

Canoe focus

No 90. OCTOBER 1994

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in Norway**

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

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

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

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



POLO

Revenge International Revenge RS2
Revenge Poly

SEA

Icefloe/Icefloe LC
Orion/Orion LC
Sirius/Sirius HF
Outlander
Baidarka

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Marathon Racing World Championships

I write this focus comment as I travel back from the Marathon Racing World Championships with mixed feelings. Firstly delight at the magnificent performance of our team and in particular the Gold Medal won by Ivan Lawler and Steve Harris (K2), the Silver Medal of Steve and Andrew (C2) and the wonderful performance of Anna Hemmings who took fifth place in the senior World Championships, whilst still young enough to compete as a Junior. Secondly, I have sadness and disbelief at the sabotage attempt that so nearly cost Steve and Andy any chance of finishing, never mind finishing with a Medal.

The two holes professionally drilled in the bow of the Train's boat were found during an unscheduled warm up and were a deliberate attempt to put the two brothers out of race. The overwhelming feeling of despair and outrage was shared by every competitor and is a concerning new twist in the fortunes of our sport.

Belated good luck

By the time you read this October edition of Canoe Focus the results of both the Slalom World Cup, and the Sprint Racing World Championships will be known. We hope that our competitors at these events have fulfilled their expectations and we look forward to the reports that will be carried in December's Focus.

Sports Council reorganisation

The Minister of Sport announced in July that the current Sports Council will be replaced by two new bodies an English Sports Council (ESC) and a United Kingdom Sports Council (UKSC). The English Sports Council will be responsible for sport in England in a similar way to the existing Sports Council in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, with a sharper focus on an increased programme of direct support to the governing bodies of sport to help the grass roots. and on services and finance in support of developing sporting excellence. The UKSC will concentrate on helping to bring major international sporting events to the UK, and increasing the influence of the UK in international sport, in addition to overseeing those areas where there is a need for UK-wide policy; for example on doping control, sport silence, sports medicine and coaching.

The concentration on sporting excellence causes the BCU in common with the other governing bodies of sport to have many questions and concerns-

Will canoeing be one of the two to three dozen sports to receive support?

If funded will it be just for the elite Olympic disciplines or for the full range of the BCU's activities. These questions and many are being voiced by the BCU through the consultation that is currently taking place. A full report on the reorganisation and its effect on the BCU will be carried in a further edition of Focus.

Direct debit

The most effective way to renew your BCU membership is through Direct debit. Not only does it save everyone time and effort but most importantly it ensures that you the member, enjoys continuity of membership.

BCU membership

I have set out below the membership fees that have been proposed to Council for use in the forthcoming year.

Individual Membership Clubs:

Life Comprehensive	£385.00
Senior	£49.00
Adult Comprehensive	£25.50
Capitation	£0.60
Under 18 Comprehensive	£15.00
Junior	£44.00
Family Comprehensive	£14.00
Capitation	£0.60
Adult Basic	£15.00
Under 18 Basic	£9.00
Family Basic	£8.00

Criminal justice and public order bill

We have said much in the past about our achievements, but unfortunately despite the righteousness of a cause and the great efforts of everyone concerned we cannot always be successful in our endeavours. I must report with concern that all of our attempts to amend the Criminal Justice and Public order Bill have been unsuccessful. This news comes despite all of the very hard work that was undertaken by the BCU offices and staff which included an extensive lobby to the Home Secretary, letters to all MP's and joint meetings with the Ramblers Association, the CCPR and Lord Ferris.

Ron Emes dinner

Tickets are still available for the Ron Emes Dinner which will be held in Richmond on the 18th November. The event will be held in conjunction with Royal Canoe Founders Ball and full details are available from the BCU office.

and finally...

Sport for the disabled whether for those with a physical or mental handicap is a most important aspect of canoeing and it gave me great pleasure to attend the second National Championships for those with a learning discipline. The event was held at Holme Pierrepont and involved a variety of canoeing events. Both well attended and well organised the competition was a major success and look forward to increased participation in this area of our sport.

Paul Owen Director





Notice board

Canoe Friendly Hotel

The Lanterns Hotel at Knowle Hill, Ashburton, Devon is offering special winter rates for canoeists and has drying facilities. Ring James Richards on 0364 652697.

A Letter from France

Verbatim

'We are two brothers 14 and 16 years old. We are kayak fanatics and we studying english since 2 and 4 years. We search friends in England for exchange is it possible to insert a call in your newspaper? Francois & Vincent Gerdeaux, 8 route de Tully, 74200 Thonon, France'

Thonon is a great place to paddle and is 30 km from Geneva, so of you would like to improve your French/English and improve your tick list of continental rivers this youth exchange sounds good. Interested young UK paddlers should check with their parents and then contact the brothers direct.

BCU Chairman Promoted?

Geoff Smedley, Chairman of the BCU's Advisory Committee on Canoeing for People who are Disabled, has been appointed as National Development Officer with particular responsibilities for governing bodies, on a 3-year contract, with the British Sports Association for the Disabled.

Geoff has performed sterling service over many years in leading the BCU's advisory panel. He has led the development of the endorsement courses for those wishing to help disabled people to paddle, to a high level of credibility, obtained substantial funding for the development of outreach among disabled groups in the regions, and latterly has been instrumental in beginning to establish both a domestic and international level of racing for paddlers who are disabled.

Geoff's voluntary services to the BCU will be able to continue, and no doubt his record in that regard probably played a part in his appointment.

Calshot Sea Symposium Date Change

The popular Calshot Sea Symposium has moved dates from 1/2 October to the 15/16 October 1994. For further details contact Dave Evans on 0703 892077

BCU Members Motor Insurance Deal

We are pleased to announce that on behalf of our members we have negotiated a special discounted motor insurance scheme through Boncaster Limited with a leading Lloyd's Syndicate.

The day to day operations of the scheme are handled by Boncaster Limited from their offices in Glasgow, Bradford, Solihull, Brentwood, Croydon and Poole. A special reduction in the premium will be quoted to BCU members and, with each quotation, Boncaster Limited will offer a series of options which will enable you to reduce your premium still further. In essence the policy can be tailor-made to meet your requirements.

Boncaster can offer payments over 10 monthly instalments and in the first year, this is interest free with the scheme Insurers. alternatively, premiums can be paid by cheque, Access or Visa.

Boncaster also offer Free Assistance to

recover Uninsured Losses such as excesses or car hire charges and can also supply legal costs up to £25,000.

A 24 hour a day 365 days a year Accident Help Line is also provided where they will recover your vehicle if it is immobile following an accident to the nearest competent repairer.

With so many Insurers competing for your business it is difficult to pick which would suit you best. Many simply go for the cheapest and live to regret it when they have to make a claim. What is needed, is the widest suitable cover at a competitive price from a financially sound Insurer who provides a fast, efficient quotation and claims service.

To obtain your preferential quotation, with no obligation, simply ring Boncaster on their Link Line number 0345 616161 quoting reference 8110 and the call will be charged at the local rate.

Telford canoe Club

Telford canoe club bought the site on the left hand bank of the Severn a few hundred yards below Telford's famous Ironbridge at the town of that name. The site cost them a lot of money, and a great deal of effort. The terms under which the purchase was made means that they have to lock the gate to the site, but this is not meant to discourage other canoeist. Purchase of the site meant that canoeist own an area that the fishing fraternity would have liked to have access to. Pete Wilson, the chairman, is prepared to make all paddlers welcome, but would appreciate notice of arrival. (A stamped addressed envelope is always a polite way to introduce yourself and organise a pre-booking).

The club has cleared several areas of scrub and can now provide camping areas and plenty of parking space. There are toilets for men and women, and piped water on site. Several clubs from other areas have taken advantage of the facilities provided and been full of praise.

Telford will not charge for launching and landing (for other charges write to the chairman). However the bank of the site is getting badly eroded and a great deal of money (ú90,000 has been mentioned) is needed to reinforce the bank and build groynes to control the river but provide interesting currents for paddlers. The club has approached all sorts of financial providers and are getting near to the sum needed, but before they can move forward a geological report on the area has to be completed.

Telford, a club of approximately eight members, host two slaloms each year; at Easter a double division three and in June a double division 4/5. they seem to be a closed cockpit, hard hat club. when I visited experienced paddlers who were new to the club were being "put through there paces" to make sure they were competent.

Those wanting to paddle the area, but with the constraints of non-paddling family members should take heart, in easy walk-

ing distance there are enough attractions and museums to keep "granny and the kids" quiet for a week yet this is an area of great beauty, steeped in history but very much alive. The accusation has been levelled at the club that they don't welcome other canoeists and make it impossible for them to use Jackfield rapids. The Severn is a navigation and anyone can paddle up or down the river, however, playing in one area is not using the navigation and Telford feel, rightly or wrongly, that use of their water should carry a fee. They are maintaining the area and would like to see some small return. So, if you want to play on the rapids put your hand in your wetsuit pocket and pay up, all 50p of it. (The price of a chocolate bar a packet of crisps!). Everyone is welcome provided they make this payment.

Anyone wanting to make bookings with the club, or contact them, should write to Peter Wilson at 'The Saplin', New Road, Telford. TR7 5DD Tel 0952 581995. (Don't forget the SAE)



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English Regions Annual General Meetings 1994

If you only attend one off-the-water canoeing meeting each year, this is it. If you want to know what is happening, or better still, want to get involved, attend the AGM in your region.

Eastern

21 November, 7.30, The Golden Hind Hotel, Milton Road, Cambridge.

East Midlands

10 November, 7.30, Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre.

London & South East

23 November, 8.00, St. Johns School, Caterham.

Northern

19 November, 3.00, Hillcrest Hotel, Alston North West. 19 November, 5.00, Merseysport, Queens Dock, Liverpool.

Southern

15 November, 8.00, Liston Hall, Liston Road, Marlow.

South West

25 November, 7.30, YMCA Centre, Friern Ave, Bridgwater

West Midlands

7 December, 8.00, Akers Trust, Small Heath, Birmingham.

Yorkshire &

Humberside

1 December, 7.30, The Queens Hotel, Pontefract.

Some regional committees are arranging additional activities and meetings at the same venue and date as their AGM. These are as follows:

Northern Region:

Paddles on the North & South Tyne Details from Sarah Shrimton, Ennerdale House, Garrigill, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3DY

North West Region:

9.30 Canoeing - 2.00 Regional Seminar (NVQ update) - 3.30 Coaching AGM- 5.00 NW Region AGM- all at the new Queen's Dock Watersports Centre.

BCU Polo Committee Annual general Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Polo Committee will be held on Sunday, January 8 1995 at 12.00 noon at the National Watersports Centre, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham.

Motions for the meeting or nominations for committee posts must be received by the Secretary before the end of October 1994. Copies of the agenda, and proxy voting forms for clubs entitled to vote, who are able to attend, may be obtained from the Secretary, 7 The Grazings, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 5JN from November 1st, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Proxy forms indicating the way they would like their votes cast must be returned to the Secretary by 31 December 1994.

Inland Canoeing Fatalities

Earlier this year Canoe Focus printed our report on Canoeing Fatalities for the period 1989 - 1992. We promised an annual breakdown of inland canoeing fatalities for 1993 onwards, with a biannual report, to be printed at the end of 1994, summarising the fatalities and near misses of 1993, 1994. Information gathered on the fatalities and incidents is still inconsistent. We believe paddlers are still reluctant to confess to their "near misses".

Please be assured this is not a "witch hunt" or sermonize in apportioning blame.

Factual information is essential if we are to identify trends and avoid unnecessary tragedies. Do please write up your experiences - your identity will be protected - so that others may learn.

January: River Awe:

Female (26). Paddling a touring double kayak. Grade III: River in spate. Capsized in eddy at bottom of slalom site. Her partner swam ashore. Despite wearing appropriate clothing and buoyancy aids, she suffered from dry drowning as a result of the shock of immersion in cold water. There were no other paddlers on the water.

April: River Avon:

Female (18). Experienced paddler, Weir: alone, practising slalom manoeuvres above Pultney weir. River was high. Assumed she attempted to shoot weir. Capsized at bottom. Drowned.

October: River Claerwen:

Male (26). Experience white water paddler. Grade V: Attempting to shoot difficult fall on river right. Boat taken too far left trapping stern on rocks. Exited boat, held underwater by force of water. Drowned

December: River Teifi:

Male (10). Experienced canoeist, river high. After Weir: seeing his group safely over the weir he capsized at foot of weir. Recirculated in stopper. Drowned.

Fatalities on Scottish Lochs

February: Loch Lomond:

Male (34). Accompanied by two other paddlers. Weather changed quickly and dramatically. all three capsized and swam to shore for over one hour. On reaching land it was discovered that the third male had died. Other two paddlers treated for hypothermia.

August: Loch Lubnaig:

Male (18). Collapsed after capsizing routine on canoeing training exercise with the Territorial Army. Reports suggest that this fatality was not connected with the actual exercise.

Also in 1993, one reported fatality to a British paddler, male (44), on the river Otz Taler Ache in Austria, who was paddling with a group from the RAF.

1993 fatalities for inland water are lower than 1992. This year there were no reports of fatalities occur-

ring to people without buoyancy aids, or to inexperienced paddlers. (Is this due to heightened public awareness in the aftermath of the Lyme Regis incident?).

However, in two incidents paddlers were alone on the water. This is an incident that has reoccurred several times throughout the past five years. Regardless of experience, we must remember that we do increase the risks attached to our sport if we paddle alone in difficult or unfamiliar situations.

The fact that fatalities do occur to experienced paddlers should serve to remind us all of the need to remain vigilant and safety conscious whilst on the water!

**These 1993 figures do not include fatalities at sea. Fatality figures at sea, which would incorporate the Lyme Regis numbers, are dealt with by a separate group and are beyond the remit of this report.*

1994 Inland Canoeing Fatalities Interim Statement

1994 so far has seen 7 fatalities on rivers and we are only half way through the year.

Of those 7, 4 have been on Welsh river/lakes. Jan: R Wrion: Male 24. Feb: R Conwy: Male 29. March: Llyn Celyn: Male 18. April: R Cwmnantcol: Female 28.

The others were: Jan: R Stour: Male 39. Feb: R Thames: Male 32. Feb: R Wye: Male 13.

In all cases (except on the lake) the rivers were reported to be high/swollen, although newspaper reports are often misleading with their concept of river levels. The Conwy, for instance may appear a raging torrent to a layman: in the accident last February the river was low, which was a contributory factor in the fatality. Given the "high" numbers of fatalities, plus the fact that the Welsh mountain rescue people have rescued several paddlers 'missing the Conwy exit', it makes poor reading. If we have another very wet winter (Oct,Nov,Dec) this could be the worse year on record for river fatalities. There are more white water paddlers than ever before and some are regrettably under prepared for the grade of water they are tackling. The more information we have on accidents, incidents and near misses, the more helpful the BCU can be in assisting with advice, information and training.

Thank you to those people who have forwarded incident reports to us. They have not been lost!! We are currently cataloguing and sorting those incidents out, with the intention of including them in our bi-annual publication.

Please, if you have been involved in any incident, then let us know about it.

Pam Peatroy Paul Kilham
259a Ladbrook Grove
London. W10 6HF

BCU South West Regional Weekend

Over the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of December 1994 the SW region will be holding a regional weekend in the river Dart region. Activities planned will include organised inland and sea tours, walking, lectures, coaching and a social event on Saturday night. Reasonably priced accommodation will be available.

We are in the early stages of planning - would any individuals or clubs who can volunteer help in any shape or form please write to John King, 1 Lincoln court, Stapleton Court, Bristol, BS16 1BX.

SW Lifeguarding

Please note that the new regional rep. is Simon Fairless, 3, Barons Court, Undy, Gwent.

SW Sea Touring

A revised Coastal Waters Guide is being prepared by Nigel Hingston, SW Sea Touring Rep. This should be completed by the end of 1994.

SW Membership

Membership in the SW continues to rise - we have only 9.76% of the National Population but 14% of BCU Membership.

SW Regional Diary Dates Slalom

November 1994 to February 1995

- series of one day mini slaloms to be held in the region January 1995

Open indoor Slalom selection event will be held jointly with Southern region held at Pewsey Swimming Pool.

Details from the regional Slalom representative, Guy Gratton, 23, Down View, Upavon, Pewsey, Wiltshire. SN9 6AG

Please note that copy for the next SW newsletter should reach Pete Whitfield, 21 Lydford Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth. PL3 4LQ. By the 19 October 94

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Liverpool Watersports Centre

The Centre was opened on the 15 July by the Lord mayor of Liverpool, and is an example of organisations working together. These include Merseyside Development Corporation, Merseyside Council for Voluntary Service and the Foundation for Sports and the Arts, along with support from Liverpool City Council and the Sports Council. Liverpool Watersports Centre will encourage the whole community to take part in affordable recreational activities as well as undertake training courses in various sports, including canoeing especially young people. The centre has full access for people with disabilities.

International Sea Kayaking Association

John Ramwell has renamed the Advanced Sea Kayak Club. From January of 1995 it will be known as the International Sea Kayaking Association. He believes the ASKC has 'outgrown' its title and the reasons for using it over the past 18 years no longer hold good. The ASKC is already an international 'club' and is an ideal base from which to set up an association.

Coaches Conference

The theme for this year's Conference is 'Methods of working more effectively with groups of athletes'. John Syers of Sporting Bodymind, and our own Hugh Mantle, and Alan Edge, are among the contributors, together with National Coaching Foundation input on 'a question of style'. The intention is to explore the methods employed by coaches who have successfully welded squads of elite performers into effective 'self-help' groups, grasping the nettle of self-interest against the general good of 'the team', and the challenge posed by inter-coach and inter-personal relationships. The dates are 3-4 December at Holme Pierrepont. All currently registered Competition Trainers and Coaches will receive information through the post. Please send sae to the BCU office if you have not done so by the end of October, and wish to attend.

6th Great Western Marathon 26.2 miles

Sunday 23 October 1994
This annual event, hosted by Bristol Canoe Club, starts in the beautiful town of Bradford - on - Avon on the Avon Valley. The course initially follows the Kennet & Avon to the Roman City of Bath. At Bath the paddlers transfer to the river Avon to continue their journey downstream through Saltford, Keysham and on into Bristol where they enter the Historic Floating Harbour.

Please note that the contact address given in the BCU Yearbook is incorrect. The actual contact should be:

Bristol Canoe Club c/o Ron Stinchcombe 5 Marlborough Street Eastville Bristol BS5 6RH Tel.: 0272 519540

Jack Vander-Molen

A Personal Tribute

It was great sadness that I learnt of the death of my very good friend and colleague Jack Vander-Molen on the 20 June, who died from a sudden blood disorder following a period of ill health at the Royal Free Hospital.

I first met Jack through his son Paul, also a good friend, one of Britain's best known expedition canoeists and whom I was lucky to spend a large amount of time with but whose life tragically changed when he became a victim of Leukaemia.

During his son Paul's illness there came a time when things were not looking good for the future and Paul was struggling not only with the affects of chemotherapy but also with the desire to compile a book about the 1983 Iceland Breakthrough expedition which led he the year before.

Jack knew how important the book was to his son and despite being at the helm of his own busy and successful business, V.M.Orthopaedics, he took six weeks off and sat by Paul's bedside taking notes and shaping the book. Paul was contented with the result and able to see the galley prints just before he died.

The death of Paul was tremendously hard on the family, yet Jack was not prepared to let Leukaemia kill the spirit of his son, so together with his family he formed a charitable trust - The Paul Vander-Molen Foundation - with aims which included raising funds for research into the side effects of chemotherapy and also to provide funding, advice and support for disabled people wishing to achieve adventurous goals. The latter to be the mainstay of Jack's labour.

I was asked by Jack to lead an expedition of able-bodied and disabled people back to the scene of Paul's last trip, Iceland. The plan was to use the same combination of transport; kayaks, rafts, micro-lights, skidoos and skis which we had used on the Iceland Breakthrough expedition to cross the Langsjokull glacier and descend the Hvita river.

It was during the planning of this trip that I have my fondest memory of Jack. While on one of the reconnaissance trips searching for a route up on to the ice, the four wheel drive vehicle we were in sank up to its axis in glacial mud. Immediately the options for solving the problems were calculated. It was March, the weather still on the cold side and the majority of roads blocked with snow. We were several hundred yards off the road and the chance of somebody passing was remote.

In my mind the solution was for me to travel cross

country with our Icelandic guide to get help while Simon Baker, the microlight pilot, would stay with Jack - who although attempting to become fit was still overweight and sixty four years old was not ideally equipped to travel fast over very difficult terrain. but Jack had other plans. When I estimated it would take five hours to cross the lava fields to reach help his response was that we should all get going before darkness descended. There was simply no way he would be left behind.

So off we all went, acutely aware that we had to be careful as we had little food, no emergency supplies and only a remote garage in the middle of nowhere to aim for.

Seven hours of unpredictable terrain and the necessity to wade through several ice cold streams lay ahead of us. But Jack was magnificent. Determined to keep up with the rest of us but not too proud to suggest a few stops occasionally, he pushed himself to his limit and gained both admiration and respect.

Three months later on the actual expedition his contribution to its success was immense. While I was busy arranging the running and filming side of the expedition, Jack's sheer ability and social skills held the team together with natural leadership, common sense and a great deal of humour.

Back in England Jack continued with his full time business - assessing disabilities then manufacturing and fitting a range of artificial aids for people with walking difficulties - yet simultaneously his energy and enthusiasm in running the foundation was ceaseless.

Even after his retirement Jack continued to work as a consultant and became involved with the Sandy Gall organisation in Pakistan and Afghanistan setting up clinics, often in remote and dangerous locations, to help victims of land mines to walk again.

All this he took in his stride while still managing to pursue a hobby of his - singing with a male voice choir and then found time from somewhere to become qualified in therapeutic massage and aromatherapy.

Jack had more friends and admirers than you think possible for a man to gain in a single lifetime and although his death has undoubtedly left a sad void, especially with his family whom he loved so dearly, countless people will remember him with a smile because of the invaluable contribution he made to the quality of so many lives.

Mick Coyne

Obituary - Syd Wheeler

Syd Wheeler died in Bournemouth Hospital on Friday 13 May after a short illness. Syd was 76 years old and was an enthusiastic canoeist for over 50 years. It was Syd's great enthusiasm that was so very memorable.

Son of Lieut.-Colonel George Campbell Wheeler V.C., Syd spent a brief spell in the RAF. The outbreak of the second world war actually interrupted a solo circumnavigation of the British Isles in a canvas canoe! Syd was active with the Canoe Camping Club and was the Solent Group secretary in the 1950's and also acted as the Technical Secretary writing articles in the Canoe Camper on such topics as the prevention of rot, the value of having a second light-weight skin for your canoe and interesting comments on the very first "plastic"

canoe's. Syd helped form Poole Harbour Canoe Club in 1956 and remained an active member the rest of his life, introducing many a youngster to his beloved sport. Syd became a Senior Instructor in 1971. He had been canoeing in the Inner Hebrides with fellow club members the week before he became ill.

Syd's canoeing interests were wide ranging. he canoed many white water rivers both in the early days in canvas and more recently in modern craft. He competed in the National Slalom Championships in 1950, 51, 52, and 53, and more recently completed the Devizes to Westminster Canoe race with his friend Don Potts in 1989.

He was a keen sea canoeist and paddled in many different areas of Britain and Ireland. But

Syd's greatest love developed from that attempted coastal circumnavigation in 1039 when the necessity of landing each evening lead to a passion for surfing. Syd was a familiar sight at Kimmeridge Ledges, normally seen as a faint speck well out to sea where the waves were the largest. If the surf was up, Syd was there! Syd designed and built his own surf canoes and later, surf skis, one design being produced commercially until the factory burnt down.

Those of us who were lucky enough to know Syd will remember him as a shy, gentle man whose numerous little acts of kindness and generosity leave an impression of great warm heartedness. With the passing of Syd Wheeler canoeing has lost a good friend.

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Akrotiri Canoe Club

The 58 Akrotiri Scout Group who underwent basic training for a forthcoming expedition across Episkopi Bay (18 k). At the end of the course each scout was awarded a certificate and a tube of aligpan rub. How many other far flung clubs do we have affiliated to the BCU? Send your off-shore club news to Focus, especially if it is from somewhere sunny. A few cheery postcards from foreign climes might perk up Focus readers in the depths of winter in dear old Blighty How about it ex-pats?

Foundation for Sports and the Arts



Yet more generosity from the Foundation for a wide variety of canoeing activities.

Grants & Beneficiaries - Summer 1994

Stornoway Canoe Club: 6,500.00 Training group's trip to visit and help in obtaining a two person kayak.

Royal Canoe Club: 150,000.00 Acquisition of BP Leisure facilities on the River Trowlock to complete the present premises of the Royal canoe club at Teddington.

Northamptonshire County: 150,000.00 Provision of an artificial canoe Slalom and outdoor Sports complex.

British Canoe Union: 30,000.00 To help the provision and conduct of the Union's "Canoe Ability" programme for the assistance of the disabled in canoeing. To assist with the construction of a new clubhouse, with facilities for the disabled at Sowerby Bridge.

Leven Open Days

1994 Sundays

Nov 6

1995 Sundays

Jan 8, Nov 20, Feb 12, Nov 17, Mar 12, Dec 4, Mar 26, Dec 11

The system will remain the same as previous years, ie; numbers limited to sixty on the water, all paddlers to wear a bib, bibs are bookable up to 2 weeks in advance. Bookings can be made by telephone from: Sten & Angela Sture Phone 0229 66063

Eton regatta Course

We are very pleased to report the successful outcome of Eton School's planning appeal. This allows them to extract gravel from a site they own between the School and the River Thames and, as the digging progresses, to create a Holm Pierrepont - sized Regatta course for rowing and canoeing.

The BCU actively supported the Eton application at Regional and Club level and the BCU Director gave evidence at the planning appeal on Eton's behalf. If all goes well the first 1,000 metres of the course could be ready in about five year's time.

White Water Challenge in India

21st - 23rd October 1994

BCU members are invited to the Second Four Square White Water Challenge - an International Competition on the Ganges River, India - 15 kms above Rishikesh, comprising of Sprint, Slalom and Descent Racing Events in canoes, kayaks and Rafts plus India's first Rodeo Demonstration Event. White Water Festivals in India, the Indian River Runners Association (IRRA) organised the Second Indo-U.S. Uttar Ganga Expedition

in 1984 led by Ken Warren of USA and Avinash C. Kohli from India and after its success planned the first Ganga White Water Festival in 1987 which was inaugurated and participated by Sir Edmund Hillary followed by different Festivals each year till 1992.

Last year for the first time with the sponsorship of Godfrey Phillips India Ltd. started the Four Square white Water Challenge which was a success and we are happy to

announce this year's Festival which is again being sponsored by Godfrey Phillips India Ltd.

Besides Indian Teams, major participation by International participants is expected. Contact:

INDIAN RIVER RUNNERS ASSOCIATION

Mailung Address :

606 Akash Deep, BARAKAM-BA ROAD, NEW DELI Phones: 3313229, 3312773, Telex: 31-65617 AMBT IN: Cable Plentiful FAX: 91-11-3312984

Ocean Leisure the virtual reality watersports store - all merchandise tested to 2"

During the heavy rain in mid August, Ocean Leisure Embankment was hit by an excess of rainwater that the drains could not handle overhead. It was estimated that due to the extent of the damage, the store would be closed for approx. a month and would re-open in mid September.

The massive clearance sale that was advertised in last month's issue did not, of course take place. However when they open their doors again, you may well be queuing to get into the largest sale ever to take place above or below the water which will no doubt include the "flood hit merchandise".

For more information on dates of re-opening contact Ocean Leisure on Tel.: 071 930 5050 (Don't forget the Chiswick branch on TEL.: 081 7428585.

Woodmill Artificial Slalom Course

Woodmill canoeing and Outdoor Centre, on the River Itchen near Southampton, have had a scheme drawn up to adapt the flow of the river next to the Centre so as to produce a significant Slalom and White water training course, with a fall of nearly 2 metres.

Efforts are being made to attract funding for the scheme, which would be a major asset for canoeists in the South of England.

What's On? *Diary Pages*

The following dates are recent additions or changes of date to the calendar events. Remember... The definitive guide to what's happening in canoeing around the country is your Yearbook. Your regional newsletter is another source of information. 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 direct on 0602 821797.

October

Wild Water Racing

16th. Dart River Race: Mike Brown, 15 Bavent Close, Stoke Canon, Exeter EX5 4RQ 29

Wild Water Race (Wavehopper Only)

Washburn: D. Peart, 29 Bank Crescent, Baildon, Shipley, Bradford BD17 5HB

Slalom

22nd-30th. Llangollen Canoe Festival. 21st Anniversary British Open Championships, details from Sue Wharton, SDO 0636 705363

Marathon

23rd. Great Western Marathon 26.2 Miles Bristol Canoe Club c/o Ron Stinchcombe, 5 Marlborough Street, Eastville, Bristol BS5 6RH

November

Touring

5/6th. Tyne Tour River Tyne and local rivers contact Dean Maragh, The Watershed, Newcastle upon Tyne

12/13th. The Dee Tour: Corwen to Llangollen Tickets £5.00 members/ £10 non members from WCA Pen y Bont, Corwen, Clwyd LL21 0EL 0490 412786

Wild Water Racing

5th. (Wavehopper Only) River Dee, S. Chorley, 13 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU

12th. North Tyne, ABCRT, Mary Armstrong,

Rodeo

20th. Playboater, Thames Weir, Hurley Weir Events Desk, Playboater PO Box 4 The Haymill Centre, Burnham Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL1 6LZ

December

Wild Water Racing

10th. (Wavehopper Only) River Dee N. Martin, 69 Canterbury Road, Farnborough, Hants GU14 6QW

Changes to Yearbook information October 29, Wild Water Racing, River Nene Race Cancelled. November 13th, Wild Water Racing, River Eden Race Cancelled December 10-11th, Surf Rodeo * Change of date, organiser as BCU Yearbook

And in addition :

The North West Canoe Polo League will kick off again in early November and is open to all North West Teams. If you are interested in entering a team please contact Paul Whitelegg on 061 973 9750 without delay, as places are limited: first come first served.

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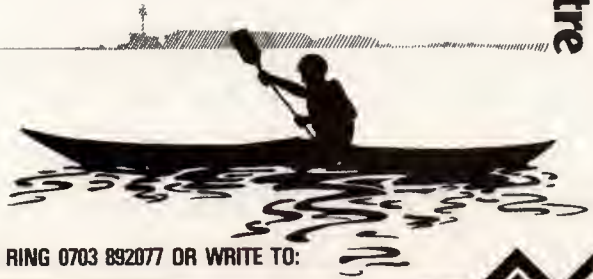
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Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today.

A little consideration

Dear Focus:

Being a local North Wales paddler and Instructor, I was at first interested and intrigued to read and hear an "outsiders" view of the Llugwy in the latest "My Favourite Paddle" series.

Most of what is said on the article is true, it is an excellent site for the training of novice white water paddlers, and I have used it several times for exactly that. However, the access, whilst better than for most rivers round here is not quite as simple as stated by Stuart.

The river is used heavily by groups from local centres, particularly Plas Y Brenin and the Capel Army camp, as well as by others for both teaching and recreational purposes. As a representative of a local commercial centre I attended a Landowners Access meeting at the Brenin earlier in the year in which a few problem areas were thrown up. The new situation appears to be that groups must book in advance to use the top section of the Llugwy, and sign in at the Brenin - in an attempt to avoid the problems of overcrowding.

Cobdens Falls is a pleasant grade IV drop; unfortunately lack of consideration by canoeists means that

the Hotel alongside, now do not allow cars etc. to park in the convenient layby - a fine example of how a little thought (Changing discretely, giving the Hotel a little custom) might easily have prevented that.

At Pont Cyfng there is an excellent access agreement that has been negotiated by the WCA, but despite this I frequently see groups of paddlers climbing the fence rather than using the gate (it less distance to carry their boats it seems), or "forgetting" to pay - come on 50p isn't much! (WCA members get it free if carrying membership cards). Much of this information has come to me via "Ceufad" the Welsh Canoeing newsletter, and also from Plas Y Brenin themselves.

May I suggest that prospective paddlers contact the RAO before making a trip here - I, for one, do not wish to see more restrictions on a fine North Wales river - we have enough problems in this area already. These are my personal views, and are not intended to necessarily reflect those of the WCA, or any of the centres for which I work.

**Yours faithfully
Brian Smith**

Poems from the muncher!



Dear Focus:

So what do you and your readers think about when sitting in stoppers? Most of the time I'm thinking about how I'll get out, and I assumed this was the case for most of my friends. But not Chris, she presented me with this poem recently, and I am convinced she composed it whilst sitting in the Muncher. Why else was she there for so long?

*Your lives are one long river trip
You'll paddle side by side
One day grade one - no ripples
The next a roaring tide*

*You'll struggle in the stoppers
But help each other out
That's what this sort of journey
Is really all about*

*Sometimes you'll need the eddies
When life is rushing by
Break out together, pause for breath
It's easy if you try*

*There'll be sticky situations
When you can't see a solution
But roll up, rescue, compromise
You have the consituation*

*And so to finish, paddle hard
and portage as you must.
This river trip together
needs fun and love and trust*

I wonder have any of your other readers composed anything as lyrical as that whilst on, in (or under) the water?

With sincere thanks to Christine Rossetti-Garvey for her encouragement on and off the water!

Kath Padmore

Coquet Canoe Club Round the Island Race

Dear Focus:

I feel I must write and tell the world about a most excellent canoeing event - the Coquet Canoe Club Round the Island Race. I took part on 19 June this year for the first time and am absolutely sold on it. Not only do these people have the most beautiful paddling country right on their doorstep but they have the most positive and inclusive attitude to their sport that I have ever encountered.

Right from my arrival at the almost professional check-in-tent I felt at home, this is obviously a large sporting family who like nothing better than to welcome fellow enthusiasts.

Their race allows for all-comers too, there are courses from 3 to 13 miles and any kind of canoe/kayak can get involved. Paddlers of all abilities are positively encouraged to come along and join the party.

I arrived not knowing what to expect and left with treasured memories of cheering-on the last of the field, swapping salty kayak yarns at the river-side and applauding awards for all levels of achievement.

I know that Northumberland is a long way off for most people but I will try to get along next year and urge you to do the same.

Steve Wilson

Raleigh International

Dear Sir:

I write to clarify any misunderstandings among your readers which may have arisen from a recent feature in Canoe Focus written by ex-Raleigh International Venturer Mr Newton-Taylor about his sea kayaking trip in Chile.

Raleigh International, formerly Operation Raleigh, runs nine ten week expeditions every year to countries including Chile, Zimbabwe and Russia. Around 100 young volunteers aged 17-25 take part in each, and like Mr Newton-Taylor, undertake adventurous projects such as sea kayaking, and community and conservation projects.

Every project is run by qualified volunteer staff members whose primary role is to oversee the safety of the young people. Due to the expeditionary nature of its projects Raleigh requires a balance of experience and qualifications from its staff. Raleigh follows closely the BCU qualification system in its selection of staff.

The sub heading of the article about sea kayaking in the last Canoe Focus implied that nobody on the project had previous experience. The statement referred only to the volunteers- such as Mr Newton-Taylor - and failed to mention the two canoe staff, the qualified Medic and the radio procedures that are always used on our projects.

Raleigh International is currently looking for canoe instructors for expeditions to Chile, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Anyone interested should approach Staff Recruitment, Raleigh International on (071) 371 8585.

Lindsay Boswell,
Director of Plans, Raleigh International

Canoe video games

Dear Focus:

I wonder if you have any computer literate readers who can design (or have any friends who can do so) canoe video games. If its not already been done!. I'm thinking of W.W.R. as a video game with all the obstacles eg: Falls, Eddies, Boils, Stoppers, Rocks, Overhanging trees etc. This would, I think be great fun to play and could be quite educational to children (big and small).

Players could amass points on a points system for skill in navigating the river, speed etc. Another game which could be designed is Hasler - inspired by the antics of a fellow (canoeist) friend. The canoes all spread out (kayaks etc) on the start line and each player has a choice, either to see how many other players they can put in the water (by touching the back of their boat) or to avoid the other players (if possible) and head for the finish line.

Points are amassed on the number of swimmers gained and position in the race. There could be variable speeds on which you loose points as to how fast you go!

Rave On - ANON

"Entering the Comfort Zone"

Dear Focus:

Thank you for your excellent article "Entering the Comfort Zone", with your permission, I think it should be copied and used on future training courses. If only as a reminder that we need to introduce people to canoeing.

Sometimes, I fear, we scare candidates off by literally "throwing them in at the deep end". Canoeing is, after all to be an enjoyable experience.

Borrowing or hiring equipment until you are sure is another way of avoiding unnecessary expense and heartache of the wrong size, shape, colour etc.

I encourage my pupils to buy their own equipment, but not boat first.

Perhaps this is a reasonable sequence. Cagoule, buoyancy aid, spray deck, paddle, boat, helmet!

Never turn down second hand gear without careful thought. If you look after it and do your repairs it will never be valueless on the club noticeboard.

later you may wish to keep your old gear to lend to friends or the club, to help get others started.

On another subject. I think Canoe Focus has greatly improved, I like the format and the adverts, if some readers are so narrow in their canoeing interests that they don't like the articles on: Polo, overseas Touring, Racing etc, tell them to turn the page, there's another topic over-leaf.

Paul Gibbard

Snippets

Heart Attack

To all concerned:

On 20 July 1994 whilst canoeing on the slalom course at Holme Pierrepont National Watersports Centre, I suffered a heart attack and would like to thank all those who took part in the rescue and resuscitation of myself.

I spent six days in hospital where made a good recovery, and should be canoeing again in the future, once again thank you all very much.

C Milner.

H G (Blondie) Hasler

Dear sir/Madam:

When I was in the No Limits Cafe recently, I happened to read one of the several BCU magazines lying around there, dated either 1991 or 1992. One article related to a canoeing event in memory of the late H G (Blondie) Hasler leader of the wartime cockleshell hero canoeing raid. according to your magazine "the canoeists were dropped by air into the Mediterranean sea". How many people have written to the BCU to put the record straight? The raiders were taken by Submarine to the Bay of Biscay (ie the Atlantic) prior to canoeing up the Gironde to Bordeaux.

Student membership

Dear Focus:

I am writing to add further comment about students and university canoe clubs joining the BCU. I am very fortunate in that my parents have paid for my membership, so I don't have to worry, but £14.00 per year or (£24.00 if you want to compete or join the coaching scheme) is a lot of money to find out of the ever diminishing student grant. Why not have lower rate of membership for students, so that more can afford to pay?

Yours sincerely
Yoel Chance



ELVEPADLING in Norway



the first 400m are superb grade 4. However getting out is a problem and a swim is not recommended, although the locals will help to pick up boats at the bottom of the gorge as we found out.

Mighty Sjoa

Moving further east we came to the mighty Sjoa, a must for anyone over here, there is so much to paddle on the Sjoa - in one day we paddled from Brurusti to Faulstad,

a distance of 24km. The first section is easy at grade 3 with one grade 5. This ends at Ned Tresafoss which has been run at grade 6. The river then ambles along at grade 2/3 until it reaches "the great Sjoa canyon". This canyon is most impressive, even by Scottish standards, and once started there is little chance to escape. The river runs at a constant grade 4 all the way through the gorge which is 10km long. This is a long day out but is well worth the effort. At the end of the canyon there is 9km of grade 2/3 until you reach the first of two slalom sites - Faulstad.

The lower Sjoa, grade 5, is also a must but requires much more care than the top. An inspection from the lower road bridge is a must as the stopper under the bridge has a terminal tow back in low water, and cannot be inspected from the bank. In medium to high water this becomes less of a problem. Put in just above the second slalom site, which has two excellent surf waves on it, at the top of the gorge there is a tricky grade 5 which needs inspection. The gorge is now grade 4 but beware there are some huge holes and inspection is a good idea. If you run this gorge with someone who has run it many times before (as we did) the trip is smoother and more enjoyable. Once through the bridge (??!) there are two rapids left, both grade 5 and good value for money.

Moving north you come across rivers such as the Jori, this is 10km of constant grade 4 with very few break outs in medium water and NONE in high water; Lora, a good grade 4 run with a grade 6 gorge (no shame to portage) then the rest of the river eases to grade 2; and Setninga, an easy grade 3/4 which has a very pleasant gorge with lots of play potential.

The furthest north we got was to the Valldalselva, just south of Andalsnes, this is a short paddle only 7km but was bank full when we got there. The section from Nedstetolen to Gronning is a good run starting at grade 5 (our start was lower than the guide as the road to Nedstetolen was blocked by a huge avalanche). There are several places that need inspection and/or portage. The rest of the river is an entertaining grade 4.

Our last days paddling and undoubtedly the best was further on the Jolstra. This, in normal conditions (1.60 on the gauge or 40 cumecs), has an upper section of grade 4. On arrival at the gauge it was read at 2.65 or 110 cumecs and rising. After much debate we ran the top section - one break out was in someone's cattle shed! Inspection was vital on every rapid as most of the holes were terminal. At this level, the river was a good grade 5 with one portage, an excellent way to finish two weeks paddling.

Alastair Collis



the land
of the
Vikings,
tax and
good
white
water.

It was the beginning of the summer and we had plans to do the usual first trip abroad and join the multitude of British paddlers and head south to the sun and crime of the Alps. However, two weeks before we set off, most of us were at the Nottingham rodeo where our minds were changed by Andy Jackson and Bod Thomas who enthused about Norway so much that we booked tickets on the ferry from Newcastle to Bergen for a Renault Traffic van and four people price £500.

As Norway is so expensive its a good idea to take all your food with you, two weeks food approx £20 each, its a good idea to take all of your own beer and spirits with you as well, as a pint in Bergen will set you back ú4!! Bread is cheap so you can buy it over there. the only thing that you can't take with you is fuel. If you have a diesel vehicle "afgifts-fri" diesel is only 30p a litre, but petrol is slightly more expensive than here. The whole holiday cost each of us approximately £190.

The guide book to Norway was written in 1987 and so is a little dated but it is in both Norwegian and English, all the major rivers have maps and annual hydrographs which are easy to follow. If you get stuck for a guide, as we did, ring the Watershed in Newcastle and pick one up on your way to the ferry.

After 22 hours on a ferry all you want to do is get into a boat, well this is Norway and the first river is only an hour from Bergen. This is the Strondaelva, a good warm up of grade 2/3 and the first thing you notice is the abundance of playwaves and also the amount of falls that have to be walked. The lower section is also a good run at grade 4/5. Having finished the lower section at 11.30pm (it doesn't really get dark at this time of year) we moved east and camped. Camping rough in Norway is OK as long as you are 50 metres away from the nearest house, although no one seems bothered were you camp.

Always keep a look out as most roads run next to rivers and you can find the occasional gem, not in the guide, as was our next the Smed on the E16. It is a good run in medium water at grade 5/6.

Moving east we came to the Bovra - an interesting grade 4. The top section ends at an unrunable gorge but

Paddlers on
the trip:

Alastair Collis,
Andy England,
Kevin England,
James
Ibbotson.

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Competition *focus*

CANOE SAILING

Europa Cup 1994

Carnac, Brittany - 17 22 July



Above:
Robin Wood from
Newport, Gwent,
World and European
Champion

After losing his national title to Lee Noble in June World Champion Robin Wood regained his form to take the Europa Cup (the European Championship by another name) at Carnac in Brittany, but it was no walkover. Thirty five sailors from six countries came together for the first Championship regatta to be held in France and this holiday resort induced a particularly enjoyable family atmosphere among the competitors. Apart from the practice race, which failed to start such was the lack of wind, warm sunshine and sea breezes (some days after prolonged postponements!) of force 3 to 4 prevailed to give close racing position changing. The key to success proved to be consistent strategy and tactics rather than flashes of brilliance or outstanding boat speed.

Very rarely did a canoe lead from start to finish and finding a clear wind rather than being

at the right end of the line was generally the first step to success. A poor first beat could be put right by correctly choosing whether to sail high or low or finding a funnel of wind through the middle on the first two reaches. The choice of which side to go up the second beat was the most critical decision to make in each race. After that it was getting a good position at marks, picking up the minor shifts and bends correctly together with slick boat handling which determined how many could be gained (or lost!)

Conditions here at Carnac were a world away the fierce

winds, curling white topped waves and cold water of San Francisco Bay where Robin won the World title last year, yet once again had demonstrated his mastery of canoe wind and water. Only in race 2, which was marred by the enthusiasm of the race organisation for shifting marks to the confusion of the competitors did he fail to finish among the leading group but with a 12th place to discard all depended upon the final race. At the end four British canoes led over the line with Lee Noble taking the winning gun and a steady second.



Above:
Mark Goodchild from
the Medway crossing
the line to take the
bronze medal.



Left:
A close pack start
"Finding a clear wind
was the first step to
success."



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Junior Racing World Cup

Groningen, Netherlands - 22-24 July



There were 30 nations participating in the Junior World Cup which took place at the end of July in Groningen, The Netherlands. A team of 9 Junior men and 7 Junior women represented Great Britain.

Our greatest success in the 5000m races. Ian Sargent raced well and finished a commendable eighth in the K1. Ann Hemmings in the K1 and Dave Smith and Tim Brabants in K2 performed brilliantly to win silver medals. Dave and Tim did particularly well to work their way back to the leading group after being turned soon after the start.

In the 500 and 1000m events GBR reached four finals. In the K2 1000m, Dave Smith and Tim Brabants finished a very creditable fourth. They were 0.7 secs. away from a bronze medal and only 2.6 secs. behind the Hungarian winners. Anna Hemmings came eighth in the K1 500m. The K4 500m crew of Ian Sargent, Dave Smith, Paul Darby-Dowman and Tim Brabants came ninth in the final. The K4 500m crew of Rachel Train, Lucy Hardy, Louise Cheyne and Kelly McGee also came in ninth. These four will all still be Juniors next year when the Junior World Championships will be in Japan.

The World Cup was won by Hungary. GBR finished fifteenth. Twenty different countries reached finals and seventeen of them won medals.

This was Great Britain's most successful Junior International Regatta for many years.

Laurence Oliver
Manager, GBR Junior Team



Top: The Great Britain team
Above: Anna Hemmings, silver.



Above: David Smith (right) and Tim Brabants (left) taking silver



Above: Lane 2: Ian Sargent
Right: Lane 2: Anna Hemmings



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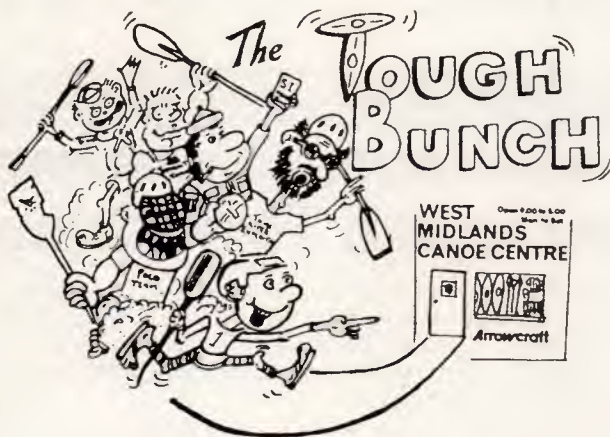
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Attention all slalom registered clubs

BCU Slalom Committee - Annual General Meeting Stockton-on-tees Saturday 26 November 1994

This is the time and place for you to decide on the way you wish your Sport to proceed.

Motions for debate must be received by 28 October and must be put forward as per constitution - Contact Slalom Development Officer for clarification.

Lunch and the meeting room will be provided by Teeside Development Corporation and a site to visit the new Teeside course is scheduled to take place during the day.

1994

Llangollen Canoe Festival
21st Anniversary
British Open Championships

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INTERNATIONAL & OPEN GRAND PRIX

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River Dee, Llangollen,
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Sue Wharton, Sport Development
Officer,

British Canoe Slalom
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Junior world championships

Wausau - USA - July 28-31 1994

British Junior Teams have won medals at every Junior World Championship since their inception in 1986! Diane Woods of Rugby, competing in the women's kayak event at this year's "World" event held in Wausau, USA, continued the tradition. In the lead until the very last run of the event, Diane still came away smiling with precious silver as her prize.

Valuable experience was gained by the nine strong British Team with youngsters Anita Bennett and Robert Turner still eligible for the next Worlds to be held in 1996. British Manager, Brian Fuller, leading the Junior Team for last time before moving on to pastures new, whilst commenting on the improvement from the Eastern European nations, who virtually swept the board, highlighted the potential of the young "Brits" who had performed well and put down markers for the future.



book & video review

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

All reviews by Kevin Danforth

White Water Nepal; The Video

White Water Nepal, the guide book, was reviewed on these pages last year and set a new standard for the guide books of the future. This video is not a moving picture version of that book but rather a complimentary tool: a device which shows the rivers moving and alive with river folk. This allows the viewer access to the flavour and feel of each river and region, which is something no still photograph or guide book can do satisfactorily.

The footage is shot by Andy Watts, a paddler and raft guide, and it makes all the difference. My misgivings that the video guide would simply be a low budget version of a TV Holiday travelogue were quickly dispelled by both the quality and professionalism of the filming, and the dialogue. This is no Judith Chalmers soaking up the sun, this is the real thing: a paddling film by paddlers, for paddlers. Rafting and kayaking are featured at all levels and the commentary is by rafters and paddlers who make their living on the rivers. It's no hard commercial sell either. The scenery, people and water do that well enough. Andy has put together an intelligent and brave effort here. The rivers are not featured blow by blow, rapid by rapid but in a 'greatest hits' style. Enough to get you interested and reaching for the phone

to check the price of an air ticket. Overlaid on the images are fact boxes and the commentary is often giving a personal view of the river, it's surroundings or the philosophy of big fun and getting wet.

This means you have to watch the video at least three times to take it all in. This is making the best use of the video medium: of course you would watch it again and again, but you are far more likely to do so if all three information avenues are worth exploring. They are, along with the maps and background to each area.

If you have Slime's excellent guide, then get Andy's most excellent video. With both you have the current wealth of information available. I suppose the cynic would say that Nepal's mysteries and adventures have now made it too accessible and thus vulnerable. The video deals well with environmental aspects and the depth of experience the country and it's rivers afford are such that they could not be explored and exhausted in a lifetime. This video is a delight. Informative, well made, interesting (even to the non-paddler) and another step forward along the paddlers information highway. 10/10 Andy, nice one. **Highly recommended, price to be announced.**

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Spanish Marathon

Sella, Spain



The Spanish Marathon races take place in early August and are built around the Sella Descent race which follows the river of that name, from Arriondas to Ribadesella in the Asturias region of Northern Spain.

For the towns at the start and finish of the race, race day is one of their major bank holiday festivals and the entire population join in the days party. The race itself features over 1500 paddlers and a corps of spectators numbered in their tens of thousands. Spanish television covers the event live from land, water and helicopter with a three hour programme which compares favourably with the BBC's coverage of Wimbledon and the British Grand Prix.

The series

The Sella and the accompanying series of races are a traditional pilgrimage for British Canoeists and 1994 was no exception with racers from Chester, Hereford, Reading, Richmond, Westel and Wey taking part in the main event and canoeists from the RNKA and Windsor joining in at the Nalon and for the rest of the series. Travel On first inspection the obvious route is to use the Plymouth-Santander car ferry which leaves about 75 miles driving,

British Results

Notable British Results were mens K2 18th Melvin Swallow & Chris Chorley, 23rd Ewen Cox and Paul Dimmock, Jan Gwizkala, Westel 6th Cadet (under 16), Nick Daniels, Niki Lester, Reading 7th mixed, Tamsin Phipps, Paul Toomey 19th mixed and Cianchi and Cianchi, Hereford 26th mixed, Marcus Gohar, Richmond 8th C1.

However, the Star British performance fell to Johnathan West of Wey Kayak club who won the veterans K1 class by over 30 seconds.

to Ribadesella. However, many people opt for the cheaper crossings to France and then the long drive (about 1,000 miles) to Northern Spain. We travelled from Portsmouth to Cherbourg and entered Spain at St Sebastian. Climate The ominous thunder storm on Wednesday night heralded the beginning of a mini rainy season which brought about four days of mist and rain. Although Spain is more well known for hot sun the region of Asturias is sandwiched between the Pyrenees and the Bay of Biscay and once bad weather arrives it takes sometime to clear.

Camping

We established camp in the commercial campsite in Ribadesella other options were a similar but overcrowded site in Arriondas or the free crim ridden site in Llovio. Several other campsites exist in the region particularly along the coast. However, care must be taken when camping farther away as several roads in the region are closed during the morning of the race. The Draw Friday was taken up with checking start positions and paddling on the course. The 20km route from Arriondas has about thirty small rapids and two larger falls at "the graveyard" (8km) and "the weir" (14km). The draw for race start position was made on Thursday night and all crews look for a low start number. Places are reserved for the British Team and although none was entered the first named crews on the official entry were allocated the two reserved places amongst the seeds. Melvin Swallow and Chris Chorley of Chester were allocated number 2 and Tom Hollins and Malcolm Starkey of Reading were number 38. Although on paper potentially the best British boat Ewen Cox and Paul Dimmock of Wey did not benefit from the arbitrary seedings and started from place number 124.

The Start

The le-Mans start arranges the competitors along the right hand bank of the Sella with the blue riband Senior Mens K2 in pride of place followed by K2 Juniors (Under 18), K1 Seniors, K1 Juniors, K2 Cadets (Under 16), K1 Cadets, K2 Senior Ladies, K2 Junior Ladies, K2 Cadet Ladies, K1 Senior Ladies, K1 Junior Ladies, K1 Cadet Ladies, K2 Veterans, K1 Veterans, K2 Centuriers (total age of 100) K2 mixed, C2, C1, river racers.

This method of allocating start positions was particularly unhelpful for the mixed K2's Cianchi, Cianchi of Hereford 1378, Daniels, Lester of Reading 1389, and Phipps, Toomey of Reading 1400 and the C1 of Marcus Gohar - Richmond 1494.

On Saturday morning an early start ensured that we were able to park on the main road out of Arriondas which allowed our competitors time to reach the start and ensured that our vehicles could pull straight out into the main road for the procession back down the course!

The Le-Mans start keeps competitors behind a starting ribbon and those with start numbers 1-1000 place their paddles in a starting mechanism which releases the paddles on the starters signal. Boats can be positioned anywhere between the allocated place and the river. The starting procedure commenced with several speeches and then the Asturias anthem which ended with the starting signal. As always tales of success were countered by those of woe and competitors had a story to tell. The mixed crew of Tamsin Phipps and Paul Toomey described the race as follows:

'The start has to be experienced to be believed and is definitely not for the faint hearted. The mad dash with boats, paddles and people everywhere meant that an element of luck mixed with skill enabled people to survive the first few hun-

dred yards. There were boats everywhere! Often hanging onto other boats was the only to "survive" the log jams. We took a nasty swim on the 3rd "weir" as two Spanish crews ploughed into the side of us forcing us onto the rocks and into the water. Log jams, capsize, wrong route or hitting shallow water means that you can loose "many places as the other crews pass by.

We decided just to paddle on and enjoy the race - we had fun, and more often than not took the right line down the weirs and through rocks and spectators. The cheating is so obvious that it is actually quite funny - we managed, despite the language barrier to laugh with other crews as we were pinned to rocks, queuing to shoot weirs and negotiate over hanging trees. All the way down the course we saw "dead" boats which had not quite made the weirs but luckily we and our boat survived the hazards and eventually paddled into Ribadesella to finish.

Rules

The Spanish interpret the rules in their own way at all of the races in the series and the Sella is no exception. Whilst all the mixed crews were drawn from 1353 to 1412, at least five of the top Spanish Crews started amongst the other classes and from a starting point amongst the 300 kayaks. However if you compete hard and take the results not too seriously an enjoyable race can be had by all.

The race finishes at Ribadesella (K1 & K2 Junior and Senior) or at Llovio (55km) for all other classes. The route by road from start to finish is fairly straight forward and there were several vantage points for spectators, however, early arrival at Ribadesella is advisable in order to conquer the one way system and find a parking place by the Quay.

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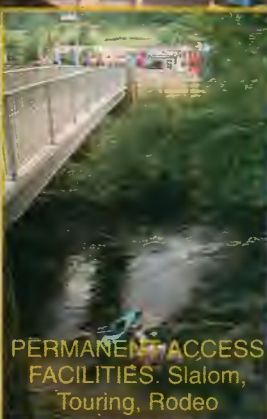
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Wild Water Cup



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canoeists in the world gathered for the 1
21 nations had entered in the four classes
the previous months the preparations for
ious changes were carried out to the co
World Championships to be held in 1
access ways to the far bank at the Cen
has now been replaced with a magnificent
After the presentations had been made
and the bridge was formally opened. Man
Rivers Authority and the WCA for their



Final

Bala, North Wales



The World Cup for 1994 consisted of 5 races with the first two races in Merrano Italy, which were a long course race and a sprint race. The third, another sprint race, took place in Bovec, Slovenia, with the final two races at Tryweryn in Bala. Saturday saw the start of race four which was over the long course from the top of the Graveyard to below Bala Mill. The weather was good and spirits were high as the first of the competitors set off down the new course. The races were keenly fought with the winners in the various classes as follows, Vladi Panato, Italy, in C1, Uschi Profanter, Austria, in WK1, Vala/Slucik, Slovakia, in C2 and Marcus Gickler, Germany, in MK1. At the presentation a great welcome was given to all the competitors including those who had travelled from Slovenia, Slovakia and Brazil. As part of the programme on Saturday, the first Wavehopper Challenge was held, this was run over the full course and was won by veteran canoeist Nigel Morley. Sunday saw the first of the two sprints that were taken together to form race five. The course for the first sprint

was based on the section down through Bala Mill. The event was televised for the later showing of highlights on S4C and Eurosport. The second sprint held on Monday, also televised, was from the Graveyard through the International Slalom course and finishing below the new wooden bridge. The times for the two sprints were added together to produce the results for race five. Vladi Panato won both C1 sprint races in a combined time of 4:09.67 beating his nearest rival by over 8 seconds. Uschi Profanter the current women's World Champion also won both sprint races in a combined time of 4:03.04. Kennel/Mueller, Germany, won the C2 sprint pushing the winners of the long race into 5th place. Robert Pontarollo completed his World Cup challenge with his third sprint win. The current men's World Champion Markus Gickler had mixed fortunes in the sprint races finishing in 37th place on the Bala Mill course but making a determined effort in the second sprint to finish in 12th place in the combined results. The overall winners of the World Cup were decided on their result in the final race plus the best two results from the other four races. New timing equipment from Mikrotime was in use for all the races providing not only start and finish times but also split times and information for television. It was an opportunity to check out some of the facilities that will be in use at the World Championships 1995. The people of Bala extended a very warm welcome to all the international visitors and many local people helped in supporting the event. The weekend was a great success with a very friendly atmosphere which was no more apparent than at the Bar-B-Q and party at Bala Leisure Centre on Monday evening. The organisation by the WCA supported by the Wild Water Racing Committee and the staff at the Tryweryn Centre was excellent and has provided a very good basis for the challenge offered by the World Championships to be held in August 1995.

Mike Tordoff

August as the best Wild Water

1994 World Cup Final. Competitors from
making an entry of over 160 boats. Over
the event had been taking place, var-
course both for the World Cup and for the
1995. For many years one of the main
tre was over the "scaffold bridge". This
t new timber bridge donated by the NRA.
on Saturday, a small ceremony was held
y thanks must be extended to the National
r hard work in getting the course ready.



Bala Race 4

Canadian Doubles C2

- 1st 126. Vala/Slucik, SVK, 23:34.05
 2nd 128. Dajek/Knittel, GER, 23:39.32
 3rd 123. Kettel/Mueller, GER, 23:44.67
 9th 103. Belin/Caunt, GBR, 25:00.74
 14th 107. Blackman/Blackman GBR 25:29.84
 16th 114. Clough/Clough, GBR 25:52.73

Kayak Singles - Women

- 1st 73. Uschi Profanta, AUT, 23:17.64
 2nd 72. Laurence Castet, FRA, 23:46.88
 3rd 81. Myriam Legallo, FRA, 23:59.01
 5th 61. Andrea Tordoff, GBR, 24:06.51
 7th 71. Cynthia Berry, GBR 24:23.10
 10th 69. Lisa Rae, GBR 24:44.79

Kayak Singles - Men

- 1st 225. Markus Gickler, GER 21:34.45
 2nd 152. Jean C Levterev, FRA 21:51.60
 3rd 212. Ian Tordoff, GBR 21:51.61
 23rd 198. Melvin Swallow, GBR 22:56.30
 33rd 196. Jon Folland, GBR 23:14.11
 42nd 175. Michael Mason, GBR 23:38.84
 51st 195. Martin Streeter, GBR 23:59.32

Canadian Singles - C1

- 1st. Vladi Panato, I TA 24:20.79
 2nd. Dominique Rouvel, FRA 24:40.37
 3rd. Primož Sulic, SLO 24:58.44
 11th. Rob Pumphrey, GBR 25:35.10
 25th. Ross Pearton, GBR 27:33.70
 30th. James Lee, GBR 28:07.97

Bala Race 5

Kayak Singles - Women

Bib	Name	Nation	Inter 5a	Time 5A	Result	Posn	Inter 5b	Time 5b
73	Uachi Profanter	AUT	0:38.56	1:17.90	4:03.04	1st	1:31.28	2:45.14
72	Laurence Castet	FRA	0:38.44	1:18.52	4:07.39	2nd	1:32.92	2:48.87
81	Myriam Legallo	FRA	0:39.15	1:21.19	4:10.27	3rd	1:32.32	2:49.08
71	Cynthia Berry	GBR	0:41.35	1:23.60	4:18.28	6th	1:34.84	2:54.68
69	Lisa Rae	GBR	0:42.70	1:25.51	4:22.16	12th	1:37.70	2:56.65

Canadian Singles

35	Vladi Panato	ITA	0:39.29	1:21.67	4:09.67	1st	1:32.71	2:48.00
28	Dominique Rouvel	FRA	0:42.00	1:26.60	4:17.89	2nd	1:33.09	2:51.29
34	Mirko Spelli	ITA	0:41.02	1:23.62	4:18.45	3rd	1:35.94	2:54.83
18	Rob Pumphrey	GBR	0:42.70	1:26.07	4:12.82	11th	1:38.96	2:58.75
17	John Willacy	GBR	0:42.67	1:29.38	4:28.47	13th	1:38.84	2:59.09
15	Ross Pearton	GBR	0:45.48	1:35.87	4:48.65	26th	1:46.17	3:12.78

Canadian Doubles - C2

123	Kenel/Mueller	GER	0:38.75	1:18.52	4:00.77	1st	1:29.53	2:42.25
125	Simon/Eich	GER	0:40.53	1:21.56	4:03.24	2nd	1:29.16	2:41.68
122	Edin/Derouineau	FRA	0:38.77	1:19.02	4:03.72	3rd	1:29.45	2:44.70
144	Clough/Clough	GBR	0:40.33	1:24.67	4:16.56	13th	1:34.07	2:51.89
107	Blackman/Blackman	GBR	0:41.49	1:25.75	4:14.97	15th	1:34.99	2:52.22
103	Clough/Clough	GBR	0:44.54	1:29.76	4:52.32	24th		

Kayak Singles - Mens

227	Robert Ponarollo	ITA	0:34.12	1:10.16	3:41.83	1st	1:23.26	2:31.67
223	Phillipe Graile	FRA	0:34.31	1:10.57	3:45.32	2nd	1:25.63	2:34.75
213	Arnaud Pariscoat	FRA	0:34.36	1:11.56	3:46.03	3rd	1:24.68	2:34.47
212	Ian Tordoff	GBR	0:35.86	1:13.13	3:49.87	9th	1:26.08	2:36.74
196	John Folland	GBR	0:35.56	1:14.65	3:55.86	20th	1:28.92	2:41.21
190	Alan Tordoff	GBR	0:38.16	1:16.74	3:58.90	28th	1:30.50	2:42.16
175	Michael Mason	GBR	0:37.22	1:15.36	4:00.97	32nd	1:30.39	2:45.61
198	Melvin Swallow	GBR	0:38.89	1:18.15	4:03.69	35th	1:31.41	1:16.85
195	Martin Streeter	GBR	0:37.99	1:17.90	4:06.17	41st	1:31.89	2:48.27

WORLD CUP FINAL PLACINGS

C1 Name	Position	Nation	Merano1	Merano2	Soca	Bala4	Bala5	Totals
Vladi Panato	1	ITA	18	18	18	18	18	54
Dominique Rouvel	2	FRA		11	11	15	15	41
Stefan Steinenhofer	3	GER		15	9	12	12	39
Rob Pumphrey	16	GBR			1	5	5	11
John Willacy	17	GBR				1	3	4
KW1								
Uschi Profanta	1	AUT	18	18	18			54
Amore Bringard	2	FRA	18	18	15	10	12	48
Myriam Legallo	3	FRA	12	18	13	13	13	44
Cynthia Berry	8	GBR		3	5	9	10	24
Andrea Tordoff	12	GBR				11	8	19
Lisa Rae	14	GBR		2	2	6	4	12
C2								
Danjek/Knittel	1	GER	18	18	13	15	10	46
Simon/Eich	2	GER		15	15	12	15	45
Kenel/Mueller	3	GER		13	11	13	18	44
Bebin/Caunt	14	GBR					7	7
Clough/Clough	15	GBR			1	2	3	6
Blackman/Blackman	18	GBR			2	1	3	
K1								
Robert Ponarollo	1	ITA	31	40	40	25	40	120
Markus Gickler	2	GER	40	23	23	40	19	99
Phillipe Graile	3	FRA	25	31	24	28	35	88
Ian Tordoff	10	GBR		17	17	31	22	70
Johnathan Folland	30	GBR					11	11
Melvin Swallow	31	GBR					8	8

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This was to have been a solo trip but the week before Trevor joined me. I was pleased to have his company. I was to paddle an old fibre glass Reynard Explorer whilst Trevor paddled his beautiful wood stripper. Preparations were chaotic, I arrived at Trevor's to find him still packing. Eventually he was ready but of course he had forgotten several vital items like water and worse... the beer. After a long drive we stopped at the Bridge of Orchy bunkhouse and collected an 80% hangover.

The following day we drove to Fort William and ran the shuttle. At last at 3 o'clock we were off! Last years trip was a gentle sunshine and following winds. This years trip began in a similar fashion. We sailed down Loch Lochy in a brisk force 3 and warm sunshine to tempt us on, me with my green and yellow spinnaker and Trevor with his black squaresail that only lacked a skull and crossbones. We camped on a spit of land at the end of Loch and sat around the first of many campfires drinking the beer (that I hadn't forgotten to bring).

If yesterday was heaven then this was our first taste of hell! A wet start then a dry patch just in time for breakfast. A quarter of a mile of paddling led to the canal and our one and only portage, easy with trolleys. It was now throwing it down which it continued to do until the end of the canal. As we reached Loch Oich the sun came out and we lunched on a spit of land. The next three miles down the Loch were painful as we battled down the Lock against force three/four winds, sneaking in and out of bays, taking advantage of every bit of shelter we could find. A pitch stroke with a pry or a C stroke worked best, although in the really strong gusts I resorted to hit and switch technique. It was during this paddle that Trevor first revealed his greyhound tendencies, rushing off then stopping to wait for me.

We camped at the end of the Loch and spent a pleasant evening trying to dry our gear in the pouring rain. Up late, eat, pack and away by eleven. A short paddle to the head of the Loch and as I passed the weir into the river Oich I noticed a straightforward jet through it. I had had the river Oich in my mind as an alternative to the canal for some time. A quick word with the bridge keeper confirmed that it was paddled, but he could give us no further information. A quick run down the riverbank was encouraging and we could always portage back into the canal

if necessary as it ran alongside the river. Above all we wouldn't have to battle the wind as the current would carry us down! So what the hell a dubious and nervous Trevor was duly persuaded or should it be coerced onto following and off we went.

A paddle up to the weir showed a nice clean run through the weir stopper, mind you it would take one hell of a stopper to stop a fully laden 17ft canadian! A quick word to Trevor and off we went, a easy line up, bounce down the waves and breakout on the right. Trevor ran the weir well but missed the breakout, no problem, there were plenty of others before a right/left dog-leg took us through the right hand arch of the old road bridge. We didn't hit a rock, the gauge by the swing bridge should read nine and a half or less (it measures the clearance under the bridge and not the water depth).

Things were quiet for while with just a couple of shingle rapids to keep us awake. Then came a mass of trees, a quick inspection showed the line. I leapt onto the boat and started off. Trevor enthusiastic as ever set off at the same time and we became entangled.....just in time we sorted ourselves out and ran the narrow passage between the trees. A few shingle rapids later we came to an island. The main flow went left down a simple rapid and so did we. Round the corner was a very rocky grade 2/3 rapid without a clear line for a canadian. We ferry glided over to the island, lined round to the other side and over a small weir, from which point we were able to take a sneak route past the main flow. One other problem gave us cause to pause...a small

drop, I went left, Trevor took a middle line and we both arrived at the bottom together.

After lunch in fort William we started paddling up Loch Ness, it was 4 o'clock, the wind was against us and the nearest campsite was 10 miles away. We were already tired out but exhilarated by the run down the river Oich, nothing seemed too difficult now. Three hours later the greyhound stopped... I think he wanted to camp but I only allowed him a tea break. We had forgotten to fill the water bottles at Fort William so we filled them with stream water and hoped it was clean.

Six hours later two very weary paddlers camped, ate and because they had forgotten to buy any beer in Fort Angustus suffered a considerable thirst. Trevor was an agreeable companion but as the days stopping times grew later and later, our earlier animated discussions became companionable silences interrupted by the odd grunt. Exhausted we staggered up at brunch time, packed and paddled away in the rain. It was a long torturous day fighting the force 3 to 5 winds on each headline and cowering in each bay. The greyhound would stop and chat for a while before hareing off into the distance. I'd come across him now and again, sleeping in some windless spot, waking as I arrived and charging off again.

On one of these occasions he had found a camp fire and lit it, his brilliant suggestion of a cup-a-soup restored joy d'vine. The battle went on for eight hours before Tor point and the end of Loch Ness came within our grasp. A mile and a quarter to go, Trevor shot off into

the middle of the Loch, out of the shelter of the land and into the full force of the wind and waves. I followed, it was the only thing to do, the decent thing to do...just in case. I kept looking longingly at the lee shore we'd just left and wishing I was creeping along it's sheltered bays. All I could do was dig deep, dig deep into the fat reserves, snarl at the waves, dig deep into the iron and beg Nessy for a lift. My personal battle lasted over an hour as I slowly, inch by literal inch, gained ground. I caught glimpses of Trevor, sideways to the wind, fighting his own titanic battle against the elements as he struggled to get back on line. At last he succeeded and the greyhound shot off again, disappearing into the distance. I kept on digging deep 1,2,3, change sides, 1,2,3, change sides... eventually I crept into the lee of Tor point, Trevor had disappeared, what had happened, had he capsized, had he kept on going down the canal...no he had nipped off to the pub for a quick Drambuie, some beer and a bottle of Malt. Off he shot again, it was ten o'clock, far to late to finish, run the shuttle and drive home so we stopped, ate, drank and indulged in the best Malt I've ever tasted.

We woke early and paddled the last couple of miles in the rain and against the wind, a fitting end. As I drove over Shap on the way home with Enya at full volume, the sun came out, It was like passing from hell into heaven. As I neared home the sun died, the tape ended and it started to rain, back into the polluted, narcotic nightmare of the real world.

Mike Hazelgrove 



Chase the greyhound

Crossing th



Above:
Dublin Bay

Right:
On the
Skerries

Far right:
Howth harbour



It was a quiet day down at the climbing wall, so we were discussing sea kayaking... as you do. "I fancy paddling over to Ireland from Wales sometime". "Ok, lets go, how does April sound?". Brief pause as Adam takes a step backwards. "yeah ok, we should be quiet after Easter." "It should be windy enough then as well!! So that was it, the plan was set in November, to leave Holyhead during the night on April 11. All we needed to do now was a whole heap of training, finalise the route and get a boat and some gear to go with it. We lacked just about everything at this stage. Adam didn't own any sea kayaking gear since he'd borrowed most of it before, and my gear was old and battered! We also wanted a bit of an easy time, so a double would be the best to do the trip in.

RNLI

With such a trip in mind: Holyhead - Dublin - Belfast - Portpatrick - Ramsey - St Bees, we decided late on to it

for the RNLI as they're a jolly decent bunch and a very worthy cause. Eventually the RNLI officials decided we weren't a couple of suicide cases and that we knew what we were about, and gave us their blessing.

Now into scrounge mode (or whatever official term you care to call it)!! Valley canoe Products came up with an ALEUT demo for us to use on the trip. LENDAL donated two modified crank Nordkapp paddles. A trip to see an old fiend Tony Stephenson at Jack Wolfskin brought us in a decent set of thermals and sleeping bags. Whilst a chance meeting with the Sub Zero rep, Clive Garret brought us some more thermals for every inch of our bodies, right down to the underpants!

With all these sponsors and money for the RNLI riding on this we thought we'd better get our acts together to produce the goods.

The training had to be squeezed in between two very hectic work schedules. Me as manager of the Keswick Climbing Wall and Adam as Senior Instructor at Newlands Adventure Centre, found it quite hard to wangle time on the water. Friends would have it that the most of our time was spent in local watering holes rather than on the pond - but that's not true HONEST! (gratuitous reference to alcohol again, cut it out boys ! Editor) Departure date was approaching, so the night before we left for Wales a trip to the pub was in order (final warning Ed.) just to get the flavour of Ireland you understand. So that done the walk back from the pub at Newlands, a full half mile, a good half inch of snow landed on us - fine weather for a jaunt in a sea kayak. Next day however the sun was out and off we went to Adam's Dads in Colwyn Bay to sort a car full of gear into some sort of semblance of order and to relax for a couple of days after a hectic Easter at work.

The Irish Sea

with a
sense of
humour!



Ideal Conditions

Monday arrived with a large high pressure sitting off the west coast of Ireland. It was due to move across to the Isle of Man during the day making conditions ideal for a smooth trouble free trip. So down to the Anglesey Sea Surf Centre for final fiddlings, words of encouragement and a final Guinness training drink before setting off. The team at ASSC are a great bunch allowing us to use their facilities, giving us encouragement (or was it abuse), helping down to the beach and looking after the car.

So with the wind still blowing a bit, but dying away - we're sure it was, we launched into the pond. A dark night and a long paddle ahead we were full of confidence in our attitudes and the met office weather forecast.

Now the first thing you hit going west from Holyhead is North Stack tide race! A bit of a bouncy affair and an interesting proposition at 10:00pm. On hitting this the word was: "Oh, its the race" "It'll calm down soon" "you into this?" "It'll be reet" "next stop Dublin then!"

The lads from ASSC stood on the South Sack until they were sure the strobe on our back was indeed the right way up and heading over to Ireland. Then back off home for a night of wondering how these two crazy paddlers were doing?

With a course plotted and a good rythm developing progress was good considering the weather that is! Our friendly force 2 Southerly had swung round to be a challenging force 5 North west. So we headed on into 3 - 4 foot waves as the night went by.

Navigation was done by Adam in the back of the boat using the lighthouse of Skerries and South Stack until they disappeared over the horizon, remembering that Derek Mayes had jokingly told him: "keep Holyhead

behind you and you'll be ok!".

Once these lights had gone it was up to me in the front with a head torch and compass! Talking was down to a minimum due to the wind making things hard. At least I think so as Adam reckons he can talk for 14 hours non - stop, so the wind has it's blessings!

Progress through the night was good and the sighting of the odd ferry reinforced the point that the compass was still doing it's job. Feeding ourselves through the night on "Climbing Wall special flapjack", things didn't seem so bad despite the fog and even driving snow at 2 am with lost horizons and only a circle of light in front there was nothing to do but paddle into the blackness. As I was navigating in the early hours all Adam could do was paddle. At this stage the mind decides to play silly games with you. At one point Adam thought he was walking down a sunlit glade of poplar trees - a much better place to be in my opinion.

Both of us were looking forward to a glorious sunrise to boost moral and the like. It came like a pale grey non event, so it was back to the flapjack. as the morning went on the sun did come out but the wind and the waves stayed - jolly unsporting I thought. The Sea Cats and ferries still went by and eventually murky shapes of land appeared as another shade of grey in the distance - only 5 more hours to go then. And it was as the tiredness set in the crept imperceptibly closer as the morning wore into afternoon. The buoys of Kish bank and Burford bank slipped slowly by and we were in Dublin Bay - trip complete good job done lads!

Closing on land rapidly now, well we were getting there. The KILORAN a passing trawler called over and asked about our trip, so who were we to refuse the ensuing light and cups of coffee after an 18 hour trip, thanks lads!

Pints of Guinness

On docking at Howth, just North of Dublin Bay the harbour master and the RNLI crew couldn't do enough for us and had pints of Guinness fluid replacement coming our way almost before we got our feet on the land. The hospitality of these people must be second to none as they really looked after us during our stay in howth. After the fluids and showers, the only thing that spoilt our meal at "Casa Pasta" was me doing a faceplant in the middle of it. After another pint, 12 hours sleep ensued. I could have slept anywhere but the accommodation was way more than adequate.

The stay in Howth lasted for 2 nights as we rested bruised backsides and waited for a break in the weather. This didn't happen so our only move now was to the ferry port for the easy way back to more hospitality and "comment" from the ASSC team. The next few days saw us do some trips around Anglesey, including a trip to the Skerries which has been on my tick list for years.

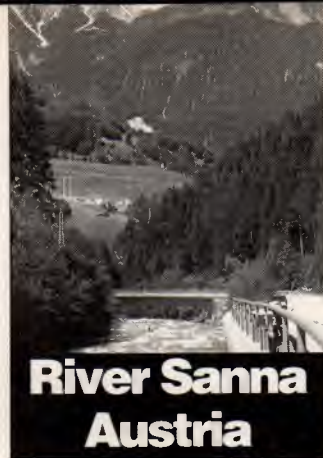
So the fortnight off work allowed us both to achieve some long dreamt about goals despite the fickle weather. And here's to our next set of trips, with an undying sense of humour!!!!

Martin Bell

**Our thanks to
all those that
helped us on
our way,
especially
Rupert
Jeffries and
the team in
Howth, Nigel
Dennis and
the Angesey
Sea and Surf
Centre team
and to our
sponsors:**

**Valley,
Lendal,
Jack
Wolkskin,
Sub Zero.**





River Sanna Austria

When first asked to write this article, it seemed like a reasonably straight forward proposition. Choose your favourite paddle and write about it. The reality has been somewhat different. How do you decide on what is your favourite paddle? Is it a trip that has taken place under a special set of circumstances, or is it a trip that has pushed you to your limit of technical know how? Is it a trip that you have repeated many times or is it a special 'once in a lifetime' trip that you are unlikely to have an opportunity to repeat?

For each of us, I am sure the answer would be different. The motivation for getting out on the water in the first place is probably very different and very personal. For me, a decision on my favourite paddle led me to reflect on my own motivation for getting out on the water. Do I do it for the challenge, that 'at all odds' feeling of man against nature; pushing myself mentally and physically, or is it for reasons much less subtle - simply because it is there.

As I searched my memory bank, firstly under 'paddling trips' and subsequently under, 'kayak', 'canoe', 'river' or 'sea', I determined that in fact the stimulation and motivation to undertake any of the trips that I have done has come from an

My favourite paddle

overwhelming desire to get away from it all and withdraw within myself, perhaps not so much for any fanciful commitment to the physical or the extreme, (although a technical or physical element to a trip can provide an added adrenalin buzz) just simply to paddle on the wild side, finding comfort and release from the pressure of the work a day routine. The opportunity and privilege of 'being able to experience the natural environment and view its flora and fauna at first hand can turn any seemingly routine paddle into a favourite.

One such paddle which fits my own 'motivational control file' and remains uppermost in my mind as a favourite among favourites provides a breathtaking trip through a wonderful Austrian valley. As you drive up the busy autoroute from Landeck to St Anton it is hard to believe that moments later you will journey a classic river, offering a splendid balance of paddling on the 'wild side' - magnificent views and superb water with a strong feeling of exposure. Turning off the St Anton road to Ischel you cross the river and get your first glimpse of the river Sanna created by the coming together of the Trisanna and Rosanna rivers, wild in their own right, which have carved out a course for themselves as they drain the high snowy mountains of the region.

Claustrophobic feel

As you park up just before the power station situated at the confluence of these rivers, a feeling of confinement adds to the usual pre-trip butterflies. The valley here is very narrow and the tree cover heavy, providing an almost claustrophobic feel to the situation. On the best of Alpine paddling days a glance upward through this shroud of trees will allow tantalising views of the mountains that surround you and blue cloudless skies with the sun

shining off their snowy peaks confirming that water will not be in short supply.

Crossing the road from your thankfully shaded parking spot, you descend a small track to the river. A thorough off the water warm up is recommended prior to launching on the roller coaster of waves. Warmed up muscles and an engaged brain are a definite requirement for this is a fast start.

Heart thumping

Once you embark on the Sannas fast, challenging and often heavy magic carpet of moving water you become totally immersed in the beauty that surrounds you and the intensity of the rapids encountered. Whilst not a particularly long trip, approx 7 kms, with a swift start and a heart thumping, almost blind overhanging corner, complete with its own jumble of house size rocks and monstrous stoppers, to run within the first few minutes this is a paddle that will keep your mind alert, your concentration sharp and the adrenalin flowing, whilst allowing you to savour (if you can on your first trip) high snow capped peaks peering through tall mountain pines (find early respite to take a look behind you back up stream). The lush river side greenery shroud you from the hustle and bustle of the world going about its business and secret meadows play host to a myriad of moths, butterflies and birds.

The Sanna is perhaps paddled most frequently at low to medium levels when it would be graded II to IV. Within this range it perhaps provides optimum opportunity for the averagely good paddlers amongst us to stretch ourselves, and develop our range of white water skills on consistently good water, while still being able to enjoy the environment around us.

The 'graveyard'

Having calmed the nerve after descending the 'schiefes eck' (roofed corner) the pace of the river varies a little providing ample opportunity to relax pumped muscles and steady the rhythm as you sharpen your break out technique and surf the numerous waves. Shortly you arrive at the village of Pians. Initially calm, it is perhaps a little misleading here as the river narrows and you pass through to find yourself confronted by what is known to some as the 'graveyard' (also referred to by some as the 'scorpion' because of the 'sting in the tail' that awaits). This long straight stretch looks immediately intense, its collection of rocks producing a wild jumble of stoppers. For those

who have checked the pace of the river there are eddies here to rest in and savour the moment. For those less fortunate it is a time to keep calm and alert. Brief respite follows as you make your approach to the rivers real sting in the tail. Here 'Three Stones', three large boulders block your way and produce three stoppers, large and powerful, ready to grab and unseat the unsuspecting paddler. The true right offers the usual route here but varying water levels can influence your decision making. Once through this section you will almost certainly want to linger and reflect on your descent so far as your paddle is all but over and you make your way to the egress either where the autoroute passes over head, or onto Camping Huber should you be staying there.

Paddling the Sanna reminds you that on a river, change is the only constant - levels change, flow rates vary and with that rocks move, holes appear and disappear, 'killer logs' surface and vanish again overnight. Once the level of the Sanna rises above 'M' then the river easily takes on change and acquires a much more serious nature, reaching a very challenging Grade IV to V at high levels, becoming a serious, complex river that should carry a warning that it is suitable only for those of the dinosaur family. Best perhaps to wait a while, let the river subside to a more manageable level as it is no place for the ill prepared and inexperienced. The Sanna is a fantastic paddle. If you, like me, seek to find in themselves, grace under pressure then this is a river that once paddled, you will want to visit again and again to master your art and enjoy paddling on the wild side. Have your camera ready for the 'get out' as everyone, well almost everyone, will have a wide cheesy smile on their faces.

The river Sanna is just one of those on offer to the white water paddler in the Landeck area of Austria. Should you be planning a visit to the area then you may wish to consult written guides, such as 'Austria and Bavaria' by Tony Ford, or 'Alpine Canoeing' by Steve Wales, both of which are available from No Limits in Nottingham. Alternatively, if you would like to visit the area and paddle this gem of a river, but lack the experience of continental paddling you could always join me on one of our popular paddling holidays to Austria next summer.

**Mike Devlin
BCU Coach.**

Mike can be contacted at Current Trends on 0602 818844



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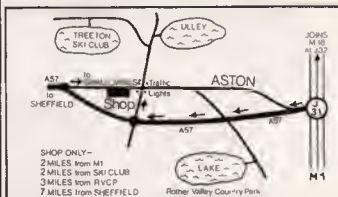
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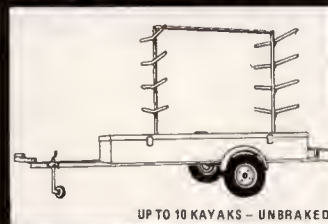
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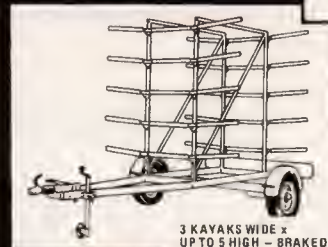
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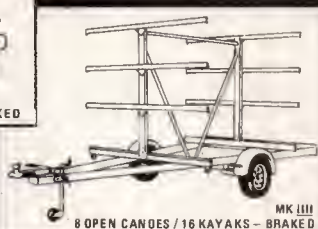
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MARATHON

World Marathon Canoeing Championships

Amsterdam - 1994

The fourth World Marathon Racing World Championships took place on a course centred on Amsterdams Bosbaan lake taking in stretches of both open water in two loops to the left and right of the main lake. The course also included an additional hazard of the wash from the large fuel barges travelling up and down from Schipol Airport. The twenty eight participating nations underlined the growth that this discipline of the sport has enjoyed since the inaugural World Championships held in Nottingham 1988.

The British Team of twenty four paddler included six Juniors who took part in the Junior Grand Prix on the Saturday morning.

Junior mens kayak doubles (K2)

First away on the Saturday morning was the Junior mens kayak doubles (K2) event. The British pairings of David Smith/Jules Brabants and Daniel Golder/James Perrier were amongst competitors from ten nations who tackled the junior course of 28km. The first two groupings saw the real action with some careful tactics and skilful portaging David Smith/Jules Brabants came home first in 01.36.15. The junior mens singles kayak (K1) saw a terrific performance by Matthew Encoch who was in the send group all the way around the course and lead it in to come in 4th in a time of 01.44.23.

Senior mens kayaks

The rain came down thick and fast as the senior event began making the already muddy portages even more treacherous. The senior mens kayaks saw yet another good performance by the exceedingly cool and confident Lars Koch, Denmark. The leading group vied for position but the experience and skill of Lars took him home in first place thus taking the K1 World



Title which was held by Ivan Lawler. Lars had added yet another world gold to his two k2 titles in 1988 1990. Greg Slater despite having had an illness during the summer was in the second group and came across the line in a credible 8th place.

The ladies K2

The ladies K2 race was controlled throughout by the Australian pair Denise Cooper and Shelly Jesney. After a very short period of time the pair pulled away from the pack and up through the mens C1 and K2 fields to come home 10 minutes in front of the Danish pair. Alison Thorogood and Helen Gilby had a good race and came in 5th place on second behind the Hungarians.

The mens C1

The mens C1 race was controlled by Arne Nielson, Denmark and he finished over 8 minutes in front of the next C1 from Hungary. The British C1 competitors came in with James Lee in 14th place. He began to pull up through the field on the very narrow shallow canal section over taking this team mate Mike Marsall who sadly suffered on the canal section and came in 19th place.

The weather on the Sunday was no better and the horizontal rain which dampened everything was nothing compared to the blow inflicted in the whole team by the sabotage against the British team pair of Andrew and Steven Train. The brothers renowned for being good sportsmen, went out for an unscheduled and unusual warmup and discovered that their boat was sinking. The pair returned to find two professionally drilled holes above and below the water line which were causing the sinking problem. This completely shocked the whole team and really affected the brothers. The boat was soon repaired but the atmosphere of disbelief continued.

The mens K2

The mens K2 start was magnificent and true to his word when he was told to have a good race Ivan Lawler said "I intend to" and he and his partner Stephen Harris certainly did. Looking comfortable throughout the race and portaging extremely well Ivan and Stephen controlled the race throughout. Despite having the skill to move away from the rest of the field the pair stayed with the front group all the way and came in 1 second in front of the Hungarian pair.

The mens C2

The C2 race which was on the course at the same time was not so sporting. The Hungarians and the British pair Stephen and Andrew Train soon pulled away from the rest of the field. The Hungarian pair were rather obstructive especially on the portages when they completely cut out the brothers, however the brothers experience remained and came home in silver medal position 1 metre behind the Hungarians. The brothers canoed well and everyone admired their professionalism to go and race so well having incurred such a major set back both to their equipment and mentally.

The ladies K1

The ladies K1 saw Anna Hemmings debut despite still only being 17 she competed with all the senior ladies. She had a magnificent race and vied for position all the way with an Hungarian and finally pipped on the line by 1 second and took 5th place.

The event was successful for British team but the shocking sabotage incident definitely soured things and the other competitors were also horrified to think that such a thing would be done. Lets hope that this incident is not an indication of the future of the sport.

Paul Owen

WORLD MARATHON CANOEING CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

Junior k1

- 1st John Mawer (Ireland) - 01.41.21
- 2nd Gido Visser (Netherlands) - 01.42.27
- 3rd Tobias Van de Pol (Netherlands) - 01.42.57
- 4th Matthew Enoch (Great Britain) - 01.44.23
- 8th Richard Golder (Great Britain) - 01.46/26

Junior K2

- 1st David Smith/Jules Brabants (Great Britain) - 01.36.15
- 2nd Mikael Gunnarson/Magnus Siverbrant (Sweden) - 01.36.19
- 3rd Bart Snel/Martin Snel (Netherlands) - 01.37.29
- 7th Daniel Golder/James Perrier (Great Britain) - 01.41.39

Mens K1

- 1st Lars Koch (Denmark) - 02.59.46
- 2nd Tom Krantz (Sweden) - 02.59.50
- 3rd Robert Herreveld (RSA) - 02.59.59
- 8th Gregory Slater (Great Britain) - 03.03.43
- 19th Simon Dark (Great Britain) - 03.13.07

Mens K2

- 1st Steven Harris/Ivan Lawler (Great Britain) - 02.46.50
- 2nd Ceaba Laszlo/ Laszlo Toth (Hungary) - 02.46.51
- 3rd Thomas Chrianiensen/Karsten Solgard (Denmark) - 02.46.52
- 12th Steven Baker/ Hayden Kirk (Great Britain) - 02.53.50

Womens K1

- 1st Susanne Gunnarson (Sweden) - 03.16.13
- 2nd Denise Cooper (Australia) - 03.18.49
- 3rd Andria Pitz (Hungary) - 03.19.12
- 5th Anna Hemmings (Great Britain) - 03.23.48
- 9th Hilary Dresser (Great Britain) - 03.26.55

Womens K2

- 1st Denise Cooper/Shelly Jesney (Australia) - 03.00.57
- 2nd Hanne Selmer/Bettina Lasen (Denmark) - 03.10.37
- 3rd Andria Biro/Agnes Erdodi (Hungary) - 03.11.47
- 5th Helen Gilby/ Alison Thorogood (Great Britain) - 03.13.40
- 11th Susan Keating/ Bernadette Pagon (Great Britain) - 03.23.28

Mens C1

- 1st Arne Neilson (Denmark) - 03.20.38
- 2nd Gabor Kolozsvari (Hungary) - 03.28.41
- 3rd Karsten Scales (Denmark) - 03.28.56
- 14th James Lee (Great Britain) - 03.42.13
- 19th Michael Marshall (Great Britain) - 03.50.49

Mens C2

- 1st Zsolt Bohacs/Istvan Gyulai (Hungary) - 03.06.31
- 2nd Stephen Train/ Andrew Train (Great Britain) - 03.06.33
- 3rd Areal Pedro/Perez Beivenvido (Spain)
- 11th Andrew Gues/ John Lyons (Great Britain) - 03.35.42



Kids in Ca

Joint Winners:

Right: Mr Alaister Clark of Wirksworth: with this shot of Roanna in a cheeky mood.

Below: Patrick Kemp of New Milton showing wife Suzanne and cheerful baby Kemp at 10 months old



Runners Up:

Sue and Colin Eades of Cardiff show their sons: Duncan (right aged 13) showing mature style on the famous Rabioux wave. Nathan, (bottom) shooting the same wave in the Durance in the French Alps (aged nine).



The winners and runners up will receive prizes of canoe clothing kindly jointly donated by YAK and Palm. Thank you to those sponsors for their generosity and thank you to all those members who sent in pictures.



Above: Mr Hall of Watf work out which type of

noes

Photo Competition

and now....The Worst

Some of the entries for this category were truly awful and the three shown here testify that there are some really spectacularly inept sports photographers out there. It was tough to judge but the outright champion, and the last person we will call to cover next year's world championships is:

Miss C Hitchen of Brinsley, Nottingham for this stunning shot of two open Canoes (recently departed downstream) at Cardington.



Below: Close behind in the incompetent lense award Tim Durant of Portsmouth for his headless playboater.



And finally below: Mark Salmon of Powys for fouling up by narrowly missing photographic evidence of the move of the day!



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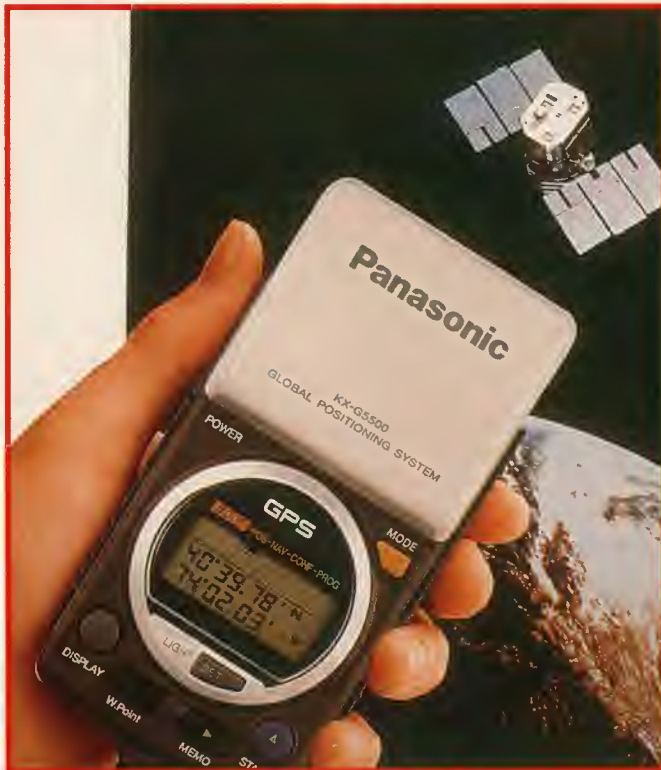
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Paddlers gear

Test Report on Panasonic KX-G5500 Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver



The NAVSTAR GPS (NAVigational Systems with Time And Range Global Positioning System) was commissioned by the US Department of Defense (DoD) at a cost of \$10,000 million, and they have overall control of it. The system was designed to provide positioning information (Latitude, Longitude, Altitude) anywhere on Earth, 24 hours a day. Income from the project is not trivial, Worldwide GPS sales totalled \$100 million in 1990, whilst in 1993 it was \$420 million, and a conservative estimate for the expected return in 1994 was \$600 million.

There are 21 operational satellites in orbit (at an altitude of 20,200 km, ie 10,900 nmiles) plus three active spares. The six satellite orbital planes, are inclined to the equator by 55°.

Every operational satellite in the NAVSTAR constellation has three atomic clocks on-board with a timing accuracy better than 1 second in 300,000 years. Outstanding accuracy is needed because position is better

determined on the basis of range, and range is calculated from the time the satellite's signal takes to get to the receiver. The signal travels at a fixed rate (the speed of light, 3 x 10⁸ m/s or 161.829 nmiles/s), so a receiver (which can measure the time delay accurately) can interpret this in terms of distance to the known position of the transmitting satellite. In effect each satellite transmits the time here is tttt hours and my

position is x,y,z. In each receiver channel, the transmission delay is measured by comparing a stored word (digital bit stream) with the same word from the chosen satellite. A 1ms timing error results in a position change of 161.829 nm).

I field tested the Panasonic KX-G5500 GPS receiver. About the size of a super-compact camera, it is one of the smallest receivers available (65 x 131 x 35mm), fits easily into a buoyancy aid pocket and at 420 grammes, will not weigh you down. When on the water I protected the water resistant set with an AQL aquasac (ie a transparent waterproof dry bag). If you do this remember to check the bag prior to use. In comparison with waterproof sets, water resistant versions usually offer a higher technical specification for less money. Unlike waterproof sets, water resistant units will float (when in the dry bag).

Satellite fix


The specification says a cold fix will be obtained in less than three minutes. In practice, I usually got a five satellite fix in less than 30 seconds (occasionally it took slightly longer). The instrument is a five channel receiver, with a 32 bit processor to calculate position. For a comparable fix, this system is quicker and more accurate than a multiplexed (shared) receiver. The horizon-

tal accuracy is quoted as 15m (+/- 1{SYMBOL 115 \f "Symbol"}) and fixes are updated every second.

You can programme in 99 waypoints (using Lat and Long) and effectively store 20 different routes each having 9 waypoint. The set is easy to programme and even easier to use. You get five hours of continuous use from the battery pack (5 standard AA cells, and 80 minutes from the slimline rechargeable pack) I found the battery pack the best; even though it took up slightly more space. On the basis of one 3 minute fix every hour the AA cells will last 100 fixes (100 hours journey time). At night the LCD panel is backlit, but this does reduce battery lifetime.

Best available today

This receiver is clearly representative of the best available today, with a little dealing it should cost you less than £400 (courtesy of Tolley Marine the sole UK importers). This includes; a power pack for 5 AA cells, a rechargeable nickel metal battery, a mains charger, a 12v car outlet charger, and a case for the set. I found it easy to use (so did my children) and very reliable. If you're thinking of an open crossing or a remote trip, it's worth thinking about using a GPS receiver.

Andy Stamp 





Access news

Focus on River Teme

I have recently taken over as access officer for the River Teme in South Shropshire and would like to pass on the results of my present contacts with the various property owners on the river.

It is hard to find the owners of every bit of land, but those I have contacted the majority do not dislike canoeists. However there are a few problems on the river.

Most canoeists get in at the Linney Playing Fields in Ludlow. This is a public park which is funded by the local council who have designated a Canoeists launching point behind the toilet block.

Access to this point can be gained through a breach in the wall from the carpark or for large groups the attendant will unlock the gate.

Problems

The problems at Linney are;

- Inconsiderate parking and non payment of the parking fee.
- Gear and equipment strewn about the general area, including the picnic benches provided for other uses.
- Lack of modesty when changing.

Ludlow is a popular historic town for both national and international tourists and whilst a lot like to watch the various antics on the water they can have their holiday spoilt by the lack of consideration.

Access

The first weir is a popular play and warm up area for the novices and the more expert canoeists who wish to continue through the town on the white water part of the river.

The major problem here is noise and bad language. There are private properties and a popular restaurant right alongside the weir so obviously be considerate to these people.

At the second weir (the bottom of Mill Street) there is no access or portage river left but you can portage river right or get out onto the footpath.

The third weir with possibly the best play spot on the river is now a "listed building". The owners are not anti-canoeist but would like to enjoy their life without having it disturbed by noise and people climbing on or over the weir and trying to gain access through their garden (river right) or their patio (river left).

To this end they ask that groups move through quietly, and as others come down river move on so there is not a log jam of canoeists building up making a noise.

The next access point to river left is opposite the fourth weir getting out into Weeping Cross Lane.

Canoeists can park at ATS tyres on the rough ground alongside, after first asking the manager or staff. (Please park against the chain link fence to leave room for customers).

From this point to Ashford Carbonel there are no access points other than under the A49 road bridge.

Ashford Weir and Mill has no footpath to the road but the owner, Mr Froggatt (0584 74650) is happy to allow portage or access if he is asked in advance.

Fishing Interests

Ashford Carbonel Weir is the only place on the river where

comments have been made about the conduct of canoeists by the NRA.

There have been cases where some individuals have gone through the fish passes, causing damage to fish counter sensors which are both expensive and difficult to replace and then playing the area where the salmon rest before going up the passes. Whilst the NRA are committed to treating fishermen and canoeists equally, this will not do our case a great deal of good.

Three hundred metres downstream of the weir is a large gravel bank (river left) from where a footpath goes into Ashford Carbonel village.

Ashford Carbonel is a small village with only one entrance/exit road, so please park considerately, both in the village and at the mill and change discreetly.

If everyone can be aware that the local landowners do need to be able to pass with large farm equipment this will help.

From Ashford Carbonel to Tenbury there are moves afoot for the fishing clubs owning the rights on both banks to form a syndicate and then grant canoeists access to certain parts at times of the day that will not interfere with fishing.

I am attempting to contact and talk to the various parties involved and hopefully canoeists will not be faced with a 'fait accompli' at a later date.

The major complaints of fishermen would appear to be perceived as large and inconsiderate groups with little courtesy towards other users.

Whilst the majority of landowners appear not to want to discourage canoeists, fish-

ing rights on the river are beginning to take on an appreciable value, partly due to the efforts of the NRA to encourage Salmon in greater numbers, so fishermen will wield greater financial muscle, possibly to the detriment of canoeists.

Safety

On a safety note, both ends of the fourth weir in Ludlow are showing signs of severe erosion. The NRA considers the weir to be defunct and has no intention of repairing it in the near future. It may prove sensible in high water levels to inspect the weir first.

At Ashford Carbonel Weir the NRA diver reports that there is a large undercut forming in the centre of the weir and whilst there is no obvious sign of this on the surface there must be a lot of water circulating to do the damage.

Current Situation

Whilst the situation on the river is sensitive I feel sure that with the good will of everyone we will continue to be able to canoe on the Teme. To this end could canoeists please contact me for up to date information.

Whilst I cannot return phone calls, if enquiries contain a self addressed envelope I will try to answer as quickly as possible.

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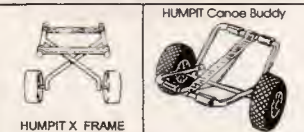
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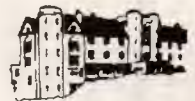
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top tips

and handy hints

Safe paddling on w

The development of safety equipment over the last ten years has seen huge changes both in concept of what is acceptable equipment and what equipment is available. To the extent that (at last) we now are beginning to laugh at the guy wearing an unpadded helmet on in the same way that we laugh at the guy with the old leather bicycle helmet on in the canoeing photo's of the 1960s. This is good. Equipment is very important. (Better still is well maintained equipment!).

I am not against "safety equipment" though it would be better called rescue equipment. Most of it I strongly agree with, and I do not want to have an argument over the points of how strong your end loops are or how long your throw bag should be; these decisions are yours, the consumer. You are the guy who buys the thing and you should make up your mind using all the information available. Information from your head, manufacturers and the BCU etc. and also by asking the sales rep relevant questions. (This will help us educate the producer in our needs: too many times when I ask manufacturers why they don't do this that or the other they reply "Because the market does not want it.")

My argument is that the prevention of the need to use this equipment is a much better way forward. The only problem with this

is that it is very difficult to analyse and produce recommendations; there is no minimum or maximum, no upper or lower limit, there are no numbers that you can test in hypothetical situations, there is just experience. What I want to talk about is the way to avoid the necessity to use the rescue equipment. This is not to say that I am against the stuff, far from it. I see nothing wrong with the stuff; I have had reason to need the same stuff on several occasions, however I would have preferred to have made the rapid rather than to have to get pulled out. Conversely I do see people loading up with "safety gear" when possibly a better use of the money spent buying it would have been to have gone to the local baths session and learnt to roll 100% every time!

The Turks have a great proverb

for it. **"Trust in Allah, but tie your horse"** Learn to paddle well but take your throw rope!

I think it is very important to recognise the difference between safety and rescue as this will help you on your judgement of what is on what is not on.

Safety and Rescue
Safe paddling is not the ability to rescue people. There are people who are very good at rescuing people but are not good at the paddling side of thing; maybe one leads to the other! However safe paddlers are often the best people at rescuing people because they understand the water and its powers.

- **Safety** is preventing the need for rescue
 - **Rescue** is when safe paddling has gone wrong.
- Both are very important to

your paddling career, how long or how terminal it is to be.

Safety

Put it into perspective. You are more likely to kill yourself on the way to or from a canoeing weekend, so buy a Volvo. Also, the most dangerous water you can paddle on is flat water! This is because more people die canoeing on flat water! However, you can prove anything by stats, and to prove these numbers you have to be careful over definitions, the only people who drown from flat water are those not wearing buoyancy aids.

White water is dangerous. If it wasn't then safety would not be a problem. The reason why it is dangerous is because you cannot breathe under water. White water is more dangerous than flat water because it is harder to stay upright in white water. This is all very basic but it does lead to the "solution" to the problem; **stay upright and keep your head above water!** This is what I want to look at.

Scouting the rapid

Is it on or not? This is an individuals decision. What you can paddle others can't and vice versa. Lars Holbeck one of the group in the States who were named as "hair boaters" said "A lot of people think I'm crazy, maybe better off locked up in a lunatic asylum. . . but when I'm boating I'm perfectly in control. When I'm scouting if I don't think I can make it with the control I want to then I portage. They are not looking close enough."

What route to take? Each rapid is different. How to run it is dependant on your skills and the rest of the groups'. Divide the rapid up into sections and look at each section; how do you want to enter the first section pointing left or right etc. How are you going to make the move/execute the drop where are you going to exit the rapid or how are you going to make the transition into the next section.

Look at the obstructions? Are they easy or hard to avoid togeth-



er with whether they are dangerous or benign.

How are you going to paddle the route? Is this a rapid that you are going to run by hopping from one eddy to the next; do you want to run it at speed anywhere; can you slow it down to give yourself more time on the rapid; do you want more time on the rapid; do you want to be pointing in any particular direction at any point on the rapid.

ment of the rapid (you hope) and a tail end Charlie who watches the rear and makes sure no-one is left behind.

This system works well when on small tight technical rivers. On large volume rivers the Americans have come up with the "buddy system" where paddlers pair up and then look after each other, this is because it is hard to watch more than one person on a large river rapid and the distance

that other peoples' decisions and lines runs should not affect you are in cloud cuckoo land! In the same way that you watch someone get badly pinned on a rock that you had thought you would miss and therefore you decide to carry watching someone make a route and gives you the chance to benefit from his experience and you can add this extra information into the equation and then reassess your original decision. Much of kayaking is learning from others be it paddling techniques, or route finding.

This changing of one's mind does have its problems, everyone in the group is therefore in a state of flux and keeping a track of who is on the river and who is or isn't running the rapid can be complicated but it has to be thought about. This leads to the idea of a tail end Charlie, a sweeper, who is very aware of his role on the river and keeps this in mind all the time. (When I have paddled with Slime this has been easy since Slime is likely to be at the back as a result of his paddling style, slow when agitated and stopped when not!) However having a tail end Charlie means that you have to be careful not to leave him behind. It is easy to say "Oh Slime's a good paddler and won't have any problems on this section" and shoot off round the corner. Accidents are more likely to happen when the pressure is not on: when you are relaxed and not concentrating e.g drifting backwards taking photos of the mountains etc.

Now, who should be the probe and who the tail end Charlie? Who is watching the front and back men? This is something that the group has to work out and be aware of. How you run the rapid depends on the rapid. Generally on small technical rivers the rule of thumb is one at a time. This is usually true because small technical rapids tend to be short and

can be run as such. Also putting more than one person on the river can be chaotic if the front person gets into trouble; the next person is liable to run in to him thus complicating things! Who should take the responsibility for leading, probing, the rapid is usually the strongest paddler the most experienced and most confident. Whether this is necessarily the best is dubious sometimes. Why? because for instance say the drop is "committed" in so much that once down getting back upstream is wither very difficult or impossible, what happens to the last man? There is a need to have a good paddler at the rear in these cases there is a case to be made to have the best paddler at the back of the group always. However this does cause problems up front! You have to have someone up front to know when to stop and scout.

Dave Manby



White water

What are the alternatives/consequences of making a mess of it. Great quote from an American "I only missed one eddy before being sucked into a religious experience". Having looked at the consequences can you handle them or be sure of avoiding them. Does it matter if you see God!

How are you going to recognise the route? Landmarks. Make sure they are recognisable from the river. It always looks better from the bank and it always looks different on the river. Saying that you will go left of that hole is all very well but recognising that hole can be difficult on the river especially if there are lots of holes going left of the wrong hole can have dire consequences! Looking for landmarks on the bank or particularly unique rocks in the river is always a good idea.

Double check your reference points. Things look different from upstream and from river level. Can you recognise your reference points? Can you remember the route?

If it doesn't feel right then have another look. If it still doesn't feel right: carry. Also important is to support anyone who decides to carry. Don't pressurise anyone into running the rapid.

If paddlers have been around long enough to attain grade 5 skills then they have had time to reflect on why, whether and when to run a rapid.

Intermediate boaters worry about "hair boaters" antics. Hair boaters worry more about intermediate boaters pushing their limits too quickly.

Right, having scouted the rapid, there is more to it than just getting in your boat and paddling on down the river. There is a not so small matter of group control. Most paddlers paddle with roughly the same group of friends each time they go paddling and sort out a pattern for their way of running the rapids. For instance the group I paddle with have a couple of lead paddlers, probes! who make the initial run and confirm your assess-

by Dave Manby: Part One

can well be half a mile or more till the next flat stretch. Also this system works very well when you have a mixed ability group with good paddlers pairing up with weaker paddlers. However it is best suited for big water where the risk of pinning is less. If someone is pinned you are liable to need more than one person to pull him clear and if you are working in pairs then you may have trouble.

Notable exceptions have happened. Once in Corsica we watched our probe, Ross, get stuffed on this drop; we had carried the drop the previous year and thought 'well, that confirms our last years decision to carry' and we were just about to carry when Radar was seen getting into his boat and being about to set off. We asked if he had seen what had happened to Ross. He replied "you're not going to let a little thing like that put you off" and off he set and cruised his line. Then we all ran the drop without a problem. Those who say that the decision is yours and yours only and

SCOUT

S section. Break it into sections; entrance set up; the manoeuvre; exit/transition to the next stage.

C current. Go with the flow unless you have to avoid the problem. Look at the eddies and the eddy line.

O obstructions. Easy (a) hard (b) to avoid + Dangerous (a) or not (b). Giving you an obstruction easy to avoid but dangerous if you fail to avoid it.

U understand. The manoeuvre required, the entrance/exit, your limitations, your groups' limitations. Encourage them to make their own decision, support those who carry.

T train. Recite your transitions, your route double check your reference points when back at your boat.





eⁿder

Editor's page

IN YOUR
OCT ISSUE

World
Champion-
ship
sprint racing
from Mexico

Rodeo
Pre-World
Champion-
ships and a
review of the
first year with
the BCU

Paddling with
Dolphins

Slalom from
Llangollen
and the World
Cup final
placings

You can do it in an open canoe... Without a man!

Why stay at home with the kids while he goes out paddling at the weekend? Answer, you don't have too. All you need is an Open Canoe and you and the kids can float off and leave behind.

Having learned to paddle in a kayak some years ago I became increasingly cheesed off at being left behind to do the domestics while my partner gallivanted off with men who preferred to avoid nasty things like cleaning the loo and emptying the cat litter tray.

The crunch came when I turned down yet another invitation to be sociable on the water. I sat jealously scowling at my partner Tom, while he packed his Mars bars, sandwiches and liquid sustenance into his drybag. then, eyeing the space within the 17ft Open Canoe lying forlornly on the grass imagined myself, the kids and kit filling its lonely hull and decided to go for it. My so Joshua was ecstatic with every rapid on the South Tyne that spring day in May. Natasha his younger sister preferred not to look, screwing her eyes tightly shut and gripped the gunnels as we negotiated the rocks. She soon got the spirit of things after a picnic lunch of tooth rotting goodies and pop.

With plenty of kit for the kids on the market taking care of their comfort and safety is simple and dressing up in buoyancy aids and hats is part of the fun. You can buy child size wooden paddles too, a bit of a luxury you might say but they do encourage youngsters to paddle properly and my children have found plenty of other uses for them such as cricket bats, weapons and shovels. children's kit has a good re-sale value too, as they usually grow out of it before it's worn out.

I am surprised there are not more female Open Boaters. Yes you do see women in open boats but

they are usually paddling at the bow with a man driving from the stern. Contrary to popular belief you don't have to be bearded to handle an Open Canoe, though a male paddler once suggested that if I really wanted to look the part I should wear a stick-on beard! We all know that paddling is about skill and technique, not brute strength. The pretty posters pinned up in the club house of families (mum at the bow and dad in charge at the stern) floating gently on sun drenched and flat rivers pose a bit of a myth. Learning some moving water skills mean you should easily be able to tackle a grade two river and keep the children dry, you can all then experience the thrill of white water. well behaved children will trim the boat for you too and with a bit of training they will edge and keep low through rapids. Their contribution makes them feel part of the team.

Tom taught me to paddle canadian in our beautiful wood and canvas canoe made by Canadian Indians and learning to paddle solo is one of the most liberating things I've done. The effort was worthwhile. Newly independent, cleaning out cupboards and peeling sprouts on a sunday is too boring to contemplate. I have got better things to do.

So ladies, don't hang up your paddle when you have babies and resign yourself to lonely Sundays and prams. There are other child carriers that don't need wheels and are much more fun! Learn to paddle an Open Canoe and stay in the driving seat with, or without a man!

Tom would like me to point out that on the weekend in question he was teaching open canoe to the girlfriends of committed Open-boaters. I have to report it's true, one of these guys now complains of the severe lack of domestic service in his house at the weekends!

Sarah Shrimpton.

Paddling, People, Politics and Putting yourself out to attend a meeting.

It is sometimes forgotten by some paddlers that the BCU is a members organisation as well as a National Governing Body for sport. Being a members organisation means that most of the decisions are made, believe it or not, by paddlers who find themselves working in a voluntary position, for one reason or another. The volunteers are banded together in groups called 'Committees', the grand British institutional behaviour pattern which manifests itself whenever anything needs organising. We Brits can't help this. It is genetically deep-seated and we enjoy talking about organising things at least as much as doing the actual thing we are 'organising'. Some are uncomfortable with this concept, but we live in a democracy and the route is there for you to have your say. This process is little understood and because it not often crystal clear is open to mis-interpretation and not a little mistrust on occasions. Outside of the BCU this fuels speculation that a BCU committee is one

of several things:

A Secret society of masonic handshakes : An old boy network ?

A bumbling bureaucracy in an Ivory tower ?

A collection of has-beens and misfits collectively gathered to set the sport back ten years ?

A cadre of anglers pretending to be canoeists, salaried to mislead and stall any access progress?

People who don't know what they are talking about, taking minutes, talking hours, wasting days?

Sorry to disappoint those who would believe all the above (and they exist, although few pay membership, lest the facts in Focus should cloud their already muddled thinking) the truth reads something like this:

Wherever canoeing takes place like minded paddlers often meet to share their sport. Sooner or later something needs doing (organising a tour, race, teaching etc) and a person with expertise/knowledge is sought: a sound chap (or chap-ess ?). In our case we need lots of peo-

ple like that just to keep the clubs, the events, the access, the coaching etc going. These people function best in small groups, often regionalised. We call them committees and they are the network we function on. They are not perfect, they have wrinkles and warts and do fall apart now and then, but they are the only real structure our diverse sport has. It is really that straightforward and simple.

The main problem with volunteer committees is that they need people to work well, and they often need new people and better support. For committees read commitment. The BCU needs you.

Anyone who has been around canoe sport for a while will have a 'committee' story...

I once went to the toilet during a meeting and came back into the room to congratulations on my new official role, voted in my short absence. This has happened to me twice, so I try not to drink for 5 hours before meetings. I know people who have

been elected to do key jobs in their absence, whilst sat at home with the family !!!

The gist of this waffle is that we need volunteers. To talk, to vote, to do the odd job, to voice opinions, to keep the greybeards up to date, to steer the sport and most importantly to guide development for the future.

This is now the time of the year when the AGM's take place: please try to get along and get involved. Find out for yourself how the BCU works at grass roots level. It is your union, and you can influence the way it runs, but you have to be there. I have heard it said that the most useful people in our organisation are too busy paddling to get involved in organising and helping on committees: there is some truth in this but it wouldn't hurt to attend one or two meetings would it? You may be pleasantly surprised.... you may even get what you want!

Kevin Danforth
Editor





SURFING WAVES AND RIDING STOPPERS TAKES ON A WHOLE NEW FEEL. UNLIKE OTHER KAYAKS THAT GET PULLED DOWN INTO THE WAVE DUE TO WATER BEING SUCKED UP THE SIDES AND ONTO THE DECK. THE ACROBAT AND CREEK'S UNIQUE HULL FORCES WATER UP AND AWAY, GIVING YOU BETTER RESPONSE AND INCREDIBLE LIFT

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