

Canoe focus

No 90. AUGUST 1994

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Canoe Focus

The official magazine of the
British Canoe Union
John Dudderidge House,
Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford,
Notts NG2 5AS
Tel: (0602) 821100
Fax: (0602) 821797
ISBN 0953-010X

**BCU Enquiries &
Editorial to**
above address

Director
Paul Owen

Editor
Kevin Danforth

**Publishing
Contractors**
RMG Publishing
Raven Marketing Group
New Road, St. Ives,
Cambs. PE17 4BG
Tel: (0480) 496130
Fax: (0480) 495514

**Group
Advertisement
Manager**
Sandra Smart

Advertising Sales
Dean Coulter
Printed by
Southern Print, Poole, Dorset.

Colour Repro by
RMG & SRS, New Road, St.
Ives, Cambs

Magazine Designer
Peter Tranter - RMG

**Typesetting and
Page Make-up by**
RMG Design, St. Ives,
Cambs.

**Annual
Subscription Rate**
UK inland: £13.50.
Overseas: £18.
Supplied to BCU members -
adults: £14 basic,
£24.50 comprehensive;
under 18's: £8.50 basic
£12.50 comprehensive.

Canoe Focus encourages contributions
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edit and condense to fill the space
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Collect your passport, visit the 10
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Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. Please don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers.

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

A help sheet is available for potential contributors. Please send a SAE to the Editor.

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



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Comment



CANOE POLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

An excellent World Class competition in Canoe Polo was held in Sheffield from 7th to 10th July. These were Canoe Polo's first World Championships and they attracted eighteen nations from all five continents. Australia dominated both the Mens and Women's competitions with the Great Britain teams taking Silver medal in the ladies event and the men taking Bronze in their competition. Particularly pleasing to see were the great efforts made by GB coaches to help the newer teams including both Brazil and South Africa. Both of these teams improving dramatically as the competition increased culminating in a swim for the (British) Brazilian Coach when they beat Canada in the playoffs.

This event was yet another first for British Canoeing and this edition of Focus would not be complete without praising the outstanding organisation of Phil Bennett and his team. Although perhaps it is a little unfair to mention particular names it would be equally unfair not to mention the contributions of Curly Barker & Marianne Spender.

World Cup Slalom

The Canoe Polo discussed above followed straight on from an equally magnificent Slalom World Cup, held in Nottingham and organised by Roger

Fox, the competition was a forerunner to the 1995 World Championships which will be held on the Holme Pierrepont Course next year. Congratulations to Ian Raspin and Shaun Pearce for their Gold and Silver medals and to Andrew Raspin for a well earned fourth place in the Mens K1, to Rachel Crosbee and Lynn Simpson for Gold and Bronze respectively in the ladies category and to Gareth Marriott who took the Silver medal in the C1 event.

Flat Water Racing

Congratulations to Ivan Lawler and Stephen Harris (K2) and Stephen and Andrew Train (C2) for fine winning performances at the First Marathon Grand Prix of the season in Sweden. Andrew and Stephen then going on to win the Silver Medal in the C2 1000 at the Duisburg Regatta.

Jubilee Canoeing Foundation

The Jubilee Canoeing Foundation (JCF) exists to assist schemes for either young or disabled canoeists. The foundation has assisted several projects in recent years including:

- Portfield School - Paddles and buoyancy Aids
- Breathing Space - Disabled endorsement courses
- Lisa Boocock - a blind paddler to attend an expedition

The good work of the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation (a registered charity) relies solely on voluntary donations and sponsorship. It is your very own Charity and although associated with the BCU it is an entirely separate entity. If you are considering a fund raising activity then please also think of the JCF.

Royal Canoe Club

Royal Canoe Club provided a fitting venue for the presentation of the ICF Touring Cup to the Canoe Camping Club for the best organised International Tour of 1993. Sergio Orsi the ICF President presented the magnificent trophy to members of the Canoe Camping Club in a ceremony arranged at the Thames Club as part of Professor Orsi's visit to the Canoe Polo World Championships. The evenings presentation completed a perfect day during which Professor Orsi lunched with members of the Royal Canoe Club and the NRA and attended the preview day of the Hampton Court Flower Show.

BCU Membership Package

Now better than ever the BCU membership package offers many additional things and two new benefits offered this month

are members discounts with Wilderness Ways and Car Insurance through Boncaster Limited. Details of the Boncaster scheme are included in this months Noticeboard and include an option to pay your car insurance through 10 monthly installments.

Wilderness Ways a sponsor of the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup Race -1, operates from seven shops in the North and East of England and more recently from Nottingham. The shops provide a wide selection of quality performance equipment for a variety of outdoor pursuits and as an introductory offer to members of the BCU Wilderness Ways are prepared to offer a 20% discount off their normal selling prices until 30 November 1994, on production of a current BCU membership card. This discount will reduce to 10% after 1st December. The discount is limited to a maximum of 10% on books and maps and any item already reduced from its normal selling price is excluded. There are shops in Chesterfield, Harrogate, Leeds, Middlesborough, Newcastle, Nottingham and York with a mail order department in Skipton. Full details from the BCU office.

British Canoe Union Mastercard - now better than ever! There are now even more good reasons than ever for choosing the exclusive BCU Mastercard - the Credit Card that helps both you and the Union.

There's no annual fee for the first year, and the card will remain fee-free in future years as long as the annual expenditure on it is £2000 or more.

To encourage you to switch to the BCU Card, Bank of Scotland - the card issuers will cut up to £60 off outstanding balances when you transfer from other cards.

Every card issued earns extra money for the Union too. Simply by switching your credit card and spending from other Cards to ours you can make a direct contribution to our funds. Existing Cardholder's have already raised more than £9,700 for the BCU.

The BCU Mastercard features both our name and logo, and will be welcomed at more than 11 million places world-wide. Its the ideal way to show your association with the BCU, and take advantage of some useful financial benefits at the same time.

For more details and an application form, simply call FREE on 0800 716097, or write to: BCU Mastercard Promotion, Freepost, Reading, RG1 1BR.

Full details and a written consumer credit quotation are available from Bank of Scotland, Card Services, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, Fife KY99 4BS. You must be aged 18 or over and resident in the United Kingdom to apply for a card.

And Finally...

Requests for seats at the Ron Emes Dinner are steadily coming in and to be certain of a seat at this prestigious event early booking is advisable.

Paul Owen, Director



Notice board

Slalom and Wild Water representatives

Please note that new representatives on the South West Regional Committee for Slalom and Wild Water Racing are respectively, Guy Gratton of 23, Down View, Upavon, Pewsey, Wilts, SN9 6AG Tel: 0980 630577 and Martin Streeter, 36 Townshend Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS22 0FW Tel: 0934 510136

South West Sports Aid Foundation

Canoeists from the South West region recently received grants worth £950 from the Sports Aid Foundation. Awards were to Surf and Marathon disciplines.

Southern Region Events

About 40 people from a variety of clubs went on Southern Region's 24 April Thames Tour from Cricklade to Lechlade. The weather was fine, the river fast and winding and the lunchtime pub made us welcome.

Basingstoke Canal

New records were set in the gruelling Basingstoke Canal Challenge on 8 May. Mike Martin (K1) covered the 31.5 miles and 29 locks in 4 hours 34 minutes. Doug Knowles/Steve Carter set a new K2 record of 4 hours 40 minutes.

The 26 June Basingstoke Canal 200th Anniversary Tour was attended by good weather and 34 paddlers from clubs as far apart as Beckenham and Penzance. A boat rally, barrel organ and barbecue awaited us at Odiham.

Stolen Canoes and Equipment

Three canoes and paddles were stolen from locked premises in Hemel Hempstead between 9.30pm Wednesday 25 May and 7.00pm Thursday 26 May. It is possible that all the equipment has been dumped somewhere near the Grand Union Canal near Hemel Hempstead, Aspley or Kings Langley.

Description:

1. Glassfibre "EXTRA" slalom kayak - yellow fade deck, white hull, yellow seat.
2. Glassfibre "K1 - Masterplan" Slalom kayak - turquoise deck, hull and seat.
3. Plastic "Corsica S" Whitewater kayak -all purple.
4. Black kayak paddles. Ainsworth & Streamlyte.

This equipment might be offered for sale in the near future or it may be dumped somewhere. Please help us to retrieve the equipment. If you can help in any way or know where it is please contact: **Graham Bourne 0422 219532**

Canoeing Safety Helmets: *The facts*

BCU Guidance Note The attention of BCU event organisers, BCU clubs, and BCU approved centres is drawn to the following policy statement determined by the BCU Council:

'Where safety helmets are considered to be necessary for an event or activity, or where they are required to be worn by the competition rules, they must conform to the following:

Safety helmets must have a hard, strong, outer shell, and provide protection close to the eyebrows and ears and well down towards the neck at the back of the head. The helmet must incorporate a shock absorbing liner of suitable foam. It must fit the head well, and must not easily pull up and backwards, exposing the forehead'.

Please note that the list of 'helmets approved for slalom' is withdrawn and superseded by the above.

Explanatory note

The use of the word 'necessary' in the above, should be noted. Many clubs and centres put helmets on novices for initial training on flat water. This is not stated in BCU guidelines as a recommendation or requirement, however. Helmets not conforming to the above would, therefore, still be useable in that context.

As with any health and safety measure, a 'run in' period is allowed. Approved Centres have already been notified that helmets used for white water canoeing or surfing need to conform from 1 January 1995.

Event organisers (apart from Slalom organisers) and clubs should draw the attention of participants to the requirements during 1994, and start to insist on conformity in 1995.

For Slalom, where notice had already been given for the 1994 season, competitors are currently required to wear a helmet complying with the Guidance Note. The definition will allow for the use of some helmets which had not been put forward for approval, and were therefore not on 'the list'.

The European Dimension

The draft of a proposed standard for canoeing helmets under the requirements of the E.C Directive on Personal Protective Equipment has now gone out for public comment the closing date for which was 28 July.

Unfortunately the draft from BSI was received too late for notification to be given in the last issue.

All clubs and traders were, however, alerted to the situation.

Broadcast Ruling Finds Adventure Holiday Investigation "Unfair"

PGL Adventure, the UK's largest operator of adventure holidays and outdoor activity courses for schools, has welcomed the ruling from the Broadcast Complaints Commission concerning part of a programme broadcast on the BBC's "On The Line" series on safety at outdoor activity centres. The Commission has upheld the main complaints made by the company which it considers was unfairly treated by the programme producers.

The Commission has concluded that PGL was unfairly treated on all four major counts:

1. "the programme unfairly exaggerated the ease with which their researcher had got a job with PGL"
2. "and (exaggerated) the extent to which he had been allowed to supervise abseiling at the PGL centre."
3. "It was also unfair. . .to include the researcher's criticism of PGL's policy on the wearing of helmets while canoeing, without also making clear that the Company's policy was in line with that of the BCU."
4. "PGL were unfairly treated by the BBC as the Company was not given a proper opportunity to respond in the programme to its allegations and criticisms."

PGL Adventure is the largest operator of adventure holidays and activity courses for young children and, in its 38 year history, has played host to some 2 million young guests with no activity-related fatality. The company operates 14 centres across the UK as well as 14 centres on the continent.

Devizes Club

A new club has been launched in Devizes, start of the famous Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race. A BCU members only club, on the first night 47 instant members were recruited!

Still on the subject of Devizes, Stonehenge Canoe Club from nearby Amesbury use the Kennet and Avon Canal for twice monthly polo practice. The landlord of the Black Horse public house allows them to launch and land from his car park. So pleased is he with the massive increase in trade that spectators and players have brought, that he has removed the fishing rods that hung behind his bar and replaced them with paddles! Well done Stonehenge.

More SW Club news - other significant club developments in the region include the building of a purpose built canoe club in Slaisbury alongside the River Nadder, and Taunton on the River Tone, Both projects have been backed by the regional committee and funded by bodies such as the Sports Council and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, as well as much imaginative fundraising by the clubs.



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From London

Tel 0001 - 450 9838

Fax 0001 - 450 2805

From elsewhere in the UK

Tel 010 - 353 - 1 - 450 9838

Fax 010 - 353 - 1 - 450 2805

For Travel Information from the UK & Entry Forms contact

Sporting Travel Services, 9 Teasdale Close, Royston, Herts., SG8 5TD

Tel 0763 - 242867

Sportswomen of the Year Awards 1994

Entries for the award, which is supported by the Sunday Times and the CCPR, are invited in six categories: Schoolgirl, Sportswoman, International, Team and Administrator. The overall winner will receive £1000 worth of travel donated by British Airways and a Balthazar (equivalent to 16 bottles) of Moët Chandon champagne. The closing date for the competition is September 17, 1994 and the presentation event will take place in London in November. Nomination forms from: The Sunday Times Sportswomen of the Year Awards, PO Box 480, London, E1 9DN

Foundation for Sport and the Arts

The FSA continue their generous support of our sport. The Spring total of grants awarded to canoeing related activity was £90,783! Notable beneficiaries included the BCU Slalom Committee.

Indiglo Competition

Ian Botham and Paula Yates have launched the Timex Indiglo Initiative which is a nationwide search to find Britain's brightest sports hopes of the future. A first prize of £10,000 is up for grabs. Any canoeist who thinks they deserve a sporting chance should ring 071 383 5633, or visit their nearest watch stockist for an entry form. Indiglo watches are reviewed in 'Paddlers Gear'

Ribble Access Officer

The new access officer for the Ribble is Dave Herd, 23 Church Close, Waddington, Clitheroe, Lancs BB7 3MX Tel: 0200 28108

Spring RCO Norway?

Rick (Zeb) Spring is now resident in Norway and is willing to provide information on paddling over there. A well known and active coach, he is setting up his own Centre and is able to provide courses. He is contactable at 'Go for it' PO box 543, W-5501 Haugesund, Norway.

South West Regional Touring Programme 1995

Will those clubs or individuals willing to offer a tour for the regional touring programme in 1995, please contact the Regional Touring Officer, Dennis Walls, at 71 Butts Road, Exeter, EX2 5BG by the 15th September 1994.

Northern Paddler Stories and photo's wanted for Northern Paddler, send to Emmerdale House, Garrigill, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3DY

BCU Approved Expedition to the Waghi

The following team will be undertaking the first kayak descent of the Waghi Tua Purari River System in Papua New Guinea in September 1994.

Paul O'Sullivan Loel Collins Colin Hill Rob Hind Marcus Baillie Phil Blain

This is a serious and major undertaking and could not be attempted without the help and support of many agencies and people. A full report will follow in December Focus. Prior to the expedition the Team members would like to thank the following for their support; The Foundation for Sport and the Arts, Malden Mills Polartec Performance Challenge, Welsh Sports Council, British Canoe Union, Hevi Lift Helicopters Papua New Guinea, Air Niugini, Palm Canoe Products, Pyranha Mouldings Ltd, PandH Gorilla Grips, Malden Mills, They will be paddling the river in Pyranha Magic Bats, and personal canoeing equipment has been designed by the team and custom built by Palm especially for the expedition.

The team are still investigating the possibilities of further support in the areas of medical provision and a film or video. Any held or ideas in these areas would be greatly appreciated.

The Waghi Tua Purari River system is one of the largest in Papua New Guinea and was made famous by the BBC as part of their River Journeys series. The descent was attempted by Sobek, an American Rafting Company in 1983. They abandoned their attempt due to the technicalities of the river, leaving the lower reaches of the Tua and Purari unrun. We hope that in kayaks we will be able to descend these rapids, thus accomplishing the first complete descent of this great river system.

At Kundiawa the river leaves the plateau of the Waghi Valley and plunges into steep gorges containing some of the most challenging rapids in the world. Flow rates up to 100,000 cubic feet per second make for exceptionally large, continuous and

difficult rapids of up to grade V+. A monsoon climate further adds to the problems. The size of the catchment area is so huge that river levels are known to rise 20 feet overnight. The North Wales team members do not foresee a problem in this as it will be just like being at home, nevertheless, some sleeping arrangements will be in hammocks!

The most difficult sections run through deep gorges and will require total commitment. Although they will attempt the river as a self sufficient team without any bank support, the remoteness of the region and the inaccessible gorges will mean a prior inspection by helicopter is essential. It is hoped to make a number of food drops to minimise the weight in the kayaks. This helicopter inspection and support will greatly enhance the chances of success. The expedition is supported by a small grant from the BCU Expeditions Committee.

The Open Canoe Sailing Group Open Day

The Open Canoe Sailing Group are to hold the second of their 'come and try it' days at their National Week meeting on Windermere on Sunday 21st August at Low Wray National Trust Camp Site. There will be plenty of expert help on hand to advise you and John Bull from Solway Dory will be there to help with the technical back up so bring your own boats if you like or sail one of ours. This is a great opportunity to just come and have a go or to get advise and re-assurance on your own efforts. The Open Canoe Sailing Group will be at Low Wray all the following week and you would be welcome to join them. The fee for the week is £5.00 plus the normal camp site fees. Enquiries to: John Bull, Kirkbride, Carlisle, CA5 5HX Tel: 06973 51688



The Real Baywatch Comes to UK - Rescue 1994

The biggest ever gathering of lifesavers will take place in the UK this September. From Switzerland to Sri Lanka from Bondi to LA County - some of the world's fittest men and women to meet to pit their strength and stamina against the unpredictable waters of North Atlantic.

From 1-10th September, the lifesavers of the world (2,000 or so) will compete in the World Life Saving Championships. The still water events take place during the first half of the week at the Empire Pool Cardiff, with the competition moving to Newquay in Cornwall for the Ocean events. The whole event is being co-ordinated from the headquarters of the Surf Life Saving Association of Great Britain in Sidwell St, Exeter.

The world's experts in life saving techniques and beach safety management will be presenting seminars and conducting workshops in Newquay - so come and hear and see the best in action at the biggest ever global lifesaving event.

BCU Lifeguards

The 1994 lifeguard convention was held at Calshot on 23 and 24 April. 60 people attended various workshops including rescues and their uses, the use of incidents in training, a new examiners module and the Aquatic First Aid course as well as assessments for Assistant Lifeguard awards.

The 1994 Lifeguards National Championships will take place on 17 and 18 September in Lincoln. This year, in line with BCU requirements, Unit/Club entries must be from BCU affiliated clubs and team members must be individual members of the BCU (basic membership will be acceptable). Event membership will be available for juniors only. It is hoped to have both Junior and Womens awards this year if there are sufficient entries.

If your club would like to take up this challenge, which is pitched around Assistant Lifeguard/Rescue Award skills, contact Paul Humphries, BCU Lifeguards Secretary (see Yearbook for address).

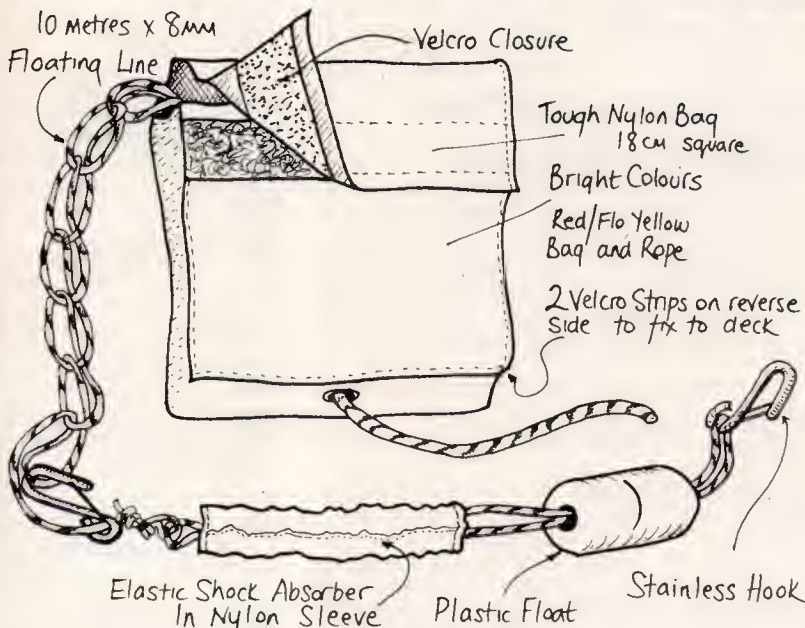
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Surf Safely

Surfing is now one of the fastest growing sports in Pembrokeshire, thanks to its superb unspoilt beaches open to Atlantic swells. However, with more and more people in the water each year overcrowding has become a problem in the surf at some beaches such as Whitesands and Manorbier - surprising as it may seem, with all that ocean to go at people still manage to get in each other's way and even collide when riding the waves!

In order to minimise conflict and avoid injury in the water Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority have just produced an advisory leaflet for anyone intending to ride the area's waves, be they surfers, boogie boarders or kayakers.

'Be Surf Safe' explains surfing's 'drop in rule' (one surfer at a time on a wave) and the reasons for it, as well as giving information on beach zoning at Whitesands and advice on surfing at alternative beaches.

"The leaflet will hopefully help to ease problems in the water at busy periods, particularly with the influx to local beaches in recent years of kayakers. Many are inexperienced in the surf and have, perhaps unwittingly, caused injuries to surfers and damage to equipment by not following surfing's 'unwritten rule', said Tom Bennett, Preseli Pembrokeshire's water safety officer.

"The leaflet has been produced in association with Pembrokeshire Surf Club, the Welsh Canoe Union, Twry-Felin Outdoor Centre and South Pems. District Council to ensure everyone has fun and stays safe in Pembrokeshire's waves," he added.

'Be Surf Safe' is available from the lifeguards at Whitesands Beach (from June 20th) or from Tom Bennett at Fishguard Town Hall, Fishguard, Dyfed.

For further details please call Tom Bennett, Water Safety Officer on (0348) 872247 or Alf Alderson, Pembrokeshire National Park Press Officer on (0437) 764591 ext 5136.

Slalom Canoeist Receives Training Assistance

Trent University student, Paul Ratcliffe, has received a £480 British Aerospace Award as part of a scheme administered by the Sports Aid Foundation (SAF). The grant will help the slalom canoeist with his training and travel expenses as he prepares for competition over the forthcoming year.

A member of the GB senior slalom squad since 1992, Paul is ranked in the top 15 in the World and one of the top canoeists in the Country. Hailing originally from Tyldesley, Manchester, Paul's decision to study in Nottingham was influenced by the excellent water sports training centre in the city and his dedication proved worthwhile with victories in both the Nordic Cup and Trojan Horse competitions within the last year.

The Sports Aid Foundation receives a £10,000 annual covenant from British Aerospace to distribute among a selection of talented young sports people who need financial assistance to fulfil their potential.

Obituaries

Scott McCrone



Scott McCrone (Scottie aged 26) was tragically killed in a climbing accident in West Wales on Sunday 5th June 1994. He was climbing with a group of friends, one of which was his fiance "Smurf" when the accident happened.

Scottie was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. He was always willing to give time and true love to people. He was a committed Christian and his beliefs and values helped him to befriend many young people in the world of outdoor education.

Scottie was an SI. He held strong views about safety standards and the importance of proper training and experience for those gaining their quali-

fications. He would never compromise his views regarding safety and development. Recently he had been employed as the Senior Instructor in charge of canoeing with 'Super-choice', working

on the Isle of Wight. The development programme that he had set up for his staff said much for his commitment to our sport. To see him working with the youngsters would have given any canoeist the feeling of a person who cared vehemently for those in his care and the development of our sport.

He had served his Country as a member of No2 parachute regiment. He had a huge appetite for adventure and he had paddled all the major white water rivers in Britain and the French Alps. Behind every activity that Scottie did was an element of fun and a wicked sense of humour. I hold many dear memories of paddling with him and also the time that he gave to me when my father died.

His photograph says so much for the character of the man, covered in mud, the happy smile and the cheeky grin. He loved Smurf so much; on the day of his death he had asked her to marry him and gave so much commitment to their future together. People like Scottie are so rare. He will be truly missed. My sympathy goes to his family and to Smurf and her family.

God Bless you Scottie

**Les Porter.
RCO Southern Region**

Jack Vander-Molen

It is with regret we announce the death of Jack Vander-Molen at the Royal Free Hospital on Monday 20th June following a sudden illness. Jack will be well known to many canoeists whom he has helped through the Paul Vander-Molen Foundation. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

French Canoeist Dies in Fair Isle Voyage

The body of the 57 year old Frenchman was recovered after a search and rescue exercise by aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss. He was well equipped with a radio and flares, and was attempting a kite assisted crossing to Fair Isle from North Ronaldsay bird observatory. He had arrived in North Ronaldsay after paddling from John O'Groats via Hoy, Egilsay, Wyre, Westray, Papa Westray, and Sanday.

Playboater offer release strap service

Spraydeck manufacturers Playboater are advising that paddlers who use any type of high performance neoprene or Hypalon spraydeck regularly check their release strap. Playboater's owner Shaun Baker compares the release strap to an emergency handle on a reserve parachute, "You only get one chance to use it so it has to work properly". In the same way that a climber would check the security of his harness a paddler must check the release strap for signs of wear and accessibility in an emergency, this

should be done before every outing. As part of their After Sales Service, Playboater are offering a free release strap overhaul to owners of Playboater spraydecks whose decks have seen better days. Playboater are the first manufacturers to do this, so if your release strap is showing signs of wear return it to Playboater at the address below, enclosing u3 to cover p&p.

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Criminal Justice Bill Update

The BCU produced a series of examples of where earlier legislation had been interpreted in the courts in ways not intended by the drafters of the Acts concerned. This was in an effort to persuade the Government that an amendment to the Bill's wording is needed to safeguard responsible recreation users of the countryside from charges of aggravated trespass. A delegation to Earl Ferrers on 9 June from the Ramblers Association, supported by the CCPR and the British Mountaineering Council, took this briefing with them. They failed to persuade Earl Ferrers that an amendment was needed. At the time of going to press the Access Committee is trying to see what other pressure can be brought to bear.

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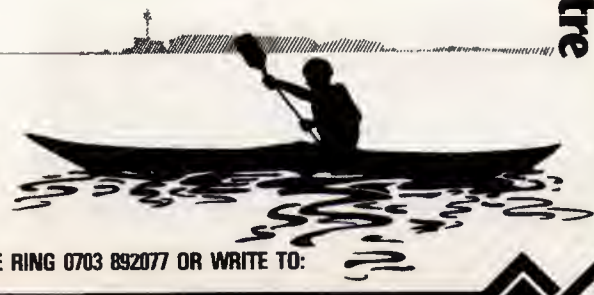
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Notice board diary

The following dates are recent additions or changes of date to the calendar Remember the definitive guide to what's happening in paddling around the country is in your 1994 BCU Yearbook, or Regional newsletter. Event organisers wishing to contribute to this column should send information to 'Diary', Canoe Focus, John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 5AS or fax on 0602 821797

August

Open Canoe Sailing:

20-26 Aug, Windermere, details E Palmer, Tel: 0434 270318.

Slalom:

Stafford & Stone August 20-21 Division 4/5 Contact Phil Gooding Flat 10, the Hayes, Longton Road, Stone, Staffs ST15 8SY.

Racing:

National Championships will be held at Worcester, August 27th/28th. Pending marathon races include August 14th, Ironbridge.

September

Sea Touring:

3/4 September. Southern Region sea canoeing weekend at Calshot - with opportunity to try out different types of sea boat. Contact Nick Hamilton 0252 875976.

Sea Race:

Torbay Canoe Classic, 4 September: Details and entry forms from Dick Dyke, 4 Treefields, Lindthorpe Way, Brixham, Devon TQ5 8PA.

Sea Race:

Poole Harbour race, 11 September: Details from Moira Higgs, 58 Henbury Close, Poole BH17 8AX.

Sea Kayak Symposium:

30 September -2 October, Cumbrae. For further details contact Gordon Brown, Blairview, Hillside Cottages, Dalry, Ayrshire 0294 8832745.

Slalom Open Day:

25 September. Provisional date for Southern Region open day at Cardington slalom course. Contact Graham Missing 0908 611187

Racing:

Hasler finals on 18th September at Reading. West Midlands Region Slalom Selection Slalom: Contact West Midlands Slalom Representative Roger Roden (Contact 0902 843740) if you wish to represent the West Midlands area in the Open Slalom at Llangollen - October 29/30. Enter the selection race at Bala Mill on September 3rd/4th to win a place.

White Water Racing:

September 11th Ironbridge Contact G. Stamps, 122 Ulverley Green Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands.

The Frank Luzmore Open Canoe race,

4 September, Solihull 60km long distance race, 2nd October (Contact 021 745 3415)

Touring:

11 Sept-Lower Tees tour, details, S Drewin Tel: 0642 788799 Touring - 4th September, Worcester Swan-along, 16 miles, Bewdley to Worcester. (Contact 0905 773689) 1st or 8th October Mid-Wales white water. (Contact 021 356 7619)

Surf*:

19th to 23rd September, St. Ives Bay, Cornwall - canoe surf home internationals - contact Simon Discombe 0803 614722, or Steve Kerswell 0752 785243 for more details. The English Open Contest is the previous weekend 17-18 September and the Red River Cornish Challenge event re-scheduled from 21 May will be held on 24-25 September. Three contests in one week!

Competition Summer School*:

17th and 18th September, Exeter Canoe Club - for slalomists and racers, contact the national marathon coach, Richard Ward 0363 774841. *Regional Subsidy has been given to both of these events. Your Regional Committee, the South West is supporting you - please support us.

Lifeguards:

The 1994 Lifeguards National Championships will take place on 17 and 18 September in Lincoln. Marathon 4th Sept Tees K.C., all divisions, classes in all divisions, come and paddle the 1st Marathon at the new Tees Barrage, details from M. Armstrong. Tel: 091 384 6118 Handikayak National Sprint Championships September 18, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. For paddlers with a physical disability. 500m sprint, K1 & K2 with classes for men and women. Two disability classifications. Entries are needed by August 28th. Details from Geoff Smedley, 11 High Beech, Coventry CV5 7QD

October

Touring:

Exe (South West Regional Tour). 8/9 October. This is a change from the date in the BCU yearbook: contact Neil Fuller, Sheran Cottage, Saxon Street, Lower Langford, Nr Bristol BS18 7PB. 2* plus paddlers welcome, camping at Exbridge. November

Rodeo:

Nepal, River Trisuli. November 17/18 Details from Equator Expeditions, 104 Warriner Gardens, London SW11 4DU. Tel: 071 622 3891 Fax: 071 498 0914

Opening of new watersports centre in Milton Keynes



The DeMontfort Watersports Centre on Caldecotte Lake in Milton Keynes was formally opened on Saturday 23 April by the contributing bodies representatives. From left to right Brian

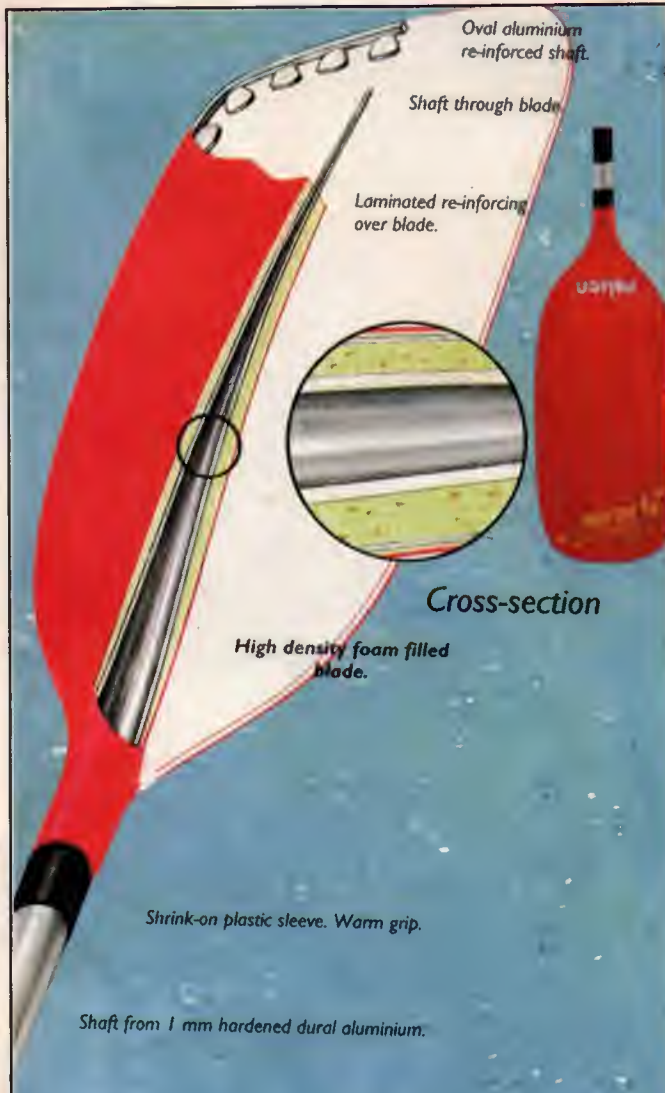
Salter of the Parks Trust who own the building, Bob Hill and Peter Thewlis of DeMontfort university who lease the building and John Napleton of the New Towns Commission who paid for the building. The centre will be used by the university and the Milton Keynes Sailing Club and the Milton Keynes Canoe Club.

The canoe club are a recreational club with around 150 members providing One to Three Star courses, instructor training and a range of recreational activity. The lake has the potential for 250 and 500 metre racing. Racing paddlers living in the area are invited to approach the club for membership with a view to starting a racing section.

WASHBURN RIVER RELEASES

Date,	Event,	Organiser,
Sat. Sun 6/7 August:	Cruise Y&H Region,	Rec Cttee, 9.30-5.00.
Wed 24th August:	Cruise,	Washburn Committee, 4.30-8.00.
Sat. Sun 3/4 Sep:	Slalom Div 2/3,	Leeds Canoe Club, 8.30-5.00.
Wed 14th Sep:	Cruise,	Washburn Committee, 4.30-8.00.
Sat. Sun 1/2 Oct:	WWR/Cruise,	Sheffield Canoe Club, 9.00-4.00.
Sat 29th Oct:	Cruise/WWR (11.30/1.00),	Leeds Canoe Club 9.00-4.00

All dates are subject to water availability, ring the REGIONAL INFORMATION LINE 0426 978654 FOR LAST MINUTE CONFIRMATION BEFORE TRAVELLING.



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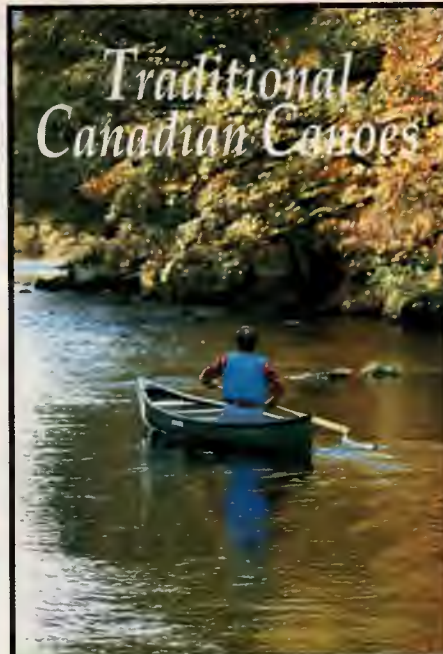
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Right:
Volcan
Villaricca,
Chilean Lake
District



Chile Con Spelius

The last few years have each been billed as the “last chance to paddle the Bio Bio”, but this year it was looking like this might be true. Having decided to go to Chile it was then a question of whether to go with some friends on a self-organised trip or with one of the American companies offering kayak holidays there. I have to admit that I was somewhat worried about going on a commercial venture, but when you’ve only got limited time off work and the brochure guarantees fifteen days of quality white water paddling in three weeks, you’ve got to give it serious attention. I felt that being on a trip organised by someone else would detract from the fun/hassle of negotiating your way around a foreign country with a kayak and to an extent it does. But when I looked back and realised that on a previous six week self-arranged visit to Peru we’d only spent 15 days on the river the decision was made.

I did however manage to arrange an extra week’s holiday, so when I landed in Santiago on December 13th I had a week in hand before I was due to meet the rest of the team in Temuco. The change from Welsh winter to Chilean early summer was more than welcome and indeed in the month I spent in the country it only rained for one morning and the temperature was in the 70’s or higher! I spent the week firstly exploring Santiago and then down to the beautiful Lake District with its spectacular volcanoes the whole time anticipating what the next three weeks kayaking would bring and particularly what the Rio Bio Bio - my main reason for being in the country - would turn out to be like.

The trip was organised by “Expediciones Chile” run by

an American paddler extraordinaire Chris Spelius. So it was no surprise when the majority of the paddlers stepping off the plane at Temuco were indeed American. In fact I was somewhat surprised when two Brits in the shape of the Drinkwater brothers stepped off the plane. There were nine of us in total on the trip along with Chris Spelius, his co-guides Ken Kasdorff and Mike Hipsher, Ken’s wife Juliette who was the video boater, Ishmael the cook, Jacqui the masseuse and last but certainly not least Pedro the driver who was soon to earn his money on the rough track that masquerades as a road up the Bio Bio valley.

The Bio Bio more than lived up to its reputation. As if in one last act of defiance to the dam being excavated in



the Royal Flush Gorge it was running high, about 15-20,000 cfs and during the week that we were there it dropped by only a small amount. Consequently the rapids were big and more importantly in the gorge sections they were running into each other, no flat sections for rescue and little room for error.

Christmas Day

I can't think of a better way to spend Christmas Day than to drop into the Nirecco Canyon with the tributary waterfalls tumbling down the canyon walls and clear blue sky above.

not that you spend much time looking at the view when kayaking superb rapids like Jugbuster, Milky Way, Lost Yak and Cyclops in big flow conditions. The only disappointment of the day and indeed of the whole trip was that at this particular water level Lava South was not a going concern. If there had been a little more or a lot less water then it would have been on, but not today and it was a portage for all. The high water conditions made the Boxing Day run down through the Royal Flush Gorge another serious undertaking and indeed three of the team opted to miss it out. Ace, normally the first rapid of the gorge was washed out but when the eddyline at the top was backlooping kayakers we knew that we were in for some real fun downstream! We had only to wait until the second rapid, King, to find it - a "must make move" onto a sloping ramp deep into an exploding wave and a very possible back loop. King flowed straight into Queen and then a short pool before the Jack. The Jack is normally the most difficult rapid in the gorge, but today it was a bouncy wave train down to the dam construction site. Indeed, the rocks falling down from the construction work above felt much more dangerous. The fact that they were working on the dam the day after Christmas shows how much of a rush they are to get it to a point of no return and avoid the possibility of another court action to stop construction on environmental grounds. Ten, the last major rapid of the gorge and normally the easiest was now the most difficult by virtue of the rockfall from the construction works, diverting the wave train from the middle of the river towards the undercut left hand wall, causing some measure of excitement for the majority of the paddlers!

Below:
Mike Hipsher
surrenders to
his fate.

Lake District

From the Bio Bio we drove to the Lake District and the town of Choshuenco on the shores of Lago Panguipulli. Choshuenco is a sleepy little town with about one and a half streets and the same number of bars - definitely off the tourist

Continued on page 16





track, but the nearby Rio Fuy puts in on the must visit list for kayakers in Chile. There are two sections to the river with the upper section being the more difficult. Like the Bio Bio the Fuy was running exceptionally high which gave excellent runs on this steep technical river. At this level however, the waterfall drops at the end of the upper section were unrunnable, but perhaps this was more than made up for by the extra fun the high water had given us up stream.

New Year's Eve

From the Rio Fuy we headed South to Puerton Montt where we said goodbye to Pedro our driver for the Bio/Fuy section of the trip. We were due to catch a charter flight down to Chaiten in Patagonia and then on to the Rio Futaleufu, however, as it was New Year's Eve no pilots wanted to fly. Chris Spelius had anticipated this and left Choshuenco a few days earlier than us and instead of the flight he had chartered a small cruise boat to take us through the night to Chaiten. We celebrated UK New Year at 9.00pm Chilean time as the boat motored out of Puerton Montt with the sun going down over a mirror like sea. This soon changed and only a hardy few were still celebrating by Chilean New Year the rest asleep or looking into a toilet. The spectacular views the next morning were beyond belief and even those who had been sea sick a few hours perviously said it was more than worth it to see the scenery as we cruised into Chaiten.

From Chaiten to Chris's base camp on the Futaleufu us about sixty miles but on the dirt roads of Patagonia it takes a good three hours - not that you mind because the further inland you go the more spectacular the scenery becomes. When you think you've seen it all you arrive at Campo Tres Monjas and the definition of a beautiful setting has to be re-written. The camp is at the confluence of the smaller Rio Azul with the Rio Futaleufu and sits below the volcanic spires of the Tres Monjas, (Three Nuns), Peak. Along the rivers edge are white sand beaches and set back from this is a cook-house and dining area, sauna, showers and a bamboo out house with a view of the nearby peaks. For possibly the best shower in the world follow the steps from the sauna down to the edge of a white sand beach where between three large boulders, an old tree stump sticks up with taps and a shower head coming out of it. But it doesn't end there a small bulb in the shower head is powered by the passing water so for the ultimate experience wait until dark and then mellow out under the hot water looking at the stars of the southern hemisphere.

Big volume rapids

A shower wasn't the reason I travelled half way around the world. The Bio Bio was and it hadn't been a disappointment, but the Futaleufu would be the reason why I'd return. It's got everything you could want in a river. Big volume rapids several of which are harder than those on the Bio Bio, play waves you can spend all day on, and automatic ender sports. All of this on a river with warm aquamarine water and stunning mountain views all around.

The upper gorge contains the most difficult and committing rapids. After a few small rapids on the outskirts of


the town of Futaleufu the river turns to the left, and enters a vertically sided mini-canyon and the first big rapid, Inferno, awaits. Big exploding waves lead down towards an undercut wall on the left. A place not to be, but then you can't afford to go too far to the right as one of our team found out. A large hole with a feeder eddy current gave some spectacular, if worrying, viewing as his boat was tossed end over end. The large volume combines with the narrow canyon to create some powerful boils so that when he finally canoe out of the boat he was guaranteed a swim with a lot of down time. A rafting trip the year before had flipped two rafts here and two people did not survive the ensuing swim. After Inferno the mini-canyon continues with another four big rapids all of which, like Inferno have no portage option. The flat water after the end of the canyon is a welcome respite but the tow most difficult rapids of the day are still to come, though they at least can be portaged.

Eddy of Death

Zeta, is the first of these and is one of the most powerful rapids I've ever seen. The river, which in places is 30-40 metres wide drops into a hundred metre long gorge which at its narrowest is 4-5 metres wide. To add to the interest the gorge is not straight but forms a massive Z - hence the name. It's hard to describe the chaos that is the rapid but one of the main features is a massive exploding fold of water above the narrowest section. The fold, and in fact the whole rapid, is constantly surging so paddling it is a bit like playing roulette, your outcome being determined more by the location of the fold when you hit it than by your ability to get any particular line. As if all this isn't enough, a few more points add to the interest of the portage trail. The hole at the narrowest section created a very turbulent eddy, affectionately known as the Eddy of Death, beneath an overhanging wall - a difficult place to roll but also a place where a swim would be unthinkable because if you managed to swim out of the eddy the outflow from the rapid feeds into an undercut wall. Four of us on the trip plus the guides Ken and Mike and Juliette the video boater ran the rapid, and none of us did it without a roll. Steve, who must weigh 15 stone was paddling a Pirouette S, disappeared from sight when he hit the fold only to appear again rolling up in the eddy of death - spending some worrying time being pushed into an undercut notch on the wall before the eddy surged and he was able to paddle out. Whereas everyone else had a nice entry to the rapid I capsized very early on and went into turtle mode with my boat taking a clean line, if upside down, missing the Eddy of Death and a quick roll once things calmed down. A bizarre rapid.

Whereas Zeta had been fast and narrow Throne Room was just massive. You can only inspect it from the well worn portage trail high up on the left hand bank and even from up there it looks huge. Its been run before but not very often and Ken and Mike, who have both paddle it previously joined the rest of us on the portage trail. With the hard rapids over we could relax a little and enjoy the somewhat easier rapids and playwaves down to camp and a much wanted beer and sauna.

My worries about going on a commercial trip turned out to be unfounded or at least as far as "Expediciones Chile" is concerned. The trip was run by paddlers for paddlers and Chris, Ken and Mike are as good as any I've kayaked with. With all the worries of transport, accommodation and cooking forgotten you can just get on with enjoying the paddling. It may be more expensive but its well worth it for the guarantee of top class days on the river.

Paul Oz 



Top:
Mike Hipsher in
the heart of Zeta,
Upper Futaleufu.

Above:
Norwood in
Inferno, Upper
Futaleufu.

Far Right: Paul
Oz at Holme
Pierrepont

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Competition *focus*

How to start Canoe Slalom

What is Canoe Slalom? An Olympic Sport which is available to all ages and standards the objective being to negotiate a rapid river course defined by gates in the shortest time.

Four categories are contested, individual men's and women's kayak, Canadian singles and Canadian doubles. Six divisions form a ranking system with beginners starting at Division 5. Speed and precision are crucial and it is possible to win promotion right through to Premier level where invariably the 'white water' froths over rocks, sometimes almost blinding the competitor, who often also has to contend with submerged boulders and rocks which cause varying wave formations.

Where to take Part? Events take place on rivers and moving water throughout the UK. Approved clubs and groups organise the competitions which take place at weekends.

Who Can Compete? No age limit although participants must be able to swim and be able to compete at the level of difficulty and grade of water on which the course is set. Around 4,000 people take part, most being members of affiliated BCU clubs.

Equipment? Boat, spraydeck and paddle, buoyancy aid, helmet and cagoule. Many clubs lend equipment to beginners.

How much does it cost? Retailers supplying new equipment now supply starter packs which cost around £300 and include everything, even a boat! Many beginners buy second hand equipment but a correctly fitting buoyancy aid and helmet is a must. Entry fees to a beginner event is £2.50 for juniors under 18 and £4 for others.

Contacts? Sue Wharton, Slalom Development Officer. The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark, NG3 5RZ Tel: 0636 705363.

World Cup Magic

Raspin Tees off with a stormer and Rachel comes of age.



An exciting weekend of World Cup Canoe Slalom at Holme Pierrepont Nottingham saw proof of the emerging potential of the Great Britain Canoe Slalom Team.

Five out of twelve medals was proof enough that the current team is truly world class and that Britain has an exciting time ahead.

Paddlers from as far away as Japan, Australasia, United States of America and all corners of Europe combined to give Race 1 in the 1994 World Cup a brilliant start to this years competition.

Drama and excitement abounded right down to the last paddler on

the last run of the final race. The Blue Riband event, K1 Men, saw a dramatic "was it a touch or not" situation around Shaun Pearce's entry to gate 9 on his second run. Chasing an absolutely perfect first run from Ian Raspin, Pearce had no choice but to go for all or nothing on his second run. Eventually the judging decision was that a penalty touch had been awarded leaving Raspin in Gold medal position and Pearce with the Silver.

The unfortunate Andrew Raspin had to settle for 4th place when Germany's Oliver Fix pulled out an excellent 2nd run, improving by over 4 seconds to take third place.

The drama had started in the Canadian singles class with a tremendous effort by Gareth Marriott in his quest for a win on home water. Tension among the paddlers on the start was high as racing got under way and after first runs Gareth was down in 9th position. Despite a marvellous 2nd run, Marriott had to settle for Silver behind Dank Herceg of Croatia by only 0.05 seconds. The standard having been set by the Canadian paddlers the question was, could the K1 Women keep up the pace. The answer was an emphatic "Yes".

Lynn Simpson soon had the crowd cheering with a terrific first run which left many of the world's top paddlers in her wake. However, the challenge was taken up by British Team mate Rachel Crosbee who flew down the course on her 2nd run to take a 1 second lead. It was the race of Rachel's life. The atmosphere was electric. All eyes were on the last few paddlers. The pressure proved too much for everyone, with Lynn gaining a penalty on her second run and Stepanka Hilgertova (CZE), only 0.2 seconds behind Rachel.

The gold Medal was safe and what a great result for Rachel and for Britain. The Canadian Doubles Class saw another fabulous display from Adisson/Forgues of France who won in some style from Berrow/Trummer of Germany.

This event saw a tough baptism for Stuart Pitt and Mike Millar into this years World Cup Series, the Scots pair finishing in 9th place in a very competitive field. No-one should underestimate the task ahead of our Canadian Doubles paddlers

in this competition. To reach the finals and get such a good result took a gutsy fighting display in the true tradition of the Scots.

European countries have very strong traditions in this event and to compete over several races with the likes of Simek/Rohan (CZE) and the other strong pairings will do all of the British lads a power of good.

And so the K1 Men with all the drama that unfolded between Raspin and Pearce, the tope British paddlers in this event. Olympic Champions Pierpaolo Ferrazzi (ITA) and many other top class paddlers were left for dead as the two Brits battled it out.

In the end the rousing 1st run by Ian Raspin won the day for both Ian and Tees-side, but the overall winner on the day must have been the sport due to the standard and quality of the competition provided by the paddlers - well done to everyone.

Just to say thank you . . . A race of this stature does not just happen. Volunteers to do all sorts of jobs from the course building, ticket sales, judging, timing etc, etc. . . To everyone who was forced, cajoled, pushed or otherwise volunteered. . . thanks a million, it couldn't have happened without you.

And finally. . . to the many hundreds of paddlers who didn't turn up to support the biggest race of the year . . . You missed a treat.

As well as the glorious weather, the chance to have seen the best slalom paddlers in the World in head on competition with our own favourites should not have been missed.

The 1995 World Championships will be another exciting weekend of Canoe Slalom of the very highest quality - out top paddlers deserve your support. . . Come along, get behind them and Cheer them all the way to GOLD.

Joe Mulholland



RESULTS	
Canadian Singles - C1	
1 Danko Herceg CRO	121.75
2 Gareth Marriott GBR	121.80
3 Patrice Estanguet FRA	122.44
Kayak Women K1 W	
1 Rachel Crosbee GBR	128.33
2 Stepanka Hilgertova CZE	129.03
3 Lynn Simpson GBR	129.83
Canadian Doubles C-2	
1 F. Adisson/W. Forgues FRA	125.74
2 M. Berrow/M. Trummer GER	129.67
3 K. Kolomanski/M. Staniszewski POL	130.94
Kayak Men K1 M	
1 Ian Raspin GBR	113.05
2 Shaun Pearce GBR	114.00
3 Oliver Fix GER	114.05



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Marathon

The Hasler Trophy

Throughout many weekends of the year up and down the British Isles competitors are taking part in Regional Hasler races. The numbers of competitors taking part vary as do the courses from region to region but all races follow the rules set out in the 1994 Racing Handbook.

Whilst there will be some variations due to local conditions and types of course available, the normal distances are:

Div 1/2/3 - singles and doubles Full Senior course of more than 12 miles (20km) with any degree of severity.

Div 4, 5 & 6 singles, 4/5 & 6/7 doubles The course of about 8 miles (13km) which may include portages and/or weir shoots.

Div 7,8 & 9 singles and 8/9 doubles Course of about 4 miles (6.5km) with the minimum practical hazards.

At the Hasler Final where crew members in doubles events are ranked in separate divisions they must race in the classification of the highest ranked paddler.

To compete the Hasler trophy individuals must have entered at least 3 Hasler Races and be a member of the club selected for the region.

Paddlers are only eligible to paddle in a singles race at the Hasler Final if they have competed in three qualifying events in singles. The exceptions are paddlers already ranked in their highest division (senior kayaks Div 1, ladies and canoes in Div 3, and junior kayaks Div 2).

What is the Hasler Trophy?

The Hasler Trophy was presented to the Royal Marines Canoe Club in January 1958 by Lloyd's underwriters; it was later presented by the Royal Marines to the British Canoe Union for long distance racing between clubs in annual competition.

The trophy commemorates the canoe raid, codenamed Operation Frankton, to destroy enemy shipping in Bordeaux harbour in December 1942: those who took part became known as the Cockleshell Heroes, after the film of that name.

The raid was planned and led by Lt Col (then Major) H G Hasler, with men of the Royal Marine Boom Patrol Detachment. It involved six two man canoes paddling 60 miles up the Gironde River to attack enemy shipping with limpet mines.

Each boat had a code name:

Catfish was crewed by Major Hasler and Marine Bill Sparks; Crayfish by Cpl Laver and Mne Mills; Conger by Cpl Sheard and Mne Moffat; Cuttlefish by Lt MacKinnon and Mne Conway; Coalfish by Sgt Wallace and Mne Ewart; and Cachalot by Mnes Ellery and Fisher.

The latter was damaged on leaving the submarine at the start of the raid, with the crew returning to England. Of the rest, Conger was lost at the entrance to the river while Cuttlefish and Crayfish were captured and shot en route. Catfish and Crayfish reached the target, with the former then escaping overland to Gibraltar; the crew of Crayfish were captured and shot.

The trophy was named, with Lt Col Hasler's permission, and takes the form of two silver figures, one representing a Royal Marine in the rig worn during the raid, and the other a civilian canoeist.

The Hasler Trophy is competed for throughout the season (1st September - 31st August) on a Regional basis. The top four scoring clubs from each Region (eight clubs from the Combined Midlands Region), plus a team from the organising host club (where there are two organising clubs then both qualify, as of right), the Combined Services and the Isle of Wight, compete in the National Final at the end of the season.

Five other trophies are competed for at the Hasler Final.

- i) The Rhodes - White Trophy, awarded to the Senior Regional Champion who gains most points in Division 1 at the Hasler Final.
- ii) The David Shankland Trophy, awarded to the Lady Regional Champion who gains the most points in Division 1 at the Hasler Final.

- iii) The Barber Trophy, awarded to the Junior Regional Champion who gains most points in Division 1 at the Hasler Final To be eligible to compete for these trophies, individual Regional Champions will be identified from the Regional Hasler Competition. These will be the individuals scoring the highest number of points in the appropriate division for the Final Trophy award in their own Regional Hasler Races.
- iv) The Adam Thomason Trophy, awarded to the winner of Division 2 at the Hasler Final.
- v) The Regional Trophy is awarded to the Region with the highest aggregate score from their three highest scoring clubs.

Other prizes

All classes

Divisions 1-9, 1st, 2nd and 3rd

First Lady Divisions 3-9

First Canoe Divisions 3-9

First Junior Divisions 1-9

First Veteran Divisions 1-9

Cheques for the first six clubs

This year the Hasler Finals are being hosted by Reading and Leighton Park Canoe Club.

They will be held on 25th September on the Thames Promenade, Caversham, Reading. Camping will be available on the Thames Promenade for those who require it. For further information contact:

Tamsin Phipps,
179 Church Road,
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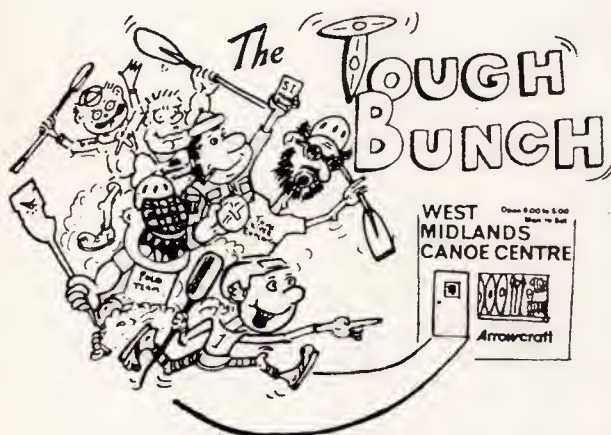
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Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today.

Pro Focus

Dear Focus

I write to take issue with those who criticise Focus. Whether they have not been BCU members for very long or have not kept their old copies of Focus and have very short memories. The club, of which I am a member (Anker Valley Canoe Club) has an exhaustive collection of Focuses (or is it Foci?) dating from at least 1988. A comparison between those old editions and a recent copy shows just how much Focus has improved; these days the layout is much more pleasing, with good use of different type faces and colours, as opposed to the old style of boring blocks of text.

The content of the text also seem to have improved, with more first-hand reports, expeditions, etc, instead of endless third person reports of competitions. Canoeing has many facets and no-one discipline or level should dominate the pages.

I believe you have struck the right balance.

Matthew Heap

Uni Clubs

Dear Focus

On reading the April issue of Focus I was struck by three different references to University Canoe Clubs apparently flouting access agreements. It is quite possible that these incidents are due to ignorance combined with enthusiasm, rather than anarchical attempts to break the rules. I wonder how many students are aware of the BCU, let alone delicate access agreements?

It is a problem that needs addressing for the benefit of all, and I think one solution could be better communication. Individuals are encouraged to join the BCU by the editor in "Ender", University Canoe Clubs are encouraged to affiliate as suggested in the letters page, - both worthy ideas but perhaps the BCU could take the initiative. I am sure that, by sending one or two copies of Focus free of charge to each active University or College Club, club members would be better informed, more individuals would be encouraged to join the BCU and clubs may even be moved to affiliate. It may even be cost effective in the long term!

Nic Burne

Editor: Good suggestion worthy of serious consideration

Booze Cruise!



Dear (slightly blurred and out of) Focus

LETTER

I feel it is time to speak out! All to recently your magnificent organ has been insinuating that time can be better spent swotting up on the minutes of Council meetings or spending 83 years whittling craft from matchsticks rather than down the pub socialising with ones chums (Re. June Focus, letters "Less Booze" & "Good Value").

Surely canoeing is inexorably linked with alcohol! For instance have you never experienced the glassy stares, numbed senses and total over exuberance of waterfall paddling? Alternatively, apart from drinking what other activity can boast of opening the sluices at both ends - as those who have paddled at Holme Pierrepont will know! The Trent? - Ah yes, that heady Amber nectar, slightly warm to the tongue and with a magnificent head, the Campaign for Real Ale should be informed!

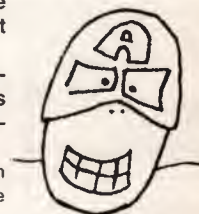
No-one can doubt this link, I myself was exposed to it on my very first white water experience - a Tryweryn Open Tour. At the end of which one of those gallant fellows who had; lent me gear so selflessly, led me so expertly and rescued me so pro-

ficiently (not to mention frequently), found that the pressures of the previous night's frivolities, the greasy breakfast and Bala Mill falls to much to cope with. However what was most impressive was that he retained the ability to roll despite this, how else was he going to clean himself off?

Now don't get me wrong, the only drinking whilst paddling I condone is that of the local spring water variety. Indeed whilst camping in the Alps last year (yes, in tents and this 'exotic expedition' only cost £150!) none of our party bought any alcohol all week (-gasp-surely-not-), the rivers provided sufficient excitement. However where is better than the Public House for swapping tales of daring-do and fishing after a hard weekend's paddle? -Not the Women's Institute or local Rotarians' Needlepoint Club that's for certain!

OK, that's enough meaningless drivel, three cheers for the KCC and all (Dis)organised trips!! Bottoms Up!

The incredible Captain Augergine



Sprint Bureaucracy?

Dear Sir

I recently competed at the Senior National Championships regatta at Holme Pierrepont. Sprint canoeing seems to be a sport which is becoming wrapped up totally in its own bureaucracy. The officials seem to be happier giving out penalty points than they are medals. I have been competing at this regatta for many years but never have I seen so many inconsistencies in the awarding of penalty points, disqualifications and inconsistency in banning of competitors.

The following incidents contributed to making my weekend thoroughly frustrating:

1 Three paddlers were banned for the Saturday's competition because of accumulation of penalty points at the previous regatta. One of the three paddlers raced on both the Saturday and Sunday while the other two both from Wey Kayak spent the Saturday unable to compete because they were not made a special case. It appears that bans can be blatantly ignored if you are the member of the right club racing in the right event. Surely there should consistency here if rules are going to be applied it shouldn't matter who you are or what you are competing in a ban is a ban. The second point here is that

their ban was the result of wearing their club vest when competing in an ORS boat not a particularly serious offence you may think but one that can result in a paddler receiving a ban if four points are accumulated.

2 My K2 was disqualified for failing to turn up to a boat weighing in time after the men's B 1000m event our only crime was to go for a warm down. We went to weigh our boat but despite the fact that they were still weighing the bronze medalists we were not allowed to have our boat weighed because we had not reported quickly enough. The rules do not state a time limit but an arbitrary one was applied to us when we put in a protest about this I was told that we should have known better. This was totally unjust and not within the rules. My protest failed as it seems that the certain regatta organiser can make a decision regardless of the fact that there is not a written rule to back up the decision.

3 The following day I competed in the Men's B K2 500m and was placed third, as I stood to have my boat weighed (inside the "allotted time" this time) the boat that had crossed the line first was being weighed it came in about 200/300 grams under weight but was placed

first despite being under weight and the medals were awarded.

It is not fair to apply a rule to one competitor and not to another. I know that running a regatta is left up to volunteers and I am not attacking the people that put in a lot of hard work but what I would like to see is consistency in the application of the rules, after all the sport is for the competitors not the officials. If this sport is to survive then consistency must be found and there should not be such rigorous application of what can be regarded as only minor infringements such as the wearing of the wrong coloured vests. With the numbers competing markedly down I feel that applying bans to competitors should not be implemented for minor offenses but saved for serious misconduct.

EWAN COX.
WEY KAYAK

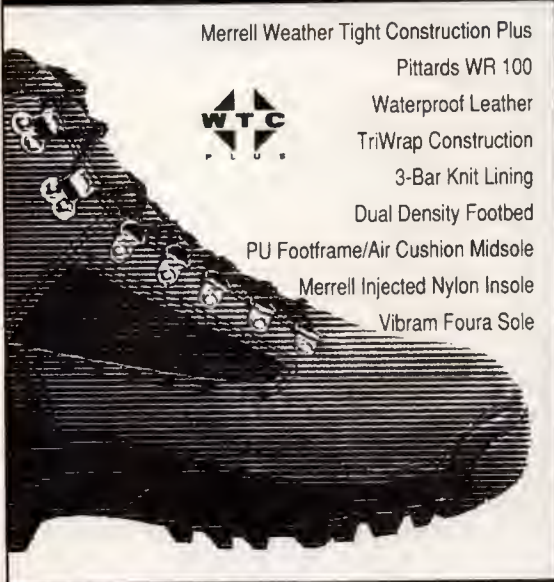
Editors Comment Sprint Racing clubs are encouraged to voice their views at the clubs meeting on September 13th and again at the AGM on November 19th.

Whilst the Wey Kayak Club management committee fully endorses Ewan's concerns about the consistent application of all racing rules. The club would like it known that they are in favour of fully applying the racing rule penalty system fairly.

More letters on page 49

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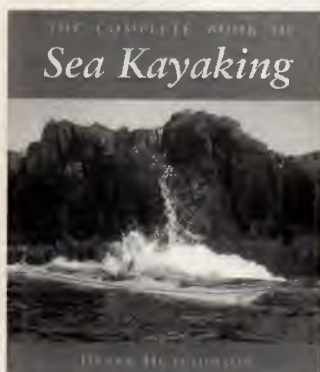
The Complete Book of Sea Kayaking

by Derek Hutchinson

Published by A & C Black

Price £12.99

ISBN 0-7136-3835-4



With the 'complete book of sea kayaking', Derek has essentially re-vamped his popular "Sea Canoeing book" and with updates and re-writes brought into the marketplace the most comprehensive book on saltwater paddling yet available. After four editions of it's previous form the book has been brought up to date in both content and style.

Hutch is known wherever sea kayaking takes place and has been more than instrumental in inspiring many aspirant sea kayakers to get sand and water between the

toes. The great strength he has (besides knowledge and experience) is the accessible style of his writing. As a symposium lecturer and after dinner speaker he is accomplished and sought after. His literary approach is much the same as his stand-up style: anecdotal and informative.

The reader is entertained as well as informed: an all too rare combination.

A BCU Coach of the longest standing, Derek has seen many changes to the sport over the years and many of these changes have been absorbed in this book. To call it a re-write does it a dis-service: it is indispensable as the first place the new mariner should look for help and advice. To read it cover to cover would give a good grounding, and would not be a chore. The best overview of the work is that it is the old book (which every sea paddler has read at some time or other) with another 18 years of experience and hindsight.

What's new then?

Old line drawings have gone and snazzy new graphics have taken their place: they are clearer and the word balloons, lighten the instructional feel of 'paddling by numbers' It is hard to get around the prescriptive nature of 'how to do it sections' but beginners will find some mysteries unraveled here. Derek learned and taught kayaking when the telemark turn was the vogue and makes no apologies for bracketing the term with the newer 'brace' turns : this may provoke some discussion in coaching circles but it also adds fuel to the current feeling amongst some coaches that the names of the strokes are far less relevant than the action. Some of the old photographs are retained (on merit) and new ones added.

The inclusion of the Arctic Origins of the Sea Kayak in a new chapter is especially welcome. Essential reading and long overdue.

The black arts of sea paddling, tides weather and navigation are presented here in a way that everyone can understand and the newer input is welcome. In 1976 we used silva orienteering compasses, in 1994 DCH has included VHF radio and satellite navigation, because that is what some paddlers use and need to know about. We have entered the era of the starship and the canoe and refreshingly, this book is a great snapshot of where we are now. Nothing is ever 'complete' in the truest sense of the word, because the game continues and develops, but I would have no quibble with 'the almost complete book of sea kayaking'.

In summary; Derek has put together a well balanced and important work, and has done so in his inimitable unique style. Not only does the book cover what you need to know, but is also a compilation of good yarns along the way. If you hanker after the wind in your hair, the taste of salt in the air and the feel of planet Earth's green waters moving effortlessly under you; this one is for you.

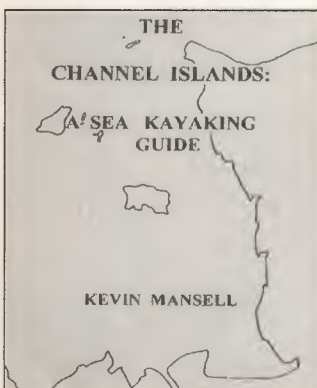


The Channel Islands:

A Sea Kayaking Guide

by Kevin Mansell

Price £5.00



In contrast to the glossy, state of the art productions usually featured on these pages, Kevin's guide to sea paddling in the Channel Islands is homemade and produced by the BCU Regional Coaching Organiser for our southernmost outpost. As

a Jersey resident he knows the islands particularly well and has paddled them all; no mean feat as the islands have more good sea paddling than you can shake a paddle at. There is a vast amount of work here and Kevin has been ably assisted by friends and paddlers of the Jersey Canoe Club, as strong and committed a bunch as you will ever come across.

Striking the balance in a guide is not easy but this one does it: facts, figures, maps and tidal information are all here. With the latter it is especially important to be guided by local enthusiasts, as the Channel Islands can have a tidal range of 12 metres, (that's about 40 feet in old money!) and 6 knot streams are not unusual. Don't be put off by this as there is always slack water and spring tides, and now you

also have an accurate guide.

It is good to see a paddling guide this useful produced well and without fuss. The author has already sold out of the first print run, so book early for the reprint. There are those who have ethical misgivings about guides in general and sea guides especially, but halfway between France and Jersey is no place for discovery learning. An open crossing to Normandy can be the penalty for thinking you know what you are doing with tidal vectors: given the nature of the paddling out there a guide is essential.

Historically and geographically the islands are just as fascinating as the paddling. The guide is interspersed with facts, tradition and seafaring stories. If you want to paddle to the Ecrihous and see the islands recently featured on

News at ten then you will need this book. (The Jersey Flag still flies there, not the French Tricolour!) I have a feeling that this guide will grow and the popularity of the islands will grow as a result: the recent European Sea symposium is testament to that with over 200 paddlers heading south for the week.

Whatever level your sea paddling is at, then the Channel Islands is for you. Great scenery, good weather, and friendly natives.

The nice thing about the Channel Islands for me is that you are never short of local paddlers who fancy a trip. The paddling is, without exception, some of the finest salt water boating in the world. Buy this guide, get a ferry ticket, and whet more than your appetite.



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First Canoe Polo World Cha

Bottom:
GB men score
against the
men from
Germany.

The time table and pre-publicity for the Canoe Polo World Championships says the event was from 6th to the 10th July - this is hardly fair, for most involved either as athletes or organisers it began more than a year ago with the detailed preparations that are required.



The teams were 'on the road' long before the competition in some cases, the New Zealand team left their homes on the 12th of June to begin their tour of Europe.

The first teams began to arrive in Sheffield on the Thursday before the event and by Monday 4th July almost everyone had had at least a canoeists traditional look at the water.

Tuesday and Wednesday were taken up with the usual tension of the scrutineering and registration processes. Passes were allocated and boats and paddles adjusted by 5.30 on the Wednesday and everyone was as ready as they were going to be.

Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was scheduled for 6.00pm and by 2 minutes too the teams were in position, the ICF Officials were on their plinth, and the Deputy Mayor was on his way. The behind the scenes team declared a "GO" and the most elaborate piece of protocol the Canoe Polo has ever seen was under way.

The teams emerged from the changing area onto the poolside behind their National Flag and Country name banners, paraded round the poolside and lined up along



Championships

one side of the 50m pool. The scale of the event became apparent as they stood shoulder to shoulder 4 or 5 deep for the Opening speeches.

The Deputy Mayor (ushered in with seconds to spare) welcomed them to Sheffield, the President of the BCU (Albert Woods) thanked the teams for attending and The President of the ICF, (Sergio Orsi) officially opened the event.

Setting the Tone

Thursday morning at 8.00am saw the first game of the Championships, with a match that was to set the tone of the event, the Great Britain team were pitched against Italy in a Men's Group D game. The British were one of the favourites for the championships with the Italians in their first showing as a National side.

It was clear from the outset that the Italians were going to be one of the tournament surprises as they had obviously put in a huge amount of training and preparation. GB won the game 2-0 but it was clear that many of the teams attending were going to have lifted their play with a World Championships at stake.

Thursday was consumed with opening round games, with no upsets for the seeded teams, but with many of the middle ranks finding that the previously unseen teams such as Japan, Chinese Taipei and South Africa proving to be more of a handful than expected.

The Women's league had begun to take shape with both Australia and GB winning all their games.

The final game of the day ended at 9.30pm with the officials tired and grateful for the unlimited supplies of water. The temperature in the pool areas had been dropped for the event, but outside Mother Nature was cranking it up so high that the poolside areas were steaming.



Above:
Never mind the
ball - let's get
on with the
game!

Sergio Orsi the ICF President had been present for the first game of the day and remained for over 12 hours, with a short break for lunch and by the evening was chatting enthusiastically and knowledgably about the games and his favourites for the event.

8.00am on Friday and the competition was under way again, with the opening round games being completed by 18.00hrs. In the Men's Competition the four seeded teams at the head of their mini leagues. Australia led the Women's league, with GB second. Third and Fourth places were a dead heat, between France and Germany so a play-off

**Right:
Aussie Women
score against
GB women**



**A MESSAGE
OF THANKS
to the
Volunteers The
World
Championship
s was an excel-
lent event and
one which all
those involved
with can be
very proud of.
It would not
have been pos-
sible without
the enormous
amount of vol-
unteer help
from all over
the country.
The volunteer
security
people, team
liaison officers,
commentators,
table officials,
scrutineers,
referees,
coaches, jury
members,
organising
committee
members it
simply would
not have hap-
pened. On
behalf of the
British Canoe
Union a very
big thank you.
David Gent
BCU
CHAIRMAN
Albert Woods
BCU
PRESIDENT**

game was scheduled to decide who would meet the daunting Aussies in the semi finals. This game was to be played at the end of Saturday.

Grudge Game

The Men's quarter finals were on Friday evening, with the seeded teams going through, the majority relatively comfortably, but the Netherlands v France match was something of a grudge game, as the French maintained that they should have been seeded over the Dutch.

The game gave both teams the chance to settle the arguments in the place that really matters. It was a very close game, flowing into extra time and then to a penalty shoot out, this combined with some inexcusable delays while the Referees sorted out some tricky decisions meant that a game that would normally last about 25 minutes took about an hour and 5. With the Dutch finally confirming the ICF Polo Committees seedings in a sudden death penalty shoot out.

Saturday saw the minor placings being resolved in both the Men's and Women's competition, while those scheduled to play the semis on Sunday just watched, prepared, rested and waited.

The Canadian's Men's team were pushed by Portugal into the distinctive position of being last in the event, though they had arrived with no misconceptions regarding their experience, they will doubtless do better next time.

In the Women's event the Kiwis eventually squeezed the Irish into 6th place in a very close game, that could genuinely have gone either way.

In many ways the highlight of the day was the game between the French and German women to resolve their league. Both teams played magnificently, giving those who remained a fine example of polo that really showed that the Women's game can no longer be regarded as a poor cousin of the Men's. The French overcame the European Champions 3-2, and earned themselves a semi final against the British, with the Germans having to take on the Australians.

The Semi Finals games on Sunday began at the later time of 08.50, partly in deference to the teams, and partly to help the officials and others who had attended the event party on the Saturday night.

The Women's semis were first, with Australia and Great Britain confirming their places in the league, by booking a place in the final. This left France and Germany to play again, this time for the Bronze Medal.

The first Men's semi final was between Australia and the Netherlands, a sharp contrast of styles. The Dutch took the lead and a furiously paced game took place, the Aussies equalised early in the second half and the game began to reach fever pitch. Five minutes from the end of the game a careless error by the Dutch in mid field led to a break by the Australians attack and a penalty was the only way the Dutch cover could prevent an open goal. With the penal-

ty converted the antipodeans took the lead for the first time.

At this stage the Dutch panicked and dropped their normal game plan and pushed everything to try and get the equaliser, but it prove a fatal mistake, several wild shots led to the Aussies scoring a flurry of goals in the final minutes, taking their place in the final 5-1, a score line that did no justice to the Dutch effort or the game that had been so close for over 16 of the 20 minutes.

The Great Britain v Germany game was close from the beginning to end, the Germans scoring first and the Brits throwing everything at the defence. Eventually the pressure of a five man press brought the equaliser a couple of minutes from the end. After the pressure of being behind had been lifted the British team appeared to relax and of course the Germans pounced, scoring the winning goal with barely seconds to spare.

The bronze medal game in the Women's competition was a mere shadow of the game on Saturday evening, both the teams being disappointed at not reaching the final, the only real justice was that the French won this contest as well, though in nothing like the previous style.

Great Britain faced the Netherlands in the Men's competition and it was plain that both teams were intent on getting to the winners podium, even if not to collect the cherished Gold. A fine game was eventually won 2-1 by the Brits, at least partly due to the support of the almost entirely partisan crowd.

The Finals

The Women's Final was a magnificently close game, with the Australian's being forced to defend an early lead. The British had numerous chances on goal, but could not find the opening they needed. Towards the end of the second half, a broken paddle in the British defense led to a moment of panic and the team was caught with 6 on the pitch. This meant that they were down to 4 players for two minutes, during which the Aussies scored a second goal and the Brits were unable to claw back before the final whistle sounded.

The Men's Final between the European Champions (Germany) and the Pacific Champions (Australia) was a fitting end to the competition, though a little disappointing for the British crowd, the however picked their favourites and the atmosphere was alive.

The Australians scored first and then again, the Germans controlled their game and a searing shot put them back in touch but half way through the second half the Aussies opened a two goal lead again and the game seemed to take on the appearance of a re-run of their semi final against the Dutch. The Germans normal cool and calculating game disappeared in desperation and the Australians were both quick and grateful to take advantage eventually running away with a 6-1 victory.

The Closing Ceremony was roughly a re-run of the opening, with John Dudderidge OBE stepping in for

Sergio Orsi who had had to rearrange his flight arrangements, due to personal reasons in Italy. He was present for the final game at his own insistence, but had to leave before the ceremony.

The medal ceremony saw the first ever World Champions of Canoe Polo adorned with the first ever ICF medals for the discipline and finally it was over. The disputes settled and the Australians justifiably jubilant, proving their strength in both Women's and Men's events.

The ICF flag was lowered, teams swapped shirts and collected their souvenirs and vowed to do it all again in Adelaide in 1996.

The event was a success, the effort put in by Athletes and Officials can never be underestimated, it is to be hoped that as the dust settles all those involved will be thanked and perhaps more importantly will feel able to say "I'm glad I was there".

A personal view

The most memorable incident of the Championships, for me, was during the game between Brazil and Canada on the Saturday afternoon.

Brazil were taking part in their first ever polo tournament and had not surprisingly come last in their group losing 20-0, 17-0 and 12-0 to Australia, Belgium and New Zealand respectively.

They had been surprised on arrival at the event to learn that they would need helmets and that they could be hand tackled! Chris Bussell a GB Under 21 player had been allocated as their team liaison officer and he quickly added team coaching to his list of duties.

Secluded team talks had been noticed by the spectator seating, as Chris endeavoured to explain various defensive tactics to a team who had all but accepted that they



would be the underdogs. The mysteries of 5 out, zones and 4 and 1 were unfolded as marker pen skidded across the white board.

I was lucky enough to be walking behind the goal line when it all began to make sense - Chris Bussell and the Brazilian team manager were shouting instructions to their team as for the first time they created a break from their familiar defensive position.

I stopped, the crowd held its breath, the pair on the back line tensed, as if will power would help more than shouting - there was a rushed shot and the ball hit the back of the net.

The crowd erupted, the normally restrained commentary team added to the moment with a typically South American extended shout of "G O-AA-LLL!", that threatened to blow the speakers off their mounts. The pair on the pontoon paused for a split second as the implications of being ahead for the first time in their short polo coaching careers sank in.

They began to jump and cheer to their team in a display of emotion that would have done justice to scoring the winning goal of the final. They turned to each other and the manager ran the 10m separating them, and jumped into Bussell's arms, wrapping his legs around his waist and almost carrying them both into the pool, Chris just carried on jumping as they hugged.

Two men who had met less than a week ago, in a flurry of arranging accommodation and borrowing team kit, behaving like life-long friends, all because of a game that they both loved.

I don't suppose anyone has that moment on video but I've already watched it a hundred times in my mind, because Canoe Polo grew in that moment, the implications of a World Championships changed, and the concept of the Olympic Ideal meant something real. Nothing and no one will ever take that moment from those involved and I thank the quirk of fate that put me on that goal line as witness to it.

Curly Barker

All photos by Kevin Danforth



1994 Canoe Polo World Championships

Men

1st Australia

Aaron Fleet, Paul Carter, Brett Houghton, Steve Hemsley, Keith McClery, Duncan Cochrane, Scott Makin, Chris Van Genderen

2nd Germany

Tilo Liebmann, Thomas Ellwanger, Ralph Konrad, Michael Konrad, Matthias Schmidt, Andreas Heidecke, Peter Kaufuss, Martin Engels, Ulrich Niehus

3rd Great Britain

Dave Fancourt, Greg Smale, Dave Brown, Brian Moore, Colin Davis, Alan Vessey, Paul Harrison, Simon Davidson, Clive Rackham, Chris Arrowsmith

Women

1st Australia

Elizabeth Shem, Anne Duncan, Julie Keast, Kaye Truscott, Juliette Makin, Caroline Houghton, Joanne Hemsley, Nerilee Flint, Caroline Nines

2nd Great Britain

Jan Badger, Caroline Parkes, Nicky Bradwell, Annie Noble, Jackie Marlow, Jo Hoyle, Sue Berry, Hayley Watret, Lynn Knowles, Ginny Coyles

3rd France

Veronique Amiard, Isabelle Boulnois, Helene Hautefeuille, Mylene Lemette, Valerie Adalberon, Gaelle Provost, Audrey Debast, Sophie Chaudiere, Karine Suzanne

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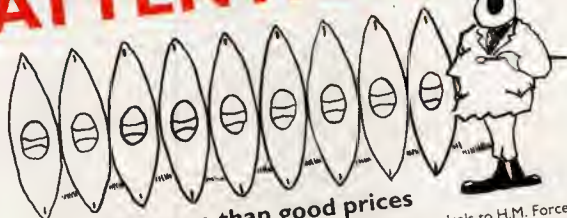
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Hull International Challenge

Hull is likely to bid for the next Canoe Polo European Championships after the success of the Hull International Canoe Polo Challenge. International teams from as far afield as Japan, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Italy and Chinese Tai Pei joined club and National sides from Britain and Europe in the unique setting of Princes Dock.

The event, in the shadow of the Princes Quay Shopping Centre, in the heart of the city centre attracted thousands of spectators over the two days, many of whom were getting their first glimpse of Canoe Polo.

Australian Men's side won the overall trophy, beating top National League side Humbersiders 6 - 1 in the final. Australia's Ladies also carried off the honours, finishing as the highest placed women's side in the tournament.

Ireland's B team were triumphant in the 2nd Division and their youth team finished top of the under 18 section. Middlesex club Wildhearts were victorious in Division 3.

"This event has been marvellous," said Australian team manager, Marianne Cochrane, whose side has travelled the World playing the sport. "It's by far the best tournament we've been to. The crowds created a superb atmosphere and the setting, with the restaurants and shops so nearby, is perfect. I really hope we can come back and compete here again in the future."

The tournament, which featured a total of 48 teams, was organised by Hull City Council's Sports Promotions team in conjunction with Kingston Kayak Club and Humberside Canoe Polo Club. Over 6 tons of scaffolding was brought into the dock to help hold the floating pontoons specially constructed in the dock. Therese Cook, head of the Sports Promotions Unit was delighted with the outcome of the week-ends event. "The tournament was a complete success in every respect. The spectators enjoyed themselves and the players really responded to that. The International team managers were all captivated with the facilities



Above:
Action from Humberside
Below:
The Triumphant Australians

and the organisational aspects of the competition - as well as the warm welcome from the people of Hull. If we can find a sponsor from the commercial sector we'll certainly be staging the event next year and be bidding for the European Championships the year after."

The Hull International Challenge was an historic event for Canoe Polo. Teams such as Canada, South Africa and Japan were competing in the Northern Hemisphere for the first time and as such, Hull can claim to have staged the first ever truly global Canoe Polo competition.



Sound of the Bell

Over 250 primary and junior school children, the vast majority clutching paddles they had made themselves, converged on Evesham on Saturday 21 May. They were supported by nearly as many parents. It was an impressive sight, and turned out to be an impressive, and thoroughly enjoyable, day.



What was the event? - the Main Regatta - a 'Bell Boat' championships. For those unfamiliar with this vessel, a word of explanation. A 'Bell Boat' is basically two C4s (4 person canoes) catamaraned together in a particular manner, which provides a central 'platform'. The result is a very stable vessel which allows for crews of any age and ability to be safely

taken afloat. Teams of 8 pupils, plus teacher, and a crew 'President', competed over a 250 metre course amidst great enthusiasm and excitement. This continued right through to the finals, in spite of the efforts of the weather to prove that theories of global warming are a mere figment of someone's imagination - this was a typical English summer day of the type we

all know and love! The boats were all called 'Spirit of ... Churchill, MacGregor, Attlee, England...'

The crew Presidents included MPs Michael Spicer and Peter Luff, the Bishop of Worcester, Sir Adrian Cadbury, John Dudderidge, OBE, - BCU President of Honour, the local Mayor, Councillor Selby, Lady Harford, Ian Elliott, John Norrie, Jane Seddan, Will Hopper, Patrick Dolan, Suzanne Robinson, David Harrod, Councillor Liz Turner, Stuart Fisher, even yours truly, and Richard Ward, National Coach for Marathon. True to his calling, Richard covered a marathon distance before the end of the day, being called upon to 'stand in' whenever a 'President' forgot to return in time for the next heat! Each boat was helmed throughout the event by an Olympic or international paddler. Their unanimous verdict at the end of the day was that it had been time well spent. The delight and keenness of the teams was an inspiration.

Margaret Emes, wife of our late President, Ron Emes, MBE, paddled with her crew, and presented the trophies at the end of the day. David Train and Graham Campbell had master-minded the event, and together, supported by David's wife Jenny, and other stalwarts, not least of which was John MacLeod, past Olympic Slalom

Team Manager, somehow managed to keep things moving smoothly along on the day. But what's it all about? Well that's an equally long story. Suffice it to say that the 'Bell Boat' is being marketed as a complete package involving the 'bell curve', the 'natural distribution' curve which David Train states is at the heart of the 'Deming' philosophy, the catalyst for the success of Japanese industry.

MacGregor turned around in his boat - he used to be a rower - and gave us the sport and pastime of canoeing. David has taken the shield and spear symbols of conflict, turned the shield around to make a paddle blade, affixed the 'spear' as a shaft, and made it into the means of propulsion of a team boat, where interaction and co-operation in response to healthy competition is the key to success. The English Main Regatta at Evesham on 21 May 1994 was an undoubted success. There is considerable interest in the project among junior and primary schools in the Worcestershire area. Was this the start of a movement, based on the canoe, which will restore to Britain a positive, caring and vital spirit in accordance with David Train's remarkable vision? Only time will tell.

Further information on the Bell Boat and its potential in the curriculum can be obtained from Graham Campbell, Cottars End, Sheriffs Lench, Evesham. WR11 5SR

It had not simply been raining, the heavens had opened, and stayed open. There were flood warnings for the prone roads, and all self-respecting mountaineers were sat in front of fires relating improbable tales of even more improbable exploits.

Canoeing & Mountain Rescue



The phone rang at about 7.30 "Hello, you weren't busy, were you". You can tell from the tense used when a call is neither social nor sociable, and that you can cancel any plans. The information was a bit sketchy, but it seemed that there were three canoeists stuck on a rock somewhere down near the Conway Falls. I took one look at the weather, abandoned any idea of hill gear and went to find my wet suit and wellies.

The area of responsibility of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation includes, among others, stretches of the rivers Ogwen, Nantygwryd, Llugwy, Lledr and Conwy. The team have been dealing with a dramatically increasing number of wild water related rescues in the last few years. It is not only canoeists that are getting into more inaccessible locations before having a problem, but gorge walking and climbing, and river crossings are also taking a higher profile in the incident figures.

Mountain rescue and its techniques have formed the central role for the team over the last thirty years, with training being aimed almost exclusively in that direction. This sudden increase in water related incidents is requiring fundamental changes of the Team. The team still does not always get first call for these incidents but the difficulty of access and evacuation from some areas tends to mean that we get involved eventually. Rescue pre-planning and training has suggested that the team be prepared for more river and gorge rescues and that it should be able to respond quickly.

All river and gorge incidents have the potential to be life threatening and the quickest team response would be too slow in such situations, so primary respon-

sibility for rescue must remain with the party involved in the incident. The team recognises this and provides for secondary support and rescue from difficult locations. It is not really part of the Mountain Rescue remit to give such wide coverage, but we have accepted this new role and so we have had to critically evaluate our position in terms of training and equipment. The team needs to consolidate its position for river rescues over the next year.

Training

Mountaineers, you will note, have waterproofs, not wet suits. There are a few of the team who are also paddlers, but the majority consider there is nothing wrong with water if taken in the right spirit; and just have an aversion to getting wet. The aim is not to put our team members into the water, but to adapt standard Mountain Rescue techniques to this new situation. The training on the white water course reinforces this opinion, but shows us what to do should anyone inadvertently end up in the drink. White water training has been carried out every year since 1992 at Holme Pierrepont National Centre with Mike Devlin and Graham Wardle and this training is being extended to other teams this year.

We are investigating equipment, and have already purchased two buoyancy aids and a throw line. It is evident however the Mountain Rescue stretchers are not likely to be the most appropriate for working near water or in the thick undergrowth that frequently surrounds it, so further new items will have to be added to our inventory. It would be attractive to have a rapid response kit for water incidents that could remain packed, and so have what could be vital minutes

in our response time, but this may mean duplicating existing equipment solely for this role. The possibility of having the rivers of north Wales mapped by experienced canoeists to an accuracy that would indicate the known hazards, in canoeing terms, on each stretch of water has also been raised. This all costs money; and Mountain Rescue is a service funded by donations and manned by volunteers.

The team liaises closely for river rescues with other rescue organisations apart from the police and ambulance services. These include the Royal Air Force and the Joint Police Dive Team based at Runcorn.

Information

One of the main problems encountered, and one which canoeists especially could help with is the vital initial information given about incidents. In a mountain incident we would expect information such as a six figure grid reference, history and mechanism of the injury, number in the party and known access routes to the incident site. We would also have some idea of the equipment the party would be carrying. Canoeists are not always in a position to help in the same way. This causes potentially lethal delays.

Apart from the obvious requirement that any group embarking in wild water should be properly trained in self help and rescue techniques, some consideration should be given in advance to the course of action required should the self help fail to be sufficient at any of the locations along the proposed route. The names that canoeists apply to stretches of river do not always appear on Ordnance Survey maps, and an unequivocal means of identifying

the incident site must be found if delays are to be avoided. Generally, the more information that can be supplied, the better the team can organise its response, and if it is obvious that an ambulance will not be able to deliver its stretcher to the side of the casualty, then it would be as well to inform the police of that at an early stage.

Oh yes, the three sat on the rock: the river rose about a meter and a half in the next two hours, and in that time they were all safely lifted off using an aerial ropeway system.

Bob Lewis

Editors note:

Local Paddlers have been involved rescuing groups at Conway Falls and involved with several River incidents to aid the Police Diving teams. Thus a valuable local resource is available: very experienced, highly trained paddlers who know the North Wales rivers inside out. There must be scope for formal liaison at a local level: mountaineers on rescue teams who are not grade V/VI paddlers could benefit from having one or two on the team, especially as the speed of rescue is crucial in water based incidents.



Chris Hare



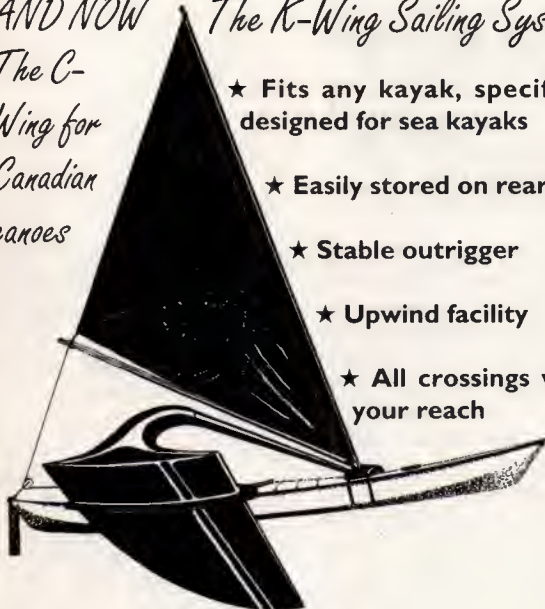
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Access news

Do you like your house flooded?

It was with dismay that I read an article in May's edition of *Canoeist* in which a letter from the NRA has been published and the editor of *Canoeist* had added his own comments as a footnote. The editor's comments amongst others raised the point that rivers should be left in a "natural state" and not used for abstraction purposes or engineered in any way for flood protection schemes. I wonder what canoeists living in York would do if there were no flood defence schemes on the Ouse? In my region towns such as Yarm on the River Tees and Bywell on the River Tyne would suffer hugely each winter from flooding if the NRA did not construct new, and manage existing flood defence schemes. I also like turning on my tap and having clean drinking water. Abstraction of water from rivers forms a considerable percentage of the water supplied to homes and businesses in England and if no abstraction takes place from

rivers then our drinking water supply would not be reliable. This is 1994 and of the NRA did not "manage" our rivers, pollution would not be monitored they would not be stopping YOUR HOUSE being flooded out every winter and they would not be granting abstraction licences to your local water company so you can have fresh drinking water. Canoeists will never have a river to themselves in a virgin state especially in the UK. We have to be part of a management policy, an example being part of the NRA's catchment management plans to make sure that our needs as canoeists are identified so that we can share a river with the abstractors, anglers, power generators, flood defence etc. I hope this points out that we cannot have Utopia and that completely unreasonable comments do not help canoeists and canoeing. Please GET REAL.

SIMON BANBURY
RAO Northumbria

LAO's for Lune and Eden

One of the BCU unsung heroes has decided that the time has come to hand over his Access Officer duties to others with more time. David Rushfirth, who has received the BCU Award of Merit for his work, has been a member of the BCU access team since he was recruited by Ralph Tyas thirty years ago. No amount of thanks in the columns of *Canoe Focus* can adequately recognise such long and dedicated service to canoeing. Perhaps the best way to say thank you is to ensure that his work is carried on by enthusiastic and committed new Local Access Officers.

Volunteers please for the Eden (excluding Lazonby to Armathwaite) to Cumbria RAO, Mike Mills. Volunteers please for the Lune below Kirby Lonsdale to the North West RAO, Dave Watkinson, 11 Latham Street, Preston, PR1 3TERiver Teme - Downton Gorge Section Some five or six years ago I arranged to paddle the Downton Gorge section of the River Teme with a small group of friends. This was at the time when access to this section was first becoming difficult. Our small group was hoping to do a quiet run down to Ludlow with out problems.

On arrival at the get in point, we were surprised to see a large group, waiting to get on the water. If my memory is working, I seem to remember that this group were from a club in the London area. They told me at the time that they had paddled this section of the River Teme annually for the last thirty years.

At the time I did not pay much attention to this fact, but now was Regional Access officer, confirmation of a club paddling Downton Gorge section of the River Teme over this period of time would be useful background information. If you know of any one or of a Club that has been paddling this section of the River Teme since the 1960's then please contact me on 0299 401872 or write to: Mike Phillips RAO, 21 Heathfield Road, Bewdley, Worcs. DY12 1JT.

River Tees Access Update

The River Tees is one of North East England's biggest rivers and due to increasing numbers wanting to use the Tees and some access problems we have recruited a second LAO for the upper Tees.

Adam Hearne from the Kingsway Adventure Centre at Middleton-in-Teesdale will look after access to the Tees from High Force to Cotherstone, which includes the High Force to Low Force section and the Tees Racecourse. Len Smith will look after the Tees from Cotherstone through to Whorlton Lido which includes Abbey Rapids.

The main problem area for

access on the Tees is the Racecourse section. Paddlers are using the racecourse in the summer months eg April 1st to October 30th and this is not part of the Tees agreement. This is occurring due to the fact that a paddler can use the High Force to Low Force section all year round as long as you pay £3.00, but paddlers are finishing the High Force to Low Force section at Middleton-in-Teesdale and deciding to paddle on through the racecourse to Cotherstone. This can only be done in the 5 winter months eg Nov 1st until March 31st, and not in the summer.

To summarise: High Force to Low Force: Canoeable all year but it costs £3.00 per paddler. In the summer eg April-October the last egress point must be Middleton-in-Teesdale. During the winter eg Nov-March OK paddle on.

Racecourse: Access to the racecourse at Middleton-in-Teesdale only Not Egglestone Bridge. Paddle only Nov 1st until March 31st. Egress the Hagg at Cotherstone.

Cotherstone/Barnard Castle to Whorlton Lido, OK to paddle during the 5 winter months and only on the Abbey Rapids themselves during the summer.



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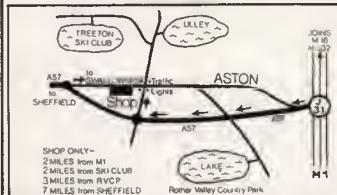
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My favourite paddle

Reading the comment by D J Oldham in the Ender section of the last issued of *Canoe Focus* has inspired me to put pen to paper. I think he may be right in that the Favourite Paddle section is "usually some high flying coach on a self appraised flight of fantasy, linked with booze and tents". So here is an account of a lowly SI, on a small river in the UK with little booze and certainly no tents. Bearing in mind that the aim of the BCU Coaching Service according to CoDe is "to ensure that NEWCOMERS are introduced to canoeing in a safe and enjoyable way and that those already in the sport are assisted to progress to whatever level and whichever discipline within canoeing suits them best" I felt that this should be reflected in my choice of Favourite Paddle.

One of my greatest pleasures as an SI is introducing novice paddlers to white water. It is rewarding to see novices progressing from the basic strokes on flat water to white water techniques on graded rivers with its associated adventure and excitement. For several years I have been trying to locate the ideal river for such an introduction, and whilst on an expedition this winter to N Wales I think I found the answer. The Afon Llugwy which runs from Capel Curig down towards Betws-Y-Coed has much to offer the novice, the proficient paddler, the instructor and in places the adrenalin junkie. The best place for the river trip to start is at Plas-y-Brenin. I found the staff to be very helpful and friendly. For access to the river, they will provide you with a key which enables you to reach the far side of Llynau Mymbyr (via Jim's Bridge opposite the petrol station along the A5). The bridge at the eastern side of the lake provides an ideal introductory rapid for those first nervous unsteady strokes into the world of

white water paddling. There is plenty of room for vehicles, an ideal tongue of moving water and when asked for politely, a warm room for a lunch break to combat the unrelenting Welsh winter weather. Also the staff are able to offer advice on the water levels and recent changes to the local river rapids.

The Rapids

Once the basics have been mastered, the group is able to paddle a short distance down river to the rapids at Jim's Bridge, 200 yards of friendly grade 2 water. The rapid is ideal for the teaching of route selection and also for pointing out river hazards (apparently several boats have come to grief wrapped around bridge pillars). The rapid is short enough to be run one at a time, but the eddies are big enough for it to be run as a group. The track and bridge allow plenty of space for rescuers, spectators and more importantly for photographers. For the beginners this rapid can be the highlight to end a good first day, with

the vehicles close to hand and the petrol station able to offer much needed food.

Another short paddle will bring the group to The Slot (III) and Cobden's Falls (IV). These rapids can be easily inspected beforehand from the footbridge opposite Cobden's Hotel or by the footpath on the right hand bank. For a novice group this rapid can be used to explain the various types of water formations, route selection at a higher level and also how you could protect such a rapid for a descent. With a more experienced group this rapid provides an excellent test of nerve and technical ability. During our expedition we witnessed quite an experienced paddler get the lead in wrong, and from then on he struggles to remain in control. He was forced to drop over the central slab sideways and paddle the rest of the rapid backwards. It is not as easy as it looks!

A small grade 2 rapid follows immediately after the falls where the river takes a sharp right turn. This is another ideal place to practise basic moving water techniques before the major portage around Pont Cyfyng (grade V-VI). The portage is made easier with a superb local access agreement which involves simply placing 50p in a box attached to a gate. You are then able to put in just below the awe inspiring last drop of the falls. There is a superb series of eddies which enables you to teach introductory techniques with a magnificent backdrop. From here on the rapids become more continuous but remain in the friendly grade II-III bracket. The boulder garden provides the opportunity for plenty of breaking in and out practise, and there are several places for the enthusiastic novice to try their hand at surfing small waves and



riding in small stoppers.

A few Kms downstream brings you to Forestry Falls, a 300 yard grade III rapid. Although fairly straight forward, the novice paddler will need to manoeuvre to keep to the best line and the rapid finishes with a quite a large drop. The rapid is easily protected and the final drop produces many a beaming smile and whoop of excitement.

From here the group can paddle to the egress point below the Ugly House or you can continue on to show the group Swallow Falls and the related stories of mad men and their escapades.

Something for Everyone

All in all the river has something to offer everyone. There are no problems with access and egress and the A5 road runs along side the river most of the way. The river lends itself to being split up into stages enabling groups of various skill levels to join in together. There are plenty of grade II sections to test the up and coming white water paddler, and sections of grade III-IV to test those with higher ambitions (and insurance coverage). The region is littered with superb watering holes, cafes and equipment shops to cater for those apres paddle activities. During high water the smaller rapids wash out and Cobden's Falls and Pont Cyfnyg become even more breathtaking. If the water level drops too much, parts of the river can involve serious rock dodging and bum scraping. However on a good day, for me it is a river not to be missed and ideal for those instructors wishing to introduce novices to white water.

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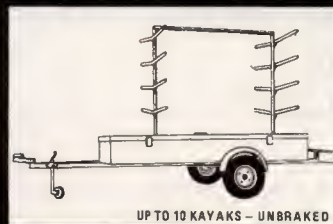
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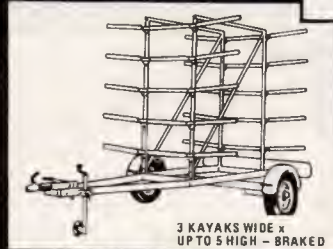
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The Gore-Tex Challenge

Easter 1994

Dave Halsall & Steve Murgatroyd



The opening of the Grand Union Canal Walk between Birmingham and London in the July of 1993 was one of the many ways that British Waterways celebrated Canals 200, the bicentenary of canals in this country. During 1793 over half of all the canals in Britain were authorised, being built, or were opened, it was the height of 'canal mania', people throughout Great Britain were canal bonkers. To add interest to the Grand Union Canal route Gore-Tex have sponsored the Gore-Tex challenge which is open to those travelling by foot, bicycle and canoe.

Above:
Gas Street
Basin

To take part in the Challenge all you have to do is carry a free Gore-Tex Challenge passport, visit the 10 check-in boxes, available all hours, and stamp the passport with the stamp provided. People travelling along the route can either complete the route in one journey or as a series of visits to complete the journey over an extended time period. The completed passport is then sent off to British Waterways and they will send you a certificate, a plaque and your name is entered for the Gore-Tex Challenge prize draw.

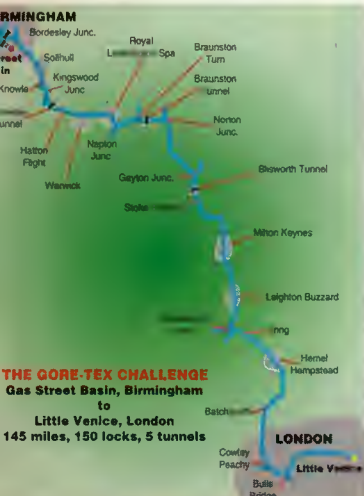
Easter 1994 It had been a few years since I was last at Gas Street Basin in Birmingham and since that time it had definitely changed from an atmospheric canal stop over, full of wood smoke and narrow boats to a twee tourist attraction with open tour boats and ice-cream.

Steve arrived, we prepared the boat and equipment, took a few photographs and then started for London heading first north west through Farmers Bridge tunnel and then turning north east at Cambrian wharf to the first of the 150 locks we would have to negotiate on our route. At the locks we stopped to don our rain suits as we were hit by a very heavy hail shower which filled the boat with white balls of ice and we had to carry it around with us for another hour. The Farmers Bridge narrow locks are close together and travelling down hill we passed a number of modern buildings, the Birmingham BT tower and under the arch of Snow Hill station. We were followed for some time by a man who was either drunk or on drugs and once he started to harangue us we put on a spurt and left him behind only to catch up with two adolescent girls who also found fun in heckling us. At Aston Junction there is a mixture of old

and new architectural building designs but we found the canal dry which was no problem as we would have to walk the section of locks anyway and at least we were now heading southeast towards London. Bordesley and the Camp Hill locks mark the start of the Grand Union Canal for real and the associated change from narrow locks to the broad locks of the canal mainline. We had passed 30 locks in 3 miles but at last had a long level section to start paddling out of industrial Birmingham. Eight miles from Gas Street Basin, around Olton and Ulverley Green the canal becomes more scenic and we saw our first wildlife, a solitary moorhen and a couple of kingfishers, one of which allowed us to get within a boat length of it before flying off. Near to Catherines de Barnes bridge we stopped for the night to be lulled to sleep by the traffic on the M42 and planes using the Birmingham International Airport.

Confronted by a Rotweiler

The second day we had a cold start, low temperatures and no tea, as over come by the excitement of starting the trip we had forgotten to pick up some water during the previous day. While packing the equipment into the Pro-Bag I was suddenly confronted by a Rotweiler bounding down the tow path towards me. Two thoughts crossed my mind in rapid succession. 'Where is my penknife?' and 'How quickly can I climb that nearby tree?' Luckily the dog was diverted by a call of nature and its, up to then out of sight owner, arrived to put it on its lead before he passed us. The incident certainly got my pulse rate up and showed that you do not have to travel abroad to be confronted by wild ani-



mals. We paddled off to Knowle locks and our second stamp on our passports. Most of the boxes contain an individual stamp of the area (similar to those of the YHA), an ink pad, a pen and best of all a visitors book. The comments section in the visitors book allows you to sympathise with the trials and tribulations of fellow travellers along the route and at Knowle, being so close to Birmingham, many travelling from London were jubilant about nearly finishing the trip. We quickly reached the top of the Hatton flight where we had a marvellous view of the 21 locks dropping down to the spires of Warwick in the distance. After stamping our passports we decided we required fortification before tackling the route march down the flight so we left our boat and equipment with the owner of a souvenir shop and walked to the pub for dinner. The Hatton area, even on a cold and wet afternoon was busy with traffic and people out for a walk and we stopped and chatted with a few interested groups during the portage down the flight. After skirting Warwick the canal then carves through Royal Leamington Spa before moving out into countryside again. The canal through Leamington Spa proved to be a totally uninspiring place full of litter and detritus that one once associated with canals, we were glad to be out of it. The persistent rain of the afternoon now turned to sleet and not for the last time we were glad of the superb clothing provided by our main sponsors The North Face. At Bascot locks after stamping the passports unsuccessfully in driving rain we stopped for the night and an evening of luxury in the tent. We had a well rehearsed ritual of making camp that had evolved from a 25 day tour on the inland water ways in 1993. I would put up the tent and get the equipment sorted inside while Steve would prepare the meal. We supplemented this with a few games of Yahtzee. Steve had to be taught the game on the first night but then went on to win all but three games during the entire trip? But it did stop him playing his bloody mouth organ!

“In that?”

In the morning we awoke to bright sunshine and this galvanized us into action but during packing it then came on to rain and by the time we were on the water heavy snow was falling. At Calcutt locks we stopped for some supplies and while Steve was away a woman walking a dog asked what we were doing. I told her that we were on our way to London and as she looked incredulously at the boat, slowly filling with snow she said “In that?” I nodded and she laughed and walked off. Standing alone in driving snow I did wonder about the sanity of the whole thing. A left turn at Napton Junction and we were on the Oxford Canal in sunshine, well sunshine and showers but there was a lot to see. Braunston is another busy place with striking buildings, and many moored boats of different designs and colours. It is also another stamping spot at the Stop House and there is a 2042 yard long tunnel which is prohibited to all canoeists but the old horse track over the top is well defined. We were told that the tunnel was a wet one by a narrow boat crew who had just come through. During the early 1790s the fissured rock strata must have hindered its construction as this form of civil engineering was still in its infancy and also due to a miscalculation during its building the tunnel has a slight S bend in its length. There were more snow flurries as we approached Norton Junction, with the route to Leicester coming in from the left and the difficult but entertaining portage under the A5 Wading Street. But the sun was out as we passed the busy Gayton junction and headed for the northern portal of Blisworth tunnel. Blisworth has the distinction of being the longest canal tunnel in the country still open to navigation, 3057 yards, non-powered craft are prohibited from using it but there is a very clear route over the top. When the canal was first opened in 1800 there was no tunnel and the portage roughly follows the route of the old plate-way which used to move the cargoes from one side of the hill to the other. By 1805 there was a tunnel, boats were legged through by special teams of men who stopped in the leggers huts at each end of the tunnel. By the southern portal there is a large concrete ring, similar segments were used in the multi million pound restoration during 1980-84. It was dusk when we arrived at Stoke Bruerne at the other end of the tunnel and it was a pleasant paddle through this normally very busy tourist village to the stamp box by the pub. Stoke Bruerne is one of the best examples of a canal village in the country, it is home to a Waterways Museum and all its



attendant paraphernalia and is well worth a day out. We stopped for the day just after the village on a very muddy campsite.

Above:
Braunstone Tunnel

The Great Ouse

The next day we woke to the sound of sleet being blasted onto the tent, so we dossed in the tent until the rain had stopped and only got on the water just after 9am. The weather had changed to a lazy wind, blowing through you rather than going round you, with a weak water-colour sun trying to break through the cloud, but we travelled cocooned from the elements in full Gore-Tex suits. Portaging the next set of locks we startled a man on the towpath who did a double take at the two of us, packs on our packs, 21 foot boat in one hand and Pelican box, dry sack and paddle in the other. ‘Oh’ he said. ‘I thought you were a couple of fishermen?’ We did not really know how to take this but we put it down to the fact that he needed his eye sight checking. The countryside south of Stoke Bruerne is beautiful with views from the canal of villages with churches set amongst fields of cows and sheep. Just before Wolverton we paused to take some photographs of the stupendous iron aqueduct over the Great Ouse. When built in 1811 it was at the forefront of technology for the time and like a lot of the engineering from that era it is remarkable that it is still in use today. How much will we leave for the future? The iron aqueduct replaced a conventional brick aqueduct and embankment that was washed away in floods of 1808. This in turn had replaced nine locks that had taken the canal down into the Ouse Valley, across the river and then back up the other side of the valley. The locks had also been abandoned because of the danger of the river flooding and the difficulty in get-

Below:
The inviting weather



ting from one side of the river to the other. Wolverton grew up as a railway town and the Inland Waterways Association have commemorated this fact by painting a large section of a canal side wall with an engine and train we stopped for a couple of minutes to take-in the amusing detail before continuing on to Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes is a new town of the 1970s which has swallowed-up all of the villages along the canal but it has made full use of the canal as an amenity for the public. Walk ways, cycle tracks, open grass areas, parks and play areas are cleverly mixed in with housing developments along the canal. There is even an up market estate that has its own private canal to the back door of each house which enables the owners to moor their boats at the back of the house and park their cars in the front. Having said all this it does drag on a bit and it is nice to get through and back into the 'real' countryside. The next stop to stamp our passports was Soulbury where the three locks and the canal side buildings form a very picturesque backdrop to the activities of the boat traffic. We sat and nibbled some chocolate as we watched a couple of boats passing through the locks and chatted with a couple who were out on a hire boat. We reprovisioned the expedition at Leighton Buzzard Tesco and shouted a brief hello to a K1 paddler out for a training run. Before stopping to camp near Slapton we knocked at a farmhouse door and asked for our water containers to be filled and then we made the most of the fine windy evening to dry out the tent before getting inside to eat our tea. The weather throughout the day had been high wind with sunshine broken by sleet and rain showers but as long as we were moving we were warm just wearing the fleece which dried rapidly once the precipitation stopped. The evening was clear and cold and Steve who always finds conditions colder than me, took the precaution of sleeping in the clothing he had been wearing all day.

The Chilterns

When we woke the sun was shining brightly but a thick layer of ice on the tent revealed how cold the previous night had been. We had both had a good night sleep and were eager to get paddling in the morning sun. At Marsworth junction we stopped for another stamp, had a look at some of the boats that are moored there and rang home to arrange a pick up time at Little Venice in London. The British Waterways Bulbourne workshops are a fine example of 19th century architecture but we were unfortunate to find them covered with scaffolding. After Bulbourne the canal passes through the Chilterns in a deep cutting at Tring, which is now wooded and full of bird song but during its construction 200 years ago it must have been the scene of intense human activity. The deep cutting required yet another engineering innovation to be used during its excavation; the barrow-runs. At the time there were no mechanical aids so using first black powder and muscle power the cutting was dug, the spoil was then hauled to the top of the ridge by barrow-runs. Planks were laid to the top of the cutting, a wheel barrow, attached to a rope and guided by a man, was hauled up the near vertical slope by a horse, the spoil was tipped out and then the perilous journey to the bottom of the cutting under-taken. Sat in the sun on a bright spring day waiting for Steve to attend to a call of nature it was difficult to imagine the hell it must have been running up down the slippery, mud covered planks of a wet winters day, there must have been numerous injuries and fatalities. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to the navigators, navies, who produced the jewel that is our inland waterways system. This day gave us our largest number of different bird species seen on any one day of the trip with the normal coots, swans, moorhens, herons, and mallards being augmented by reed buntings, jays and a green woodpecker. At the campsite while I was washing the dishes I found a Swiss Army penknife in the mud by the side of the canal, which after cleaning worked very well indeed, so well that I spent all evening whittling a stick.

Knights in shining armour


The morning started off wet and windy and remained the same throughout the day but at least the wind, as it had been for most of the trip, was at our backs and the sleet showers were infrequent. As we passed through Hemel Hempstead, which is not a very pleasant section, we were hailed by a narrow boat by a lady. The boat was flooding and she did not



We are indebted to our wives and families for letting us go, our main sponsors The North Face and other sponsors Gore-Tex, British Waterways, Leicester Promotions, Cascade Designs, MSR, Therm-a-rest, Mobile Adventure, Petzl, Ortlieb and Lendal.

know what to do to stop the leak or pump the water out but luckily her knights in shining armour had arrived. We quickly turned on the electric and started the bilge pump and after 15 minutes there was a noticeable drop in the level of water in the boat. Our good deed done for the day we treated ourselves to a pub lunch sitting around the fire drying out we added a strange aroma to the room which was full of office types in suits and ties. As we approached London we noticed more and more 'hippie' type boats along the canal. These boats seem to be occupied throughout the year by people who have taken advantage of the cheap rent of the British waterways licence and the benefit of being able to move their accommodation once they are tired of the view. At Batchworth we stopped for another stamp box and food supply raid at the Tesco's just at the side of the canal. Reprovisioned we paddled on through Harefield, which seems to drag on, to stop near Denham Country Park. We had a great campsite opposite a lake in a fisherman's car park. It was the closed season so we were on our own. During our trip down the canal we had seen a few people fishing but as in all sports there are a few, as with canoeing, who are selfish enough to break access agreements. That evening as we sat eating and watched the coming and goings of the water fowl on the lake, while in the morning we woke to the sound of a woodpecker announcing its desire for a mate on a branch that acted as a sounding board. With the woodpecker still calling for a mate we set off for the 25 mile blast down to Little Venice in the heart of London, the finish of the journey and our pick-up. We had arranged to meet at 2.00pm so had to paddle hard first on the mainline then through Uxbridge and Hayes and then onto the Paddington Arm at Bulls Bridge junction to Little Venice. The Paddington Arm was very quiet and we travelled past some interesting sites such as the North Circular aqueduct, Wormwood Scrubs, Kensal Green cemetery and Porta Bella dock before stopping at Little Venice. Throughout the journey we had been shouting a greeting to most of the people we had seen as we like to think that it will help the sport of canoeing by appearing happy and cheerful. In London a cheery good morning from a pair in a canoe came as a complete surprise and was usually greeted by total indifference. At one point we had stones thrown at us. It was a bit of a downer but our arrival at Little Venice soon renewed our enthusiasm. Elegant Regency houses and tree lined roads provide the backdrop to the numerous multicoloured boats that are moored there while the Paddington Basin and Maida Hill give additional interest to the location. We arrived by 12.30pm and stamped our passports for the last time before packing up and returning home.

The weather had been cold and wet but using the right equipment we had travelled 145 miles in comfort with something always there to entertain us round the next corner. We are very privileged in this country to have over 2000 miles of inland waterways full of both natural and historical wonders that add interest to any canoe journey. The whole network of British Waterways, and more, is covered by the Universal BCU Licence which makes it easy for anyone to get out and about linking many waterways to make a fascinating journey.

Dave Halsall 



Right: Gas Street Basin



Paddlers gear

Neuman Paddle Joint

Now this is a novel bit of kit. I am usually pretty scathing about wonder kit which claims to solve all your problems, even before you have realised you have one. In this case the verbal description of a breakdown paddle joint which allows for adjustment of length as well as feather, and doesn't really weigh much either, sounded far too good to be true.

When I received the demo sample I was presently surprised. The joint is a well made, precision piece of engineering, which works. What more could you ask? The range of feather adjustment is infinite and the length

can be adjusted over about 5/6 cm which is about right if you want to shorten your paddles to go surfing, or lengthen them for touring. Some competition paddlers are already using the joint to make adjustments for different conditions. Right then; it works, it is not 'Blue Moon equipment'. The drawback is the cost, quality engineering is not cheap. Though pricey it is still cheaper than a second pair of paddles. There are great possibilities for coaches who are working with paddlers who need this type of tweaking, or for novices who need to try before they buy.



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Cost: approx £40.00

Brazil Reef Sandals

Summer is here and sensible shoes are needed. Summer sensible means sandals. Reefs have been around for a while but the latest convertible model features a velcro heel strap which helps prevent those unexpected sandal blow-outs which are so debilitating when chasing kit/balls/other people around the beach. The toe strap is adjustable and patterns attractive. Reefs allow maximum tan and minimum odour entrapment and enough purchase for all but the roughest terrain. They will probably blow off in heavy whitewater and surf swims so you will still need to determine your river runs as either sandals on, or sandals off rapids. The footsole is soft and flexible and the outsole provides adequate grip. The construction is more simple than some other water-friendly models. The velcro heel strap is removable, which converts them to slip ons.



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Timex Indiglo

Timex have long made robust and practical timepieces for outdoor enthusiasts, for the most part waterproof and canoeist friendly. Some of their range, ie Ironman, Triathlete, have been used by paddlers and coaches to record those important split times, and by sea paddlers to guesstimate tides and weather. The indiglo function is new and works well. With one touch of the button the whole watch face illuminates in a non-glare blue light. Is this the end of squinting at digital readouts. Whether night navigation, or stumbling around dark campsites wondering what time it is, Indiglo is a small but useful, step forward. In the tent there is just enough light given off for the bleary-eyed to find a torch. There is a full range from the simple and inexpensive, to the gadget ridden and 'needs insuring' price.

The watches are waterproof to 328 feet and since Indiglo's inception as a feature, 4.5 million watches have been sold in the USA alone. Indiglo has been hailed as the biggest breakthrough in watch technology since waterproofing.



Available from:
Most high street stores

Silver Hook Harpa Fishing Line

Fishing from a kayak is one of the simple pleasures left in a world of telephones, air travel and the micro chip. At the risk of being branded a heretic and an 'angler' there is a nomadic, hunter-gatherer satisfaction gained from gathering dinner from the sea using prehistoric techniques of hook, lure and line.

So what could improve my trusty stick, line and piece of lead pipe? Ask a Norwegian, they know about fish. The harpa is a neat progression. The simple components are kept and a nice ergo handle/frame added for ease of use. Function has been allowed to dictate form and the moulded frame is held in one hand and the nylon line supplied wraps easily and quickly. The lead weight clips into the handle and the hooks stick into a rubber inset to keep everything nicely out of the way. Packing flat like this means it slips readily under decklines and the whole arrangement floats: better than the seaside novelty shop 'H' frame by a long way. The combination of coloured and metal lures are a good two-way bet. Add a pack of feathers and you should be into a variety of mackerel, codling and the incredibly stupid pollack (would you eat feathers?) Does it work? Scientific objective data on whether it catches more fish will never be gained, but it was simple and safe to use. I didn't damage myself at all on the sharpies and my daughter (aged 5) caught two fish in ten minutes. Nice one from Norway



Available from:
Valley Canoe Products,
Nottingham. Price £13.99

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Duo Tramontana Anorak

Duofold are well known in USA leisurewear, taking 60% of the outdoor market. They specialise in thermal layering systems using only fabrics they manufacture themselves from Dupont fibres specially developed in Europe. The range of products includes different weights for different activities all with good wicking properties and designed around an understanding of the nature of the activities.

The Tramonata Alpine jacket is obviously put together with climbers and walkers in mind, with a stretch breathable membrane laminated between two layers of fleece. The big plus is the windproof nature of the construction. After a real test in the wind and rain following a day's paddling I found the garment lived up to it's press release: no mean feat.

Shape wise, it is generously cut and is more elaborate than the ubiquitous fleece jacket seen on every riverbank and cafe. Two good handwarmer pockets, one security pocket and arm vent zips show the thought that has gone into functionality, and the large detachable hood is more than welcome to those of us who need mollycoddling after a day on the water (or are forced to watch others perform whilst still experience the outdoors climate.) The Tramontana is a departure from the run of the mill, but performs superbly. Ideal for the British climate.



Available from:
Stockist, contact Dawson
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Woppa

And now for something completely different. It is refreshing to see a canoeist design, build and paddle a piece of kit which starts in concept on the back of an envelope and splashes onto the water as something different. Loel Collins and Dave Luke clashed paddles and collective knowledge to breed a new open playboat for British water. The 'Woppa' is very short (10') and chunky and constructed in composite materials and it's an Open boat. From the first appearance at Crystal Palace it has grabbed attention and visually it extracts an number of responses from grins to bewilderment with large portions of curiosity thrown in. Starting out as very much a 'concept' boat, much like the giant car companies produce novel cars which never go into production, the Woppa is different in that it is now produced as a viable white water playtoy for the bored or eccentric. Loel's experience as a competitor at the Rodeo World Championships, as well as his extensive white water kayaking background are evident in the design spec. Starting from a blank page, the boat had to be able to loop at Nottingham and Hurley, side surf stoppers without too much swamping, surf like a kayak on short steep waves, and roll easily for those coming from a kayak. Some descent capability for steep North Wales water also had to be accommodated and a recent outing on the Tryweryn saw



Dave looping and rolling on the Haystack wave, previously a 'kayaks only' experience. The Woppa is short, twitchy and sensitive to weight shifts, which moves open playboating into new territory. Initial impressions are frighteningly close to coracle paddling. In the right hands surfing, side and reverse surfs and enders are all possible and entertaining 'power flips' a strong possibility. Rolling is easy, even for light weights.

Despite appearing as if a set of bath mixer taps wouldn't go amiss on the foredeck the Woppa has interesting lines. A lot of thought has gone into the hull shape; some form and shape have come from kayak influences! The canoe is viable for white water fun, and being manufactured in small numbers to order from cost effective materials, perhaps affordable as a second boat. Custom colours are normal, even if you want

one covered in fried egg designs! Self build and kit form options are available to keep the price attractive. One of the original intentions was to provide whitewater open boating at kayaking costs. If you are interested in something different which will challenge your skill and excitement levels look here. Big fun in a small boat, even for the seriously bored.

Available from:

The Woppa, Cwm
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build and spec but a fully
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around £650
Contact:
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Double Dutch Touring Blades

Companies producing top end competition equipment are now, more than ever conscious of the need to produce kit for the mass market. This is true of Dutch composites who have started to produce carbon composite blades for the general whitewater market. The test blades looked a lot like a French slalom blade of the late eighties, and may even be the same design made under license. Construction is kevlar carbon weave or glass epoxy over a pre-shaped foam plug, which eliminates some of the problems of air bubbles and de-lamination, frequently a problem when foam is used in this type of layup. The alloy rim is tough and light and keys into the layup well away from the blade edge. The end result is a light but stiff and resilient blade of a proven design. Dutch Composites plan to extend their range to include the same blades in a budget glass layup adding to the weight a tad but making the blade more affordable. They

are supplied as loose blades for the paddler to set up to preferred length and feather on a choice of alloy or Lendal carbon shaft. They range in price from £80.00 to £100, making them durable and affordable for a lightweight blade. The blade shape is stiff, flutter free and predicable in the water with enough area to satisfy most muscles. The thin profile works well in slices and rudders and overall the feel was precise.



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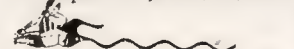
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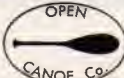
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top tips

and handy hints

L Meet the Paddle

Getting started in general purpose, closed cockpit kayaks

The second of a three part series on getting started in closed cockpit kayak. Following on from the last article which covered sitting in the boat and getting used to the feel of the craft, water and movement, it is now time to meet the paddle:

Traditionally kayaking instructors have introduced the paddle first, often before the boat. That's O.K but having tried the kayak awareness exercises you are able to give the paddles the full undivided attention it deserves, without worrying about wobbling and falling over.

Most off-the-shelf available paddles come in styles from 200-206cm in length and have an average sized slalom-type blade, set at 85 degrees - 90 degrees. This is fine if you are average build or bigger, average weight or heavier, and can cope with blades the size set at this angle. Unless you pay a lot of cash for your paddle it is not likely to be light-weight.

I believe that most people progress more quickly with the paddle if it is shorter and lighter and with smaller blades if possible. My reason for this is two fold - firstly the short paddle takes less time to adapt the body to (small kinesphere) and secondly, short paddles have worked everytime I have used them with students who were struggling. This concept of introducing beginners with short kit is well known in ski-ing and called GLM (graduated length method). I now have a solution to finding paddles to suit the individual - an adjustable shaft which allows a range of 190-204cm with an infinite range of feather and the option of left and right hand. This is now one of my coaching tools.

The table illustrates a rough guide to ideal paddle lengths, although you may have to search a little for a shop who will set up what you want. Light slalom blades on cheap fibreglass shafts are probably easiest to cope with and the shaft can be changed

at a later date.

At the risk of making the above table obsolete as soon as it is printed: there is nothing wrong with 6'3" paddlers using 198 paddles - height doesn't matter but arm length does. Start with short paddles and lengthen when you need to. Now you have your paddle you have to get used to the feel of it. Hold the shaft with hands a little more than shoulders width apart with a loose grip.

This will probably change as you develop as a paddler. Avoid being too precious about a correct or wrong width here - much depends on your shoulder width, arm length and comfort. Once you have sorted out a width to start off with mark the positions of your hands with coloured tape, this will serve as a guide for later.

Now that we have it what do we do with it? For some paddlers the paddle will only ever be a water bashing stick which is used to beat H2O with.

In skilful hands it can be much more than that - it can be a precision instrument which can give you all sorts of information, as well as propulsion, steering and safety. For it to be this multi-functional you have to imagine that as well as energy being transmitted through your body into the water

via the shaft, it can also allow energy to flow back up the shaft which can be harnessed or responded to. This is particularly true in moving water.

Getting a Grip!

The grip - Assuming your paddles are feathered, one side will have a grip which is normally referred to as the "control". If you are right handed then this sits on the right hand and the paddle shaft is rotated back through the left hand. Lefties please convert this to suit. Initially this notion of control hand is more than useful; later in some types of paddling it is advantageous to be more flexible about which hand controls the shaft (and the blade attitude) at various points of activity. This is called DHPC (Dual hand paddle control) but don't worry about that for now. If you followed the exercises in the last article you will now be used to moving the kayak around with hands in the water - good paddle/blade awareness hinges on having almost as much feel for the blade as you have when you have for your hand in the water. Sounds simple but it can take a while to expand your "feel" zone to around two metres. An equivalent exercise would be opening your front

door with the key sellotaped to a two metre long stick! You can do it but not first time.

Some exercises: (all are done using the control grip as described.)

1. Tune in to longer hands - paddle around using table tennis bats or flip flops on hands.
2. Place the paddle blade deep on the right hand side and pull slowly back along the side of the kayak keeping the blade close to the side and the blade face trapping as much water as possible. Do it again with eyes closed. It doesn't matter where the canoe goes - it is important you feel how the "open" blade is locked in the water. Repeat on both sides. How firmly do you grip? Imagine the shaft is a banana. Don't bruise the fruit!
3. Now try alternate left and right "pulls".
4. Try pushes from back to front - is the feel different? Which part of your body does the pull? Arms, shoulders, back, all? How about the push?
5. As long as you do these exercises slowly the "feel zone" will soon expand. You will notice that to keep the blade deep and close to the kayak the paddle shaft is high - Try placing the shaft very low across your lap and pushing and pulling with as much blade in the water as possible. Does it feel different? What happens to the kayak?
6. Using a low shaft try using the back of the blade on the surface and doing the same action. Another new feel? Can you get some support

Paddle Table

Height	General Use	W/W/ Surf
4.6 - 5.0	196 or less	194 or less
5.0 - 5.4	198 or less	196 or less
5.4 - 5.8	200 or less	198 or less
5.8 - 6.0	202 or less	200-202
6.2 +	204 or less	204

from this position if you edge the kayak and put some weight on the blade?

7. Place the blade deep in the water at the front of the boat and turn the blade face towards the kayak side. Pull slowly back slicing the blade in a straight line from toes to hip - and back again. Can you hold the line of the slice without flutter? If you are still upright you will know that this exercise should be done slowly.
8. How's your grip? You might like to try doing all of the above exercises with as light a grip as possible - this will let you feel water, and receive

information through the shaft.

9. Try linking all the pulls, pushes and slices, smoothly
 10. Try pushing the shaft with the pad of your hand on forward paddling: try pulling with just a finger grip. What difference does it make?
- These are all simple paddle awareness exercises; with a short practise time you will soon be aware of where your blade is in relation to the kayak and your body. Short cut exercises develop blade control which helps your paddling all around the kayak. Importantly "feel" through the blade will assist more complex paddle tricks later.

What use is all this? Look

again at the blade exercises and now watch where the kayak goes.

- The path of the your paddle triggers basic kayak movements
- forward and reverse paddling, forward and reverse sweeps (turning), support and recovery
- bracing on the blade and slicing between strokes.

The nice thing about fiddling about with blades in the water like this is that you can now use a paddle quite naturally and change gear smoothly between strokes. Individual strokes are only the building blocks of fluent paddling.

Now all you need is to decide which paddle stroke/movement goes where and when, and per-

haps add a little oomph! into the blade to help things along into future water. (*future water is where your kayak will go next!*)

The third article in this series will cover the 'Body' and it's importance in total paddling. It is available only by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Doc D, 17 Cambridge Road, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 5NA

Doctor D.©

Thanks to the muppet for input to this article.

Doctor D has now retired from Canoe Focus.



YAKety

YAK

More Letters

Dart Access

Sprint Racing

Dear Focus

I am concerned, as are a large number of canoeists involved in Sprint Racing, that our sport in Great Britain is in decline, and that a number of things will need to be done to improve our participation in what is the largest and oldest form of Canoeing competition in the world.

Firstly, with the demise of 5 and 10km races at the World Championships, our major source of medals has dried up. We do not have the investment, infrastructure or sponsorship of individual talent necessary to compete with the major nations such as Germany. The efforts of our top athletes are excellent considering this lack of support. Our only finalists since before Seoul have been from the relatively small number of Men's Canadian and Women's Kayak classes. In the Men's kayak class, we tend to concentrate on the talents of a few athletes in the hope that they will win medals, to the detriment of some considerable talent, which given some investment could produce the goods beyond Atlanta. Their team for Mexico this year will probably be composed of no more than three athletes, all of them from Elmbridge Canoe Club, and they will have justified their selection. However, these athletes benefit from a very good training set-up, which other talent from clubs, particularly away from London, do not possess. Alan Williams has made considerable efforts this year to help athletes help themselves, by increasing their skills and knowledge, but we also need more concentration on the development squad athletes rather than pumping resources into those who have already achieved reasonable results and who receive, in some cases, excellent financial support from outside the sport. Additionally, the uncertainty of selection for these younger athletes could be minimised by specifying one or two early season selection events, and selecting A and B teams with guaranteed international races, regardless of momentary ups and downs in performance, for the duration of the season. To have the certainty of concentrating on one event on one date that would give them the ticket to a series of foreign regattas leading to the Worlds would decrease the financial burden on the team and help athletes to succeed. This system already applies to Women's Kayak and Men's Canadian simply due to the smaller numbers and a clear division between the athletes which rarely changes.

Secondly, a serious problem with Sprinting at the grass roots level is that Holme Pierrepont often suffers from conditions which make racing unpleasant, and unfair, giving the young little incentive to return if they fall foul of the waves or a poor lane draw. A regatta at the Docklands course in late July may have provided the solution to this, and I hope that good attendance by clubs will make this a success.

A Group of Concerned Athletes

Dear Focus

I was somewhat disappointed to read the rather critical letter concerning the Dart access officer in the Feb 94 Focus. I would counter by reporting my own clubs 100% satisfaction with the access arrangements being made through the access officer. This applies to all aspects and in particular the speed of response.

However, and whilst on the subject of the Dart I would like to express my concerns with regard to white water racing on the very popular loop section. In the past we have witnessed the odd training WWR, flashing past and never had any problems. This year though, we encountered dozens on one Saturday and with so many using the river as a race track it was inevitable that clashes would occur.

We infact rescued at least 3 or 4 swimming WWR but on one occasion we

met a very unpleasant character who having capsized suggested one of our members deliberately put his Stunt Bat in the Spin Drier in order to capsize him.

Whilst we sympathize that the accident may have upset his timed run, the verbal threats that followed were not necessary.

It does infact beg to question just how wise it is to run a serious white water training session or race on the loop section on a busy Saturday with some other 175 more leisurely paddlers just messing about for fun. Speed skaters do not train or race on an ice rink during a public session! There were also no warnings or notices posted of a WW event at the 'put int'.

But whatever, keep up the good work, the river Dart and all the other Local Access Officers.

I W H DAVIDSON
Fairthorne Manor
Canoe Club

Dee Pride

Dear Focus

Recently three friends and I spent a marvellous, sunny Sunday afternoon on the River Dee at Chester. We, in our open Canadians, joined many other water users. There was the rodeo event, the 'Dee-Dash' for the youngsters, paddle boats, motor boats, rowing boats; yes almost anything that would float, full of people enjoying themselves.

It was a fine sight to see, especially entertaining for the hundreds of people sat in the sunshine on the embankment. I wonder if they noticed the every canoeist wore a buoyancy aid and nobody else on the water did? (We did actually spot one buoyancy-less canoeist later in the day).

I must admit that I felt particularly proud of our sport that day. Keep up the good work with the magazine.

Lynn Davies



Ender

Editor's page

IN YOUR OCT ISSUE

Marathon from Sella

World Cup Wild water racing

Questionnaire

The Focus survey mentioned in the last issue will now be circulated with the October Issue. This will enable us to ask more relevant questions and include more of your questions. If you have not yet sent in your ideas this is absolutely your last chance!

And all the usual news, views and reviews...

Below: Sharron Davies helps in Beachwatch 93



'Kids in Canoes'

1994 is the year of the family and to recognise this I thought it would be a good idea to celebrate this with a photo competition. The rules are simple: send your best photos of kids and canoes, preferably connected and on the water. Please send prints or slides, clearly labelled, and with a stamped addressed envelope for their return. The winner as judged by our panel will get their photographic work on the cover of the 1995 yearbook and a goodie bag of prizes. The prizes will include buoyancy aids and other kiddie sized canoeing items.

To start you off here is a picture of the offspring of Dave Taylor (BCU Coach) putting a redundant open canoe to good use.



The Worst

Are you a really rotten photographer? Are heads and feet always missing from your shots? Can you miss the action entirely and get a picture of an empty playwave? Maybe this one is for you. For the first time ever Focus is offering a chance to become Britain's

worst canoeing photographer. More prizes and your work unlikely as it seems, in print. Any canoeing related subject matter is allowed but remember to tell us what you were trying to photograph in the first place!

Beachwatch '94,

How About A Dirty Weekend

You've been out on the water for hours, have just mastered the latest canoeing technique and are feeling alive and vibrant. You finally call it a day and return to the beach for a rest. But hang on, is this the beach or did you land at the local rubbish dump? Other leisure groups would freak out if, for example you arrived at their golf club and dumped a load of rubbish on their course. Yet via rivers, sewage outfalls and ships this is what happens to your recreation ground every day.

Now is your chance to do something about it. Beachwatch '94 is again taking place over the weekend of 24th and 25th September as part of an international campaign that highlights the problems and causes of marine pollution in a practical hands-on initiative and will also enhance canoeists standing in the local community.

Beachwatch '94 is sponsored by Reader's Digest, organised by the Marine Conservation Society and is part of the International Coastal Clean up run by the Centre for Marine Conservation in the US. Coastal clean-ups will be taking place in sixty countries, helping clean up some of your favourite canoeing sports world wide.

Last year thousands of volunteers took part, covering hundreds of beaches round the UK. The many tonnes of rubbish that was collected and surveyed revealed that 52% of the marine trash on our beaches is plastics (which will still be around for our great grandchildren to see) and 11% sewage related debris - that's everything from condoms to sanitary towels, demonstrating once again the ineffectiveness of our sewage treatment system.

Unfortunately marine debris is not just an aesthet-

ic issue. 88% of the world's 280 species of seabirds are known to eat plastics. Marine turtles often confuse plastic bags for jellyfish. 700,000 sea birds die every year due to entanglement, as well as many thousands of dolphins, whales and seals. Ghost fishing (by discarded nets) costs the fishing industry millions of pounds every year. Canoeing in waters contaminated with sewage and its related debris can cause ear and throat infections, as many of you will have experienced.

Beachwatch '94 will no doubt attract enormous nationwide media coverage again, so don't be surprised if your photo ends up in the national press! This publicity is vital in the campaign for more effective sewage treatment by water companies, for the council to clean the beaches all year round and for more effective enforcement of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships (MARPOL).

MCS Dirty Weekend

Beachwatch '94 is just one of the activities you can get involved in during MCS Dirty Weekend, so please don't forget to put the date in your little black book. This is the perfect opportunity to increase your intimate relationship with marine wildlife!

So whether you live on the coast or not - please allow MCS to tap into all your energy to fuel our campaign for cleaner seas for wildlife, future generations and of course YOUR enjoyment. And don't forget to bring all your friends along - the ones that are left to watch you from the debris covered beach all day!

Phone Melissa on 0989 566017 for more details. or write to Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5BU.



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SHOULD

The features that make the Trix ideal for the tough world of polo are equally appropriate in the great outdoors. It's the budget blade you can take anywhere, do anything. It's hard wearing and hard working - leaving you to relax and take in the views, breathe in that good clean air.

GET OUT

Play boat, river run - have fun! And when the weather takes a turn you and your blade can retreat indoors - it'll still be in good shape and ready for action. Get a life, get a Lendal and get out there!

MORE



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