down. She was convinced that I had thrown it at her. It is odd

how we see fate as part of a great conspiracy that other people are plotting against us.

I could not come up with a use for a broken unbreakable flask and it appeared irreparable. I suppose I should have recycled it but I just threw it in the bin.

Funny thing is, as I sit in my towelling cocoon, my boat always gets tied on my roof.

How do you load yours?

Dr D replies; Inevitably I end up loading my own, and others, before I get changed because the transport is full of wet people, cocooned in towels eating Mars Bars and guzzling coffee...maybe I should adopt the helpless catatonic state, the thousand-yard glassy stare, and the shivering pallor perfected by the blue people who con others into tying on their kayaks for them.

Spinal cord

Dear Dr D

Extracts from a letter from David Miller referring to a memo circulated to Southbourne Canoe Club.

'Due to the statement concerning "an incredible risk of canoe club members damaging their spinal cord" and this matter must be investigated and opinions from acknowledged experts sought.'

The practice in question concerns looping of plastic kayaks from the pool side. The paddlers sits in his/her boat on the poolside, and a helper (or two) seal launches the canoe, and lifts the stern, pushing it over the bow (which is in the water at this point) to produce a loop in one continuous sequence.

Looping is only practised by a small number of able paddlers, and to my knowledge no accidents (even minor) have occurred. Inexperienced paddlers are not looped, nor do they assist others.

I, and other instructors, do not dispute that it is possible to hit a nearby paddler, or if not pushed cleanly over, to pop back and contact the poolside. Due to the limitation on who is involved (see above) this has not been a problem, due to good judgement and care - these are not reckless maniacs.

Mr Hughes concern, with his background in the St John's Ambulance Brigade is that the

impact of the body on the water will cause the spine to impact the back of the cockpit causing "an incredible risk of" (paddlers') damaging their spinal cord."

I have many years experience in white water and surf, and have never heard of this type of injury, even in large surf. I do not believe that it is not possible, but many paddlers are subject to hard, bad landings (for example Shaun Baker in the "waterfall kayak" video) but if Mr Hughes fears were based on fact I would expect to hear of these accidents in the canoeing press.

I am not an expert in first aid, nor am I an expert in spinal injuries, merely an experienced paddler, so would appreciate your opinions on this subject.

David Miller

Dr D replies: From your diagrams it seems that this is a fun, harmless and commonplace exercise with no risk of injury to the paddler. There is more risk to the instructor/helper who is lifting the kayak into the vertical position, especially if the lift is done with straight legs and bent back. In reality the forces on the paddler are small, (less than looping, in surf or whitewater) and can be measured by looking at the arc of the head in relation to the surface of the water. This is small and given that the surface tension of the water is already bro-

ken by the kayak, the paddler will feel little more stress than diving in for a swim. The rule is small arc OK, large arc OUCH.

As to the impact on the back of the cockpit: how about back-rests?

Most kayak instructors in pools use games just like this as

exercises to reinforce rolling practice, or train paddlers for surf, or playboating.

Back and spine injuries do occur in kayaking but these are largely from flat landings from waterfalls, or seal launches, and most injuries from lifting and handling kayaks on dry land!

Forward Paddle Stroke

Dear Dr D

A number of very experienced paddlers at the club push with the opposite foot to the pulling arm. I use the foot on the same side.

Could you explain why this is best as it appears to be more natural to use the opposite foot.

D E Howell

Dr D replies: This question crops up quite a lot on training and assessment courses. As ever it is not quite as straightforward as a 'right' or wrong foot. I personally find it is better to put pressure on the left foot whilst the right blade is in the pull phase, and vice versa. This has four main benefits;

1. There is a good positive 'lock' on the footrest, driving the boat past the blade in the water.

2. The kick from the footrest counteracts most of any turning moment set up by putting the blade in on the other side

to the foot (mainly applicable to short boats)

3. The arm/body/leg action is more natural and encourages much more use of the back and large muscle groups rather than just arms. This is the trunk rotation talked about in manuals.

4. This trunk rotation sets up the next stroke by pre-rotating the body in preparation for the pull phase.

If it feels more natural to push with the foot on the same side as the blade this would suggest to me that your action is more akin to rowing where the large muscles are used in a 'front to back' pull.

The opposite foot method utilises a twisting and torque action, which most importantly sets up the next blade efficiently, and a long way forward..

Try both methods on the water and off. Do you walk forward swinging your left arm forward with your left leg? Forward

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***B**efore I went to Chile I had done quite a bit of paddling, but I'd never been sea kayaking. Come to think of it, neither had anybody else in our group of twelve Venturers. We were all on the latest Raleigh International expedition to Chile and undertaking conversation, community, scientific and adventurous projects. Sea kayaking for two weeks along the coastline of Patagonia to the San Rafael glacier was to be our adventurous project.*

As with all good expeditions something had to go wrong before we had even started. The American boats which we were going to use have sea socks to prevent them from swamping in the event of a capsize. The previous expedition had trashed them and so we had to wait for replacements to be flown in from the US. Rather than sit around for five days we went off on a trek in the Rio Simpson Reserve (or as we called it, the Nightmare Bamboo Reserve). Let's just say it wasn't the best part of the expedition and as this article is supposed to be about kayaking, hardly relevant.

When at last our sea socks arrived, we packed up the lorry and headed off to Puerto Asien where a fishing boat had been chartered (the previous day) to take us to our start point, a little island called Renaco. The fishing boat was quite small (the doubles wouldn't fit in the hold) and leaked a bit, but we weren't going to argue. Its subsequent sinking came as no surprise.

Chilean Navy

Once packed we had to observe the Chilean custom of waiting. Two hours later the man from the Chilean Navy arrived to check that we had a radio, medic, buoyancy aids and whistles. Then we could get underway; by now it was

six o'clock in the evening but still light.

It was a bit rough for a small boat and very soon Matt and Andy, two of my fellow Venturers, looked green. Everyone else settled down as the journey would take all night. Waking up in the morning we noticed at once how calm it was. Unfortunately this was only due to our being in the lee of an island. Phil and Jez our instructors, explained that we were not going to get in any paddling that day. Looking out to sea where the wind was blowing at the side of the island we could see their point.

We spent the whole day on that grotty little island which didn't have a beach, let alone a McDonalds, and was where all the fishermen chucked their rubbish. It rained lots too. But the fishermen came over to say hello and gave us a big bag of scallops. We were all thankful when the next morning Phil said it was calm enough for us to set out. Packing the boats with all the gear and food for ten days and actually getting on the water took ages. It took us a while to get used to the rudders and the person in front never really trusted the back person's steering. The paddling was very different, just onwards and onwards. I was dying to do a bow rudder. We had a good first day as both the wind and the tide were with us. We even found a nice beach to camp on.





**Expedition
members:**

**Phil,
Morph,
Suz,
Jez,
Jo,
Dave,
Nicky,
Tam,
Nutty,
Jude,
Alex,
John,
Andy,
Matt.**



One thing I should point out here is that we were using Chilean Navy Charts which do not show beaches or tides to any great extent. So knowing whether to stop when you found a beach, or push on, was more a matter of guesswork than experience.

Rainbow Beach

The second day it was raining (again) but not so windy. I finally found out how difficult using the rudder could be, but at least it was dryer in the back. We began seeing more wildlife, porpoises, albatrosses, the odd penguin and really funny flightless steamer ducks. At the end of the day

we found an even better beach to camp on complete with its own rainbow. It still didn't have a McDonalds though.

The next day was beautiful. As one of the other Venturers dragged me out of bed to show me just how beautiful it was despite my protests. A flat calm sea was very welcome. We had a good long lunch break to wait for the tide to turn (good thing it was hot and sunny). We bumped into a group of sealions but they did not seem to like our company as much as we liked theirs so a quick retreat seemed like a good idea, especially when they started swimming after us and snorting. That evening we found some caves on the beach which was a bit different but this meant we didn't have to make any shelter.

Six hours sunbathing

The following day we had to get up early to catch the tide and paddled for two hours before stopping at ten to have breakfast and lunch at two before the tide was with us again. I guess six hours sunbathing made up for the early start. However, when we took the sea again in the afternoon the wind had got up and it was a real struggle (if not quite fun) to get round the headland. Worse was to come however when at 7.30pm we still hadn't found a beach to camp on. The choice was between an old fishing camp which scored one out of ten (only because it had a water source) and crossing the channel to a beach which we could see on the other side. The unanimous decision was to go for the beach; luckily the wind had died down a bit and it only took an hour to get across. We knew we wouldn't have to go back if we didn't like it as just being a beach scored two out of ten.

The next day was rest time (although you may think the previous day had been as well with that long breakfast/lunch break). Mostly because Andy had fallen ill, (it must have been something he'd eaten) and needed some more sleep. The sun came out and we had a bit of

Continued on page 16



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Kayaking Patagonia

a beach party, definitely a nine out of ten beach. To score ten it would have needed a bar or a McDonalds (but both would have been nice). We paddled a bit in the evening but didn't really get far.

After a day of rest, the next day started at 5.30am. Jo and I had to tow Andy and John so that Andy can have another day's rest. It was very easy going as it was flat calm. We swapped at breakfast so that John and I were towing Andy's boat. It took us five minutes to realise that we were in front of the others and this was why the towing had become much harder. All the others had decided to take a rest as well and we were towing a raft of all seven boats.

Loco Gringos

We also managed to bump into the Chilean Navy that day. It had to be seen to be believed, as no-one spoke Spanish we left it Phil, our leader, to explain. He didn't speak Spanish but he managed to speak English very slowly and very loudly like any good Englishman abroad. Every day at 7.30am we were supposed to radio our position to Raleigh who

would pass it to the Chilean Navy. For the last few days we had been on the water at 7.30am and so we hadn't been able to. As we couldn't speak Spanish we don't know if that's why they were looking for us; they didn't seem that bothered but then eight kayaks is hardly a threat to the Chilean Navy. Maybe they just wanted to have a look at the "loco Gringos".

By the end of the day we had covered some 16 nautical miles and we were all knackered.

The next day we had another 5.30am start and we were still towing Andy. Three hours constant paddling until we could find a beach stop. The afternoon breeze soon turned to more of a gale so we decided to make use of it by sailing rafted up. After another crew swap around, off we went. We were positively speeding along until we noticed that the sea was getting rather big and it would be more prudent to break the raft up. There then followed a long paddle in a three to four foot swell. The temptation to surf was unbelievable, made even worse by Phil and Jez making the best of the waves in their singles.

It was a long time until we made it to a suitable beach and even then it only scored a two (because it was a beach and it had a water source). The rain came down in sheets and we caught sight of our first iceberg. The next day we knew we should reach the glacier. There wasn't much to do except go to bed.

We misjudged the tide somewhat and it was only Matt's ability to get up at two in the morning that stopped the boats and the pots and pans floating away.

Another following sea got our adrenalin going. We had to time the approach to the Lagona San Rafael just as right as the channel narrowed to only half a nautical mile wide which increased the tide to as much as six knots. We sat on a muddy bank to wait but after half an hour decided that paddling against the tide would be much more fun than waiting on the mud in the wind and the rain. We had to play 'dodge the iceberg' going up the channel but there were fewer than expected.

Emerging into the Lagona was a bit of a disappointment as it was too misty to see the glacier. We still had to get across the Lagona to the 'San Raf Hotel', a Chilean

Tourist project which was less than successful. However it had four walls and a roof where we would be allowed to stay. Unfortunately we didn't know exactly where it was as it wasn't on our charts.

The wind and the rain were starting to get to us so we tried to get further back into our hoods and keep paddling. Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse, Phil came out with his 'more wind, more rain, please!' act and it was. When we all thought we couldn't go anymore somebody saw a couple of chimney pots above the trees. It was all we needed to restore our spirits, a quick paddle up the shore and we had made it.

The next day we went and had a look at the glacier. Just gobsmacking. It is sooo big and bits fall off it all the time (it's the second largest carving glacier in the world).

We stayed a couple of days before another fishing boat turned up to take us back to Raleigh base. (The first fishing boat had sunk.)

Our thanks to all at Raleigh base for their support and especially Phil, Jez and Nicky without whom we couldn't have managed.

Article & Photos
by Neil 'Nutty' Newton Taylor 



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Competition *focus*

The First International Slalom Training Camp

The last week in March saw some of the world's top slalomists gather in the small town of St Pe de Bigorre, in the south of France. Standing in the foothills of the Pyrenees, this was to be the location of the first International Canoe Slalom Training Camp. Entry to the camp for athletes was by a 1993 World Championships, World Cup Series or Olympic medal and their respective National coaches accompanied them. Organised by French National Trainer, Christophe Prigent and with the help of Richard Fox, the camp was attended by 9 K1M, 4K1L, 4 C1, 2 C2 and eight national coaches. Accommodation was provided at the town's regionally funded Outdoor Activity Centre which located on the river has its own moving water site complete with fates. The training site itself is comparable with any of the British Premier sites. It is located approximately 2 miles from the town with constant water releases throughout the day. Wider and deeper than the Tryweryn it is a mixture of natural river with some built up groins from the river bank to

give more defined eddy lines. Wide and flowing at the top it narrows down to give a tight fast finish to any course set.

The camp was for 6 days with 2 water sessions per day plus one rest afternoon. The sessions were a mixture of technique which was carried out in class groups, competition runs in an international format i.e qualifying event 1 day and then a final (no practice) with a change of course the following day, and some more physical workouts. This programme, even though gruelling, kept competitiveness at a high all week with athletes stretching to their limits every day. Technique sessions were structured so that no athlete worked more with one coach than another. This was stimulating for all participating as not only were athletes given new types of feedback on their own paddling but coaches were able to see how other countries trainers worked.

Besides the serious element of paddling, a good camp should always include fun! This was provided in the form of the "Haute Pyrenees" Challenge. The athletes and trainers were split into 2 teams captained by the 2 C2 crews, Addison/Forgues and Simek/Rohan. The Challenge



Lynn Simpson

consisted of 4 events; a football match, a ski giant slalom (hosted by the local ski resort on the rest afternoon) and 2 of the canoeing sessions with points awarded for each event. The Simek/Rohan team led all the way in the giant slalom. There was definitely some potential Winter Olympic stars amongst them although Jimmy Jayes is not one of them! A close football match starring Shaun "not quite Ryan Giggs yet" Pearce and Ian "Vinny Jones" Raspin went into extra time with a 1-1 score. Yet again Simek/Rohan's team snatched the points with an extra goal in the closing minutes. However, Addison/Forgues's team excelled and took a clean sweep in what they do best - the canoeing events. So with the teams tying on points a complicated and yet still unknown formula

continued on page 20

Athletes in attendance:

Shaun Pearce **GBR**
 Jochen Lettmann **GER**
 Lynn Simpson **GBR**
 Gareth Marriott **GBR**
 Ian Raspin **GBR**
 Thomas Becker **GER**
 Anne Boixel **FRA**
 Hervi Delamarre **FRA**
 Sylvain Curinier **FRA**
 Michael Reys **HO**
 Marie Anne Agulhon **FRA**
 Patrice Estanguet **FRA**
 Ian Wiley **IRL**
 Oliver Fix **GER**
 Sheryl Boyle **CAN**
 Lukas Pollert **CZE**
 Manuel Kohler **AUT**
 Frank Adisson **FRA**
 Wilfred Forgues **FRA**
 M Simek **CZE**
 Rohan **CZE**



Ian Wiley

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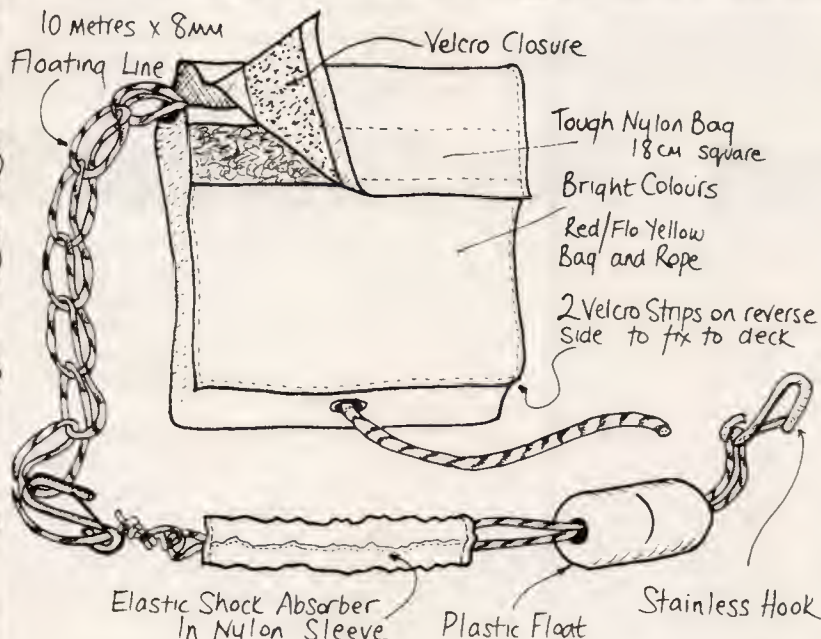


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Slalom Snippets

Giant Slalom - Come and try it in a plastic boat only!

Open to all and quite different from your usual slalom - few rules, as many runs as you like throughout the day BUT you MUST PADDLE PLASTIC! Where's this - at Washburn on Saturday 3 September, below the Div 2/3 slalom and with kind permission of Leeds Canoe Club and the Washburn Committee. Entry fee £3 per boat - like more details? Please send SAE to Slalom Development Officer, the Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark NG23 5RZ.

British National Veteran Championships

July 2/3 at Holme Pierrepont - come on all you Veteran Slalomists, here's your opportunity! This event is happening for the first time, will be an annual event and this year, is combined with the Div 2 being run by Hemel Hempstead CC.

Watch out for the British Canoe Slalom Trailer this Summer

Loaded with boats and equipment, it is to visit three events - Red Locks, Newbury on June 18/19, Stratford Weir on July 30/31 and Peterborough on August 20/21. You can borrow gear free of charge!

Date Changes

Some date changes for your diary - Holme Pierrepont 4/5 event will take place on August 13/14 this year, and NOT the following week as advertised in the BCU Handbook, entries still to Olney Slalom Paddlers! Premier Division competitors please note that the Holme Pierrepont Premier to be held at the end of May will now take place on 15/16 October at the same venue with the same Organising club.

And Finally...

We are looking for a new Junior Team Manager and we invite applications! Responsible to the National Teams Manager for the British Junior Teams and winter training squad - please apply to Slalom Development Officer (address above) by July 1 1994, requesting job and person specification and enclosing a sae.



Scott Shipley

was used to decide the winners. Adisson/Forgues's team triumphed, each member receiving a bottle of wine and some locally produced Foie Gras (duck pate) from the Haute Pyrenees Regional Council who had kindly sponsored the event. All participants agreed that this was a worthwhile exercise with a lot of knowledge and ideas being swapped away from the all too tense race environment. - it is sure to have been the first of many!

Lynn Simpson

World Cup Race 1

24th - 26th June 1994

The build up to the 1995 World Championships begins this year in Nottingham with the first race of the 1994 World Cup Series.

World Cup Race 1 is expected to attract a strong International entry, all looking for race experience on the artificial Slalom Course in readiness for the 1995 World Championships, which are also to be held at the National Watersports Centre, Nottingham.

Teams from the main European countries as well as from Australasia and the United States will all be competing in this first race of the 1994 World Cup. Paddlers then moving on to Augsburg, Bourg Saint Maurice, the 1992 Olympic course at La Seu d'Urgell in Spain, with the final race of the series in September on the Yahagi River at Yahasi in Japan.

Nice work if you can get it!!!

Of course, an important race of World Cup quality cannot be run without a great

deal of help, both from the physical and financial aspects. For this years race we are pleased to have support from the Sports Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, Teeside Development Corporation and Norwich Union.

The other great news about this race is that the final stages are to be televised by BBC as part of their Sunday Grandstand Sports coverage.

So having done the hard part in gaining sponsorship, television coverage and convinced an army of volunteers to work hard in the sun for a few days, whats left....

THAT'S RIGHT! WE NEED YOU, THE CANOEING WORLD TO COME ALONG AND SUPPORT THE BEST SLALOM PADDLERS IN THE WORLD.

Lets show the viewing public around the country what an exciting sport we have by being there to support our top British Paddlers taking on the best in the World.

What - No Richard!

It will be a strange feeling for everyone concerned with the race whether paddler or helper to know that this will be the first time a race of this stature to be held in this country will have a great name missing from the start list.

Our own Richard Fox MBE, five times World Champion, retired from International competition at the end of the 1993 season. He and his wife World Kayak Ladies Champion Myriam Jerusalem, who has suspended her canoeing career, are living in Marseille and expect their first baby around World Cup time. Such has been Britain's dominance of the sport over the past few years that with Richard now retired the remaining British Men, and indeed the rest of the World might stand a chance!

So who can we expect to see battling for honours?

At the time of writing the British Senior Team Selection Races had not been completed but expect to see a strong GBR Team to include paddlers such as Melvyn Jones, 1991 World Champion Shaun Pearce, Teessides favourite sons, Ian and Andy Raspin, Lynn Simpson (3rd in last years World Cup Series) and Olympic Silver Medallist Gareth Marriott in the Canadian C1 Class.

The opposition is bound to be tough, headed by 1992 Olympic Champions Pierrepalo Ferrazi from Italy and Lisa Micheler, from Germany.

Many paddlers from abroad have already spent some time training at Holme Pierrepont this winter, including a visit from the Australian and Swedish team members.

It will be a great race to be at!

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RACE SCHEDULE. Friday 24th June

Non Stop Practice

Saturday 25th June

Qualification Race

All Classes C1, K1W, C2, K1M

Sunday 26th June

Finals C1, K1W, C2, K1M.

For further information please contact:

Roger Fox, Race

Technical Director

Sue Wharton, Slalom

Development Officer

B.C.U. Adbolton

Lane, West Bridgford,

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Deck	Full layer pure Carbon Full layer composite cloth
Inside seam	50mm Kevlar
Outside seam	25mm Kevlar Bi-axial tape
Seat	Kevlar/Carbon Epoxy

Weight of finished shell 8.4 - 8.8 kg
Fully fitted, no footrest.

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Wild Water Racing

The Wavehopper

What is it?

The Wavehopper is a 4 metre plastic wild water racing kayak developed by the BCU wild water racing committee. Input to the initial design was made by both Nick Pink and by Antoine Goetschy of France - who was the 1987 World Champion, before being tested by several senior paddlers. Those familiar with designs may notice aspects of the Superstar and Obsession but being a shorter boat than these, a glass version was tested first to check the design and some initial plastic boats were also produced before the go ahead with the final mould.

The idea was inspired by the need for a longer lasting boat, particularly for British rivers where rocks are too often the main obstacles. This was seen as especially important for paddlers starting the sport or to encourage clubs to own boats as repairs can be a length and discouraging job. Given that plastic kayaks are now almost universally used for wild water touring it was obvious that this would follow into racing as well. In racing it was also considered that a mono type would have many advantages amongst juniors and new paddlers without the need to purchase new boats regularly as the repairs increased on the old ones.

The finished article is therefore half a metre shorter than a normal river racing kayak in order to ensure that it is manoeuvrable and more stable, as well as keeping the weight to an acceptable level. It now comes equipped with a moulded seat, backrest and an adjustable footrest that can

be rapidly changed for different paddlers. It weighs about 16kg but this is not noticeable when paddling one downstream and it still handles well as a fast tourer on the flat. It is of course slower than the longer boat, but only about 5-10% for the average paddler and because of its stability can result in faster times on the rough.

An increasing number can now be seen in the UK following its launch at the canoe exhibition in 1993. There it was an ideal boat used to hold pursuit races round the 'lazy river' in the fun pool area. Gaybo started manufacturing the boat in the autumn and its now available at around £400 - somewhat cheaper than a new kevlar river racer these days.

The boat and the development of Wild Water Racing. The boat still won't stop you falling in but it does allow new routes or rivers to be run without the fear of ruining a kevlar boat. Its also fun to paddle as it turns easily but has considerable straight line speed. It certainly doesn't handle like a Dancer for example though and like other river racing boats it responds better to being paddled firmly down the river. It may not be ideal for long distance races but one was seen in the Waterside races covering 20 miles - an impressive feat considering the portages. The river racing committee has therefore purchased over 30 Wavehoppers in order to ensure that they can be tried out initially by clubs or individuals, particularly for introducing new paddlers to the sport. The boats are going to be regionally based in the following locations:

Scotland

2 boats in each of 4 locations.



Bala

at Canolfan Tryweryn
South East
at Herts Canoe Club
Midlands/North
at Holme Pierrepont

In addition two trailers will be available to keep boats on and to take them to clubs, introductory sessions or to races. Both North-West and South-West regions are purchasing Wavehoppers as well so that there should be some accessible in all areas. Any clubs wishing to try the boats should be able to arrange this and river racing will try to make coaching support available where necessary. This is likely to be from the coach to be appointed in the near future or from locally based paddlers. There is intended to be no charge for using the boats for introductory purposes but there will be a fee for using them on the Tryweryn for training. Individuals are already purchasing their own, even if they usually race a kevlar boat, in order to use them for practice or indeed as their only boat.

International, several other countries have already seized on the Wavehopper and a large number have gone to Europe. The French, in particular see it as a strong junior class boat even though they have much better water available.

Wavehopper Racing

A significant number of Wavehoppers are now being seen at river races and there has been some debate as to where they should fit into the racing and ranking structure. At the top level it is not expected that kevlar boats will be replaced as they have their own feel and speed which can be more easily mastered once

initial experience has been gained. However, in order to promote Wavehoppers a 10% deduction from times has been allowed in 1994 at all ranking races, but not in specific Championships. This was to encourage their use and to ensure that paddlers in them are not disadvantaged. In keeping with the monotype boat concept though, the river racing committee intends to promote the boat for all Under 14 and 16 paddlers in future years and to run Wavehopper only races at suitable venues from August 1994 onwards. These are likely to be over shorter courses and on the better stretches of wild water available. Prizes will be in offer and the entry fee will cover the use of a boat, as it should be possible to shuttle them around quickly. The likely venues and dates are listed below but more details will be announced by August.

Tryweryn

27/28 August - Graveyard/
Slalom site.

Washburn

29 October

Dee (Wales)

5 November

Dee (Wales)

10 December

The Tryweryn race will be on the World Cup weekend and is an opportunity for anyone wishing to watch the racing to take part in a competition themselves, rather than it being an extension of the international racing. The others are being held in conjunction with traditional ranking races.

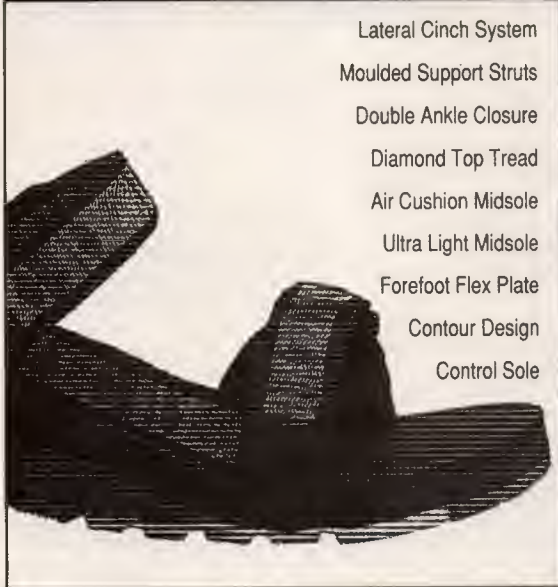
Therefore if you haven't already tried the boat the opportunity will be there soon just to have a go or to race one.

Dave Belbin



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Regional round up

Chair's Chat

What do the BCU or the regions do for you the canoeist? How often do I hear comments to that end? Probably as often as I speak to canoeists about canoeing. The BCU through the Regions struggle to keep track of all the developments that may affect our sport and recreation. We can only respond to things that we know about and rely on you the members to keep us informed. Many of the Regions have their own newsletter, they all have access to space in Regional Round-Up. The Regional editors are crying out for information to keep others informed. Details of editors can be found in the "Yearbook", another service by the BCU for its members. Come on, flood us with information, I long to hear my editor moan that she has too much information. Let us communicate!

Ron Hodgson



Eastern

The successful River Blackwater tour in April launched this year's Eastern Region tour programme. Coming events include the River Bure tour, Norfolk 3 July (Judith Fynn 0603 737456) and the River Ouse tour, Cambs 7 August (Eryl Jones 0480 860894). All paddlers and craft welcome. Why not organise a tour in your own area? The Bedford 100 Mile Challenge 18-19 June is an ideal fund raising event for your club or charity (Mike Carter 0234 215441). The Essex Battlesbridge Marathon returns to the tidal Crouch on 10 July after a gap of some years; an excellent race up the Crouch Estuary (Colin Smith 0268 282361); Cardington Inter-Club and Regional Slalom Championships 16-17 July (Jim Croft).

Judith Fynn

East Midlands

June 5 Derwent Rally - Simon Dawson, June 12 Club Challenge Leicester OPC - Keith Hampton, July 1-3 Lincolnshire Family Camp - Ann Hart, July 3 River Trip Soar - Alistair Lea-Wilson and August 7 Lincolnshire Coastal Tour - Richard Arden (phone numbers and addresses in Yearbook). More details on telephone information line 0602 850930. We would love to meet you at an event. Training courses throughout the region - Keith Sykes 0602 894267. New canoe club at Holme Pierrepont Thursday nights. Support World Cup 1 at Holme Pierrepont 24-26 June.

Ann Hart

London & South East

The River Medway requires a Local Access Officer. If you can help, contact Gavin Hollis (address in Yearbook). Slalom in the Region is raising its profile. With the full support of the National Executive, a steering group has been established with a view to establishing a wider base of competition such as the use of sites for non-ranking slaloms, drawing in the nuclei of slalomists in the numerous clubs, offering these opportunities to all canoeists regardless of previous experience. An inaugural meeting will be held on June 4 at Yalding in conjunction with the Div 5 slalom on the Sunday. Interested! Have a go at the competition; try judging or supporting. Details from me (address in Yearbook).

Les Saunders

Northern

June 19 Coquet Race and Sea Tour details from Martin Meling, 20 Windermere, Cleadon Village, Sunderland SR66 7QQ. All welcome. Touring dates/events from E Palmer tel: 0434 270318. Wanted reports

and photos of your summer canoeing events to Editor Northern Paddler. Regional Slalom Championships 16 July 1994 details from A Wilson tel: 091 584 1869. Access in Cumbria to all waters, please check before paddling. Access to north/south Tyne no paddling August/September. Other summer months, check access before you paddle. Events at Tees Barrage coming soon. Details of canoe training courses are available from NE Dave Gray tel: 0861 836576 and Cumbria from Keith Morris tel 05396 58897.

Mary Armstrong

North West

The Wavehoppers are here. Try them out Tuesday/Thursday at Chester Canoe Club. Phone Mike Worden for more information 0244 313879. David Watkinson Access Officer would like to hear from any paddlers using the lesser known rivers in the Region. He is trying to compile an up to date information sheet 0772 824502. Inter-Club Slalom Manchester canoe club 16/17 July contact Roy Bradshaw 061 427 7324. All welcome team participation not necessary. Women contact Joanna Morley for information on training specially for women or to discuss womens issues 051 270 1456. Newsletter now well underway, anyone requiring a copy ring me on 0606 41106. All articles welcome; next copy date 17 June.

Dawn Neville

Southern

De Montfort University Watersports Centre at Caldecot Lake opened in April - the culmination of years of BCU liaison and home to Milton Keynes CC, who wish to get 500/1000m racing going (0234 711833). The 25 June Basingstoke Canal 200th Anniversary tour will now go westwards to Odiham, instead of east to Frimley, due to a 300 peg angling match. Barbecue or pub lunch at Odiham, where the celebrations are, after 5.5 or 8 miles (0252 850657). July 10 and September 25 are provisional SR open days at the Cardington Slalom course - (0908 611187). SR sea events on 17 July from Stokes Bay (0252 713818) and 3/4 September at Calshot - come and try a sea boat (0252 875976).

Charles Hicks

South West

In April, a second unit of equipment suitable for use by disabled people was presented at a ceremony attended by Robert Kay MP and officials of Wessex Water PLC, who provided the funding. There are now two units, one kept by Frome CC and one by Salisbury CC through whom arrangements to use can be made. Pete Whitfield of 21 Lydford Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth has taken over as

Newsletter Editor. The intention is to produce a Newsletter after each Regional Committee meeting. Letters will be sent to each affiliated club or group, but resources do not stretch to circulating individual members. Individuals requiring a copy should contact Pete. A surveyor has produced plans of our land at Holne on the bank of the Dart and discussions regarding possible development are taking place with Dartmoor National Park.

Dennis Walls

West Midlands

Following on the successful Spring events we now have: marathon races: June 12, Nottingham; 19, Soar; 26, Wye; July 17, Burton; August 14 Ironbridge 1995. Details contact 021 745 3415. Slaloms: June 19 Stone; July 16/17 Inter-Club Slalom selection and August 21 Luddington. Details contact 0384 76855. Tours: June 5 Padlathon (in aid of Heart Foundation) Ironbridge to Bewdley, 25 miles grade 1; 19 Wye Tour - 20 miles, Ross-on-Wye to Monmouth; July 2/3 Pershore Camp weekend - family recreational weekend and 18 Sutton's Severn tour. Short trip, Hampton Loade to Bewdley September 4 and Worcester's swan-along (in aid of Spinal Muscular Dystrophy), Bewdley to Worcester 16 miles grade 1. Details contact 021 772 3739. National Championships at Worcester August 27/28.

Rosemary Preece

Yorkshire & Humberside

The Regional Disability Panel as a priority group has pioneered a new concept in the promotion of canoeing for people with a disability. Canoeability, on a video, illustrates canoeing as a sport that offers the disabled a challenge, enjoyment, friendship and a new freedom. The Sports Council and the Yorkshire & Humberside Federation of Sport & Recreation who administers a Sportmatch Award Scheme sponsored by Yorkshire Electricity funded the video. Produced by Chrisfilms of Glasshouses it introduces canoeing to the Deaf with a signed version; it is also available for the Blind. Canoeability is to be launched at an event organised by Yorkshire Electricity on the 17 May 1994. To follow up the video, the Disability Panel is organising an Endorsement Course, 25/26 June at York. If you would like to become involved get details from John Swallow, 0642 599153.

Mike Twiggs



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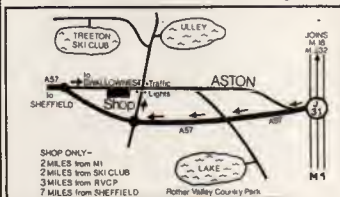
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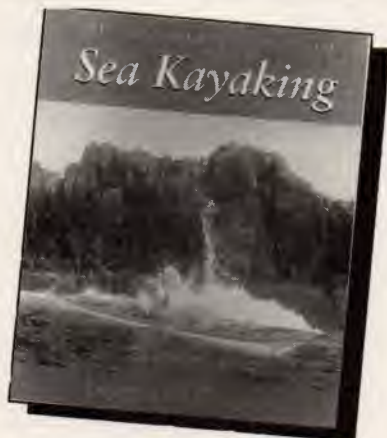
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Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands

International Kayak Expedition



Above:
Warning -
unexploded
mines!

Main picture:
Starting to
ease up.

"Wood and water, wind and tree, jungle f

After six months working for Shearwater on the Zambezi river, at the end of the season almost all of the river guides are totally burned out. I loved the big volume river, surfing rafts, over thirty flips and the 'down time' you can get in a kayak. The water got too high to raft commercially, so it was time to paddle some different rivers. Before going to Africa I was told the Zambezi was the only river in the area; read on.... as always a plan came together...



This time it was in the infamous 'Explorers', if you need a raft guide that's where they'll be. Todd, Stan 'the video kayaking man' and myself teamed up with some Sobek guides for a major road trip. The highlands then through Mozambique. A week (and two tyres) later we made it to the cooler and almost Scottish like highlands. We are all used to the immense heat in Victoria Falls. So some of us who chose to leave our fleece jackets behind were tucked up in sleeping bags a little earlier than normal. We knew some South African kayakers who walked out of a river as they came to some waterfalls. After a quick game of paper, scissors and rock to see who would drive (kayaking is a lot safer) we put onto the river, which had a lot more volume than the Zambezi NOT!

Gairezi River

"Will we ever get out of here?" asked Stephan, stereo typically Swiss, is always a little more than highly strung. It

was near the end of the second day and the gorge fell away from us for 7K with a 6% fall rate, with thick African forest either side. "Yahoo" I thought. After a late start the first day, mainly down to our "we'll be off by the morning" attitude. With clear water just under the bridge, the river started with grade 3, quickly turning into technical grade 5 drops. Spending the first night on a small damp island with the roar from waterfalls both sides of us, Stan's paddle lost in one of them. The second day we were moving 1K per hour maximum, with some grade 6 runs and portages. A world class section of eleven continuous falls and slides, all around 8 metres and runnable. Only Todd and myself could keep the adrenaline going to run them all. We spent a hungry nights camp (unknowingly to us) just a few Kilometres before the take out. No photo's taken, but catch me if you want to see the video. A beautiful river, the starting point below the impressive Pungwe Falls. Although it took over two hours of dragging our

Highlands

by Colin Hill



avour go with thee!"

*Rudyard Kipling
The Jungle Books.*

kayaks through thick bush to get us down to river level, it was worth it when you have two days of continuous grade 4 paddling. Well some of us did, Stan put a hole in an already well worn, very old mountain bat, having then to walk back up the gorge. It also never ceased to amaze me how much our Swiss paddler could swear; having two near vertical pins in a space of ten minutes does not help. Another hard bush walk around another huge fall does make this trip hard work, but very well worth it. The lower section is being run (on a small scale) commercially by a company called 'Far and Wide' (thanks for the bed and food), taking inflatable canoes down some pretty good sections. We all left the highlands with the hope of one day returning, there are plenty more rivers in Zimbabwe than the Zambezi. The next part of the trip took us down the coast line of Mozambique, a country which has just got rid of the Portuguese and been through various liberation wars, the largest number of unexploded land mines and the most beautiful beaches. We were in no hurry, having no plans for this part of the journey. This in fact caused a slight strain on the team as some wanted a faster pace, whilst others were happy to have some RR. The surf wasn't as good as 'J Bay' and Cape Town, but paddling to various islands and coral diving. Life's not too bad in Africa if war holds off.



Top; Todd, myself, Stephan and Stan (caveman) after the Gairezi River.

Above: Into Mozambique with the Stan mobile.

Below: "It's that swiss!"
Bottom: Not for me thank-you. Mozambique fisherman.



TeamMembers

- Colin Hill
U.K.
 - Amy Flynn
U.S.A.
 - Scott Kazma r
U.S.A.
 - Stan Ricketts
R.S.A.
 - Stephen
Zumsteg
Swiss
 - Todd Post
U.S.A.
- Special thanks**
to:
- Pyranha
 - Kayaks,
 - Wildwater,
 - Playboater,
 - Nyami Nyami
(Zambezi River
God)



Paddlers gear

YAK Buoyancy Aid

The XP1 is a simple, no fuss buoyancy aid for general purpose use. A generous cut under the arms and three good sized pockets for bits and bobs will please the tourists, instructors and sea paddlers who like to keep things about their person, but not feel restricted by bulk. The red & yellow colour-way of the sample is a bit on the staid side for some tastes, but no doubt other colours are available for the fashion victims. The aid is extremely well made, and looks as if the shell will give good service long beyond the lifespan of the foam inner. Simple but good.

Recommended.



Price: £59.95 Junior,
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Tel: 0705 528621

Palm Junior Buoyancy Aid, Palm Junior Mini John

At last: new kit for kids.

Following last years success in producing a women's alpine buoyancy aid, Palm are venturing into the children's range. This is the year of the family and more and more young canoeists are paddling with parents, or solo at the age of five and the previous difficulty has been finding appropriate kit. As the father of a boisterous sprog who goes paddling, this development is welcome. To be fair other manufacturers produce BA's for kids, but they are often designed assuming the youngster generally sits still and does not want to actively participate: safety rather than function. My

daughter complains about the fit, the colour, the chafing and the need to go toilet all in the same breath so a harsher test pilot probably could not be found.

The results?

She very much liked the colour, tolerated the fit (very good in other words) and was still alarmingly mobile whilst wearing it. From my point of view, she felt happy, had bags of float, and the fittings were sensible and not awkward or fiddly. I particularly liked the lap strap arrangement which could

be tucked away if paddling kayak, or quickly done up for other water activity.

The shoulder pads were a little bulky but as the BA comes in range of even smaller sizes this should not present a problem. Overall a nice product, user approved.

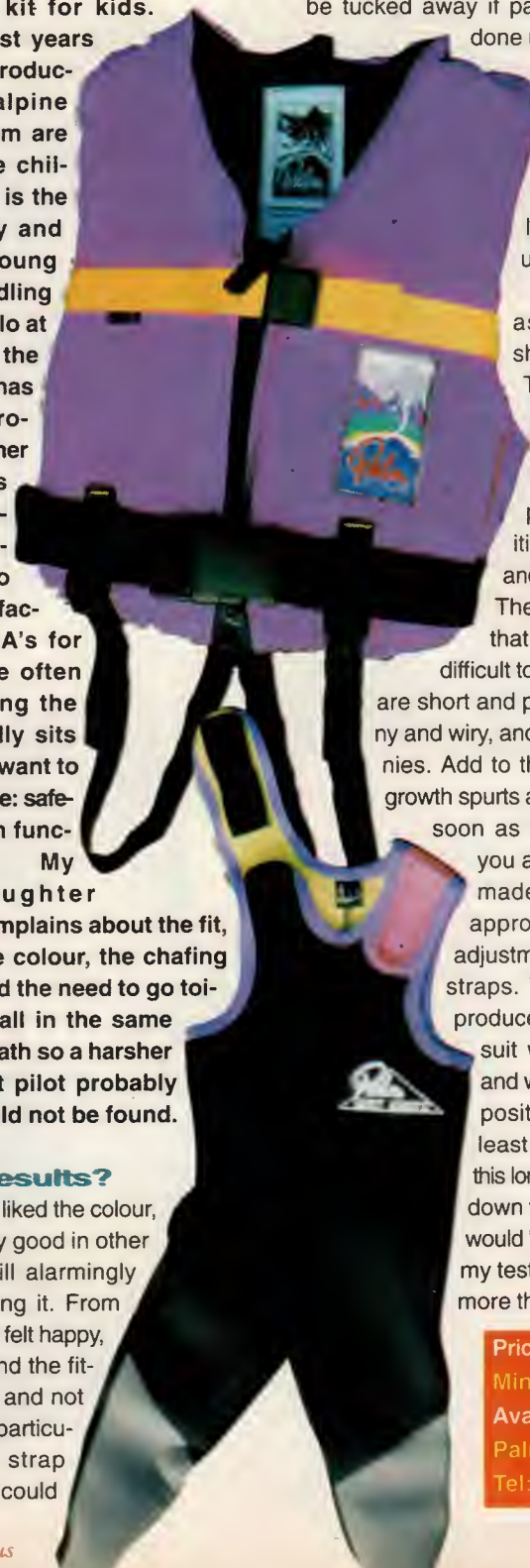
The long john is much as you would expect; a shrunk down adult wetsuit.

There is not much new you can do with a standard item like this when adapting for kids, but Palm have paid attention to the priorities. The neoprene is soft and the cut on the loose side.

The problem with children is that proportionately, they are difficult to size. Some five year olds

are short and puppyish, others are skinny and wiry, and a full range of in-betweenies. Add to this the problems of rapid growth spurts and sudden weight gain as soon as they start paddling, and you are faced with either tailor made suits, or opting for an approximate size with lots of adjustment in the velcro shoulder straps. This is what Palm have produced, and it works well. The

suit was not restrictive either and was comfortable in a sitting position. I could envisage at least two/three years wear in this long john, and good hand-me-down value. My only suggestion would be even brighter colours as my tester liked the colours inside more than out. Good effort Palm.



Prices: Buoyancy Aid £33.95
Mini John £33.85 to £36.92

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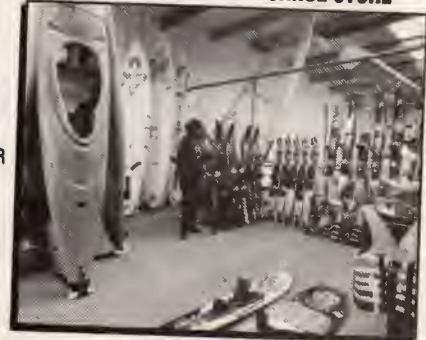
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Filling the gap in the market between the cheap and cheerful and the £100 plus paddle, the Tourist is a crossover product between competition slalom paddles and the robust general purpose river bashers, often brought into the UK from a couple of well known German manufacturers.

The blades are composite with an alloy rim and are available in a variety of lay-ups and incorporating patterned fabrics. The samples supplied varied from Woody Woodpecker to arty Mondrian-type patterns. My daughter was particularly impressed with the Aladdin Genie version.

Construction is solid and lighter than most composites, giving a solid if dull feel in the water.

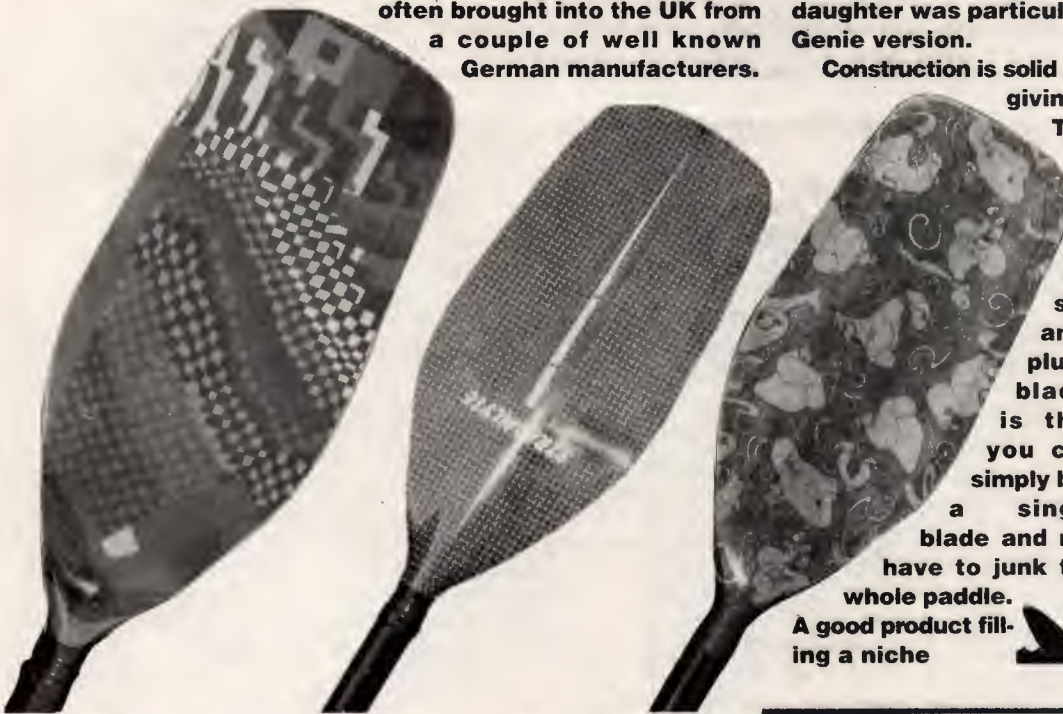
The shafts are industry standard Lendal giving a bonus of choosing any length, stiffness, and any feather, as the blades bond into the shaft in traditional style. Although heavier than my slalom blades they are very robust and will last a long time. A major plus if you do manage to destroy a

blade, is that you can simply buy a single blade and not have to junk the whole paddle. A good product filling a niche

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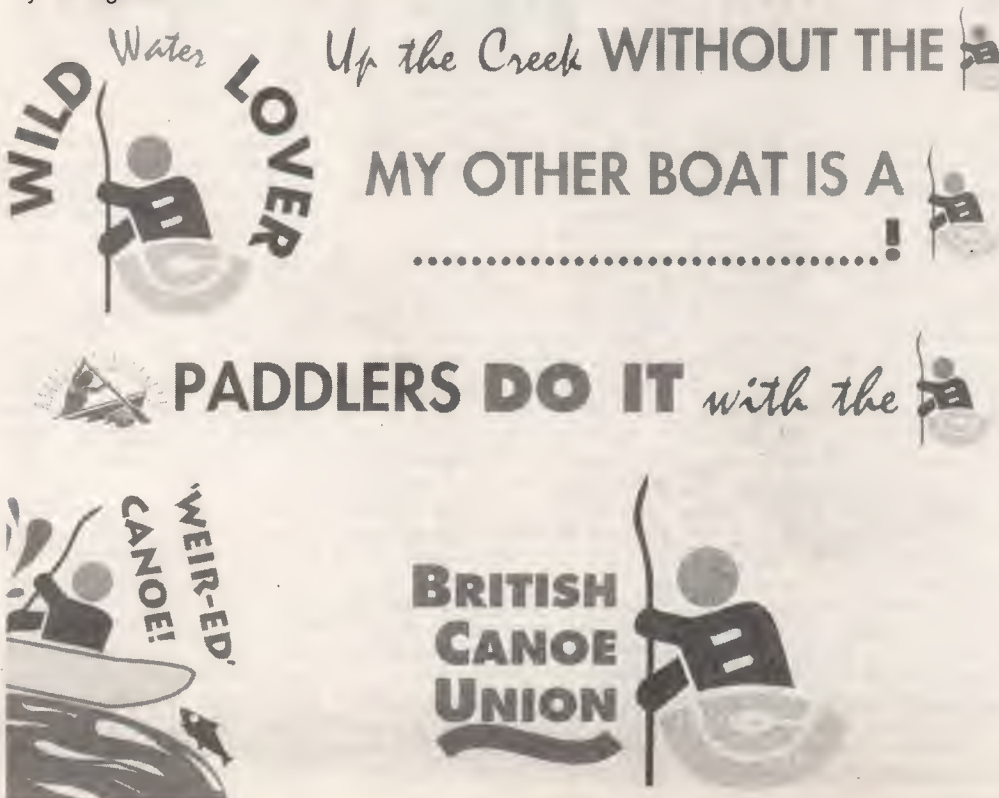


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Stickers

For those who are fond of car and boat stickers there is a new sheet of BCU logos and slogans for all occasions. Appealing to the 'my other car is a Porsche brigade' the stickers are bright and cheerful. Come to think of it they might just be sticky enough to hold my car together!



Sweatshirt

An original 100% cotton printed sweatshirt is now available featuring 'The original surfer' design shown here. Available in unbleached cotton and a range of sizes.





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

Special Island

Dear Focus

I enjoyed reading about Franco Ferrero's favourite paddle (Focus, Feb '94) and was pleased that he did not disclose the name of his special island. Not so that Franco can avoid attracting too many people to it, but so that I don't know its identity. Like me, Franco probably likes the feeling of being the first person to set foot on some desolate island. These days it can seldom be true, but it is nice to pretend, and too much prior knowledge about a place can detract from this. I suppose many sea kayakers are living out some sort of explorer fantasy, which whilst seeming odd to mere humans is fairly harmless and still legal.

I do what the Health and Safety Executive class as one of the most highly stressed jobs and I am convinced that sea kayaking contributes to my well-being. To me it is important to always have an expedition 'on the go'. It is amazing what has to be done, planning/modifying equipment, boat improvements, menus, map work, the list can be made endless if one tries hard. After a particularly bad day it is wonderful to escape into the map of the area of my next expedition or into the garage with the bits and pieces of my latest modification.

Naturally the expedition itself is the final objective and highlight of all the planning, but for me the planning provides a therapeutic escape from the madness of a day at work.

What I really need now is when my colleagues get sent on stress management courses I get sent on a sea kayaking trip. What do you think of my chances?

Ian Thompson

Gender Assumption

Dear Focus



I'm a 15 year old female and I'm writing in to complain about a problem I repeatedly come across while out canoeing, which I'm sure other young females suffer with.

When people see me assisting a group of beginners in kayaks, others immediately assume that I am incapable of supervising because of my age and gender, although I hold my 3 star award and am soon to take my trainee instructor award when I'm 16! I'm fed up of being discriminated against because of this.

People seem to be more willing to trust a complete beginner if he is older than me and male, than they are able to trust me in a kayak, for the simple reason that I have mentioned above.

I have only one more thing to say, which I think other young/female canoeists will agree with. To all you male canoeists who think you know it all, we are quite capable to handle demanding situations, and if we need your assistance, you can be assured we will ask for it.

Angela Byers

Less Booze

Dear Focus

It is usually a race in our house as to who's going to get to the magazine first. There's a lot of carefully thought out material and exciting expedition reports to whet our appetites. As an Instructor (Open Canoe) I find CoDe very informative, and there's often an article relevant to teaching beginners on flat water.

The latest issue of Canoe Focus was no less compelling. I was particularly heartened to find Helen Mullineux's 'Notes from January Council' early on in the magazine. This confirmed in my mind that now, women do have a strong role to play in shaping the present and future of canoeing in this country. There is however still one aspect of the magazine which continues to irritate me. This is the male boozy articles that continue to appear, (e.g April issue p.24 'How to (Dis)organise a Club Canoeing Trip KCC style) and give the impression that unless there is an alcoholic haze through which to peer, it is hardly worth getting on the water! I feel that it is vital for the sport and the BCU to believe at grassroots level that canoeing can be and is enjoyed for its own sake; the pub crawl aspects are really not necessary and they only serve to turn people away from the sport who do not feel comfortable with this scenario.

So can we have more articles/letters from those who do not fit in the old stereotypical image of canoeing as portrayed by drunken young (?) men?

Suzanne Clark

Editor: More articles: yes please. Point taken on the alcohol (although the only real drunk I have ever paddled with was female!).

Clubs: No Reply

Dear Focus

I joined the BCU last August after reading your information leaflets and wishing to 'join in' and get the right training and guidance.

To this end I wrote to several clubs, enclosing the requested stamped addressed envelope, enquiring about membership and what they had to offer new members. I wanted to ensure that any club I joined could cater for my desire to become a qualified instructor. I want to do this as I work with youth quite a lot and want to pass on the skills I have, and would gain, to others.

I am sad to have to say that if the treatment I received from clubs is anything to go by people will not join. Ultimately I doubt if they would become members of the BCU. I have had no replies to my enquiries from any of the clubs I have written to after a wait of SIX MONTHS.

Do these clubs want new members or are they insular

and only want 'experienced' members or members brought along by other like minded members? Is this any way to promote the sport by ignoring enquiries?

I would not mind if they only wrote back (using my stamp) saying that they are 'full' or could not help me in my goal. To totally ignore someone is rude and off putting to a potential member of any club, even the BCU.

My membership of the BCU is due to renewal in August and I will, despite the above, renew. I believe that the way to change peoples attitudes is to become involved and show them the right way of doing things. The response I have had to enquiries to BCU Headquarters has been excellent and clubs should take a leaf out of the BCU's book.

I have made other enquiries to commercial operations for training and assessment. If the pre-course treatment is anything to go by I am certainly

looking forward to attending one of their courses.

I feel that all clubs should look at the way they handle new membership enquiries and think how they portray the sport to the public. We have enough problems with 'rogue paddlers' getting us a bad name but we cannot expect people to believe in us if we treat them the wrong way from the outset. In a business environment many of the clubs would go out of business because they would get a bad reputation and people will vote with their feet.

Can I also make members aware, through your columns, that there is a canoe/kayak/rafting section on Compuserve in the Outdoors Forum. It is mainly USA at present but if more people resident in the UK were to 'log on' it could become a good place to exchange information and ideas. My ID number is 100113,170 if anyone wishes to E-Mail me.

Malcolm J Smith

Disappointed

Dear Focus

I was very disappointed by your defensive and rather negative response to Roy Bradshaw's letter concerning access. Although Roy was critical of Council the points he raised were both constructive and convincing, and deserved better than the familiar "hatchet job" which dissuaded me from ever again writing to the BCU some fifteen years ago.

Roy is right to contrast our approach to new legislation with the position adopted by the Ramblers Association. The issue is identical. Both organisations are full of responsible and respectable people who simply wish to enjoy their sport, without causing loss, damage or inconvenience to anyone else. The Ramblers have campaigned vigorously for the right to wander freely. They have secured support in Parliament, they demonstrate an awareness of both the threats posed by new legislation, and the opportunity to win support for their case. Can anyone explain to me the BCU's plans for lobbying, our strategy for winning support through the media, or the steps we have taken to share a public platform with the ram-

blers? What are our key messages to the nation?

Your response to Roy's suggestion of a year's free membership on the purchase of a new canoe misses the major point for the sake of pointing out that the production and distribution of Canoe Focus is not "free". The real question is surely whether the cost of subsidising new members through such a scheme would be a cost effective method of furthering our most fundamental objective; to secure the right to enjoy our sport. If we cannot afford to mail every edition of Focus, perhaps we can find something even cheaper. A leaflet explaining the struggle for access would be a helpful start.

I applaud the efforts of our negotiators. They are attempting miracles; negotiating from a position of weakness, and being undermined by the Union's failure to accept the need for more radical action on the one hand, and paddlers' natural temptation to risk "bandit" runs on the other. The agreements they painstakingly negotiate can, at best, defer the time, when having agreed to pay for access, we find paddlers priced off the water.

Perhaps we should be more

supportive of those paddlers who occasionally find themselves in legal difficulties. It may be helpful to be more realistic in the advice we give our members. We could distinguish between cases where pirate runs will lead to the withdrawal of realistic agreements settled with co-operative landowners, and those where, perhaps, a whole river has been sterilised by the intransigence of one riparian owner. Why not give our members a clearer picture of the legal risks they run, and some advice on minimising them rather than letting them believe trespassers can be prosecuted.

If I go on at greater length you may be unable to publish this letter in full. Roy was "scurrilous". I am no longer making a significant contribution to the sport, so you can probably afford to be a little tougher on me.

Mike Chambers

Editors Comment: The response to Roy Bradshaw was not designed to be negative. Roy had his say, and for once voluntary and paid officers had theirs. I realise this is unusual and to some, a radical approach, for your old canoeing comic, but

it is known in journalist circles as the 'right to reply'. I welcome positive suggestions on how to increase our resources to lobby, to support, to represent, to negotiate. What does provoke a hard 'bite back' is the stance taken by Roy and other that the BCU (mythical big brother figure again) does nothing.

Some facts:

Last year the Access Committee, through Focus, provided the means to lobby Parliament and your local MP: did you write the letter? Sign the form? Roll over and assume that BCU office would write your personal lobby for you?

BCU office is currently discussing with the trade ways of including Basic membership, not just Focus, with a new boat.

Radical action does not guarantee results; can anyone put their hand on their heart and say we have better access as a result of Crack? I used to enjoy paddling the Seiont

We do publish a leaflet on access; every new member and general enquiry to the BCU office gets one, like it or not.

Incidentally Mike, you are making a significant contribution, thanks for your letter.



International Canoe Exhibition

Dear Focus

I am responding to your request in this month's Canoe Focus for information regarding my non-attendance at Crystal Palace this year.

Since joining the BCU some six or seven years ago I have attended the annual exhibition and have spent a bit of money at each one; never as much as I wanted but usually more than I could afford. I therefore welcomed the move from Crystal Palace to Sheffield last year as it saved me some £20 in travelling costs which went very nicely thank you towards the cost of purchasing a much reduced in price dry top which I would not have been able to afford had I had to travel to Crystal Palace to look for it. I also found that the facilities were better at Pond's Forge, particularly in terms of the space I had to move around rather than the push and shove which have always seemed necessary at Crystal Palace if one is to make any progress. The change in format was also very welcome at Sheffield but these things I think you will know anyway as I have a vague, although perhaps totally erroneous, recollection of having completed a questionnaire afterwards and seem to recall that the Pond's Forge Exhibition was favourably received generally.

This brings us to this year. The only piece of gear I really need, other than a new boat which is totally out of the question, is a helmet. If I travel to Crystal Palace to buy it then the total cost is likely to be some £20 higher than if I brought it locally. I was therefore faced with the question of what would I actually get for my extra £20. I decided that the answer would be very little. I would have a pre-dawn start in conjunction with two long drives as I'm the only insured driver, a lot of pushing and shoving to have a look at stalls showing a lot of gear which I can inspect on the river bank without the pushing and shoving, the chance to watch pool events in which I'm not particularly interested and have difficulty following from an overcrowded pool side because of the appalling PA system and not a lot more. There might be the odd boat that I haven't seen before but then I can't afford to replace the one I have now so the fact that I might be able to buy a new one for

£100 or so less than list price is not a great incentive to attend, although it will be when I can afford to make the purchase.

This may sound very negative and in a way I suppose it is, but I do think that the Crystal Palace formula has become very flat and quite honestly it just failed to give me that spark which made we want to come, particularly having thoroughly enjoyed the one at Sheffield, as it seemed that by and large the format would be the same and there was nothing really in that for me this year. I do realise that the organisers of the exhibition have a very difficult job in catering for a sport which is so diverse and on the whole I think they do it very well, but I think they did a lot better at Sheffield than in previous years at Crystal Palace.

What might tempt me to next year's exhibition? Well a Northern venue would be cheaper; perhaps the opportunity to try out different bits of gear and boats (although I do realise that this could be a bit of an organisational nightmare); a lack of overcrowding which I really can't see being addressed at Crystal Palace as the available space seems to be the same and yet you report attendance's up each year which seems to equal more overcrowding, perhaps somewhere to store purchases on a kind of left luggage system as it is particularly difficult to move around with arms full of paddles and bags full of goodies, particularly so when the goodies take up as much space as wetsuits, buoyancy aids, etc. Free parking would also be a help as I do think it is a bit of a rip-off to have to pay for a car park at the site of the exhibition when I also have to pay to enter the exhibition.

Keep up the good work with Canoe Focus, it is definitely improving steadily. One suggestion for the magazine; how about a competition to see who can respond with the correct number of typographical errors each issue? Sometimes it's a bit like reading the old Guardian!

Martin Plunkett

Editor: I thought it was Grauniad?

Moreletters on page 50







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

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

Take the Wild Ride: Kent Ford


 This is the American version of the Rodeo Worlds at the Ocoee River, Tennessee last year. Whilst the close-in video footage of the event is excellent and good broadcast quality, the video seems to fall between two stools. At first I thought it was going to be an excellent training video with analysis of the moves and techniques, a resource well overdue for this type of paddling. As the video progressed, it mixed video footage from several sources and became disjointed. There are lots and lots and lots of paddler interviews between the action, which you will either find fascinating or boring, and a mysterious and complete absence of Squirt, C1 and Open boat content which gives fuel to the protesters who complain that only the men's K1 event was really important. Despite it's flaws, Kent Ford does a good job as usual (why didn't you enter yourself Kent?) and the image quality is good enough for the aspirant hot-dogger to slow motion and work it out themselves.

Paddle to the Sea: National Film Board of Canada

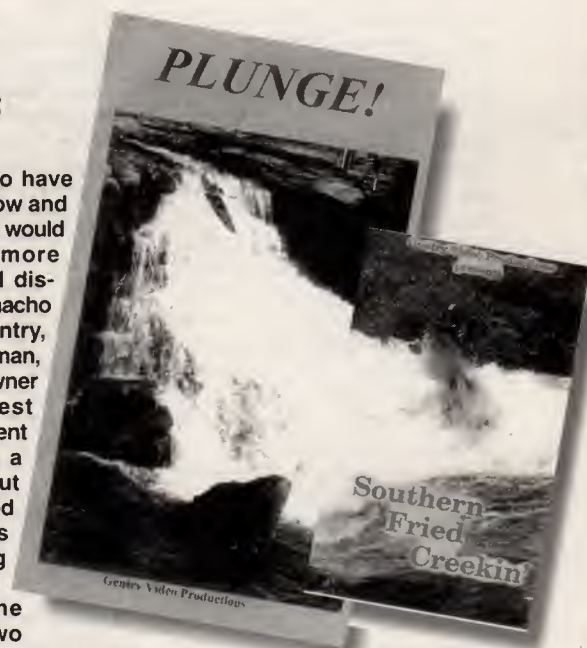
 This is a film adaptation of the children's classic story by Holling C. Holling, recently converted to video from the National Film Board of Canada archives. During the long winter night an Indian boy sets out to carve a man and a canoe. He calls the man Paddle to the Sea and sets him down near a frozen stream to await the spring melt which will take the canoe from Lake Superior to the sea. Directed by the late Bill Mason this is a children's adventure of charm and romance, and the grown ups will also enjoy it.




The Plunge: Wayne Gentry Southern Fried Creekin': Wayne Gentry

 Two more from across the pond, both worthy of a look. The plunge is exclusively big water, big, big drops and scary hair-boating. Southern fried creekin' is more of the same, with good open boat footage. The recent trend for running steep creeks in the Southern states continues unabated and the water looks amazing. They seem to have more steep white water than you can shake a paddle at and for the most part the paddlers run it in style. On slight irritation I had was the editing policy of the fast cross cut when someone was really in trouble. Our heroes appear never to swim or pin. They are human

and I am sure do have strategic exits now and then; seeing them would make me feel more comfortable and dispel some of the macho myth. Wayne Gentry, squirtist, cameraman, presenter, and owner of the best 'Deliverance' accent I have heard in a long time, has put together two good mementoes of his buddies paddling trips. Spielberg he ain't; but the two videos are very watchable and good value.




 Cesar Newashish, a Cree Indian, peels the bark from a birch tree and, with little more than an axe and a pocket knife builds a canoe: a conveyance unsurpassed in function or beauty, or design.

Cesar's Bark Canoe

Cesar was sixty seven years old at the time of filming and the documentary focuses on the native craft of open boat building. As a documentary of a dying art it is an invaluable work: as testament to man's intelligence and ingenuity I found it moving. A small child assists the old man in his craft: I wonder if the skill has been passed on to the child's generation? The last demonstration of North American Canoe building I witnessed was the moulding of a Royalex open boat by a team of four workers who had a craft ready to paddle, seats and all,

after 20 minutes. By contrast my last mental imprint after watching this video was the amount of care and love which went into the birch bark boat: the crude tools, the absence of artificial and metal materials and the natural magnificence of a vessel grown from the earth and crafted by the Cree's callused hands and shaped by a seasoned eye. You could buy the factory model, and probably have. Your only access to this quality open boat is to watch the video. **Essential viewing.**

Over... and Out Sea Kayaking Rescues: Gordon Brown

 At last, a practical video on group and self rescue at sea. There is plenty of white water and river oriented material, but so far little for the salt-water buffs. Gordon Brown of Garnock canoe club has managed to fill the gap and produced a workable training aid for sea paddlers. It is meant to complement the work of instructors and coaches and is shot in real sea conditions, with wind and choppy water. Assisted by club members and coaching colleagues from the

SCA/BCU Gordon runs through the most common forms of deep water rescue in a workmanlike fashion. Most of the standard rescues are shown here with one or two exceptions. Some may quibble over a detail here or there but the end result is a good alternative to diagrams in handbooks. Produced with the backing of Lendal Paddles, and Valley Canoes this is another example of a coaching service member taking the initiative and producing a very serviceable resource.

All reviews by Kevin Danforth

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Access news

Access Committee

From the April meeting

New Access Officers
Welcome to two new Regional Access Officers, Dave Watkinson in the North West, 11 Latham Street, Preston, PR1 3TE (0772 824502) and Mike Phillips in the West Midlands, 21 Heathfield Road, Bewdley, Worcs DY12 1JT (0299 401872).

Payment for Access
Simon Dawson is taking a close look at our present "payment for access" policy; some of the wording could perhaps be made clearer and it may prove sensible to update the policy in the light of today's access situation. Contact him (address in Yearbook) if you have any opinions to express that will help him in the preparation of a discussion paper for the November meeting.

Access Officer Training
The Access Officer Training Seminar on 5-6 March in Hexham was a success and another seminar for Regional and Local Access Officers is being planned for October this year; it will be in the southern half of England and make provision for lowland access officers. The better our access officers are trained

the more we shall be able to achieve for canoeists. A big thank you to Simon Banbury and Eddie Palmer for their work in organising the first seminar.

Access to the Sea
Access to the sea was reviewed; on coastal waters and on the open sea there are few restrictions except for the need to keep out of firing ranges and to respect marine nature reserves. There are some local problems in harbours and estuaries used by commercial shipping; in many cases there are user groups. Hopefully there are BCU representatives on all such groups, but this may not be the case. If you know about a user group, please find out if there is a canoeing voice and if so who it is; then pass the information to your regional sea touring representative or your Regional Access Officer. This is particularly important if there is no canoeing voice.

WCA Full-time Officer
The Welsh Canoeing Association have appointed a full time Access and Conservation Officer; he is Peter Weston, who has long experience in access matters and will report to the newly formed Welsh National Access Committee chaired by Chris Charters.

Criminal Justice Bill
The BCU and its members have been active in a lobby campaign

over the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill. The BCU Director wrote to the Home Secretary due to concern that a new criminal offence of aggravated trespass could, in practice, be applied to canoeists, although this is not the intention of the Bill. A specific amendment was recommended to clause 52 (now renumbered 58), but at the time of going to press this had not been accepted, so a further letter has been sent to the Home Secretary. We are also working with the CCPR in their efforts to exert influence on sympathetic members of the House of Lords during the second reading there. Many thanks to those members who have written to their MPs on the subject.

Catchment Management
The NRA is well into their programme to draw up River Catchment Management Plans; it is important that canoeing is supported in all of them. Your regional committee and your regional access officers are feeding in details of canoeists needs and aspirations; make certain that they know what you want. Regional Committees are also trying to find out whenever local authority structure plans are being considered. If you know of any plans being prepared, please tell your Regional Secretary so that between you you can ensure that account is taken of the needs of canoeists.

Lower Wye
Mike Phillips, Regional Access Officer for the West Midlands, is responsible for co-ordinating BCU access work on the Wye below Hay-on-Wye; he is liaising with the Welsh Canoeing Association and with the Wessex Regional Access Officer, whose members are regular users of the Lower Wye. Mike has recruited John Westlake as a member of his team as Local Access Officer for the Wye from Ross-on-Wye to Chepstow. John also sits on the Wye Users Forum; he can be contacted at 33 Golden Vale, Churchdown, Glos GL3 2LU.

Coarse Fishing Season
The BCU has responded to the NRA discussion document on the coarse fishing close season suggesting that on wildlife conservation grounds it should be extended slightly to run from 1 March to 30 June.

Windermere
There is a proposal for a 10mph speed limit on Lake Windermere for powered craft, so K4s would not have to slow down! The BCU deplore the irresponsible use of powered craft, and take the view that dangerous use of power boats should be controlled by management action rather than bye-laws.



Safety matters

by Geoff Good
Director of Coaching

White Water Safety
Mountaineering has recently come under scrutiny, with media cries of 'should it be allowed?' and similar nonsense, following publicity regarding several accidents in the Scottish Highlands.

Questions are being raised about the cost of rescue, and whether or not this should be passed on to the person concerned, who would need to be insured for the risk.

Speaking for myself, I have no difficulty in accepting that a certain amount of tax is required from me to cover the cost of rescuing the odd outdoor enthusiast, leading a positive life, who falls victim to circumstances.

There is the argument that others have to risk their lives to help someone who has got themselves into difficulties, and do we have the right to expect this. The fact is, that no one in Britain has a legal obligation to risk their own life to help save someone else. Many vol-

unteer to do so, and many would feel a moral obligation - but that is their choice.

Whatever our beliefs and attitudes, adverse publicity from a sensation-hungry media can destroy rationality. It is in all our interests for situations to be avoided which could lead to serious criticism.

Reliance on Guide Books

Some excellent guide books are available. There is, however, concern that too much reliance is being put upon over-prescriptive descriptions of routes. This may be leading paddlers into 'following the instructions' rather than carefully inspecting the situation on the day, and making decisions based upon their knowledge and experience.

Sites of particular difficulty were studied over a long period of time, and in a wide variety of water conditions, by local paddlers, before the first attempts were finally made on them.

This factor must be taken into account. It should not be assumed, for the more serious sections, that just because other paddlers have negotiated them, all is now straightforward.

In Perspective

The above comments, and the notes below, should not be regarded as direct criticism of particular paddlers. Whatever the ability, training and knowledge, involved, it is impossible to eliminate all the inherent risks of white water paddling.

It was felt desirable, however, that a general comment should be made, reminding members of the nature of the risk, and of the very careful study and consideration that is behind the running of some of the more extreme sections now being tackled.

Conway Falls

There is a danger of missing the last breakout above Conway Falls. If you

see the bridge, it is too late! Mountain rescue have been called out to rescue paddlers on four occasions! Paddlers are advised that it is vital that they identify and reach the last breakout.

Fairy Glen

In low water there is a serious risk of being pinned in a potentially fatal situation. Unlike most sections of the river, Fairy Glen actually gets more dangerous in very low water as a series of pins, undercutts and sumps become exposed by the lack of water.

In medium water it is good for a first descent since some of the technical difficulties are ironed out by the increased flow, provided all the factors are in place: knowledge, sufficient personal ability, bank support, and a competent TEAM. It is a particularly difficult site to 'protect'.

In high water the Glen is obviously a serious undertaking, and should be tackled only by those who, in every way, are prepared to do so.

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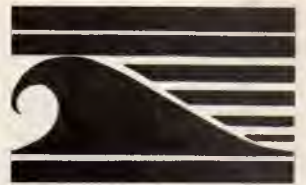
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Devizes - Westminster 1994



DEVIZES TO WESTMINSTER RACE 1994 RESULT

K1 Men

1st G.J. Butler
Nottingham KC
15.07.43

2nd S.A. Morley
Exeter CC
15.15.07

3rd P. Lanighan
Falcon CC
16.17.31

K1 Women

1st A. Morris
Independent
20.50.12

K2 Women

1st E. Egan/T.S. Harris
Worcester CC
27.54.15

C2

1st C.A. Haskey/S.A. Haskey
RECC
22.37.47

K2 Juniors

1st M. Starkey/T. Hollis
RLP
15.23.21

2nd R. Pearson/T. Baxter
RLP
16.00.10

3rd A.M. Webb/D. Oliver Warren
16.45.59

K2 Juniors Women

1st H. Bernays/K.R. Backhouse
Dauntsey Sch
21.23.55

C2 Junior

1st J. Moore/J. Bedshaw
Bryanston
18.45.17

Junior/Veteran

1st A.J. Tonge/M.I. Preddy
Meridian CC
22.26.37

For the first time in many years a daylight run for the senior K2s was a possibility. By starting at the earliest allowed time of 0700 hours on Good Friday morning (April 1st) the fast crews could expect it to be light through to about Staines (90 miles) and although missing the best of the tide on the Tideway, they would still be going with the flow to the finish at Westminster. The other option was to start at the latest possible time of 16.00 hours with the traditional paddle through the night to catch the Saturday morning tide at Teddington.

The gale force winds, cold and torrential rains on Thursday night were far from encouraging.

Devizes car park was full at 06.00 hours with many having spent the night there in campervans. First away at 07.00 is Brian Greenaway and Danielle Sellwood (Richmond). Brian has won the race several times, '68, '77, '85 and they were out to challenge the Mixed record of 18-00-00 set by the Danes in 1993. The rest of the fast crews followed quickly after with the strongly fancied veterans of Robin Belcher representing Australia and Tim Cornish representing South Africa. Tim and Robin are both ex-British International paddlers and have outstanding race records. Tim holds the current record (with Brian Greenham.....this year paddling with Glyn Wallis) and has won the race in '72, '78, '79, '80 and '84. Robin has won the K2 race in '81, '82, then the first two senior K1 races held in '85, '86 and '87 K2 race which was the last daylight run.

The early morning crews set off in quick succession and by the end of the long Crofton portage (19.5 miles) the early groups had split up and the crews had settled in to a sequence which was to last until way beyond Reading.

Whilst the senior K2s were speeding towards Reading the Junior K2s and the Senior K1s set off from Devizes. By the time the senior crews reached Reading the winners of day 1 were off the water at Newbury. Shaun Morley (Exeter) had a minute over Jimmy Butler (Nottingham) who won the K1 in 1993. Tom Hollis and Malcolm Starkey (RLP) had already established a large lead in the Junior K2 race.

For the daylight senior race the canal section was completed crews were beginning to settle in to a slightly different sequence. Lewis/Phillips were maintaining a slender 2 minute lead over Owen/Barrell. Cornish/Belcher were in third place a +10 min but had not closed the gap since Newbury.

The temperature began to drop at about 5pm and a couple of the crews were beginning to drop out. It was at Bovney (81.5 miles) that Owen/Barrell pulled out leaving Lewis/Phillips clearly in the lead but still being

chased by Cornish/Belcher. Darkness fell at about Windsor but from there down the river is well lit from the houses and streets next to it so for the daylight run the darkness was not going to be a problem.

The race was still very much on as the crews went through Teddington and they were still actually able to catch the last of the outgoing tide. The crews finished under Westminster Bridge at around midnight. Out of the 13 daylight crews 8 finished with two records being broken.

Mixed Record

They had finished but the tail end crews of the night run were

passing through Reading some 73 miles further back heading on towards the next tide.

On day 2 of the 4 day event Jimmy Butler (Nottingham) had managed to take the lead away from Shaun Morely and pull his lead out to 6 minutes. A lead which Shaun despite hard work was unable to pull back throughout the rest of the race.

The final day of the race (Bank Holiday Monday) was, despite the early sunshine, extremely cold with huge hail storms and strong tail winds which caused some difficulty for the competitors as the tideway was extremely choppy.



DW first timers: Alan Williams and Nick Cunliffe

The Long and Lonely Paddle

It really had to be April Fools Day as Paul Toomey (Longridge) and I (Tamsin Phipps) headed off towards Devizes as all we saw on the way down were empty v-bars heading away from the start. We hadn't left home until 1 o'clock when normally we would have at least have been in Devizes if not on the water. Perhaps it was all a joke and we were too late to race. The last straw was when we saw Allan Bennet (Eclipse Racing) heading away from Devizes in his familiar blue van ...Allan is always there so people were really having us on. On arrival at Devizes we realised that the semi deserted site was actually still functioning and the few remaining competitors were getting ready to race despite us having missed all the usual hustle and bustle which goes on every Good Friday in Devizes.

Even before arriving in Devizes we knew that Danielle Sellwood and Brian Greenaway were well on to not only winning the mixed event but smashing the mixed record. So why race knowing that we could never win? Well for us the real competition lay with the crews who were undertaking the night run as these were the ones we had competed against during the build-up races and there was some friendly rivalry to see who could beat the other.

Nick Daniels and Wicki Lester (RLP) headed off and we went down to wish them well....wishing that we were the ones going as we still had an hour to wait. The Maidstone crew of Dean Jordan and "Flos" Jackson were obviously waiting to see when we left and we were waiting for them to go. It became a battle of wills. We had set our start time at 4pm and in the end we left a

mere 15 seconds behind them. The 15 mile pound is not the place to get in to a head to head race and we were very conscious that if both of us did we would blow each other out. So luckily we hopped on a wash (the only one we were to get for the entire 125 miles) for about a mile and put some distance between us and them. We fully realised that they would probably come steaming past us some where along the 125 mile course...especially as my running was not all that it should be.

The recent rain had luckily filled the canal and for a while we had a tail wind and in parts we were virtually surfing on the canal!!

The Maidstone support crew were every where so we always knew their crew was not far behind. That knowledge gave us the impetus to run the entire 1.25 miles of Crofton (a first for me). We felt so good that Paul and I decided to start singing Scout songs every time we saw anyone on the bank!

Normally on the race one would gradually over take crews as well as being overtaken but we saw no-one for mile after mile and apart from the crew right at the start no-one over took us. We had prepared ourselves for the fact that it was going to be a long lonely night which was just as well because it certainly was. Our support crew (Dave

merged wall. So no time to loose out with the boat and on the shoulders and run in to Thatcham along the rough tow path. Paul Owen had realised that we were late getting in to Thatcham so ran down the tow path to meet us which was lucky as we told him of the problem and headed off at the speed of light to get one of the many spares we were carrying in the cars.

It was at Thatcham that Paul Toomey and I learnt that the Maidstone crew had pulled out. I was disappointed as not only did they deserve to finish after all the training they had done but we had lost one of our competitors. It also made us tail end charlie so there was now no-one to over take us. The Maidstone crew pulled out at Kintbury but went in to Newbury to tell the marshals and it was there that they sought our support crew out to wish us a successful race and for them to ensure that we finished.

From Newbury down for Paul and I is home territory and we had been out and practised in the dark but it was still lovely to round the final corner into County Lock in Reading. We were greeted by a sizable contingent from Reading and Leighton Park Canoe club who had stayed on to wish all the RLP crews well. They had to wait until gone Midnight for us and it was a real boost to see



bodies became extremely cold so much so that for once I fell silent. We got the message to our support crew and they decided that we would have to do a complete, originally unplanned, kit change. At Bray I have never seen such a quick pit stop. The five of them each had their own jobs to do and we were stripped dressed and fed with in an matter of minutes. (These guys could easily compete with the pit stops during formula 1 racing!!!) So much so that we were still a little shell shocked that it had happened by the time we were back on the water in our boat. I was even wearing Dave's red "dishy" peaked balaclava hat which I had spent years teasing him about but never again.....despite its looks it was certainly warm.

Dawn couldn't come soon enough and for us the day light came at Old Windsor. At last we could hope to be warmed up by the morning sun (not that it materialised) and make portaging a lot easier.

The miles passed quite quickly and we met up with and passed several other competitors who were all cheerful and like us looking forward to the tideway and ultimately the finish.

At Teddington, the last portage before the 17 bum numbing miles of the tideway, we stocked up on drink and for Paul to have a quick massage on the rear in preparation for the next section. We had caught the tide at the best time and the tideway for once was plain sailing. Bridge after bridge passed with our support crew egging us on and this time we knew which bridge was which. At Putney - 6 miles to go - the weather changed and the wind along with numerous barges and pleasure craft really made the water extremely choppy. At times it was actually necessary to support stroke to save us capsizing or getting swamped which when you are tired certainly sets the adrenalin going!!

Big Ben is such a welcome sight and just as we paddled under Westminster Bridge its chimes rang out as if welcoming us home.

We had finished (19.13.46hrs) ...not only beating the distance and the cold but also combating the mental pressures of loneliness. After a shower and a quick check of the bruises (I only had one small one which proved that I could portage in a lady like way...which I had promised

the doctor) we headed off for a well earned breakfast.

I would do the race again but I think that although Paul and I enjoyed all the training and the race itself I would not undertake to race when it would be as lonely as this one was. Thank heavens for a wonderful support crew and canoeing partner!

Tamsin Owen

SPANISH MARATHON RACE SERIES

The dates of the marathon racing series in Northern Spain for 1994 are as follows:

Asturian Region

- 6 Aug:** Sella Descent Arriondas to Ribadesella 20km
- 7 Aug:** Sedes K4 Ribadesella circuit 8km
- 9 Aug:** Nalon Ascent - Descent from Pravia 18km
- 10 Aug:** Villaviciosa Circuit Race 16km
- 11 Aug:** "Toso Muniz" Ria de Aviles K4 12km (New Event)
- 12 Aug:** Gijon Harbour Circuit Race 12km
- 13 Aug:** Ribadesella Circuit Race 12km
- 14 Aug:** Cares-Deva Descent Race 25km

Other Areas

- 13 Aug:** Rio Mino Descent Tuy (Nr Pontevedra)
- 14 Aug:** Alar Del Ray Pisuerga Descent 14km
- 16 Aug:** Torquemada Circuit Race 8km
- 17 Aug:** Upper Eslla Riano - Valdore Descent 13km
- 20 Aug:** Ebro Descent Polientes
- 20 Aug:** Eslla Descent Valencia de Don Juan 12km
- 21 Aug:** Orbigo Descent Hospital de Orbigo 18km
- 21 Aug:** Sanabria Regatta Sanabria 6 and 9kms

The marathon committee's booklet of advice and notes about the Spanish Marathon series is still available from David Enoch, 102 Bingham Road, Radcliffe on Trent, Nottingham, NG12 2GT at £1 per copy (cheques payable to D Enoch)

Would you feel supported by this team?



Green, Steve Ellard, Rob Fletcher, Christa Toomey and Paul Owen) were marvellous as they kept our spirits high which was especially important as the darkness fell only 25 miles in to the race. This meant that we had to negotiate the tricky canal portages in the dark as well as be aware of any other obstructions such as low bridges.

It was lonely for the support crew too as normally they would be able to time other crews through and catch up on race gossip with other support crews. A symbol of how quiet the race was to be was when we passed through Newbury and all the normally noisy juniors were tucked up asleep in bed. However Allan Bennet and Peter Jones had stayed up to cheer us on for which we were extremely grateful.

Not far out of Newbury we managed to break the rudder (a usual event for me) by stupidly not doing as we had practised and dropping the boat in to the canal on a sub-

merged wall. (Thankyou)

Just before the River Thames we caught up with a Ladies crew who were in high spirits and after a quick hello we had left them behind but now on the river which was flowing nicely we settled back in to our own race. We had discovered that Nick Daniels and Wicki Lester had sadly pulled out at Reading which left us entirely on our own. Wicki and her father decide to follow us down the rest of the course (as we did for Wicki last year when we pulled out) so it was great to have more familiar faces around.

Paul Toomey and I are very lucky to both live near the course so from Hungerford to Windsor we knew every nook and cranny in the canal and the river which definitely was a major factor in keeping our spirits high during the "lonely" periods.

The temperature dropped rather rapidly and despite changing hats and putting on spray decks our

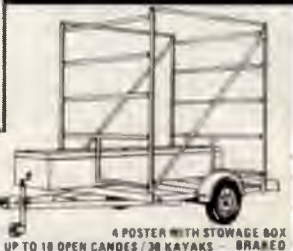
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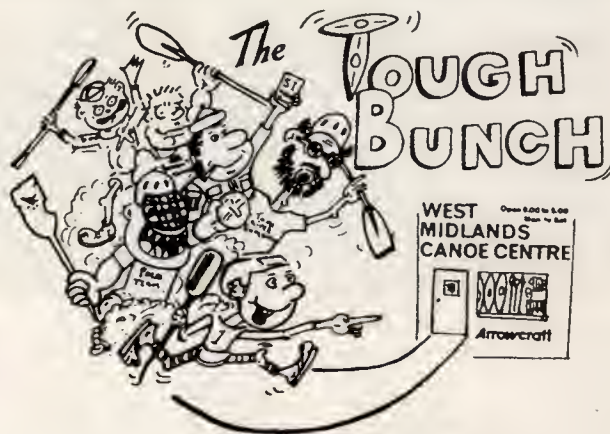
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POLO

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1994 sees the first World Championships of Canoe Polo - Focus takes the opportunity to take a look at this ever growing discipline.

Most paddlers who have been lucky enough to paddle in an indoor pool will have at some time or another thrown a ball around and called what they are doing "polo".

That process is typical of the way the sport came into existence in the sixties, primarily in Britain, but also in other European countries. The first National Championships were held in Britain in 1971 and other countries were quick to follow suit.

OWN VERSIONS

Because of the way the game had developed, in an insular way, the individual nations were all playing their own version of the game, using different goals, balls, and general playing rules. However, not surprisingly the boats, which had become purpose designed were all very similar, between 2.5 and 3 metres long, the ever present compromise between turning ability and forward speed.

The differences became apparent in the late 70s and early 80s, as a limited circuit of

International events began to be formed, the practice being to play to the rules of the host country. This clearly gave home teams a distinct advantage, though it was not unusual for teams to adapt very quickly.

In the mid 80s, a specialist Canoe Polo Committee was set up by the ICF and in 1987 there was a set of internationally agreed rules. This paved the way for Continental and World Championships, with the first European Championships being held in Sheffield, Great Britain in July 1993.

The game itself is relatively simple with teams of five players attempting to score goals with a football sized ball in a goal suspended above the water. Of course as an international level contact sport, the rules have necessarily become quite complex.

PLAYING AREA

The playing area or pitch can be any area of flat water, marked out as a rectangle, the short edges are the goal lines and the long edges are the side lines. The goals are rectangular

frames, 1.5 metres wide and 1 metre deep, with a net to hold the ball, they are suspended 2 metres above the centre of each goal line and obviously because of their height can only be defended by the player's paddles. Games are 2 periods of ten minutes at international competitions, with the halves reduced to as little as 6 minutes at lower levels.

In the UK the game is played largely in swimming pools, with

the sides of the pool being used as the boundaries of the playing area. On mainland Europe and in other more temperate countries the game is played outside, often with numbers of pitches being set up on a lake or canal, with floating ropes defining the playing area. The size of the pitch will vary, depending on the space available, but a typical size for an international competition will be 40 x 25 metres, with a lower level of



A player looks to pass the ball as she comes under pressure



Above: Teams before the medal ceremony at the European Championships

time, players can substitute at any time during the game, without reference to the game officials, but the penalties for having too many players on the pitch at once are severe.

At the start of the game the teams line up with the back of their boats on their own goal line, one of the referees throws the ball into the middle of the pitch, one player from each team then sprints for the ball in an attempt to gain the first vital possession of the game.

POSSESSION

Once a team has gained possession they move onto the attack, playing the ball from hand to hand or using their paddle to pick up and flick the ball. All five players on the attacking team will usually be involved in bringing the ball up the field, this leaves their goal unattended and means that they must be extremely careful to retain possession and be prepared to defend very quickly if their opponents take the ball off them.

The defending team must make a choice as to



Above; "Pulling" an opponent is not allowed

pass that they or their teammates can pick up and try to stop the attackers from getting a clear shot at goal.

The attacking team will try to get as close to the goal as they can to maximise their chance of a scoring shot, though it is sometimes worth trying to catch the goalkeeper unawares with a long shot. They will do this by making darting runs at the defence and passing the ball around, continually threatening shots and attacks in an attempt to create spaces in the defence that one of their players can slip into and then to pass the ball to him without the defenders blocking the all important pass, usually with their paddles.

Players who are in possession of the ball can be tackled in a variety of ways; they can be pushed on the side with a flat hand, though any player expecting a push can "ride" the tackle quite effectively. Defenders can 'kayak tackle' by riding their boat under or over the player with the ball, attempting to overturn or at least de-stabilise their opponent.

At the highest level the game is played at a furious pace for prolonged periods, with teams skilfully using substitutes to gain the opportunity to rest.

As can be imagined the tactical possibilities are endless, with teams marking on a man-to-man basis leaving their goal entirely un-defended. This is rightly regarded as a risky method of play and is only usually adopted by a team that is behind or

that thinks that its personal skills are superior to its opponents.

SANCTIONS

Passes can be intercepted by hand, but it is much more common to use the paddles, though "striking" the ball is not allowed. Corners, goal-line and side-line throws are awarded as appropriate and the Referees can award a range of sanctions for breaches of the rules, these sanctions range from a simple award of possession to the sending off of a player for the rest of the game.

Worldwide participation is rapidly becoming a reality for polo, as is demonstrated by the entries received for the World Championships - All five continents are represented, with the first appearance of teams from South Africa, Taiwan and Canada. Favourites for both the Mens and Women's events are; Australia, Germany and of course Great Britain.

Watch our for more in depth coverage of the World Championships and other Polo Events in Canoe Focus.

Photos by Paul Jackson



POLO

A Sport Coming of Age

game being played to slightly smaller dimensions.

Two referees control the game, from the sides of the pool, they are assisted by two line judges and the time of the game and the score are monitored by two more. Teams can have up to eight players for any one game, but only five can be on the playing area at any one

how to approach their enforced role, their primary aim being to gain possession of the ball without conceding a goal. Usually they will have one player who becomes a goalkeeper, to reduce the chance of a goal being scored from a long shot and as a final chance if their defence allows the attack to get too close. Two other players will form the basic defense, taking one side of the goal each and trying to jostle with the attackers to prevent them from getting too close to the goal. The remaining two players on the defending team then try to harry the attack, in the hope of forcing a mistake or a bad

Below: A player can dribble the ball



The World Championships are being held at Ponds Forge Pool, Sheffield from the 7th to the 10th of July 1994. For further details about them or how to get involved in Canoe Polo generally please contact Curly Barker, Competition Secretary, 43a Sackville Gardens, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3LJ. Tel: 081 554 9533 or Fax: 081 252 6618.

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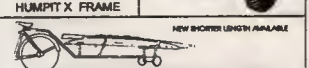
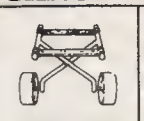
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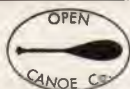
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Nomad Rapide K1 WWR, Kevlar - carbon hull. Needs repair £35 ono. Rotobat ww spec, pink, well used, but complete with thigh braces, airbags, full plate footrest £100 ono Tel: 0532 750137 (eli) 0602 520019 (Rob)

Cadence white water kayak, plastic, backstrap, foam buoyancy, full width adjustable, foot rest, white, VGC £150. Hustler finre galss kayak, orange and white, adjustable foot-rests, foam buoyancy, thigh braces, VGC, £50 Contact David Heath 0932 346970 (Surrey)

Blenheim K1 red/white, Excellent condition, fully adjustable footrests and seats, £250 ono Tel: 0923 678608 (Herts)

16ft Coleman Gold Medallist Canadian Canoe. 4 yrs old VGC. £200 Tel: 0883 344046 (Surrey)

Metallic red Ultra K1, paddle, spraydeck and helmet. Excellent condition, good starter or general purpose boat £100 Tel: Mansfield 0623 25538

Rotobat ww spec, 15 months old, colour red, excellent condition, £250 Tel: Richard 0705 252385 (Hants)

Two seater touring kayak 4mm ply, open cockpit, including paddles, hardly used £50 (Lancs) Tel: 061 764 5277

Bubble ww spec, good condition, excellent in surf and ww £170. Tel: Mark 0722 322870 (Salisbury)

Nelo racing K1, as new. Available Guildford area £250 ono. Tel: Michael Preece 0374 712228

Dancer XS, red, with spraydeck. Suit smaller paddler £220. Tel: 0384 422118 daytime, ask for John (W. Mids)

Kayak Outfit, 1 plastic kayak, 1 paddle, spraydeck, b/aid, and helmet, all in good condition £150 Tel: 0981 240115 (Herefordshire)

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Tiger K1, sprint/marathon boat, Kevlar/carbon, u/s & o/s rudder. Seen some mileage but still sound. Seat included £175 please call 0254 831007 (Lancs)

2 Palm dry cags. 1 small, blue/yellow. 1 large red/yellow £25 each, excellent condition Stunt Bat, yellow. Full plate footrest and airbags. Good condition £250. Tel (0705) 454340 (Hants) eves.

Granta Explorer touring double kayak 18'6" red. Excellent condition £200 ono Tel: 0203 386455 (Warks)

Fast, stable, single tourer, KW4 river and sea canoe. Excellent condition and as new £130. Fibreglass reflex slalom canoe also as new £130 Ultra light-weight KW4 as above £100 Tel: 081 398 3118 anytime.

Dancer, yellow standard plastic perception, slightly battered, waterproof. Ideal for beginner, Playboat, white water homemade seat. Will swap for secondhand pair of wings in good condition or cash offer. Contact Chris Baker: 9 Heaton House, Heaton Road, Lancaster, Lancs LA1 4SU

Rafts for sale. 3 rubber rafts for sale, new and unused originating from the East German Army. Grey rubber or hypalon on a cotton canvas. Weight of the raft is about 100lbs and the carrying capacity is 2500kgs. Packed size is about 3'6" x 2' round. The rafts appear well engineered and have 6 separate air compartments together with reinforcing patches and plenty of tie points, complete with foot pump, but are more easily inflated with a vacuum cleaner in about 10 minutes. Ideal for watersports/activity centre or flat water rafting. Could also be used as air flotation for boat salvage. £300 each for a quick slae (new these would be £1500 upwards) Please get bakc to me ASAP if you are interested - otherwise they will have gone! Tel Pete Knowles: 081 391 0299 Fax: 081 391 5114 day.

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ACE Pioneer 2/3 man canoe. complete with spray decks and two twin blade paddles. Safe family canoe, good condition £275 Tel: 0829 740547

Prijon T Canyon, pink, full ww spec, nose cone, 2 air bags, deck lines £170 ono. Black Rotobat, full ww spec, x linked, v good condition £245 ono Tel: Mike 0793 611773 (day) 0793 516115 eves (Swindon)

One six canoe trailer, fully refurbished with new road wheels and fixed lighting £350. Wildwater twin seal spraydecks, unused, cost £65 new £25 each. Tel: Steve 021 474 5878 (Birmingham)

Mountain Bat, yellow, x link, ww spec, model previous to current, vgc (light use only) £200 ono. Perception Mirage, natural, linear, fair condition, suit beginner £80 ono Tel: Andy 051 327 8563 (Wirral)

Canadian Canoe, fibreglass, 15'6" VGC, £120 Tel: 0257 266506 (Chorley, Lancs)

Open Canoe, 16' GRP, little used £250. WWR C1 kevlar, old, but good condition, £50 Tel: Ipswich 0473 310923

Coleman Canadian Canoe "Ram-x 16 Gold Medallist" with 2 wooden paddles £300 Tel: 0223 212365 (Cambs)

Canadian Open Canoe, Pyranha Traveller 16", good condition, with air bags £350 ono Tel: 0509 504351 (Leics)

Stunt Bat £360, 6 months old, only used twice, London E17 Tel: 081 509 2831

Horizon Double. 16ft long fibreglass, stable, good condition £100 Tel: 0793 813842 (Wilts)

Garage Clear Out. McNulty Horizon twin cockpit touring kayak, fitted with rudder and rear bulkhead with two Henderson hatches £195 ono. Osprey Expedition WW touring kayak with rear bulkhead and VCP hatch good condition £100 ono. GP Slalom kayak well used £350ono. Thule roof rails to fit Mazda 926 (1991 model) £50 ono. Tel Henry: 0708 438994

Perception Gyramax C1, Very Good Condition, £250 ono, Tel: 0279 446595 (day) 0992 584949 (w/e Eves).

Perception Reflex, plastic, magenta, airbags, back strap, good condition, £250 possible delivery Tel: 0831 278251 (Gatwick)

Prijon Invader ww spec (lightweight), one careful lady owner. 8 months old, Pink, VGC £300 Tel: 0752 661951 (Mike) Devon.

2 Magic Bats (1 new £350 1 used £300) please contact Phil by the given contact number after 6pm. Tel: 081 969 7852

Nordkapp, good condition, hardly used, Decklines, 2 hatches and backrest £220 Tel: Yeovil (0935) 28180.

House for Sale - Shoreham Beach, West Sussex, 2 bed semi-detached with easy access to River Adur and the sea - ideal for river and sea paddlers. Excellent condition with garden on 3 sides of the property. Must be viewed to appreciate the situation £58,500 ono Tel: Jane Atkins 0444 247136 Eves.

M380, ww spec, red. Great all round boat, suitable for all levels, with spraydeck. Only £150 Tel: Lancs 0524 382746 (Simon)

Ace Flash plastic canoe, red, standard spec (includes thigh brace and back rest) little used, excellent condition £180 Tel: Rachael 0742 509513 (Sheffield)

Perception Sabre, VGC £150 Tel: Malcolm 0689 835041 (Kent).

Reflex Barcelona, carbon/kevlar hull, foam sandwich deck, extremely good condition £425 ono, Simon 0203 453702.

Bargain. Complete set of clothing and equipment, wild water (Explorer) Bouyancy Aid, Dry Cag, and Helmet, size medium, and wet suit (M), 15m throw bag, BDH and 2 storage bags, and top light paddle £175 no. offers Job lot only. Tel: 0286 881810

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Pyranha, Rob Roy, in tough cross-linked plastic, yellow £120 Tel: 0654 710065 (Gwynedd)

Pyranha Master cross linked, ww spec, full plate, one repair £95 Tel: Beddgelert 0766 86552

Aqua Bat, sports spec, blue, fair condition, ideal beginners/club polo boat, or ww play boat for the lighter paddler £110 ono. Also Palm Extra '90 slalom kayak, full kevlar, good condition. Perfect early slalomist craft £220 ono, may part ex or swap for a C1 slalom boat in similar condition Tel: 0934 518505 (Bristol)

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1 Extra, one very careful owner, in excellent condition, diolen construction, offers of £150 ono will be considered. Contact Janet on 0904 652768

Dancer, plastic whitewater/touring kayak, white, full set of airbags, adjustable footrest, good condition £200 ono. Also a well used Kevlar Premier II slalom kayak, around £90. Stuart Marshall Tel: Warrington 0925 267342

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LOST AND FOUND

Found at Shepperton Weir on 20 March, pair of wings, junior size, ring Rocky (0305) 860363.

Lost - Grey Owl voyager canadian canoe paddle on 26th Feb on R. Meden/Idle. Tel: 0335 330065

Lost - on R. Clywedog 30.12.93, 1 set of Ainsworth Spec 4 paddles Tel: Malcolm 0689 835041

Found - On R. Spean 30.01.94 1 Mountain Bat, Tel: Malcolm 0689 835041

Lost at Div 1 Grandtully start line on 10th April. Red fleece top and Polartec pink/purple trousers Tel: 0946 694820

Squirt boat: Prodigy Valley, glinder gel coat with green and purple zebra stripes. Recent seams, good condition £275 Tel: Neale 0272 712527 (Bristol)

WANTED or SWAP

Corsica S or similar ww boat in good condition preferably around W Mids area Tel: 0455 212416 (Hinckley)

Swap - My Corsica S, 2 years old, no major scratches, full plate footrest, air bags, bow cap. Looking for Corsica or similar Tel: 0698 373 453

Wanted - Touring companion wanted, adventurous and educated, by male pensioner, West Yorks (0422) 245291

Wanted - Paddling buddies, free spirits, preferably female, to share a mutual love of canoeing and the countryside. No macho-men, white water wasters or canoe-club-cliques, need reply Tel: Gordon 0527 878533 (Worcs)

Wanted - general purpose plastic kayak to fit 10 year old Tel: 0283 703576 (Nr Derby)

Wanted - Mi 415 Tourer Tel: Mark 0203 348513 (after 6pm)

Wanted - Squirt Boat, plastic will offer £2-300 Tel: 0734 429610

EXPEDITION

Nepal Expedition. We are looking for others interested in canoeing or rafting in Nepal to join a budget trip in Nov/Dec. Ring Willie 0203 410213 eves 0203 523523 ext 2572 day.



top tips

and handy hints

L Entering the comfort zone

Getting started in general purpose, closed cockpit kayaks

Whether you get started under the guidance of a BCU instructor or a club, or even pottering about teaching yourself, there are several short cuts to the stage of feeling happy in a kayak, which is the point where you really start to learn and become a 'canoeist' rather than a beginner. Have you noticed how experienced paddlers look like they are wearing the boat, rather than just sitting it? This stage of development can take some time but there are fast ways of educating your body to adopt an artificial appendage...the kayak.

The kayak

If you have any choice pick one that fits: sounds obvious but find one you can get in and out of easily with some room to wriggle about. You should not feel too sloppy or lost either in craft that is too big. Often it is difficult to progress if you are cramped, or conversely, slipping around. Simply: big people in big kayaks, small people in smaller kayaks.

This list is not definitive and will vary from person to person. Ask the advice of an experienced BCU instructor and try several types before you buy. Better still don't buy. The kayak you first learn to paddle, you will probably outgrow when you find out what type of kayaking

you most enjoy. At this stage if you want to buy, get it second-hand.

You should not be too concerned about performance claims, but whether or not the kayak will allow you to learn quickly. Over the years I have been coaching I have often met paddlers whose progress has been severely hampered by a poor choice of kit. From short light girls in huge mountain bats to big strapping lads in roto bats: sometimes swapping kayaks makes a vast improvement!

The platform: sitting the kayak.

Find some soft sand, or grass and sit in the kayak on dry land.

Wearing a tracksuit, or canoeing clothing, sit upright and brace your knees under the cockpit rim or thigh braces.

Your feet should rest an inch or two off the foot rest and you should also be able to shift your bottom enough to alternatively sit on one buttock or the other. Can you lean back in the seat and arch your back enough to touch the rear deck with the back of your head? Would the cockpit rim allow you to if your spine was flexible enough? Can you lean forward and touch the front deck with your nose? How close? You may need a small amount of foam padding by your hips so that you are snug but not too tight in the cockpit. You could also consider a webbing back rest or foam pad behind the seat to support your lower back. It should also be snuggish but certainly not pushing you off the seat. Take a short time sitting there grooving your body into the shape in which it will spend many happy hours in the future.

Close your eyes, relax. Move each leg. Sit on one cheek, lean forward and back. Stretch and relax. Sit there for 10 minutes. Are there any parts of your lower body you feel are not comfortable? If there are they usually fall into two categories:

a: pressure points which are too tight (bigger kayak or less foam needed) or

b: Cramps or tension caused

by your body struggling to learn a new shape. The remedy here is to spend time getting into this shape and some stretching (when warm) to train the muscles to cheerfully accept this sitting position for kayaking. My personal remedy for grumbling hamstrings, knees and feet, is to sit in the floor watching TV, or reading whilst in the shape.

If you are really struggling to get comfy try another kayak. Sometimes it is as simple as the profile of the seat and your backside unable to agree!

Almost ready to get wet now, but before starting you need to know about the triangles. At any one time whilst paddling, your purchase points in the kayak can be thought of as forming triangles.

Try these exercises:

Place both hands on your head and:

a: Both knees locked under the deck, feet loose, bottom flat. Rock the kayak left and right and forward and back.

b: Lock the left knee up, straighten the right leg and balance on the right buttock. Move your body around find out how much you can move the kayak about. What is your range of movement?

c: Lock the right knee up, straighten the left leg and balance on the left buttock. Move your body around find out how

This table is a rough guide

Height/Weight

Kayak

1. Under 5'9 stones:

Stunt Bat/ Corsica S/
Conquest/Crossfire/Reflex

2. Under 5'8/11st:

Most kayaks in first list plus Creek, Pirouette S, Magic Bat, Hurricane, Dancer, etc. but none from list 3

3. Over 11st:

Mountain Bat, Response, Master, Pirouette, Dancer XT, AQ

4. Over 6' / over 13 st:

Mountain Bat, Vector, Gattino, Everest, Taifun

much you can move the kayak about. What is your range of movement ?

All of these positions form triangles of contact between you and the kayak and help control the boat from the inside. When you see a white water paddler surfing around most of the control is taking place inside the kayak where you can't see it, using mostly these simple triangles. Mystery solved.

The movements and shapes can be practiced on dry land, in and out of the boat. Get used to the feeling of the space around your lower body on relation to the boat. This is your first comfort zone.

Water time

My favourite short cut here is a nice warm pool or occasionally outdoors in Mediterranean conditions (I wish). The pool has the edge because it is a safe familiar environment and you ideally can swim and stand up within your depth.

Get in, swim and then get into your kayak. If you wish try getting a paddling friend or instructor to run through a basic capsizing drill with you. This is well documented elsewhere (BCU Canoeing Handbook): invert, tuck up and slowly slide out of the kayak as relaxed as possible and return to the surface. It is worth practising this until you are used to slipping out of the kayak without fuss or trauma. If you are anxious or panic...find a BCU instructor who will help you through the process.

After practising the worst case scenario (easy eh?) you are ready to tune in to wearing the boat in the medium it works best in. Get in your kayak (right way up this time) float in one spot and try the previous exercises, SLOWLY, and re-discover your zone of comfort and movement. You will quickly find that your movement zone is much larger, and that your triangles of pressure have a much greater effect than on dry land. Begin to gently move the kayak around using your hands in the water in as many different ways as you can imagine:

Alternate hands, front crawl style

Both hands pulling back at once.

One hand forward, one back

Both Back, as in backstroke

■
One hand only, wide sweep as in breaststroke.

■
One wide forward, one back forward.

■
one hand deep, making circles in the water.

■
one hand deep making figure 8's

■
Get the kayak moving straight, and slice one hand in by your knees. and more.....

Try them all with all the combinations of triangle exercises. How much control can you find?

Using forward paddling only and your triangles, can you get the kayak to move in a straight line?

■
a Square ?

■
a Circle ?

■
A figure of 8

■
Big arcing smooth turns

■
small tight skids

■
Can you change the boat's path and go off some where else?

■
Try all the above with your eyes closed !

By now you will be getting used to moving around in the kayak and feeling water around the hull of your kayak. This is a short cut which will really pay off later when you get a paddle in your hand. Some instructors describe the kayak as a platform you sit on and paddle from: after these exercises your platform is more a part of you and your understanding of the feeling of close movement over water has begun. You are well on the way to grooving in an instinctive feel for movement and balance from the kayak: I think this greatly reduces the time it will take for you to learn the other paddling skills later.

The next exercise will be very revealing and it is one I still use to 'feel out' any new kayak:

Sit in your kayak, lift your left knee and place your right hand flat on the surface of the water.

Keep the edge of the kayak high and gently pull the edge higher using your left hand. Try and edge the kayak without leaning outside of the boat. Having your weight inside the gunnel lines maintains balance.

Keep going until you feel a twitch or wobble. This is the border of your comfort zone: the maximum amount of boat-lean/edge you can get away with, before falling over. This border frontier can be extended and pushed further and further the more you practice: it is also a great way of limbering up and improving flexibility in preparation for white water, surf and sea kayaking. Often the twitch zone is much further away than you think. Try closing your eyes during the exercise.

By now you should have a good awareness of the alien craft and feel more like part of

one another. This tuning in process is fundamental to good kayaking, and often I have had to suggest these same exercises to experienced paddlers because their paddling lacked 'feel'.

You now have a head start (or is that 'body'?) and a second comfort zone which extends beyond your own body and includes the whole kayak

Next:
The Paddle: Extending the comfort zones to include the blades.

© Doctor D

The pictures below show playboater Greer Mackenzie using the triangle of pressure points to balance the kayak whilst surfing during the Hurley Rodeo. The body weight is kept over the kayak, not leaned.



PHOTO CREDIT HEATHER GUNN



Ender

Editor's page

A Question of Sport?

IN YOUR AUG ISSUE

World
Championship
Polo from
Sheffield.

World Cup
Slalom from
Nottingham.

Flat Water
from the
Thames.

White water
from Chile.

Environmental
journey by
canal.

Paddlers I talk to often quiz me about the job of Focus editor: what's it like then?

The view from the editor's chair is quite an odd one. I came into the job three years ago as a paddler, not a journalist, which is still what I believe the job requires. Talking to my predecessors the nature of the job hasn't appreciably changed. The technology changes daily, but the requirement to produce a readable canoeing magazine which reflects our sport and the work of the British Canoe Union is essentially the same....or is it?

Nowadays the ferocious complaints about the magazine and it's content are not so personal or vitriolic; nor are they as frequent. Members still tell me what they think, often loudly but tinged with the sweetener 'It's getting better'

My assumption from this is that Focus is probably a little more along the lines of giving most paddlers a little of what they want, some of the time.

This is not easy given the range and variety of paddlesport.

Some actual comments:

"Hardly anything in it for me. It's full of morons paddling yoghurt cartons?" **Slalomist**

"What have you got against polo?" **Polo Player**

"Why didn't you bother to put my article in?" **Contributor who provided copy for the October issue, on the same day the October issue arrived from the printers.**

"Why didn't you report on the event in Lands End/ John O'Groats?" **Event Organiser**

"Why are there never any placid water articles?" **Placid Water Paddler**

"Too much Recreation" **Competition Paddler**

"Too much Competition" **Recreation Paddler**

"No beginners articles" **Beginner**

"Not enough technical articles" **Sports pulse meter manufacturer**

"Not enough English Regions news" **Englishman**

"No Scots news, your magazine is entirely English" **Scotsman**

...and so on, and on.

There is no truth in the rumour that the editor abuses editorial privilege by favouring material featuring his pet interests. If this were true there would be four page articles on Newcastle United and Andy Cole's forty one goals this season.....

Walking the Dog

Editing Focus reminds me of the famous quote from the man observing a dog walking on it's hind legs 'One marvels not that it is done well, merely that it is done at all!'

Most weeks I feel just like that. What keeps both me and the magazine going is the input, the articles, the photos, the phone calls, the readers' patience and the face to face feedback. As I have said before I can cheerfully accept criticism if it is tempered with an article, and photos. Something along the lines of 'Focus is rubbish; here is an article on the history of coracles in the UK and how they still use them on Senior Instructor assessments in Cumbria.'

Most of the feedback on the changes has been positive. People are even starting to accept the lightweight paper; some find interesting ways of recycling it. Even the modern page designs have found general acceptance apart from the member who still (allegedly) gets it confused with 'Just 17' magazine.

Questionnaire

Finally the point; in the next issue of Focus we will include a questionnaire, on Focus specifically and Information and publicity. My problem here is that in order to make it meaningful and provide the information I need to improve the magazine, I need the right sort of questions. Some of these I can just about work out for my self, but I do need your input. A questionnaire can be a valuable diagnostic tool, but only if it is a precise tool, sharpened with good questions. Please write to me with questions, comment or suggestions on how to put the tool together.

The whole point of the exercise is to improve Focus and the BCU service to members, or put another way... how I can improve the dog's balance.

Kevin Danforth
Editor

Good Value?

Dear Focus

Avril and I are now Grandparents, but some 20 years ago we built an Ottersports Canadian, all oak and mahogany and varnish. We used to licence it through BWB; it cost a fortune. Never heard of the BCU until it was too late by which time we had sold our Canadian, a very silly thing to do.

Some twenty years later I have built another one, a Granta 14' two person this time, modified for sail and electric outboard, but the main power source is paddle power. On going to the NEC Boat and Leisure show we found the BCU stand and joined. Value for money or what! But? Where are you? not

in Classic Boat, Waterways World, Canal and River Boat. Just where have you been over the past twenty years still a closed shop it would seem, just like Cycling Weekly.

Canoe Focus? As a non-member we wouldn't buy it, not three times anyway.

- (1) Front cover any person or subject would have a mention or title in the Editorial i.e. Classic Boat do, Waterways World do, etc.
- (2) Full of white water, boozy, macho, plastic.
- (3) or interesting "but beyond the average working person" expeditions to some far flung corner of the earth.

- (4) Favourite paddle, usually some high flying Coach on self appraised flight of fantasy, linked with booze and tents.

On the plus side, lots of life-jackets, and safety features, unlike WW or CB. "But if you really want new members we need more features on PLACID WATER, more family canoeing, canoe camping, canoe history. Simple canoe techniques such as on page 48/49. Top Tips "Tremendous Picture". So come on lets get back to basics.

D J Oldham

Editors Comment: You have touched on some fundamentals here DJ: BCU membership is tremen-

dous value, if only for the waterways license fee. One of the reasons you will not find BCU advertised in the other watery journals is simple: our limited resources are spent serving the members and producing 'Focus', a basic magazine. I am sorry you are not impressed with some of the content of the magazine: I have to find a balance of interests. Many people do drink beer, sleep in tents, paddle plastic and visit far flung corners of the earth (Nepal now being as cheap as a package tour to the Algarve.) For some, the basics are different to yours. Placid water? Articles to this address please with good photos, electric motors or not! Good paddling to you.

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PHOTO CREDIT: SPORT FOLIO

HURLEY RODEO RESULTS 1994

MEN: 1st Paul Currant (Topolino); 2nd Shaun Baker (Topolino); 3rd Trevor Straffon (Avenger). **LADIES:** 1st Bridget Thomas (Topolino)

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