

THE CANOE SPORT MAGAZINE FOR THE NINETIES

Canoe focus

No 93. FEBRUARY 1995

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**BCU Enquiries &
Editorial to**
above address

Director
Paul Owen

Editor
Kevin Danforth

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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 changes are preferred on transparencies (colour slide). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. A help sheet is available for potential contributors. Please send a SAE to the Editor.

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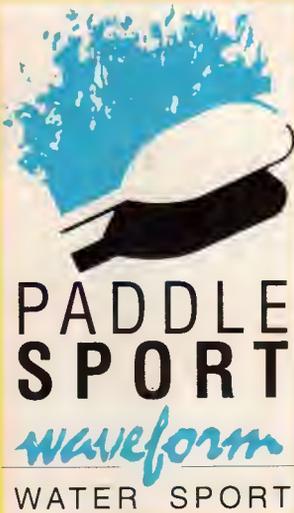


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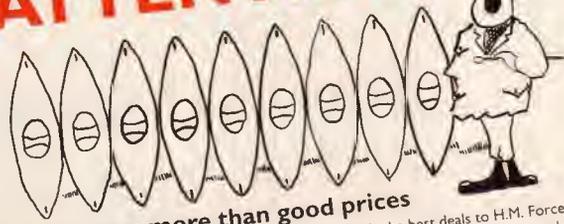


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Comment



! Canoeing comes alive in 1995

This is the year that world championships once again come to Britain. Unlike the highly successful 'Canoe 81' when, for the first time ever, all three world championships were staged in one country in the same year, racing does not feature on this occasion.

However, the picturesque town and area of Bala will host the World Wild Water Racing Championships, from 26-28 August, and Nottingham, home base of the world's most successful slalomists, is the venue for the World Slalom Championships from 30 August - 3 September. The World and Olympic qualifying events are on 30-31 August, and the World Championships themselves from 1-3 September.

Every member is urged to grasp the unique opportunity to see the world's best in action, and, regardless of their particular interests within the sport, be ready to capitalise on the publicity surrounding the events, to recruit others to 'the pleasures of the paddle'.

Hugh Mantle OBE

It is with much pleasure that we take the opportunity to congratulate Hugh Mantle who was awarded the OBE for services to canoeing in the New Year's Honours List. Hugh was coach to the men's Olympic Slalom Kayak Team, to whom he continues to be a consultant, and where he brought his expertise as a sports psychologist to bear, with unique effect.

Well known to many sportsmen and women throughout the world, particularly in coaching circles, Hugh has twice been Sports Coach of the Year, and is currently assisting some of Europe's leading golfers!

BCU Licence

Please remember that BCU membership includes a licence for BWB waters, but does not include a licence for NRA rivers, and in particular the River Thames. We look forward to including these rivers in the future. In the meantime, relevant licences must be obtained prior to paddling.

Do display your BCU Licence when paddling on the waterways as it is being increasingly asked for by lock keepers and BWB officials. This will save any awkward situations, as well as making its availability known to others.

Remember, the more people who sign up with us, the more competitive can your membership fee be, and the more likelihood we have of extending the licencing scheme.

New Phone Number

As of 1 April 1995 the BCU office will have new telephone and fax numbers:

Telephone 0115 9821100
Fax 0115 9821797

Torch Awards

The Torch Trust introduced the Torch Awards in 1962 to recognise voluntary service in sport at club level. In December the Duke of Gloucester presented one of these awards to John Moore of Bryanston School for his outstanding contribution to canoeing at youth level.

John has concentrated his effort locally, and is well known in Marathon circles particularly for preparing teams for the Devizes to Westminster race. His long, faithful and dedicated service to the community has now been justly recognised.

Lyme Bay - Verdict

The spectre of 'Lyme Bay' is behind us as the court in Winchester decided that gross negligence amounting to manslaughter had taken place and Peter Baylis Kite was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment. The full significance of this decision is still to be realised and fully assessed. Any new devel-

opments which arise as a result of the verdict will be reported to our members.

The report produced by the 'panel of experts' convened by the BCU is reproduced later in this magazine.

Canoe Exhibition

The International Canoe Exhibition takes place on Saturday and Sunday 18-19 February at Crystal Palace. With well over 100 exhibitors, and an ever-enlarged programme, the event provides the ideal and only opportunity to catch up with all the latest developments in the canoeing world as you prepare for the 1995 season.

Annual General Meeting

The BCU AGM is being held on 11 March 1995 at Westminster Boating Base. Please read the enclosed literature concerning motions and elections and exercise your right to vote.

Recruit a new member in 1995

The BCU has to represent and seek to protect the interests of all who paddle. Those who do not pay a membership fee are benefitting from your contribution - they are, in fact, 'free-loading'. It is in the interests of all members to recruit, so that everyone pays their own way, and ensures that the organisation has both the financial and numerical strength to carry out its work on behalf of the whole sport, more effectively.

VAT-man!

Much has been said, and there has been considerable agonising, over the years, concerning the BCU's finances. Today I can bring good news. The BCU has successfully recovered in excess of £72k from the Customs and Excise after 'extensive negotiation'.

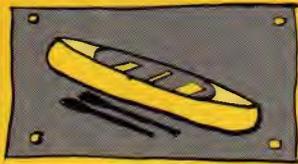
Ron Emes, MBE, Memorial Dinner

Will it, won't it? Well it did! The Ron Emes Dinner took place at the Richmond Hill Hotel on 18 November. The evening was combined with the Royal Canoe Club's Founders Ball and was a memorable occasion. It was attended by the guest of honour, Margaret Emes, and her family, together with several dignitaries from the wider world of sport, and over one hundred BCU members. Sir Peter Yarraton, who has just retired as Chairman of the Sports Council, made the key note speech in which he recalled with fond memory the valuable contribution that Ron has made to the World of Sport. A moving tribute, written as 'an ode to' by his daughter, Mandy, was read by our President, Albert Woods. Margaret Emes would like to thank all those who travelled from far and wide for the Memorial dinner.

Paul Owen, Director 



Left: from left to right,
Sir Peter Yarraton,
Jim Elmes,
Margeret Emes,
Dick Hodges,
Lady Yarraton,
Albert Woods,
Helen Armitage,
Dick Palmer



Notice board

Vintage Kayaks for Sale

A 1945-46 Tyne folding single with aluminium framing, and a 1950s 2-seat German Hammer with a sprung trolley, are available. Both complete with bags, and skin, so far as is known, in reasonable condition. Any offers please to Mr P W Burston, 3 Burnham Close, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5ST (0628 522498).

Basingstoke Canal - Closure at Ash

The canal is closed at Ash until 30 June 1995 for the construction of the Blackwater Valley relief road aqueduct crossing (in the middle of Ash embankment) Section closed: from Ash Wharf to Ash Lock.

Huntingdon Canoe Marathon

Sunday 26 March 1995. GB Team Singles Assessment race (K1/C1) and Eastern Region Hasler Qualifier. Check in by 11am, starts from 11.25am. Organiser V Anderson (0223) 233668, Huntingdon Canoe Club, Venue Huntingdon Riverside Car Park O.S Map 153 Ref TL246716

Birmingham Century

May 6/7th. Try this event 100 miles non-stop. K1 or C1 solo, C2/K2 non stop, K1 or C1 two man relay, C2/K2 four man relay. OR Team event for 10 person team (for specialist racing teams and non-specialist marathon teams). Application forms from P Wilson, 9 Lincoln Croft, Shenstone, Nr Lichfield, Staffs, Tel: 015143 480258 TRAIN FOR IT NOW!

Yorkshire and Humberside

Next date of the Yorkshire and Humberside Coaching Meeting will be held at Buckles Inn near York, Tuesday 21st March 1995 at 7.30pm.

Mini Slalom

Manchester Canoe Club will be running a pre-season "warm-up" mini slalom at Marple on Sunday 26 February 1995. It will be open to all paddlers, including slalomists of all divisions, beginners and plastic boat paddlers. Any newcomers to slalom who would like advice and assistance on the day should ring us beforehand. We will then allocate someone to "show them the ropes". Interested paddlers should ring 01925 823897 for details.

Avoiding Collision

Those who train on the river at night can cause considerable alarm to other river users, quite apart from breaking the law, through not carrying the regulation lights.

An agreement has been reached on the Nottingham stretch of the Trent, that canoeists will carry a red flashing rear light, as used by some cyclists, clipped either to the back of their boat, or to their buoyancy aid.

Many are reluctant to carry the regulation all round white light because of interference with their 'night vision'.

The theory is that if something is coming towards them carrying the regulation lights, then they can take avoiding action, whilst anything coming up from behind can see their flashing red light and keep well clear.

If the regulating authority is happy with this arrangement it has a lot of merit. However, the canoeist should also be aware of the fact that whilst he or she may be happy that they have time to cut across the bow of a closing vessel, the person navigating that boat does

not know their intention, and suddenly becomes aware of a canoeist ahead of them.

They may well take avoiding action, and it could be that other canoeists are at the time level with the vessel, unseen by the skipper, which now veers into them.

If the arrangement is to work and be safe for all, therefore, the 'golden principle' enshrined in the Rules for Avoiding Collision at Sea must be adhered to: that is, to take avoiding action early.

Paddlers training at night must consider the effect that their suddenly discovered presence in close proximity could have on someone quietly navigating their craft. The paddler may well know his or her intentions, but they may be far from clear to the other person. Canoeists should always ensure, therefore, that they are going to pass the oncoming vessel with plenty of clearance, and at no time be likely to be discovered directly ahead, or crossing the bow.

Common sense and courtesy equals safety for all.

International Canoe Exhibition

18/19 February, Car Parking is free. There are six halls spread around the centre, showing a wide range of canoes, kayaks and equipment, with a number of new overseas manufacturers displaying for the first time. There will be three lectures - all in the afternoon.



Stolen

About a week ago a canoe and three sets of paddles were stolen from Hemel Hempstead Canoe Club. This was the third major loss from the club this year. There have been several other thefts. The owners are trying very hard to get their stuff back! We can't rule out the possibility of the equipment being stolen to order - which may mean it's all miles away and we'll never see it again. This equipment may be lying abandoned somewhere -

or maybe one of your readers has just bought the boat or a paddle in "suspicious" circumstances.

Stolen from Hemel Hempstead Canoe Club

1. Plain yellow "Magic Bat" with a distinctive pink seat. There are black foam hip and knee pads fitted. Marked with "Graham Bourne - HP2 7NR".
2. "Propulsion" slalom blades on a cranked shaft - carbon fibre. Left hand feather.
3. "Schlegel" asymmetric slalom paddles on a straight shaft - carbon fibre. Left hand feather.
4. "New Wave" general purpose blades. White blades with red lettering. Right hand feather.

A reward for the safe return of our equipment - and a bigger reward for information leading to an arrest.

Tel: Graham Bourne - 0442 219532 or Hemel Hempstead Police Station 0442 218433

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ...

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International Paddle-ability 1995

From the 1st until the 3rd September 1995 the British Canoe Union will be inviting delegates from around the world to attend an International Gathering in Nottingham.

The principle aim will be to bring together paddlers, coaches, officials and administrators from the National Federations for paddle-sport in other countries to discuss ways of promoting the sport for disabled people. Paddle sport encompasses canoeing, kayaking, rafting and dragon boats.

The programme will include sprint racing competition for single and double kayaks. There will also be seminars to discuss, coaching programmes, the adaptation of equipment, and the setting up of regulations to govern future competitions for Sprint Racing, Slalom and Marathon.

The whole event will take place at the National Watersports Centre at the same time as the World Slalom Championships and the European Dragon Boat Championships.

There is a need to recruit a large number of volunteers from the Nottingham area to help with this event. Some people will be needed to assist with the planning and organisation prior to the event, but many more will be needed to escort teams and provide support and hospitality during the event. It will not be necessary to speak a foreign language although this would be helpful.

Volunteers should contact Geoff Smedley, 11 High Beech, Coventry, CV5 7QD

Canoeing for People who are Disabled

An open forum will be held at 2pm on Saturday 18 February 1995 for all who are interested in the above subject. The meeting will be held in room G55 at the International Canoe Exhibition, Crystal Palace. The Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee, Geoff Smedley, will report on the years progress, followed by an election for the Committee, and an open forum. The present Committee members are all eligible for re-election. Other nominations should be proposed and seconded by two current members and forwarded to the Director of Coaching at the BCU before 15 February 1995. The forum (without the election) will be repeated on the Sunday at 2pm.

Review of the Second National Championships (Canoe, Kayak & Raft) for People with a Learning Disability -

July 1994 Holme Pierrepont Nottingham

Right from the start we said that one of the main purpose's was to have fun and all those who attended showed us the way. The Championship's are more than a test of skill and ability, they are a major social event as many of the competitors do not get out very often socially. New and old friendship's are formed each year and as much effort was put into the dancing as into the canoeing.

The participants were the stars of the week, but some of the credit must be given to the team organisers/leader's. Five days and four nights of almost non stop activity and they were still smiling. Thank you everyone.

Thanks also goes out to all the volunteers and helpers that gave up their free time, skills and energy to make the competitors time in Nottingham a memorable one. If you are interested in the results, the list is too long to print here today so please phone the competition committee and we will send a copy to you.

The future Beck Meadow's Canoe Clubs Aim is to provide the facility for as many disabled people as possible to try our growing sport from just feeling the freedom of sitting in a boat in a swimming pool or becoming top paddlers, the

Championships is just one of our facilities for making it happen, and it's happening again in 1995 from Monday 17 July to Friday 21 July however we need your help, maybe you are an instructor and could give a couple of hours of your time to help train some of our competitors or maybe you can help with the timing during the race days. These guys and girls, men and women really do need your support to experience the world of canoeing in its various forms.

I'll finish on the words of three of our competitors as they climbed out of their boats having raced over two days and the completed a four mile tour the very next day:

Zoe said, having capsized three times in half an hour "Ho that was fun"

Jamie (Baker, "Blimey how many Jamies in one place") "Can I come back next year and help?"

Lisa (our youngest competitor never paddled outside a pool before but went home a Gold Medal Winner) "It's the best day of my life"

No words from Richard but his smile said it all.

See you all next year from the fab five BMCC Committee. For further details contact Dave Clifton on 0115 9781120

Launch of Canoe Facilities For Disabled Paddlers

A superb new facility for the disabled was launched at the Basingstoke Canal Visitors Centre at Mytchett last Saturday (3rd December). The new facility consists of an access path from the disabled car parking area direct to the canal and a hoist enabling disabled people to be lifted from their wheelchairs into a canoe or boat on the water.

The facility was paid for by Surrey County Council in celebration of European Day for the Disabled and Mr Timothy Goad, the High Sheriff of Surrey led the opening ceremony. Despite a drizzly start to the day lots of people turned up to support the launch, including members of Surrey County Council Social

Services Department, County and District Councillors and local groups. One willing member of PHAB (Physically Handicapped Able Bodied) agreed to brave the elements and test out the new hoist. Nigel Campin was lifted into a Kiwi Canoe (the first of the fleet, sponsored by Marconi) and taken for a short paddle by Trix Davey of NEHWACA (North East Hampshire Water Activities Association) who organises canoeing for disabled groups in Fleet.

The Basingstoke Canal Authority is continually seeking to improve facilities for disabled people to enjoy the many recreational opportunities offered by the canal and this is seen as

a valuable extension to the facilities already available at the Canal Centre.

Annette Weiss

1995 marks the 40th anniversary of West Yorkshire Canoe Club

If you know any ex-members of WYCC names, addresses, over the past 39 years please inform myself, Peter Dawson, at 87 Fall Lane, Hartshead, Liversedge, West Yorkshire, WF15 8AS Tel: 01274 870988. At our West Tanfield Slalom in September we are holding a special event in the evening, and the official dinner late October 1995.

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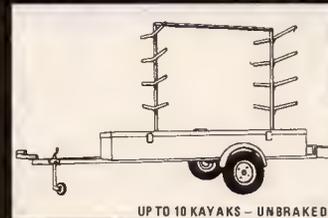
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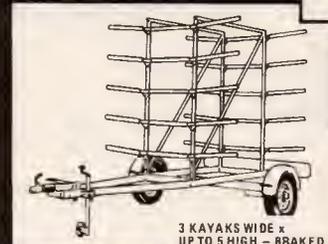


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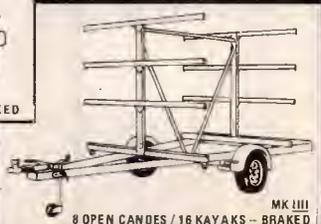


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News from Canolfan Tryweryn

Good news from North Wales, as prices for Day Tickets and Tryweryn Tours will remain the same for next year. As in previous years, members who are unable to produce a current membership card are charged at the higher non members rate and given a refund slip for the difference. These refund slips can be exchanged for cash at the Centre within six months or used against another Day Ticket or Tryweryn Tour when a valid membership card is produced. However, due to the increased bank charges, it will only be possible for members to be offered a partial refund if this is requested by cheque. To save all this hassle, members are encouraged to bring their membership cards with them whenever they visit Canolfan Tryweryn.

Duncan Winning

National Service To Sports Awards 1994

"When I opened the letter and glanced at the heading, 'National Service to Sport Awards', I thought 'Good God! What do they want me to do now?' Further reading revealed that they were doing something for me, not the opposite way round, which left me speechless - something some people might find hard to believe."

Duncan became involved in canoeing through the Scottish Hostellers' Canoe Club in the 1950s. He has taken part in most of the competitive disciplines in canoeing and continues to take an active role in coaching newcomers at local clubs, Garnock CC, in his home town. His expertise has been invaluable in coastal access issues through his involvement with the Scottish Canoe Association Touring Committee.

Duncan first served on the Scottish Canoe Association Council in 1962 as Slalom Secretary,

becoming Association Secretary in 1964, Vice President in 1968 and then President from 1969 to 1972. During the 1960s and 70s he was also a key player in ensuring that Scottish interests were fully represented by the British Canoe Union. In 1981 he was elected Honorary President of the Association, a position he holds to this day.

Duncan's wider interest in Outdoor Pursuits has led to his increasing involvement in the Scottish Sports Association, where he is Chairman of the Outdoor Pursuits Division.

Probably the pre-eminent figure in canoeing in Scotland, Duncan Winning's knowledge of the history and tradition of canoeing in Scotland and further afield is unsurpassed and his love and devotion of the sport is undisputed.

Kingston Royals Seek Recruits for World Dragon Boat Championships in China

The first World Championships in Dragon Boat Racing will be held in China on the Nanhu Lake, Yue Yang City, Hunan Province, South China, one and a half hours flying time north of Hong Kong from Thursday 15th June to Sunday 18th June 1995. This will be one of the first major events to be held in China since they adopted a more relaxed attitude to the western world, China has reputedly 20 million people dragon boating and it is their major water

sport. It is expected that some 18 countries will compete in the open/mixed/women's races over the three distances 250m/500m/1,000m.

The "Royals" based at the Royal Canoe Club in Teddington are British leaders in the sport having won frequently in the far east, and were mixed and women's European Champions in 1993.

The Royals are keen to recruit experienced canoeists whether Sprint/Marathon/Slalom or Wild

Water in their quest for success at the World Championships.

If you feel that you are up to the challenge, based in the London area, want to visit China and win and would like to appear on the BBC Personality of the year awards in December 1995 why not give Jock Wishart 0181 549 1457 or John Griffiths 0181 941 2714 a ring. Full sponsorship is being obtained.

What's On? *Diary*

Events Diary

Sunday 4th June 1995, Blackwater Valley "Crazy Coot Challenge", at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett, Surrey. Five mile run (mainly off road) followed by 12 miles of Mountain Biking (off road!) and finally 3 miles of canoeing (limited canoe hire available). Entry Fee: £5.00 per person,; Team (of 2 or 3) £10; Canoe hire £5. Closing date: Friday 26 May 1995. For details and entry form please send SAE to: The Blackwater Valley Visitor Centre, Frimley Business Park, Frimley, Surrey GU16 5SG. Tel: 0276 686615 Fax: 0276 678798. Parking, refreshments, bar, food, kiddie play area, toilets, camping, results sheet and prizes all available.

Open Canoe Sailing Group

April 29/30	Ullswater
May 27/30	Bala
June 24/25	Derwent Water
July 22/28	Loch Lomond
(The National Week - overnight and day cruises - full race programme)	
Aug 19/20	Rudyard Lake
Sept 16/17	Coniston
Oct 7/8	Rutland Water

These are open recreational events and new members or non-members are welcome. On Saturdays we have a social cruise and Sundays, while still sociable, normally include a race or two! Further information from John Bull 016973 51688

White Rose Canoe Club Washburn Cruise 2nd April 1995

The White Rose Canoe Club will be organising an Open Day Wild Water Cruise on the River Washburn on Sunday 2nd April 1995. This date is a must for your diaries; full details will be published in the canoeing press. We plan to run as many events as possible - all types of craft will be accommodated from kayaks and open canoes to squirt boats and rubber rings. Organised groups for training will be welcome. A range of reasonably priced refreshments will be available. Come and enjoy a fun day on Yorkshires premier controlled release White Water Site. Let us know in advance of any particular requirements: Norman and Pamela Taylor (tel/fax 01132 737393) or Dick Constable (tel: 01132 668787)

Green Slime Whitewater Lecture in London

Pete 'Green Slime' Knowles is to present a London lecture on whitewater rafting and kayaking in the Himalayas in March. Supported by Cotswold The Outdoor People, Knowles (Currently Chairman of the BCU Expedition Committee) will be talking about his expeditions to the Kingdom of Nepal from 1983 to the present day; expeditions which have included descents

of the Modi Khola and the Sun Khosi. The lecture will take place on Monday 27th March starting at 7.30pm at Cotswold The Outdoor People, 42-46 Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush (next to Shepherd's Bush Central Underground). The lecture costs £3 (£2 Students, UB40, OAP) Tickets are available from Cotswold in the shop or on 0181 743 2976.

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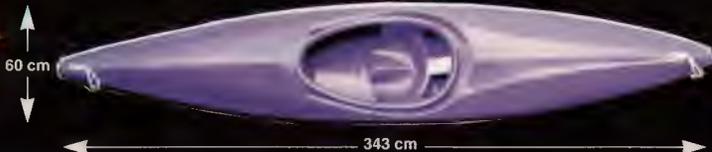
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Record breaking with Citroën a

Helen Barnes aims to be one of just four British women selected to compete at the forthcoming World Slalom Canoe Championships at Nottingham - and then go on to represent Britain at the 1996 Olympics at Atlanta in the USA. In the meantime, she's limbering up for an attempt at the International Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace on the world record for canoe rolls with a paddle. If she succeeds, she'll gain a place in the Guinness Book of Records - not bad for someone who only took up the sport seven years ago.



The brightest canoe on the water, paddled by one of the sport's brightest young stars... Helen Barnes, sponsored by Citroën

Success, in the World Championships, the Olympics and even the Guinness Book of Records, depends on hard work and preparation, Helen's own skills and determination - and also on Citroën, the company which is backing her efforts.

This is the second year that the car company has been sponsoring Helen and for her, the support is invaluable: "It means I can now have the very best equipment, but just as important is the car they provide for me. It means I can drive to training sessions easily and I can get around to the various events without difficulty. Before I had a car it was very hard to motivate myself to go out on a dark December night on my bike in the cold to get to a training session...."

And already Citroën's support is paying handsome dividends. It has allowed Helen to continue her meteoric rise in the world of

competitive canoeing and to reach the top three in the rankings.

She started canoeing at 15, after attending a PGL adventure holiday. "I really liked canoeing and joined a club at Matlock in Derby where I spent time in the swimming pool getting water confident and learning how to paddle in a straight line", she says.

Winning from the outset

"Then I entered my first event at Darley Abbey and won it so I decided then and there to take up the sport competitively".

She bought a fibreglass Concept Ziggy First boat to replace her old plastic one, promptly won races in both Division 5 and Division 4 and by the end of the season was promoted to Division 2.

at the International Canoe Exhibition

The following year saw promotion to Division 1, though she had still not yet learned to roll: "I spent a lot of time swimming in those days", she ruefully remembers. Nevertheless, she took the Division 1 Championship in 1990 and was promoted to the Premier Division to compete with the nations top 40 women canoeists.

The same year she was selected for the England Junior team and after turning 18, made it into the GB Intermediate team in both 1992/3 and 1993/4.

By the start of this season she was ranked 10th. Now, thanks to another successful season, she's third and has now made the GB Senior squad.

Tough, practical and stylish

Her car is a Citroën ZX 1.9 turbo diesel Estate and she's delighted with it: "It's economical and it's fun to drive", she says. "But it's also very practical for someone like me. The roof rack is standard, and with the Estate there's loads of storage space for equipment and all the paraphernalia I carry around with me.

"And it's tough too the paintwork doesn't scratch easily taking the canoe on and off the roof, and the side stripes and large bumpers

Helen gets to events in her Citroën ZX Estate: "It's economical and it's fun to drive", she says

two days to make the deck with its special chevron design", she says. "You won't see anything else like it on the water!"

But just as the boat is technically state-of-the-art, so is Helen's ZX which, under the skin, bristles with all the latest safety developments. For example, side impact bars and air bags ensure the ultimate safety for occupants. When it comes to the braking system, the ABS means you'll be hauled down faster than a stopper in a weir. One of the motor industry's most modern diesel engines provides just the sort of torque and power delivery you need to punch out into fast moving traffic, and it also offers outstanding economy and unrivalled reliability.

Other plus points are the Citroën's good all-round visibility - which makes back-paddling into a parking space a piece of cake. Handling in the wet? According to Helen, the ZX is safe and sure. And its tough and durable



protect it in the car park."

Helen also reckons the ZX is distinctive and stylish - though perhaps not quite as bright as the livery on her full Olympic construction full foam and kevlar boat which is so lightweight at 8.4 kilos that she has to put lead weights under the seat to bring it up to the 9kg minimum limit.

"It was made specially for me and it took

construction means no leaks in the footwell of a ZX! It takes the rough with the smooth - "I can get the ZX along rough tracks and difficult areas at some of the more remote events, but at the same time it's easy and relaxing to drive at the end of a hard day's canoeing. Even at 70mph it feels like it's in an eddy", says Helen.

Looking ahead, Helen's first ambition is to gain that coveted place in the Guinness Book of Records at Crystal Palace, then to retain her top 3 placing in next season's rankings, perform well on the international circuit, and then get selected for Atlanta in 1996 and maybe Sydney in the year 2000. With a little help from her friends at Citroën, there's nothing holding her back...

WIN A CAR

Come and meet Helen Barnes and Citroën UK on Stand 411 in Hall 4 at the International Canoe Exhibition at Crystal Palace on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th February.

Enter the Free Draw and you could win a top of the range Xantia VSX worth over £17,500.00.

For more information on the Citroën range ring 0800 262262



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The helicopter banked to the left as we turned downstream for a closer look at the river. Turning to Loel in the back seat his expression replicated my thoughts, this was the biggest white water I'd ever seen. The hole was threatening to recirculate the helicopter - what would it do to a Magic Bat!

Right: biggest hole in the world?? - from 700ft



New Descents in New

Left: about to head up the Chimbu valley



The idea of kayaking in Papua New Guinea, and particularly of descending the Waghi-Tua-Purari river system, first emerged about five years ago. A direct result of watching a BBC film of an unsuccessful attempt to raft the river by a team of Americans in 1983. Eighteen months of planning, letter writing, phone calls and faxes had finally reached fruition as we flew over the river. Starting at our proposed take out on the coastal plains we worked our way upriver. Flying through a series of deep limestone gorges, eventually emerging into the Upper Waghi valley in the Western Highlands near Kundiawa.

Looking at the river, we soon realised two things. Firstly, a descent would be much faster than the twelve days we had envisaged. Secondly, the river level would need to drop a long way, if an attempt was to be feasible. Unfortunately, during the next four weeks the rain increased and the river rose to flood level. Indeed, we found out that our visit was coinciding with the wettest dry season in Papua New Guinea since 1973, making an attempt out of the question.

However, all was not lost. The section of the Waghi in the upper valley, above Kundiawa, was still possible and provided an excellent day trip with big volume grade four fun. More importantly however, we discovered a number of rivers flowing off the surrounding mountains into the Waghi, including the Chimbu which runs off Papua New Guinea's high-



EXPEDITION TEAM

Marcus Bailie
Phil Blain
Loel Collins
Colin Hill
Rob Hind
Geoffrey
Lennon
Paul O'Sullivan

All Photo
Credits -
Waghi Kayak
Expedition

Left: dancer at
Goroka show

est mountain - Mt. Wilhelm. All these rivers still awaited first descents and the unseasonal rain made spate runs on these a very exciting proposition.

Perched on top of the kayaks in the back of the Land cruiser, we bounced our way up the muddy dirt road that forms the only link between the outside world and the Chimbu valley. The vehicle had seen better days and we regularly had to stop to let the overheating engine cool. Arriving at Gambol Station we were immediately surrounded by a large crowd eager to see the strange visitors. The highlanders are not fond of the water at the best of times, but one look at the brown torrent that the Chimbu river had become after many days heavy rain, was enough to convince them that we were mad. As I sat in the eddy about to head down river, I looked up to see an old woman waving good-bye with tears tracking down her weathered face, fearful for our safety, if not certain of our imminent demise.

Unfortunately, that first afternoon we nearly proved her correct. Three Kilometres on we were settling into

the river. Steep continuous rapids wound around blind bends with few eddies. Six was a big group for this kind of river, but from the whoops and smiles it was obvious we were all enjoying it. Rounding the next bend we found a tree taking up four fifths of the river. Marcus and I both made the same mistake of heading too far right, spinning on a small eddy to hit the tree backwards. Capsizing under the tree, my paddles and his boat pinned. Luckily, we both managed to get to the bank, but my boat and Marcus's paddles, headed downstream with Loel and Colin making chase. Once we'd retrieved his kayak, Marcus, using my paddles, headed off with Rob and Phil as I began the difficult climb up to the road. As I walked along, my mind was heavy with worry. It would be dark in three hours, and all my kit was loaded in my boat. To top it all it was raining. I could easily imagine a miserable night coming up. At least I could make out three paddlers on the river below, and occasionally an empty boat tumbling downstream. About three kilometres downstream, I came to a small



Local rafters

village perched above a rope bridge spanning the river. Excited villagers came running up beckoning me to follow them. We made our way down the steep muddy slope to the bridge, where incredibly the rest of the village were waiting with my kayak. I can't imagine how they managed to get it out of the river, but I was grateful and immensely relieved. It did however look slightly different from the last time I'd seen it. The nose now split and at 90 degrees to the rest of the boat. Nothing a little sex wax wouldn't temporarily repair! Indeed, surprisingly minor damage considering the rapids it had come through and even more unbelievably all my kit was still intact and dry, even my camera had survived. Things just kept getting better when Phil, Marcus and Rob turned up. After saying goodbye and thank you to the boat retrieval team, we headed off down river to meet the others.

We spent the night in the mission house of a riverside village. Built by two Americans, who'd left in the late 1970's it had been empty since. Reverend Wesley Karenga was now head of the mission and we were not about to turn down his offer of hospitality. Dust and cobwebs were much better than a night under a wet tarp.

Film Crew

The whole village came to see us off in the morning. With a blue sky above, and the river having dropped a little, we were all confident of getting to the confluence with the Waghi in Kundiawa that afternoon. As an added bonus, we finally managed to meet up with the film crew from EM-TV. They had wanted to film our descent for the documentary they were making on the expedition. However, their 4x4 had been stolen two days earlier and travelling by local trucks they had only just managed to catch up with us. As the river downstream disappeared into a series of limestone gorges, it was unlikely they'd get much footage today, and would be relying on what we could capture on our small Hi-8 cam corder.

By lunch we were about 7 Kilometres from Kundiawa. We'd had an excellent morning's paddling, with one portage around a boulder choke, and continuous sections of grade four rapids falling at up to 200 foot per mile. Stopping for lunch in a small village, we were immediately surrounded by a large group of locals somewhat bemused by the space bars and dried food we were eating. Back on the water, we hoped the afternoon would be as rewarding as the morning's paddling had been. We were not to be disappointed. Straight away we were into a superb section of difficult but highly enjoyable white water. Suddenly, the banks steepened as the river disappeared through a gateway, formed by two vertical limestone walls with a small log bridge spanning the gap. Rob had broken out on river left just above the narrowing with the rest of us in a larger eddy upstream on river right. He could see a small eddy below the bridge, and waved Loel through with Phil following. Rob was now looking uncertain, and signalled that he could no

MANY THANKS

As well as the first descent of the Chimbu River the Waghi Kayak Expedition completed first kayak descents of the Koronigl and Minj rivers. The expedition would like to thank all its sponsors without whose support the expedition would not have been possible.

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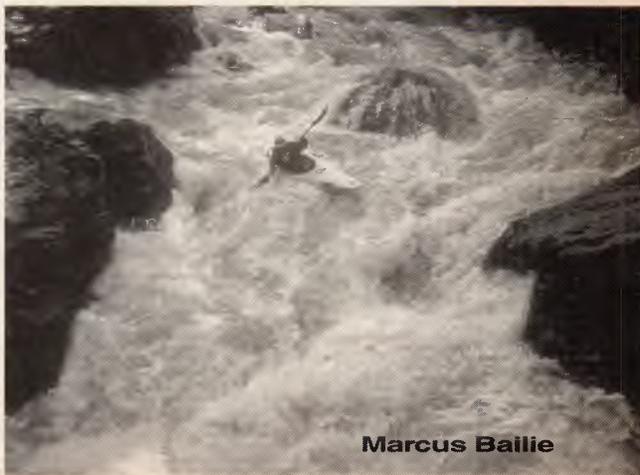
Chester

longer see the other two. We got out, and with machetes, cut our way up to the path to the log bridge. From the bridge, we could see Loel and Phil out of their boats and signalling. All was not well. In fact, just below the eddy they were in the whole river disappeared into a cave, re-emerging through a bedding plane some distance downstream. With no chance of portaging at river level, we set about rescuing Phil and Loel and hauling their boats back upstream to the bridge. By now, a small group of local teenagers had gathered. They 'd seen us at lunch and had been running down the road following our progress. In a mixture of English and Pidgin they said it was impossible to continue, and we'd have to climb out to the road. Not wishing to admit defeat too easily we decided to divide up, Loel, Phil and Marcus headed off to try and find or cut a portage route through the jungle on river left. Meanwhile I headed up the path out of the gorge with the locals who now had to head home. The path was steep and muddy, winding its way up alongside a waterfall before emerging into more open countryside, eventually reaching the road about 400 feet above river level. Not an easy option to take loaded kayaks up. As I headed back down I hoped the others had found a better alternative. Unfortunately, it was not to be. After one hour they had only made 200 meters progress and that was without kayaks! It was going to have to be the climb out to the road, but with only two hours light left it was dubious if we'd make it all the way before dark. About a third of the way up, we were getting into a routine, and hauling the boats was getting faster but progress was still slow. Hopes of reaching Kundiawa faded as a bivvy began to look like a certainty.

Short and Stocky with Huge Feet

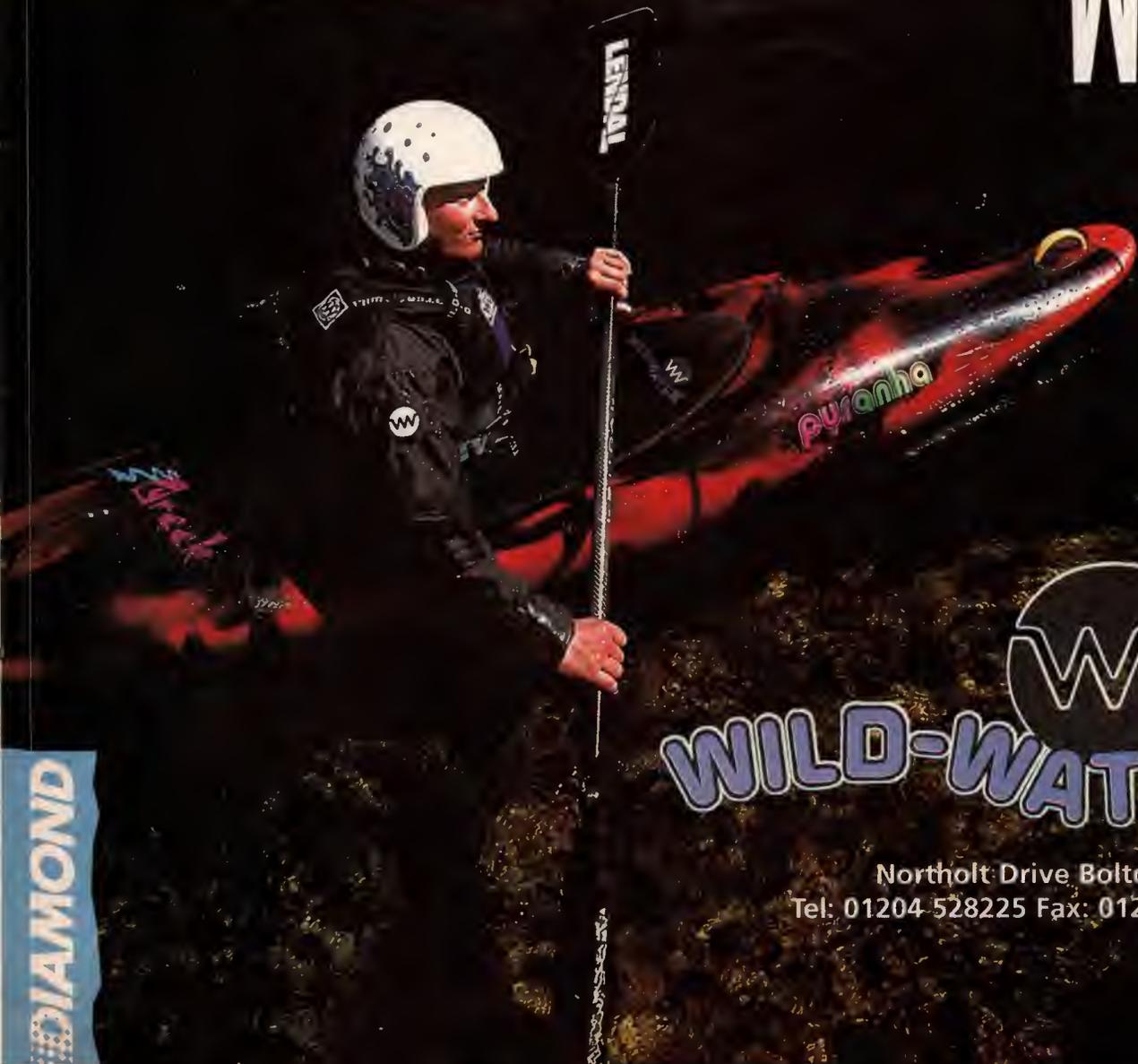
Marcus and I looked at each other with puzzled faces. "Did you just hear voices?" Looking up through the trees we could see people descending towards us. In fact it turned out to be our friends from earlier on, who'd gone home only to return with others from their village, and they were now determined to take over the evacuation of the kayaks. The highlanders are ideally adapted for farming on the steep slopes of the mountains. Being short and stocky with huge feet, about half the width again of our European feet. The human equivalent of four wheel drive! Whereas we'd been slipping on the muddy path and using ropes to haul the boats, the locals just picked them up one between two, or even one each, and trotted up the path as if the loaded Magic Bats weighed nothing. Forty minutes later in the deepening dusk, we were loading the boats into the back of a truck about to head back to our hotel in Minj and a shower. No bivvy after all. All that remained was to come back and lower into the gorge downstream to finish off the last section to Kundiawa, but that's another story!

Paul O'Sullivan 



Marcus Bailie

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DIAMOND

The trial is now over. The managing director of Active Learning and Leisure, which owned the St Albans Centre at the time of the accident, Peter Baylis Kite, is serving a 3-year term of imprisonment, having been found guilty on four counts of manslaughter (relating to the four victims) against the charge recorded at the end of this article.

The company itself was also found guilty and fined £60,000.

The jury failed to reach a verdict with regard to the Manager of the Centre, Joseph Stoddart, who had actually authorised the particular venture on the day, and the Judge refused a plea by the prosecution for a re-trial in his case.

Reproduced here is a copy of the report which was prepared following the visit of a 'panel of experts' convened by the BCU, to the Weymouth Police, where the evidence as gleaned by them from the survivors was presented, and the following opinions determined unanimously.

The Tragedy in Lyme Bay

Introduction

Within 24 hours of the Lyme Bay Incident it became obvious that we were dealing with a very serious and high profile tragedy. It was therefore decided to convene a panel providing a wide and extensive range of expertise and experience to deal with the matter.

The panel comprised:

Martin Meling

BA Cert Ed, 2nd Mates FG Cert. BCU Senior Instructor (Sea)
Chairperson BCU Sea Touring Committee

Sam Cook

Chief Instructor, Bewerley Park Outdoor Pursuits Centre.
BCU Regional Coaching Organiser. BCU Coach (Sea)

Nigel Dennis

Proprietor, Angelsey School of Sea Kayaking.
BCU Senior Instructor (Sea)

Franco Ferrero

Head of Kayaking, Sports Council's National Centre for Mountain Activities, Plas-y-Brenin.
BCU Coach (Sea)

Nigel Hingston

BCU SW Regional Sea Touring Representative
BCU Senior Instructor (Sea)

Howard Jeffs

Valley Canoe Products.
BCU Coach (Sea)

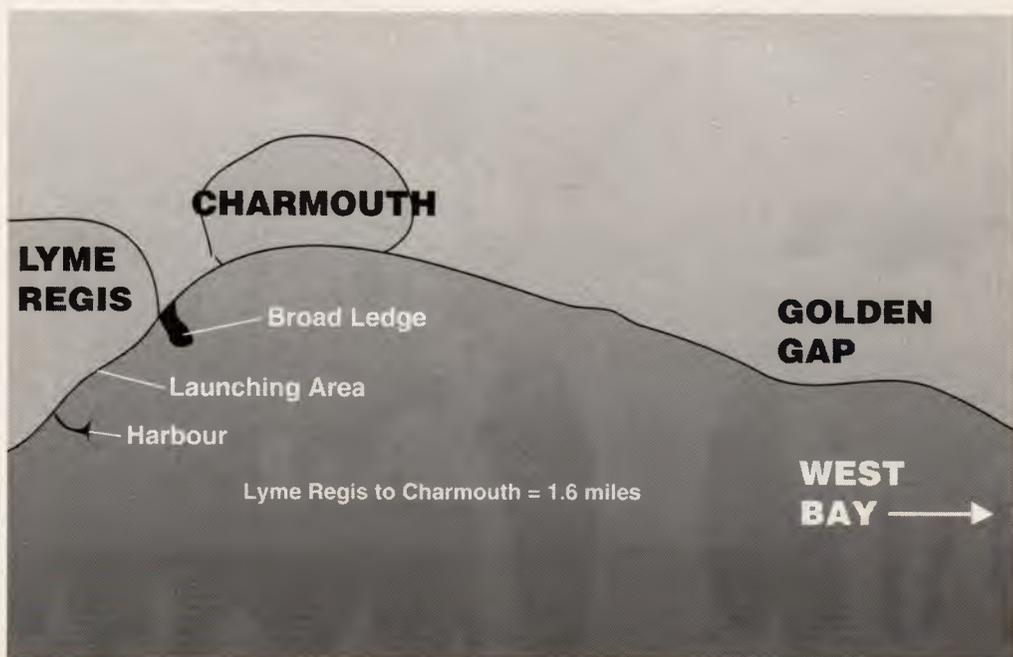
Geoff Good

(Servicing) Director of Coaching, BCU

The Panel agreed that Martin Meling would act as chairman of the panel, and official spokesperson for the BCU.

Lyme Bay Map

Scale = 1 inch to 1 mile



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To keep these prices all boats are manufactured using clear gel-coat and have a one colour logo on the rear deck. Any variations to either constructions or colour will be charged to the customer. A footrest is not included in this price.



Hull	Epoxy Resin Full Layer Kevlar/Carbon Full layer pure Carbon Full layer Spheretex foam Vacuum formed.
Deck	Full layer pure Carbon Full layer composite cloth
Inside seam	50mm Kevlar
Outside seam	25mm Kevlar Bi-axial tape
Seat	Kevlar/Carbon Epoxy "Italian racing style"

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The Tragedy in Lyme Bay

continued

The equipment viewed at Weymouth Police Station comprised:

8 General Purpose White Water plastic kayaks
3 Lower Volume GP White Water plastic kayaks
8 Aluminium shaft ABS bladed paddles
2 Buoyancy Aids *
9 BSI 3595 Life-jackets
11 Wetsuits
2 Kayak Cagoules *
2 Spray-decks *

1 Tow-line **
1 First Aid Kit **
* Equipment worn by 'instructors'
** Equipment carried by Tony Mann

All of this equipment appeared to be in very good condition. The kayaks were all fitted with longitudinal block buoyancy, pedal type footrests and end toggles/loops.

Sequence of Events

A group of some twenty sixth form youngsters, accompanied by two teachers, arrived on Sunday 21 March from Southway Comprehensive School in Plymouth, to take part in a multi-activity week, at St. Alban's Centre, Lyme Regis. During this first day they took part in an assault course, and the kayak group did some initial training in a heated swimming pool. This took the form of a two-length swim, some treading water and capsize drills of which all participants did at least two such drills.

The next morning kit was issued to the kayaking group, which comprised 8 students, 1 teacher: Norman Pointer, and 2 'instructors': Tony Mann and Karen Gardner. Neither Tony Mann nor Karen Gardner hold BCU coaching qualifications, but both had passed the 1-Star test.

At this point the group were shown how to put on and fasten their life-jackets, but were given no instruction as to how or when to inflate them. Nor were they instructed in this respect later, when in the water. They then undertook some dry land paddle practice and were reminded of the capsize procedure that they had practised the evening before. Their destination was pointed out to them (a conspicuous white building at Charmouth) and they were told to stay close together. The life-jackets were checked to be correctly fastened. The group then launched with Tony Mann going afloat first and Karen supervising on the beach. It seems that the intention was to undertake a trip from Lyme Regis to Charmouth and return a total distance of some 3.2 nautical miles (straight line course) for the round trip.

The group launched from Town Beach at approximately 1015. The wind at that time was from the NW. Within 5 minutes the first capsize occurred, which was one of the male students. He was put back in his kayak by Karen Gardner and the group continued on its way. Shortly after, the teacher capsized and Karen put him back in his kayak. Almost immediately he capsized again and was this time rescued by Tony Mann. The group was now beginning to separate and so Karen Gardner got the remain-

der together in a raft. By now it was approximately 1100 and the group was drifting offshore with the influence of the wind. They attempted to paddle the raft but made no progress. Karen attempted to attract the attention of Tony Mann, who was still dealing with the teacher, by blowing her whistle but got no response. The two groups were now approximately 250 metres apart. By about 1130 they were drifting past a buoy which may have been a dan buoy (fishing marker) and it is estimated that it was about this time that the two groups lost sight of each other.

Soon afterwards Karen Gardner's group, seeing fishing vessels in the vicinity, blew their whistles but to no avail. Paddles were not waved (the recognised method of attracting attention). By now the waves were bigger and beginning to break. The kayaks began to fill with water and swamp, some paddles were lost and they were having difficulty keeping the raft together. By approximately 1230 some members of the group were suffering from sea-sickness. Dean Sayer capsized and lost contact with his craft. He was told by Karen Gardner to climb onto the raft. One by one the kayaks capsized and were lost until only Samantha Stansbie was upright in her kayak with the others clinging on to it. Soon she too capsized and they were all in the water clinging to the upturned kayak.

No life-jackets were inflated, thus the buoyancy was only about 70N instead of 150N. They tried to swim with the kayak for about half an hour but gave up, when they finally realized it was futile. Time was difficult to judge but it was likely to have been between

1530 and 1600. The group were beginning to suffer from severe heat loss and were showing the symptoms of advanced hypothermia.

At about this stage Samantha Stansbie, accompanied by Emma Hartley, departed from the group and attempted to swim for the shore. Accounts would indicate that the group now huddled together and some made valiant efforts to help others who were becoming delirious and unconscious, though the recognised guidelines on conserving heat were not adopted.

At 1746 Royal Navy Helicopter 172 picked up four casualties and at the same time RAF Helicopter 169 picked up Samantha Stansbie 1.5 miles south of Golden Cap. 169 then flew in behind 172 and picked up a further three casualties. The teacher and Tony Mann were picked up, rafted together in their kayaks, by the IRB 1 mile south of West Bay and landed at 1738. A fishing boat located Emma Hartley and she was picked up by helicopter at 1840.

Four students drowned:

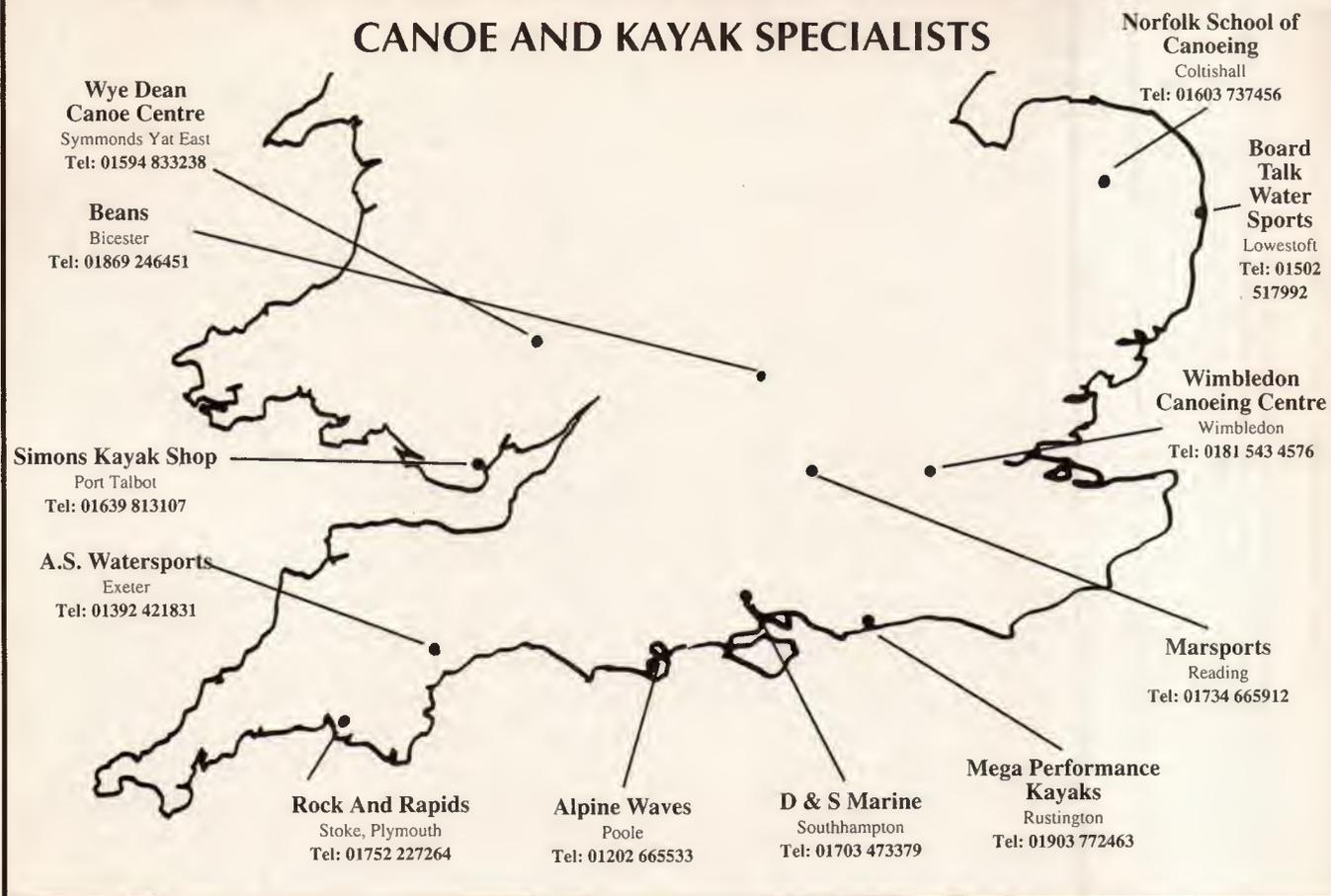
Simon Dunne
Dean Sayer
Claire Langley,
Rachel Walker.

The survivors were

'Instructor' i/c
Tony Mann,
Assistant -
Karen Gardner,
Teacher
Norman Pointer,
four Students -
Samantha Stansbie,
Marie Rendle,
Johanna Willis,
Emma Hartley.

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The Tragedy in Lyme Bay

continued

Comments

Based on the above information the 'panel of experts' made the following comments:

1. This was not a suitable trip for a group of complete beginners to undertake.
2. This was not a suitable exercise for the level of ability of the two 'instructors'.
3. This was an open sea journey and therefore spraydecks should have been used. If the students were not trained in the use of spraydecks the journey should not have been undertaken.
4. Instruction should have been given as to how, why and when to inflate the life-jackets.
5. Instructors on journeys of this nature should carry: a tow-line, flares, survival bag, means of providing a hot drink, spare clothing, repair kit, emergency food and spare paddles.
6. The participants should have worn waterproof anoraks, some headwear and footwear.
7. The kayaks should have been fitted with extra buoyancy.
8. Once in the water proper procedures should have been adopted to conserve heat and ward off the effects of hypothermia.
9. Since the accident, a recommendation for the future has been jointly agreed with HM Coastguard that kayaks should carry the name, address and phone number of the owner clearly displayed inside the cockpit area.

Conclusion

It was the conclusion of the panel that the most significant factor in this tragic episode was the fact that the two 'instructors' were not sufficiently experienced or qualified. An experienced instructor would not have made the many mistakes that were to compound with such drastic consequences. The central question that needs to be addressed is how did two such people come to be given the responsibility for which the outcome of this tragedy demonstrates they were clearly ill prepared.

The BCU's press release states:

The British Canoe Union would like to express heartfelt condolences to the parents of the four fine young people who so tragically lost their lives in Lyme Bay in March 1993.

Learning to canoe should be a safe and enjoyable experience. In the view of the BCU there is no reason or justification for putting a beginner into any situation of real danger.

It is estimated that up to 1 million people are safely and successfully given a taste of the sport every year. There has never before been a case of a beginner drowning in such circumstances.

The deaths in Lyme Bay occurred only after the group were finally immersed in the cold water for a significant period of time. The onset of hypothermia (exposure) eventually led to the four drownings. The group had first drifted a long way out to sea, without means of communication, and their location unknown.

Parents and those responsible for the safety of children on adventure holiday, or outdoor education programmes, should be reassured that the 'Lyme Bay tragedy' has no relevance to other situations where it is not possible to drift out to sea. Nor is it significant where people are introduced to canoeing on the sea, in those centres and clubs where it is the norm that the level of competence of the instructors is sufficient to ensure that this easily prevented situation does not occur.

The legal implications

Legal opinion has been published to the effect that a precedent has been established with the verdict for manslaughter against the company involved, and with the imprisonment of the managing director. The view is also, however, that the case has merely illustrated that where a small company is involved, and the issues relatively clear, it is quite possible to establish guilt, but less likely in the case of a large company where responsibility is dissipated among a number of directors. The warning letter from the two instructors who left the Centre because they were not satisfied with the safety standards, and which was not acted upon by Peter Kite, appears to have been particularly damning.

The charge

Peter Baylis Kite on 22nd day of March 1993 unlawfully killed Simon James Dunne in that

- a as the Managing Director of OLL Limited he owed a duty of care to those who took part in the outdoor leisure activities operated by OLL to take reasonable care for their safety;
- b in breach of that duty failed to take reasonable care for the safety of Simon James Dunne by:
 - 1 failing to devise, institute, enforce and maintain a safe system for the execution of an outdoor leisure activity, namely canoeing, by students attending the St. Alban's Centre, Lyme Regis, Dorset;
 - ii* failing to procure the employment by OLL at the Centre of an adequate number of staff, suitably qualified to give safe instruction in canoeing;
 - iii* failing to procure the provision by OLL at the Centre of all equipment necessary for safe instruction in canoeing;
 - iv failing to heed, either adequately or at all, the content of an undated letter sent to OLL by Pamela Joy Cawthorne and Richard Retallick in or about late June 1992.
 - v failing to supervise the Manager of the Centre (namely Joseph Thomas Stoddart) so as to ensure that canoeing was being safely taught at the Centre;
- c his aforesaid breach of duty amounted to gross negligence on his part, and;
- d his aforesaid gross negligence was a substantial cause of the death of Simon James Dunne.

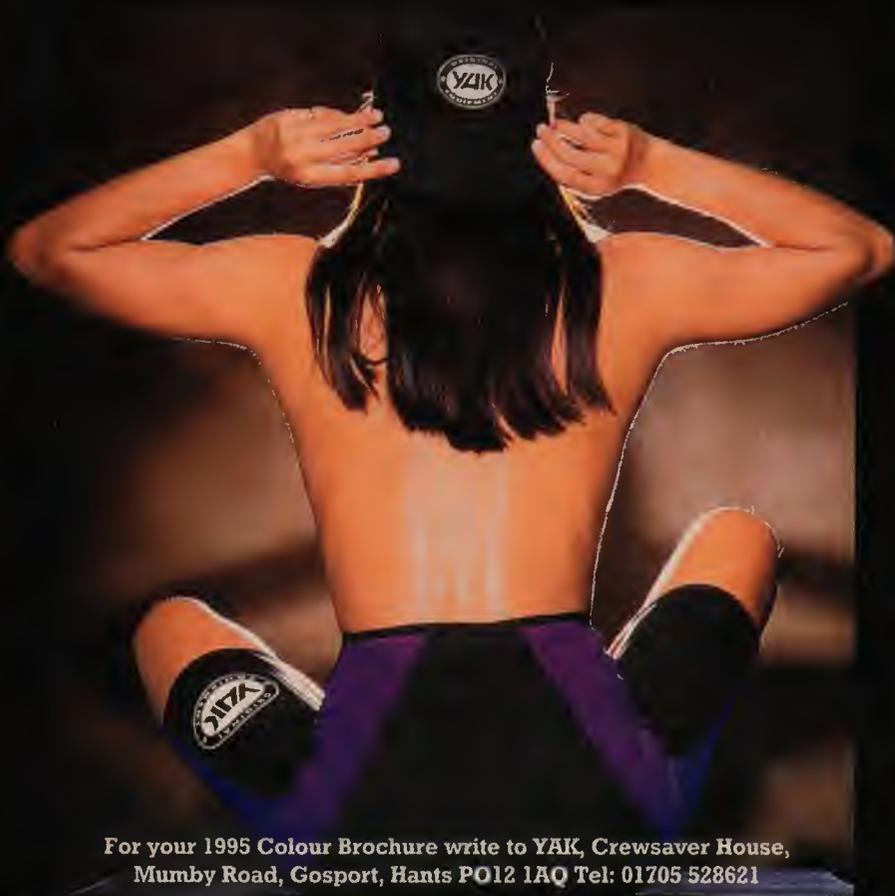
Counts 2, 3, and 4 were in respect of Claire Louise Langley, Matthew Sayer and Rachel Jane Walker.

**Charges ii and iii were dropped, by mutual consent, during the trial.*



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A conversation on the river - (3 Star test still some weeks away)

"Brrrr! Cold isn't it".
 "Yeah the water's freezin."
 "Don't fancy goin in today."
 "Me neither"
 "Freeze yer nuts off wouldn't it?"
 "Wouldn't last 30 seconds what with hypothermia an shock and that"
 "Hi Simon" (Simon swims past)
 "Anyway, doin this 3 star then?"
 "Not sure - are you?"
 "Don't know - I'm still very weak on my left hand side."
 "What - your sculling for support?"
 "Everything!"
 "Brrr... can't see much happenin this morning"
 "Nope."
 "Cor did you see that? Adam just went right over and up again."
 "Yeah serves him right he was trying to capsize that girl."
 "Which girl?"
 "She's not that bad! poor kid"
 "I said WHICH not WITCH?"
 "Sorry it's this helmet! It's too tight".
 "Hi Simon!" (Simon swims past in the opposite direction towing
 3 boats with his teeth)
 "Wossername Nikki, Vicki, or Chrissy or summat. One of Audrey's lot"
 "Their rolls are coming on mind you - look there goes another one - over
 and up."
 "Makes me shiver just watching"
 "Practice makes perfect I suppose."
 "Well yeah that's it of course - I mean if you get the practice..."
 "Brrrrr...innit cold?"
 "Speaking of practice... We'd better try some...can't just drift about here
 all morning."
 "DON'T...oh now look you've woken that duck up."
 "Had no business on my boat in the first place."
 "Show us yer sculling for support then."
 "Right. Hoi hup..." (Sculls impressively)
 "Can you get your ear'ole in the water then?"
 "PARDON"
 "I SA...oh nothing. HOW ABOUT ON YOUR LEFT THEN?"
 "Ah! I'm glad you asked me that - NOT. Lets see yours first."
 "Er. . .OK. WOOOOOOEEERR!" (Major wobble)
 "Don't do that to me, I nearly had a thromby. I thought you'd gone in"
 "I chuffin nearly did"
 "Hi Simon" (Simon surfaces close by)
 "Right my turn." (PAUSE WHILE SHALLOW WATER IS FOUND)
 "There see!"
 "Is that your left? Hey that's pretty good!"
 "Not bad eh? My elbow is resting on the bottom, mind you"
 "Still impressive though" (nods in admiration)

"God it's cold" (blows on hands)
 "What about your bow rudder?"
 "Wot - you mean like this AAAAAARGHHHH!"
 "Wotsup?"
 "GASP!..." "A load of cold water just ran out of me sleeve an down the
 back of me cag."
 "We'll forget the bow rudder then."
 "Too right - this T shirt was dry till then...Brrr!...boy it's cold"
 "Yeah...still it's nearly time to get out - the girls have finished their prac-
 tice rolling."
 "They've done X rescues since then"
 "Must be daft. Brrr."
 "Can you roll OK, by the way?"
 "I...er...well...yerz...ish...type of thing...sort of style...after a fashion
 - You?"
 "I did one in the baths."
 "Yes but what about a roll?"
 "Funnee Ha Ha...no seriously. I was getting quite confident."
 "Right you do one and I'll do one."
 "B****Y HELL! WHAT - HERE?...oh Hi Simon"
 (on his way for the paddles)
 "If you can't get up I'll do an Eskimo rescue"
 "Oh good" (scowls)
 "Right then...(manoeuvres deftly)
 "Check its deep enough."
 "Oh yes...thanks" (prods with paddle) "Should do. Cold though! - hells
 teeth."
 "Go on then"
 "I am, I am...I'm just going over it in my mind."
 "I can't do that - visualise wot it's like upside down."
 "Neither can I...Right" (positions paddle and starts to hyperventilate)
 "How long are you planning on being under?"
 "Ok Ok I'm just getting ready...Oh wait!...there's some leaves in the water"
 (waits at leaf)
 "Now look...we've drifted."
 (five minutes more of careful manoeuvring and detailed talk through of
 the Eskimo rescue)
 "Here goes then..."
 "Right..."
 "Right...Brrrr!"
 (one more huge breath and he's over...rebounding back from the cold
 water as if it was electrified...total immersion time 0.5 nanoseconds)
 "YO! no problema old son."
 "GNNNNNN!"
 "What's it like then?"
 "UGHUUUNNNNN...HAH...HOHH...SNERCHH... jussaminnit. . Oh
 God. ."
 "No that was pretty swish...honest. You've got a bogey by the way"
 "Gag me ch ch chuffin 'eads gone berzy an shrinkin...god its cold...your
 turn."
 "ME!"
 (same routine as before - an eternity of preparation and loss of bottle)
 "Right..."
 (over he goes and executes a swift, not to say stylish, roll)
 "Hey that was brill..." (somewhat jealously)
 "GHOH!...THEW...etc...etc..."
 "Oh look everyone else is getting out, we'd better get off the wat. . hey
 wait for me!"
 (At the edge they meet Simon besporting himself in the shallows like
 a young seal)
 "Hi Simon, are you not cold?"
 "No" (looks puzzled)
 "Course not... it's fine once you get used to it isn't it?"
 (coff coff)
 "Funny though, your dad's up there waiting in the car park and he looks
 frozen."

EPILOGUE

We passed our three star but were both a bit weak on the
 Bow Rudder...can't think why. JR



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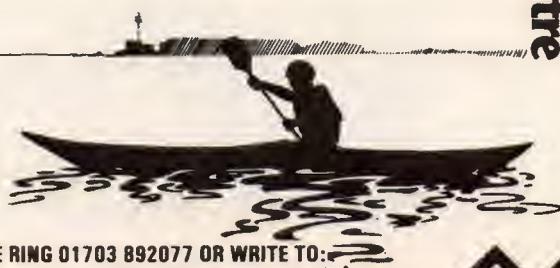
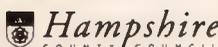
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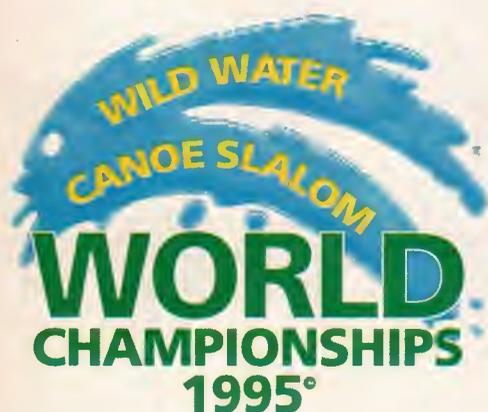
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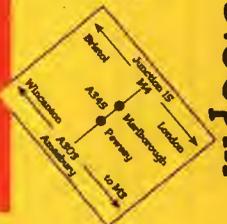
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Lots of people will think that taking canoes on the sea is the height of folly (and I do mean canoes not kayaks). They are probably concerned about boats swamping and being impossible to rescue. They may think that open canoes are only fit for family camping or picnic trips on sheltered inland waters. But many of us are coming round to realise just how capable these craft are, especially for those with the abilities to exploit their particular virtues.



Exploration, Discovery and Re

Scottish V

Certainly anyone who has seen Bill Mason's "Path of the Paddle" films will be aware of the big swell conditions coped with on the Great Lakes of America. The main point is that windage on a canoe is much more significant than on a kayak; the paddling power and skill to get somewhere or even retain control against anything more than a moderate breeze is great. But if you put a sailing rig on the canoe which is well designed and efficient then suddenly motive power is available in abundance and the physical effort needed is reduced enormously. However most people assume that a canoe is so narrow that it must be very unstable with a sail added and that the whole idea is crazy but I hope the account of this coastal journey of well over 150 miles may start to convince you otherwise. It should also emphasise the huge versatility of a canoe and its ability to go places no other single type of boat can.

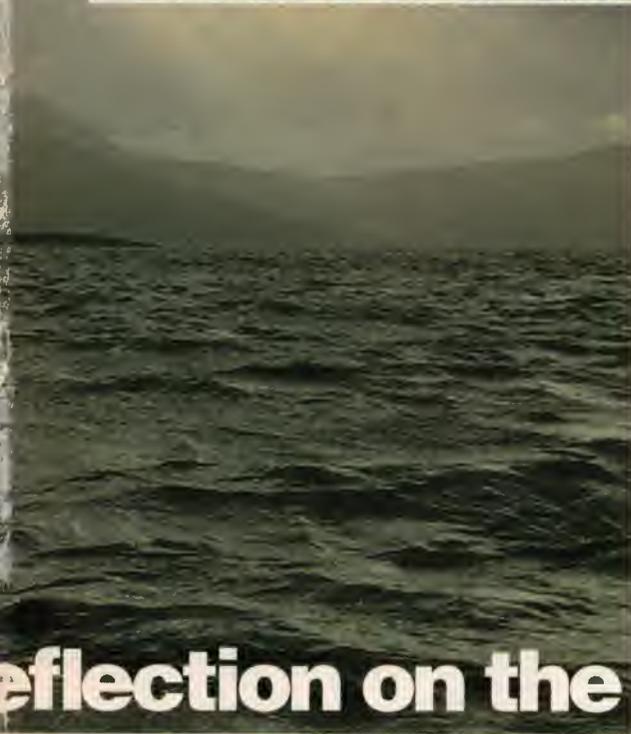
The trip was from Crinan in Argyll to Portree on Skye and inspired by an account (reprinted in the Advanced Sea Kayak Club newsletter) of one carried out by three members of the Clyde Canoe Club in August 1875. The type of boats they used were rather different from ours probably being more like kayaks with more decking and using double bladed paddles but still similar in that they also used a small sailing rig to make progress whenever the wind made it possible and worthwhile. The scope and length of their trip was dictated by their use of public transport (coastal steamers) to travel to and from their start and finish points,

understandably making good use of the shelter from prevailing wind and waves provided by the many islands and headlands off the Scottish West coast. The route also goes "inland" for about 20 miles to avoid having to round the notorious Ardnamurchan Point.

We were three canoeing friends who also happen to work at the same place and who are members of the Open Canoe Sailing Group, each of us using different makes of canoe but all of them plastic, around 16 feet long and using a reefable sailing rig of the same sort and dimensions, thus providing a reasonably well-matched sailing speed and performance. We were carrying all our camping gear with food for several days and a pair of wheels each to allow the single but lengthy portage to be done in one go. Any space not taken up with kit or needed by us to actually sail or paddle the boats was filled with buoyancy bags and we took sensible safety items like bailers, flares, hand-held VHF radio and even sea-anchors. Compass, yachting charts, almanac for tidal and pilotage information together with the equally useful OS maps were also carried.

First Day Was Outstanding

Lasting impressions of trips usually focus around a number of high and low points. Certainly there were many moments of elation or satisfaction, with some of tension and a few of frustration together with one short period of sheer misery! The very first day was outstanding, starting from Crinan har-



reflection on the

West Coast.

bour on a sunny and warm June morning. Some of the weather forecasts had sounded a bit dodgy, suggesting stronger winds than the light southwesterly we were seeing but we decided to go ahead with our preparations and see how it looked a short way out before fully committing ourselves to the first leg of the route which was to go through the Dorus Mor (a tidal race of some renown) before turning north. To be honest I think we were all desperate to get started, not least myself whose brainchild the trip had initially been, with the planning and anticipation building up over many months. But on the other hand we had been careful to establish between ourselves what the acceptable "ground-rules" were to be, especially in terms of the conditions under which we would start each leg of the trip and to accept that any of us could "veto" proceedings should they become unhappy with the situation.

That particular morning the weather forecast and the "actual" not matching certainly made me feel a little uneasy, so once we had packed and rigged our boats and while Andy and Tony filled water containers I nipped up to the yacht chandlers remembering that they usually had a weather bulletin displayed at the door. Sure enough they still did and even better it was a Metfax, the source of weather information which was to prove most accurate for our purposes over the ensuing days. It reassured us by actually corresponding with what we were seeing, even mentioning the slight risk of fog-banks early in the day some of which we had spotted in the

distance out in the sound while we were sorting out the boats and gear. In fact, as we set out on a bearing towards the Dorus Mor, mist was obscuring the area around it. This was certainly an added challenge to our navigation skills over and above the expected straightforward "eyeball" coastal pilotage especially for Tony, who would be the first to concede that although a very competent paddler and sailor had not had much experience journeying on salty water. After a few minutes of pleasant sunny sailing we entered the fog-bank which was infuriatingly so shallow that we could see the sun above us. Being careful to keep each other in sight we continued on the bearing catching a fleeting glimpse of one of the small islands on our right which served to confirm our correct track. At more or less the expected time we sighted land ahead of us through the mist which I quickly recognised as Garbh Reisa, the island to the south of the Dorus Mor. As we approached the gap it became apparent that the tide was still running east against us, much as the almanacs predicted but it was due to slacken and turn in our favour very shortly so we landed on the island for an early lunch and to calm the adrenalin which was flowing partly through getting under way at last and partly through having to contend with the poor visibility. I think making a satisfactory landfall in the tricky conditions served to reassure us all that the venture was not as foolish as some people might judge.

glassy-smooth

We lunched overlooking the tide race which in these settled conditions was smooth and benign. It was also slackening as predicted so we set off again but paddling as the wind had dropped to nothing, the water being glassy-smooth and the enveloping fog giving me a spooky feeling thinking of the contrasting conditions which would be experienced when the race is working on spring tides in a gale. We paddled north planning to catch sight of Craignish Point on the other side of the gap before heading north towards Shuna Sound. What happened was that the tide was more of an influence than we expected and when we were thinking that it was about time that we should be seeing some land the breeze returned, the mist cleared and we found ourselves further west than expected. We then set sail, dropping into the lee of Reisa Mhic Phaidean to reef our sails down to their smallest size of thirty square feet before enjoying a great beam reach in the Force Two to Three westerly breeze, all the time



discovering that the boats and rigs could cope with, and relish, the waves which were larger than any we had experienced before.

We headed north and up the Sound of Shuna in very pleasant conditions with sun and a helpful light breeze most of the time. Passing between the mainland and the islands of Luing, Torsa and then up Seil and Clachan Sounds was idyllic. We made good progress, averaging around three and a half miles an hour, approaching Clachan Bridge just before high water which was perfect timing as the channel dries out at low water. The water was flowing north up the channel and pouring over the high point past the bridge just like a river, only being a foot or so deep in places. Having by then been on the water for some five hours we stopped for a break and some hot food. The weather still being kind and the next leg somewhat exposed up to the

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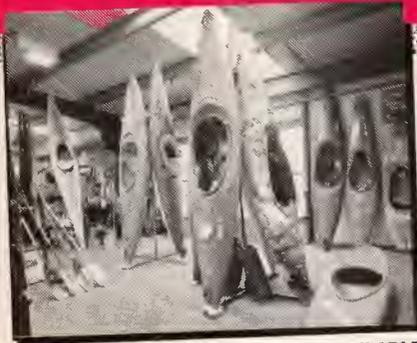


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Sound of Kerrara we decided to press on to make best use of the daylight and reasonable conditions. Although the wind was only an easy Force 2 the waves were again quite exciting especially those created by the large 'Cal-Mac' ferry on its way to the Outer Hebrides. The crew on the bridge certainly seemed to study us very closely as they steamed past. Our first night was spent just above a pebble beach near the south of Kerrera Island where we relaxed, happy to have got under way and with the 22 miles progress made.

Serious-looking Fall

Perhaps the other most memorable day was about halfway through the trip when everything was perfect (well almost everything; the previous day had been so wet and windy that the contrast may have made it seem that much better). The forecast promised lighter winds and clearing skies, it was Sunday so there would be no fishing to disturb on the River Shiel and we were rested and dried out. We set out to paddle down the river and rejoin the coast against the moderating wind. It was flowing high and fast due to the heavy rain of the previous day but the sun was out and the scenery wonderful. Both Andy and Tony had independently checked out most of the river previously and neither had seen anything to worry about so when we had almost reached the tidal water once more it came as an added challenge and surprise to find a short but serious-looking fall. On bank inspection I reckoned a narrow but feasible line would be worth risking even in a laden canoe with its sailing gear stowed but still mostly in place. Andy was a little unsure but happy for me to be the "rapid probe" whilst Tony was probably the wisest of all choosing to ease down a small side-stream. It turned out to be boisterous but less challenging than it appeared and we regathered in the tidal pool to have lunch before paddling out to the mouth of Loch Moidart passing many seals and even spotting an otter five yards away, which after a bit of chittering at me continued feeding, unconcerned at our intrusion into its spectacular environment. Once beyond the skerries we set our sails again and close-reached north towards Arisaig in the light westerly breeze enjoying the views of the Small Isles and Skye in the distance. The wind continued to lessen as we sailed into the evening eventually dropping altogether as dusk approached so a spell of paddling was needed to reach a



landing near Morar. A silver-sand beach, a hot meal and a great sunset rounded off a day to remember with just over 20 miles covered.

Any idea that a trip was all sweetness and light winds would be deceptive of course, and only a few hours after that sunset our fortunes had changed. During our overnight bivouac the forecast light drizzle and mist developed into steady rain for which we had foolishly not prepared resulting in two of us getting a bit wet; we needed shelter and to dry out so at dawn we packed up and headed the few miles north to Mallaig in what initially seemed to be only a light breeze but which quickly grew into a Force 3-4, gusting 5. This meant we were on the edge of what we had learned was feasible with our boats and although only a few yards from the rocky shoreline the sense of exposure was real, surfing fast down the waves and fighting at times to avoid broaching or burying in the waves which we were able to overtake even using our smallest sail area; (our average speed for that short hop was around 5 mph). The sense of relief on entering the shelter of the harbour was very real, but what put a complete damper on the whole scene was having to wait huddled from the rain in the biggest doorway we could find for several hours for the first warm and dry establishment to open (the excellent Fisherman's Mission). We described ourselves as "Destitute in Mallaig!" but at least we were then in easy sight of Skye on the far side of which was our ultimate goal.

The other obvious high point of the trip was the final reach into Portree which seemed almost too easy and perfect in the warm sun and moderate if somewhat fluky southerly breeze especially after the constant uncertainty about whether we would be able to complete the journey. Yes, it had been done before over a hundred years ago but in different boats. Our time taken, average speeds and daily distances were remarkably similar to their's. [For the record we travelled 153 miles (as the gull flies ie not accounting for tacking), our average speed while actually on the water was 3 mph (faster than just paddling a canoe solo) spread over 9 days with 2 days also lost due to high winds.] I feel very satisfied to have retraced an old route and to have begun to rediscover the fuller capabilities of our small craft.

Keith Morris 



Access news

Access Agreement River Erme, Devon

The Regional Access Officer for Devon and Cornwall has finally been successful in negotiating an access agreement for the River Erme, which runs off south Dartmoor. The agreement is with Ivybridge Town Council and allows for canoeing from Harford Bridge to Ivybridge during the fishing close season, that is from 1st November 1994 to 15th March 1995, initially as a trial, but with a long term agreement on offer if the trial goes well. There is also a possibility of a spate agreement out of this period, but again this will depend on the success of the trial. The BCU has been supported by the Dartmoor National Park and the NRA in the negotiations.

The Erme is a very serious undertaking, being paddleable only after heavy rain when it runs at any-

thing from grade 3 to a genuine grade 6; it is therefore a river only for competent paddlers who are well rehearsed in whitewater rescue techniques.

The terms of the agreement require the LAO or RAO to provide details of numbers booked onto the river to Ivybridge Town Council in advance. Consequently, those wishing to paddle must contact Bill Mattos or Adam Box at least two days in advance so that we can fax the town clerk with the information required. It is unlikely that anyone will be refused unless the river is over-booked, so there is no excuse for failing to have permission. Please help us to make this new agreement work; if it doesn't we will lose the Erme altogether.

Bill Mattos: 0822 855400
Adam Box: 0363 773793

River Colne Colchester - Essex

The LAO Lesley Quinlan, made contact with large local fishing clubs who use the river. The Secretary now sends him fixture lists and canoeing nights are not fished/fishing nights are not canoed without discussion. Times have only conflicted once in three years - this was resolved by communication. Any Angling Club members causing problems are "dealt with" by their club.



“By the way, the Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium was pure dead brilliant”

It's difficult to know where to start this account, because the Scottish symposium was all things to all paddlers. Deciding which sessions to attend was like choosing your options at school, and the only problem was one of so many choices, so little time.

As in 1993 the symposium was organised by the Strathclyde West Coaching Panel. The three main characters running this year's event were Gordon Brown, Matt McElroy and Duncan Winning. Their determination to see a Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium become established on the symposia calendar has paid off after only two years. After an event like this there is only one way for the Scottish symposium to go, and that is onwards and upwards.

The day time sessions were a mixture of travelogue slide shows, technical lectures, practical sessions on the water, sea trips and the ever popular demonstration boats. Reports coming back from all the sessions were generally positive, but I can only report on the ones that I was involved with myself.

Slide Shows

Two interesting slide shows that I took in were given by Donald Thompson on his trip to St. Kilda, and Robin Lloyd-Jones on this summer's expedition along the Greenland coast. Donald's talk highlighted what a committing paddle the crossing to St. Kilda really is. It must be an amazing place once you are there, and the photographs of orcas within 10 metres of the kayaks showed what the paddling involves when you are there. But to make the crossing in both directions, and

for the wind to pick up to force 5 within five minutes of their return to North Uist, you got the feeling that this was one of those trips where it was going to work out. Going further north, the author of *Argonauts of the Western Isles* has been active this year, and brought his slides from Greenland to present to the symposium. Paddling out of Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, Robins slides demonstrated what an amazing coastline the country has. Paddling amongst icebergs is an experience that most of us aren't used to, even on the east coast of Scotland, but given the opportunity I'm sure there are a number of British sea paddlers that would be over there given half a chance.

Popular Sea Areas

My own contribution to the symposium was a talk, on behalf of Scottish Natural Heritage, on access and wildlife issues in sea kayaking. In planning my talk I asked a number of questions to a straw poll of 60 sea paddlers from Scotland. The results of this survey helped me to identify the most popular sea paddling areas in Scotland, as well as showing the sites where conflicts with access and nature conservation interests are most prevalent. Some of the answers were perhaps predictable, but others were more surprising. One of the main points that I looked at was ways of developing better channels of communication for informing paddlers about sensitive access and wildlife breeding sites. Two methods that I looked at were a series of coastal information sheets showing the sensitive areas, along with seasonal or monthly variations and advice; plus



Thank you

to Gordon, Matt and Duncan and the many other helpers who made this such a successful event. A special thank you is also due to the Cumbrae Centre staff who welcomed, accommodated and fed a record number of people. Well done to you all.



September 30 to October 2 1994

a list of useful names and telephone numbers that can be contacted before setting out on a trip. The discussion with those attending the session was extremely useful and I hope to be able to work on some of these ideas over the coming year. Sea kayaking is generally an environmentally sensitive activity, and the people involved in it are usually interested in conservation issues. Reading into the answers that a number of paddlers gave in the survey, there is a great deal of interest in coastal wildlife and an eagerness to learn more about sea birds, seals and dolphins, and how our activity affects them. What is required is a source of advice that shows us what is where, when, and what we should do to see it, or keep a distance from it. One of the less important, but nonetheless interesting findings of the survey was that membership of the RSPB outnumbered that of the RNLI by 15 to 10 amongst this particular sample of Scottish sea paddlers!

A very popular practical session was devoted to towing systems. This session was led by Graeme Bruce who covered the subject in considerable detail. Having used my tow line

for 12 years with virtually no changes, I learnt a few new points and have already made alterations to my system. Towing systems are usually highly personal pieces of kit, but even a unique system is a cobbling together of a number of other peoples ideas. Actual inventive steps are probably quite rare.

Keynote Lecture

The highlight of the weekend was the Saturday evening which was in two parts. The early evening was the keynote lecture given by Karen and Dan Trotter, and told the story about their recent circumnavigation of Tasmania, which was, to the best of their knowledge, the first completion of this journey by kayak. Dan started by saying he didnt know what a keynote lecture was. Well, along with Karen they certainly did know how to grab an audiences attention and tell an incredible story. Their slides and their recounting of the journey along the south west coast of Tasmania was just unbelievable. Some days they paddled along thirty miles of continuous cliffs in rough seas, and with the security of a snippet of information from a fishing boat skipper who had told them of a tiny inlet where they would be able to land! The east coast was less committing, but still spectacular, and Hobart sounds to be a place for sea kayakers, as well as sailors, to meet up with like minded friends. Now, Im sure my girlfriends brother lives round there somewhere. We must check it out sometime!

“there is a great deal of interest in coastal wildlife and an eagerness to learn more about sea birds, seals and dolphins, and how our activity affects them”

The second half of Saturday evening overflowed into Sunday morning, and saw the strangest of movements and contortions performed by grown paddlers that would have made their gym-mistresses ashamed to have been responsible for their moral upbringing. All of this was in the name of the symposium ceilidh. Any reader who has never been to a ceilidh is really missing out here, so let me just describe it has a sort of rolling clinic without water and canoes, and set to Scottish country music! As well as music and dancing, Derek Hutchinson recited a story about electricity, Howard Jeffs crunched crisps and slurped beer (at the same time as the story about electricity), and, after all these years, Dave Ross still can't sing.

Coastguard Helicopter

Moving swiftly on to Sunday, the high point of the final day was a demonstration by a coastguard helicopter from HMS Gannet, the naval base at Prestwick airport. The helicopter winched RNLI personnel out of the water in a series of practice rescues, and provided a number of paddlers with the experience, not to mention exhilaration, of sitting in the down-draught. The Largs Inshore Lifeboat was also on hand to carry out practice rescues on kayaks and kayakers. The team from Largs are looking to take part in more exercises with canoeists, which is an encouraging sign of co-operation between our sport and the organisation that is always prepared to go out and rescue us if we hit problems at sea. No apologies for making a quick plug, but shoreline membership of the RNLI is easy, just phone 0202 671133 and ask for details.

This years symposium will be at the slightly earlier time of the May Holiday Weekend: Friday 26th through to Monday 29th May 1995, with various extensions into the following week for trips, training and assessments. The venue once again will be the National Watersports Centre on the island of Great Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde, about 1 mile from Largs. It promises to be even more pure dead brilliant than last years. In other words, it runs a serious risk of being even better than 94. It will be worth going to.

Mike Dales





Club event

Canoeing Paradise

I have wanted to see a BCU event based at the Burrs Site, on the River Irwell, for two years. Some of those who don't know the river have laughed at me and made jokes about sewers. However some of us know better and the Bury Canoe and Kayak Club took on the organisation of an inaugural event to mark the opening of the Burrs Site. Burrs is virtually dedicated to canoeing and has been developed as a partnership between Bury Metropolitan Council, the NRA and Bury Canoe and Kayak Club who have formed the management team for the site.

The River Irwell flows through the site and provides good white-water at most river levels. A disused canal feeder is used to paddle upstream to the mighty Burrs Weir. A start can be made from below the weir but many choose to shoot the weir's twenty foot sloping face. The river bed downstream of the weir has been modified to provide rapids and play waves which provide entertainment for a range of skill levels.

The site also has a large training/polo pool, which will soon be floodlit, a good pub and a campsite. Old buildings are being renovated and there are toilets and a shower block.

This all sounds great but in addition the river from Nuttall Park, in Ramsbottom, to Burrs flows through a superb gorge with excel-



lent whitewater and no access problems.

On the first weekend in October the event finally happened and was a tremendous success. The credit for the success must go to Bob Marley and his team from Bury Club who ensured that everything was spot on.

The format of the event follows criteria that the Touring and Recreation Committee of the BCU are trying to establish for some of the larger events in the English Regions. That is to offer more than a river tour. It is hoped that these events can be used to introduce paddlers to some of the sporting disciplines and encourage future participation.

The plan was to have touring on the river from Ramsbottom to Burrs and a minibus, driver and trailer was



Top: Joel Wilson on Burrs Weir
Above: The Irwell Gorge

provided to facilitate this. At the Burrs site novices could be coached on the training pool and water polo competitions and a pool slalom also took place on it.

The river, at Burrs, had a slalom course set up and a fun slalom was run on the Sunday. The highlight of the weekend for me was having the North West BCU fleet of Wavehopper river racers at the site. Mark Williams and Colin Smith did a good job of persuading paddlers to try them. Some looked in horror and flatly refused, braver souls gave them a try and found them to be a very stable and enjoyable boat to paddle. I spent most of the weekend using the wave hoppers and on the Sunday took part in the river race. It was good to see that

some of those converts to river racers enrolled on the river racing training courses being run by the Chester Club.

I was camping on the site and had come prepared with my stove and plenty of food. I need not have bothered. The organisers had laid on the "Burrs Bistro" which provided excellent hot food all through the day. It needed to as the weather was rather miserable. It rained most of the weekend but I heard no moaning as the river just kept on rising and got better by the hour.

Having the buildings meant that there was no standing about in the rain. In breaks off the water it was pleasant to eat a bowl of stew and browse around the trade stands.

Nattering in the warmth of the pub provided an ideal end to Saturday and an opportunity to slowly anaesthetise myself for the night in the tent.

Over one hundred paddlers attended the event and I hope that many who came for the first time will come again and that those introduced to some of the disciplines of the sport will want to continue.

Everything about the weekend was great, the team from Bury Club had done a great job and the weekend ambled along in a sort of organised chaos. This meant that the organisation was friendly and laid back. None of the regimentation that can occur when numerous activities are organised was evident. One event such event was the Duck Race! I didn't see it but spent some time up to my waist in a rapid waiting to capture yellow plastic ducks that had escaped. None showed up, they obviously thought better of it and migrated to more peaceful waters. I later overheard a conversation which ended with "...and we won't have a duck race next year"

What about the sewer. Well those making jokes must have been thinking of somewhere else. I certainly don't associate flocks of ducks (not plastic), kingfishers and brown trout with sewers but I do with the River Irwell that I paddle. Come and give it try and find out what it is like to paddle a white-water river that you have access to for 365 days of the year. If you want to enquire about paddling at the Burrs Site give them a ring on 061 764 9649.

Ian Thompson



Capel Canoes

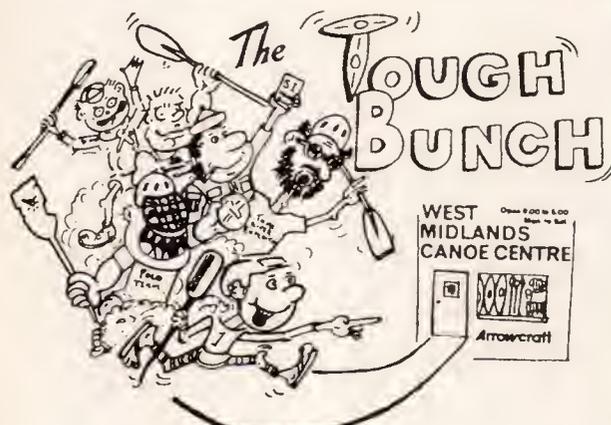
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Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today.

Exe Descent Rules

Dear Focus

I have recently participated in the annual Exe Descent race as I have for the past 6 years, each time in an Open Canoe with a partner.

For the last couple of years I have paddled the Open Canoe solo, and last year managed to come second after a 19 mile battle with the eventual winner, as my boat was made of fibre glass and the weirs and ledges took their toll and the boat needed a fair repair before the '94 event.

This year I tried my luck again paddling solo and after seeing the height of the river looked forward to a good time and the obvious challenge.

Unfortunately I came to grief as many others at Cowley Steps and had to retire but I feel that I need to write and question the booking system.

At the start of the event I could not see anyone else paddling solo so my thoughts were on taking my time and trying to conquer the course to get a prize, after all that is the idea of taking part in an event like the Exe Descent, and although not a trophy collector I do feel that the winners mugs look good on the shelf.

As I paddled along I notice not only were there paddlers in the Touring C2 class using double bladed paddles, a distinct advantage over those paddling with single blades, but that all the WW racing C1s were also in the same group as me, again a distinct advantage over a 17ft touring canoe.

As I watched the WW C1's go past with relative ease I must admit that I felt demoralised and depressed knowing that all the effort that I had put into the previous years boat repair and the battle that I was having with the river and the wind would be to no avail and although annoyed at being swallowed up at Cowley was quite happy to call it a day and report retirement to the marshalls.

As I will be back next year is it possible that the organisers give a bit more consideration to those of us that are daft enough to attempt the race in a Touring Canoe albeit paddling solo.

Dave Bateman
Ackers Canoe Club

Unobtrusive Pirate



Dear Focus

It is very unusual for me to pirate a river but I have had for quite a while the desire to explore a 12 mile stretch of a particular river, other parts of which are paddled and have good white water. There is no access agreement and it is a very popular game fishing river.

The fact is that my friend and I have now paddled the section of river and it was excellent. Access was from a public car park and egress was onto a public footpath. Apparently luck was against us as fishermen seemed to be out in force. As we drifted by they would sometimes direct us to where they wanted us to pass and all gave a friend-

ly nod. Not one questioned us being on the river.

Could this be that we where two polite and unobtrusive paddlers and probably the only ones that would be seen during that day. Even as a paddler I resent sharing the river with some of the large, noisy and obtrusive groups of college and club paddlers I sometimes see on tours, so what must other users of the countryside think?

Not all anglers are paranoid about canoeists but large numbers of us at any one time will probably upset them. I do appreciate that there are rivers where serious problems exist but it is nice to know that it is possible to paddle rivers without upsetting the fishing fraternity.

Alan Fresco

Canoe the Spey for Raigmore

Dear Focus

I am a keen mountaineer and kayaker who met with a climbing accident in Glen Coe in February 1991. The accident resulted in my being transferred to the Highland Health Board's Hospital at Raigmore, Inverness, where a broken femur was pinned.

However, a broken collar bone was not dealt with and due to an indifferent attitude on the part of my local health Authority resulted in my returning to Raigmore where the collar bone was broken and properly re-set.

I am now on the road to full recovery and consider that I owe Raigmore a debt of gratitude which I would like to repay. The hospital is a busy one and it's area covers the best part of the Scottish Highlands meaning that they receive and treat many injured mountaineers and canoeists.

In way of thanks I wish to organise a sponsored event to raise money for Raigmore in order that they will be able to continue the excellent work they do on our behalf, this I intend to do by canoeing the River Spey from the highest navigable point down to

where it runs into Spey Bay, all funds raised as a result of this will go to Raigmore hospital.

I do this not for myself, but for the many people like myself who both work in and enjoy the outdoors, of course this event is also intended to benefit anyone who lives in the region of the Highland Health Board as well.

I am writing to ask for your help and support, I have never organised anything like this before but I feel that if I can target people through outdoor magazines, articles and the like, then we could get a very good response indeed. I am sure that people will see the value of this event and that it will be well supported.

At present, I will be aiming to carry out the paddle during a week early next April, of course whether or not the event takes off will depend on the amount of support I get.

I hope that you will be prepared to offer your support and help. - I will need it! I look forward to hearing from you.

Ian Gallagher,
75 Brooklyn Street,
Crewe,
Cheshire CW2 7JE

Tyne Tour Theft

Dear Focus

At the Tyne Tour Leeds Canoe Club's flag was nicked by Lxxxxxxx University. We would very much appreciate its return, and advise the people concerned that if they are stupid enough to get up to such infantile pranks, it is even more stupid to go around bragging about it. May I also thank the BCU on a great event on behalf of the club, the organisation was superb.

B. Chapman
Touring and Recreation LCC

Survival Poem

Dear Focus

Kath Padmore was right when she suggested in last months magazine that many canoeists are, in fact, composing poetry when it looks to the casual observer as if they are purely concentrating on survival. Sometimes, it is not enough to manoeuvre the boat and keep it balanced. Sometimes there is a need to steady words into poetic meter and manoeuvre them into regular rhyming schemes and stanzas. Here is a sonnet that I composed whilst descending some of the grade v sections of the Afon Conwy.

*I tell how in my boat I always long
For waterfall, for stopper and for wave.
I'm told that fear and weary limbs are wrong
That leisure should be pleasant and safe.
"It's not a proper way to play", I'm told,
As people slur my sport with this sad stance:
That I'm not fit for pleasure; that I hold
A gambler's life-denying debt to chance.
But should we call this passionate struggle "play"?
When stoppers grip me with the force of death,
I flex my living strength and float away
With beating heart and new delight in breath.
This is the only way I know to thrive.
To dance with death and end up more alive.*

Mark Davidson



Competition *focus*

SLALOM

As with copy dates for all good magazines, articles are put together weeks in advance and rushed to freight editors at the very last minute - still weeks ahead of circulation date. This issue is no different - right now, we are in festive mood, trying to cram in our remaining annual holidays and that last paddle before Christmas and complete the Slalom section for Focus! You will be reading this around Canoe Exhibition time, and many of you will be wondering about your next challenge - why not try slalom this year - the year the World Championships comes to the UK - celebrate this with us! Yes, but, I'm not into competition did I hear you scream! OK, think of the positive - boat control, reading the rapids - another challenge! Slalom is about having fun and preparing yourself for other situations both on the water and in everyday life!

How about sending for the "Getting Started in Slalom" pack - this includes information about actual events, how to enter, what to expect, equipment etc - it costs nothing! What about working for an award from our Slalom Skills Award Scheme - tests on basic skills for our discipline, which successfully completed, result in both satisfactions and badges!

How about booking a holiday in Nottingham and combining a trip to the World Canoe Slalom Championships with some basic canoeing instruction at the National Water Sports Centre and even some sightseeing in the area? If you want to see how it's really done, and you are free from 29 August through to 3 September 1995, you'll see the Worlds best in action at Holme Pierrepont. At least thirty five Nations are expected to compete with the added knowledge that this event will provide the first Olympic qualification event for the '96 Olympics.

We're going to need helpers too - from escorts and hosts to site workers, electricians, interpreters, office support, marshalls, general runners and even 'oddbods' - there's a place for you at this event - more details from the Event Administrator, Sue Wharton Tel: 01636 705363.

Advance tickets for the Championships will cost £6 for the whole period (£4 for concessions) Dragon Boar Racing on the Regatta Course is also included and there will be packages to include camping too. All helpers get free entry to the event, free camping and discounted refreshments.

SLALOM TITBITS

Hope all you ranked paddlers have received your 1995 Slalom Yearbook - if you moved house without telling your Ranking Compiler, odds are that you haven't - please remember that it is your responsibility to inform us - there is not link up with the BCU membership computer and the crystal ball doesn't operate in this field.

Congratulations

To Claire Fox from Basingstoke! Claire, a member of the GBR Junior Worlds Team in 1994 won the College category in the Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year Awards!

Congratulations 2

To winners of the PHOENIX of Nottingham award, Michael Butcher of Pangbourne Canoe Club and to Helen Reeves of Shepperton Slalom Club, winner of the DELAPRE award. These paddlers won the junior newcomer awards to Div 1 men

and women! Thanks too, to Phoenix of Nottingham and to Delapre for their continued sponsorship and generosity in providing the prizes - spraydecks and paddles!

Enter early

This is the year you made it easier for Event Organisers! Please enter at least two weeks before an event so that the Organising Club knows numbers, can continue with planning and indeed, decide whether to run the event at all! List of events and all you need to know about Slalom is contained in the Slalom Yearbook which you can obtain from BCU Slalom Committee, The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark NG23 5RZ price £3 inc p&p.

Bibs

Competitors ranked in Div 4 and above - do apply for your bib from the Bib Issuing Officer of your division in good time. Current membership of your National Association is necessary along with other items - please

see Bib arrangements in the Slalom Yearbook, or ring the Slalom Development Officer (01636 705363).

Volunteers

Our discipline couldn't function without them! We are currently searching for an Equipment Hire Officer to plan and arrange the routing of our timing equipment around the UK. A good organising mind, access to a telephone and endless patience would help!

Wanted Too

If you feel you would like to be involved in Divisions 2 - 4 without paddling - we need a volunteer who will take on the responsibility of appointing Jury Chairs for events throughout the Country. Tact, enthusiasm and use of a telephone essential.

Contact Slalom Development Officer for more details of both these posts 01636 705363



If I Go In Forget About Me - Just Get My Arm If It Falls Off!



Arctic Canoe Rally

There I was canoeing Grade 3 rapids without any real problem and having a ball - me, a 'cripple' - well in theory anyway! Having one arm less than most people sometimes causes a few problems and limits my activities to an extent. If I'd been told a year ago that I would be participating in the Arctic Canoe Rally 1994, I would have smiled unbelievably, sighed longingly and gone along my way. I had always enjoyed canoeing and had done a fair amount of flat water paddling. However, much as I wanted to do more whitewater paddling, my arm had been the limiting factor as electric artificial limbs do not mix well with water, and are very heavy to boot! Well, to cut a long story short, I was asked to participate in the ACR along with some of the boys from St David's College, an independent school from Lladudno, N. Wales.

The trip was to raise money for the Paul Vander-Molen Foundation, a charity set up, after Paul's death, to help the development of leukaemia treatment, and to assist handicapped people to participate in adventurous expeditions.



I had a specially developed arm made at the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital in Edinburgh and suddenly it occurred to me that this thing might just work. I visited Ardeonaig Outdoor Centre, Perthshire, Scotland and attained my 2 star qualification under the instruction of the people there.

The Paul Vander-Molen Foundation was absolutely wonderful in their willingness to give financial support as was the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation. My grateful thanks go to both because without that support I would not have been able to participate in the ACR.

Finland

July 30 saw us in Klipisjarvi, Finland, and ready to go. My arm worked a treat, being both light and sturdy. The sun shone down from a clear blue sky (guess I won't be needing my Buffalo jacket today then!), the temperature was in the mid 70s, the water smooth and clear, and the paddling excellent. My own paddling skills began to improve under the careful and humorous instruction of Taff Bowles, Head of Outdoor Education at St David's, and the leader of the expedition.

I began to understand the vital need for teamwork in a C2 - each relying on the other to put in the 'draw stroke' or 'bow cut' at just the right time. I'm ashamed to say that I seemed to get my right arm muddled with my left in the early stages as Taff would shout instructions from the back.

"Right Pip! . . . No-right . . . right . . . right . . . oh don't worry" and he would adjust to my persistent 'left'! Longsuffering is a suitable word I feel!

Teamwork was a big underlying theme of our time in Finland. The St David's boys were outstanding in the way they supported and helped each other. We completed the rally in stages but two of the boys - with the complete backing and assistance of the rest of the team - completed the whole 527 kms. It was a fantastic achievement and we, the rest of the team, were really proud of Luke and Charlie. It was teamwork that got these two boys - and the rest of us - down, that, and sheer guts and determination.

Through the week I gradually worked my way up through the rapid grades and I began to understand the addictive quality of paddling a river and its bumpy water.



Support

This expedition was supported by the Jubilee Canoeing Foundation

- with a few small rapids on the way. We could hear it before we could see it and we could see the spectators standing and watching. We stopped just before the bend in the river, got out, walked up and had a look. It was huge - but short - an immense surge of energy being forced through a relatively narrow channel. For a minute I stood, lost in the size of it, but then I realised that Taff was talking, and showing me the line that we'd be taking. We were going to come down the edge of it - the right hand side. Suddenly I was filled with a quiet but intense excitement. I was looking forward to this. Back to the boat and then off - becoming one with that river of raging fury. I remember Taff shouting from the back of the boat, "Take your time - don't panic" - words that I needed to hear. Someone shouted from the bank "Smile!" and I thought "Why?," but I did because I was really enjoying myself. Two shakes of a duck's tail and it was over, I was at the bottom and grinning all over my face. My arm had stayed on, the paddle hadn't slipped out and I thought to myself, "Hey, I could cope with doing more of this!"

The ACR provided a very real classroom for me to learn or relearn some life lessons. To know that I would be facing physically demanding challenges, and to see myself face and overcome them had proved to me once again that to an extent one can be limited by one's disability as much as one wants to be. One's capabilities can always be pushed that little bit further, and I am thankful for the chance to prove this.

Coping with Disability

Finally, I have realised that attitudes are an integral part of coping with disability. If one wants to sit down, mope and feel sorry for oneself, then the chances are that the disability will be accredited with more attention than it should have. It will begin to take over the personality, and instead of being a thing to prune and develop the character it will stifle and warp it. If, however, one faces up to the handicap, sees it for what it is, and then determines to make the best of it, looking upon it as the means to learn important lessons about life and human nature, well then, one will end up happier and more completely developed person.

A disability can become a real classroom, for both the person affected and for those who stand around and watch. Yes, I enjoyed the canoeing more than I can say, and I enjoyed the teammanship and companionship of the boys, but the thing that I am most grateful for as a result of the expedition to the Arctic Canoe Rally was being given such a vibrant and potentially rich learning ground, and as a result, being able to put my disability back into perspective whilst relearning those important lessons mentioned above.

Pip Harry

If you require further details about the Arctic Canoe Rally contact: Hikki Kivinen, P183, 99300 Muonio, Finland.



Rally 1994

My first 'big' rapid happened on Day 3. Taff reckoned it was about a Grade 3, but to me that sounded a pitifully small number for such a large upheaval of water! We were into it before I really knew what was happening. I carefully followed Taff's shouted instructions (no left and right mix up this time!) my eyes and mind mesmerised by the swirling, frothing and racing water all around us. Suddenly we were through and we broke out into a convenient eddy to empty the boat and watch the others coming down. I felt shaky and weak from the outright fear I had experienced whilst coming down. But I also knew a wild exhilaration and sense of achievement. I had tackled my first big one and survived to tell the tale!

Rescue Team

The rest of the week flew by to the sound of rippling water backed by blue skies, and the ACT Brass band who perched in all sorts of precarious places and played us into every resting spot. Day 7 came and with it the anticipation of some really big rapids. Taff was keen for me to attempt one of them, a Grade 4 called Matkakoski, but I must admit that I took a bit of persuading. I decided to have a bash. I was reassured by a couple of members of the Rescue Support Team, who told me that I would be fine and that they would make sure they pulled me out if I went for a swim. "Forget about me - just make sure you grab my arm if it comes off. It should float but I'm not convinced!"

I have to say at this point how completely proficient these guys were on the Rescue Team. Their support - and cheeky comments - accompanied us all the way down the river. Their proficiency was reflective of the whole set up. The sense of camaraderie that developed and the interest and care that was shown to us really made the trip a success.

I think we became the light relief element of the Rally, due to our frequent change overs of team members. We were always last and the comments over the loud speaker became more and more derogatory over the week (all in good fun of course). I think the sight of all these English boys running around was too much for some of the folk although their respect was won over the duration of the Rally by the hard work of the St David's Team.

The run down the rapid was fairly long - about 12 km



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Paddlers gear

Microbat vs Probe vs Spud

As Pyranha's new Microbat joins the Probe and Spud in the short-boat pool, the buyer now has the choice of third, second, and first generation kayaks respectively to choose from. As should only really be expected, with the opportunity to build on past experience, the newcomer appears to have more versatility, and probably the edge over its older, but still serious, competitors. All three boats offer remarkable agility, eminently suiting them to both rodeo and river running, and are not beer barrels with cockpits as some long boaters are inclined to believe.

Punching stoppers and glutinous eddy lines can prove difficult for short-boats, and in terms of speed to achieve this, the Microbat leads, followed by the Spud and Probe in that order. The latter is probably hindered



by its heavy nose unit, which also makes it the heaviest and most uncomfortable to carry of all three. However, the unit can be replaced if damaged, as can the Bat's nose-cone, incorporating an innovative spray-deflector.

The Pyranha scores well again on drops, its upturned nose and bulbous stern contributing to bow lift, whereas the others rely simply on their cork-like volume. The stern of the Bat also has centre buoyancy, lacking in the Probe and Spud, but all three carry kit adequately.

In terms of agility, any boat trying to outgun the Spud faces a hard task. The Probe is good, but not in the same class as the Prijon. Conversely, the former's wider beam gives it more stability than the latter. Pyranha has brought technology (and hindsight) to bear here, and boasts the advantage of a chined and double concave hull, plus a seat that can be trimmed backwards to cause de-stabilisation (rodeo) or stabilisation (river running). Adjustable seat and thigh braces also allow a paddlers height to be more easily accommodated.

In conclusion, all three kayaks

sit at the cutting edge of boat design. They are all safe, extremely agile, dependable on rivers, and unsurpassable in the jolly stakes. Choosing between them is difficult. Pyranha seem to have seized the initiative, however, and innovated an already radical design. Long term tests are likely to prove this.

**Mark Hickman
(short light paddler)**

First Impressions
-a boat with character - almost cartoon like shape - very shapely with strong curves.

Another test pilot comments...

The cockpit is not too high around the waist so you feel part of the boat rather than 'in a boat'. Even being 6ft 3 and having size 10 feet, with the long cockpit even I can lift at least one leg straight out.

Forward speed is good for a small boat, the boat is more controllable than the Spud which is very important when crossing flows and eddies.

The Micro is just waiting to be edged, and reacts quickly to any change of angle. As with the Spud or Probe you can turn instantly, but on a wave or stopper I feel the concave hull sharp rear lines enable you to shred about even faster. At times you can be pulling an 'off the lip' move, almost ski like and due to the hull shape, when surfing backwards the rear tends to raise and the centre ridge of the hull acts like a fin, you can shred backwards as well as most people could forwards, whereas you find, in a spud or probe the back digs in and you get washed off! The beck deck has quite a sharp edge which catches well, when pulling Woopies (tail squirts).

The front deck is kind of like a shorter fat flat Creek, with a centre ridge but definite flat appearance with an upturned nose, this means looping and front Woopies are quite controllable. I find the round Spud deck slips



out sometimes! The seat was big and shapeless meaning you can pad it to fit your shape, rather than cut bits out. The three point thigh braces are totally split as with Mountain 300 and they located well on myself. So yet again Pyranha have made an Awesome shredding machine - just hope the final fittings match!

Additional first impressions and comments from the very tall, Alan Ellard



	SPUD	PROBE	MICROBAT
Performance	****	***	*****
Speed	****	***	*****
Flat Stability	****	****	****
Edge Stability	***	****	*****
Surf	***	**	****
Rodeo	****	***	****
Rivers	****	****	*****
Roll	****	*****	*****
Safety	***	***	****
Special Features			
Microbat			
(Art Spec): bow cap/spray deflector as standard; PVC grab handles; adjustable seat & thigh brace system; integral deck; deck release; drain plug, foam comfort system; chined hull; non-slip rear deck; rear centre buoyancy; new safety footrest (available soon).			
Spud			
PVC grab handles; ribbed deck; extremely robust and durable.			
Probe			
PVC grab handles; integral deck; three			

Test Report

Palm Extreme Buoyancy Aid:

Filed Test: Extreme River Vest, Buoyancy Aid
Price: £79.95
Flotation: 7.5kg + 0.5kg
Colour: High Visibility Red
Location: Papua New Guinea
Advanced White Water Coaching
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Design Philosophy:

1. Paddle to avoid problems rather than just survive them.
2. Safety is based on judgement not gear.
3. If you swim. Active self rescue is better than passive submission to the river and divine intervention.

This vest is the product of Palm's ongoing coordination with paddlers. Palm's willingness to listen and actively ask for ideas and feedback from paddlers has led to a 'gem' of a piece of kit. The original vest was designed by the team of the Waghi Kayak Expedition and was 'beaten to within an inch of its life' over a two month expedition in what is generally considered the harshest environment in which to test this type of equipment. The feedback from the trip has been included in the production of models.

On first appearance this vest has some interesting features some new, some modified but none 'gimmicky'. To put things in perspective, this vest was designed to be simple, safe, hardwearing and affordable. It meets these requirements.

The vest is based on the philosophy that it is better to paddle to avoid problems rather than just survive them. For this reason the vest has a slalom style cut with plenty of arm movement and a short cut in the body. The foam has been specially shaped to be non-restrictive and soft. This creates a comfortable body 'hugging' vest that moves with you as you paddle and will not restrict your movement. The demands of the recreational paddler are still in the forefront and special consideration has been given to maintaining a high degree of flotation in the event of a swim. The vest on it's own should provide around 7.5kg of lift, and the pocket on the front has a foam insert that can be added if needed increasing the flotation to 8.2kg. This foam pad is shaped and fits the pocket snugly but does not inhibit any movement. Without the



foam, a large pocket is created cunningly shaped to maximise its volume without any adverse effects. Using the foam block to retain this degree of flotation without losing any mobility is a real winner as the vest affords plenty of lift when you are in the water, keeping your face out of the worst of it, and enabling you to pick your swimming line. 'God helps those who help themselves', the philosophy here being one of active self rescue rather than passive submission to the river Gods.

The shell of the vest is constructed of hard wearing Cordura fabric to resist thorns, brambles and barbed wire. The inner is a lighter nylon that is comfortable even if you are paddling without a cag. The vest is adjusted using a system of cinches on the shoulders and at the waist this gives the paddler unlimited flexibility when fitting and time should be spent to get the optimum results, it's worth it! A tie at the bottom prevents the vest from being lifted off you if you are in the water.

Like many buoyancy aids, this vest has a rescue harness, but unlike many the release is positioned to one side so that it does not interfere with the pocket. This also keeps the buckle out of the way when paddling. With the harness released, the vest stays in place and does not become a billowing jacket around the paddler. A great deal of time has been spent improving the nature of the tape in the harness to ensure the quick and smooth release. This is particularly important in dealing with low loads in situations when a release is vital. No cow's tail is sold with the harness, encouraging paddlers to use the harness in pairs, rather than solo. A handy two karabiner cowstail is available (£28.95). This has proved to be a real asset. The two karabiners provide extra flexibility when setting up rescues and a simple way to carry them. The prototype vests we took to Papua New Guinea also had a passport pocket on the inside back; a nice touch. For the colour coordinated it matches the Extreme Cag -very smart!

Loel Collins

Test Report

Paddles:

Paddle Sport/Waveform
'Streamlyt' Carbon Slalom K asymmetric
Length = 183 cms
Feather = 80 degrees

A big challenge for ski and kayak surfers has been to find a set of white water paddles that translate to surfing. They need to be short, typically 170-180 for ski, 180-190 for kayak; they need to be light, for rapid side to side transition when executing manoeuvres; and in particular they need to be strong, to stand up to the exceptional forces that surfing exerts upon them.

Over the last 20 years I have spent hundreds of pounds and destroyed more pairs of wooden,

fire-glass and alloy paddles than I care to remember, in my search for the 'right' tool for the job. And today, even though there are certainly some very strong paddles around, they are just too heavy (man!), and they have such a leaden, 'dead' feel to them. Now, however, I believe I have finally found what I have been looking for all these years.

Peter Howard made me up a pair of his 'Streamlytes' to my own specification (see above) and I have tested them for a full season

in a wide range of surf conditions: From perfect hollow 3'-4' sand-bar breaks, to gnarly, maxed-out 5'-6' beach breaks in S Wales and the S West; plus some "humungus" reef breaks, up to 8' on the W Coast of Eire.

At first, I found the lightness of the Streamlytes a bit disconcerting, but once I learnt to trust their true strength they withstood all the punishment I threw at them and gave a performance that was a delight.

Some specifics: To start with the loom slipped around in my hands, especially during turns (in spite of the contoured grip for the control hand), however, by lightly 'scuffing' the hand grip areas with wet sand I solved this problem for good. (Once I had them wrenched from my grasp in a particularly heavy wipe out and it took me ages to find them again due to them being black! A day-glo logo would have helped me find them in the turbulent water).

For me the Streamlytes offered the lively responsiveness of wooden paddles when bashing out through the break; they had an overall handling of lightness that almost made me forget I was holding them, and yet were tough enough for me to commit full power in all my turns. The large asymmetric blade area gave a huge amount of 'grip', whilst showing no signs of 'flutter' and made rolling in heavy aerated water a synch. They also provided ample stability during the less stable manoeuvres (e.g 'bouncers' and re-entries).

The most significant design feature of the Slalom K model for use in surf is the 'fullness' of the bottom edge of each blade where it meets the loom. This is just where the grip on the wave is needed during manoeuvres, and it worked a treat.

I can confidently recommend these paddles to all serious paddle-surfers

Dennis Ball

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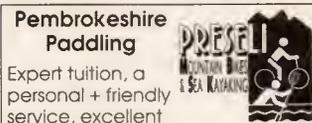
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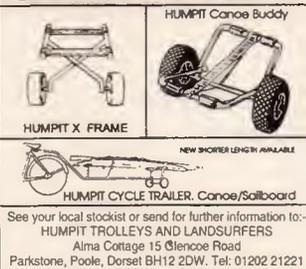
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For application details please contact:
Edale Y.H.A Activity Centre
Rowland Cole, Nether Booth, Edale, Sheffield S30 2ZH
Telephone: (01433) 670302
COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 16th

Qualified Canoeing and climbing instructors required at Outdoor Centre in North Devon from March - July. Phone 01237 477637 details.

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For application and further details

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For a gateway to a career in outdoor activity or for a unique opportunity to build on your qualifications and gain valuable work experience contact: Recruitment Department,
PGL Adventure Ltd., Alton Court, Penyard Lane (B20), Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5NR.
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Superchoice Adventure require canoe and multi activity instructors from March to September 1995. Challenging and rewarding jobs working with British school groups.

Canoeists should be a minimum of TI in either kayak or open canoe although I preferred. 3 star also considered as we organise TI training and assessment courses.

Activity Instructors should have some experience in working with children but qualifications are not essential as full training given.

FOR RECRUITMENT PACK AND APPLICATION FORM CALL SUPERCHOICE ON 01273 670047 (24HRS)

situations vacant

Enthusiastic, motivated and qualified water-sports instructors required for May to October 1995. C.V.'s to - Paul Hodgson, Reivers of Tarsset, The Comb, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1RU. Telephone: (01434) 240 245.

Staff required full time and seasonal. Must have national Qualifications. Ideally 21 years plus. Send C.V. and copies of qualifications to J.I. Hayward, Mendip Outdoor Pursuits, Summer Lane, Banwell, Weston Super Mare. BS24 6LP.

The Lake District, qualified, experienced instructors & general staff required for our Centre in the heart of the Lake District. For an application form write to: Newlands Adventure Centre, Stair, Keswick Cumbria, CA12 5UF.

Summer Vacancy for Outdoor Instructor small privately owned Activity Centre in Orkney. Applicants must have experience of Sea & Loch Kayaking, windsurfing, rock climbing and abseiling. Kayaking qualifications and a driving licence essential. S.P.S.A. an advantage. Eviedale Centre. Evie, Orkney KW17 2PJ Scotland.

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Send full CV with covering letter (stating NGB membership number(s), dates available and contact phone numbers) to:

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Please forward all adverts to appear in the Members Classified direct to
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MEMBERS ADS FREE

FOR SALE

Corsica S, 1 year old VGC. Full WW spec £275. Corsica, Red used twice on flat water full ww spec £330. Rotobat VGC white with bow cap, full ww spec £220 ono. Schlegel Topline excellent condition, almost new £80 Tel: Julian 0492 641560 (Llanrwst, N Wales)

Mega Extreme, WW kayak, by Wavesport of Colorado. Smart boat, only used once, £345 ono Tel: 0793 611773 (wiltis)

Prijon Gambler, dark blue, good condition, complete with airbags & Play Boater deck £285 ono (Can deliver) Tel: 0227 830042 (Kent)

Pyranha Magic Bat, teal, used only twice, with back-rest, Ainsworth K100 paddle, Palm centre spraydeck. All brand new (cost £500), will accept £300 Tel: 0734 598361 (Reading)

Wave Ski, 7'6", Dirty Habits, 3 thin thruster, channels, white hull, fluo fade deck, leash etc, as new, plus Wave Ski book and video £250 ono. Ass WWR C1 kevlar/carbon, good condition £100 ono Tel: (day) 0279 446595 (eve/wkend) 0992 584949 (Herts/Essex)

P&H Reflex slalom boat. Kevlar carbon construction. Carbon deck, Italian seat. £200ono. Tel: Stuart 0942 603698

A fabulous opportunity to obtain a unique rodeo C1. Based on the design used at the World Rodeo Championships in the USA. A wicked surf boat!! Chumley Proof Construction - Kevlar Carbon Hull - 2' Outside Seam and stunning 'big glitter' deck graphics. £225 ono Tel: Steve Black 0602 810954. (Notts)

Reflex Perception Slalom canoe, fibreglass, very good condition £175 Tel: Hereford 0992 581831

Canoe Clear Out: C1 WWR, Gaybo Ace II, Carbon/Kevlar Epoxy construction ex worlds boat, mint condition with end guards £350 ono. Two WWR paddles £25 and £60. KIRKES 21 marathon C2 ideal first DW boat, good condition £350 ono. WEE NOH NAH marathon C2 fast and light DW boat, good condition £850 ono. Bent shaft racing paddles selection of four from £30-£60. MAGIC C2 slalom boat, Carbon/Kevlar Epoxy construction, back right, ex worlds boat, good condition £350 ono. Selection of slalom paddles £25-£65 Tel: 081 523 1948.

Mountain Bat - full ww spec, as new, hot pink £300 (no offers). Contact: D McGarry 130 Buckingham Road, Maghull, Merseyside, L31 7DR.

Expedition Sea Kayak - Baidarka Explorer £360 (negotiable) inc Sea Paddle & Neoprene Spray deck. 2 watertight storage compartments, paddle storage, water pump. Yellow deck, white hull, good condition. View in Harrogate but possible delivery to Bedford area. Tel day 0532 547045 or 0423 564540 eve/wkend.

Prem 2 Slalom kayak, pale blue, good condition, plus Nautisport spraydeck. Owner outgrown. Tel: Lesley 0255 815093 (N E Essex) £100

Trailer for sale, Hauling trailers custom built to carry 17 foot canadian and three kayaks or 7 kayaks. Large lockable box for gear, light board £425. Waveski, Dirty Habits XP75 good intermediate ski, good condition £200. Tel: James 0803 812944 Friday and Saturday after 5pm (S Devon).

Canoe Trailer, holds 8 kayaks with very large storage box £150. Conquest kayak with airbags, backstrap and footrests excellent condition with little use £200 ono Tel: 0373 826128.

Corsica, excellent condition, airbags, footrest, etc. £220 ono. Call Kevin Dudley 0376 348691 (h) or 0702 386862 (w)

C1 Slalom "Double Dutch" good condition with as new Bush Deck £120 Tel: 0924 430785

AQII, excellent condition, full plate footrest, x-linked, with smart colours, only one year old and kept under cover £350 contact Gerry: (eves) 0742 580496 (Sheffield)

Prijon Avenger, black, full plate footrest, ww spec, used 5 times, excellent condition £420 ono or swap for any Dagger boat, contact Simon (eves) 01142 314134

Nookie Shock Deck, red with black body tube, S3 will fit GRP slalom boat, Mirage or similar £25, tel Ian on W. Sussex 0243 572937

Pyranha Elite 80SS Slalom Canoe, colour yellow/black, glass/kevlar construction. Old but in as new condition £150 Tel: 0865 63804

K2 original Moonraker, Timber frame, fibre

glass skin, v.strong, light, L 17' B 28", good condition, £120. Tel: 0362 687233 before 10am or after 8pm.

Discovery 169 - good condition open canoe, central airbag £350 ono, Pyranha Master - full white water spec, brand new spraydeck and helmet, paddles £250. New unused wooden oars with rowlocks £30 tel: 0743 356336

Gaybo Slalom C1, excellent condition, £150 ono and carbon-fibre shaft paddle £20 must collect, Tel: (h) 0279 413741 (w) 0279 635464 (Harlow)

Pro-am C2 back right £100 ono, Reflex Barcelona £400 ono, Propulsion Kayak paddle 208r £90 ono Tel Andy eves 0926 400377 (Warks)

Rotobat X link, full ww spec, Hot Pink, Excellent condition with deck £225 Tel: Eugene 01954 719477 (Camps)

Dancer XS, teal in colour, £100 ring 0798 873904 (Sussex)

Perception Kayaks, 7 Mirages and 2 Dancers for sale, centre spec, old but watertight, £600 the lot, however, will split Tel: Martin (Keswick) 07687 78463

Canadian Canoe 17' Mic-Mac with sturgeon stems. Redwood strip plank, mahogany and ash trim, 6 months old, 60lbs, ideal for touring £750. Also 15'8" MacGregor (Iain Oughtred design) clinker canoe in Gaboon plywood and oak. Elegant design with good tracking, as new, 50lbs £650 ono Tel: 0960 365918

Premier Image Slalom kayak, white, good condition, would suit person under 10 stone, £100 ono Call Edward 0442 239796

K1 all carbon, Laser/Cougar, 12 months old, VGC £300 ono Tel: 0602 305010

Conquest WW spec, complete with airbags, backstrap, full plate footrest, good condition £170, Palm gasket deck VGC £30 Tel: 0223 870981 (Camps)

Pyranha Master, red, full ww spec, full plate footrest, Alloy bow cap and handles and pyranha paddles £300 ono Tel: Chris 01924 498117 (eves)

Roof Rack for VW Golf Mk3 or Vento. Never used. Still boxed. Can be delivered to Crystal Palace Canoe Exhibition or collected from North Wales. Phone Peter on 01248 601366 (eves)

Perception Corsica S, full ww spec, 18 months old, vgc, plus YAK neoprene deck £280 Tel: 01535 630275 (Yorks)

Two 17' Coleman Canadian Canoes in good condition, offers around £350 each. Tel: Shipton Youth Club 01756 793987

Perception Dancer, red, in good condition, £160 Tel: 01752 814937 (Plymouth)

Rotobat, red, ww spec good condition, 18 months old £220 ono. delivery possible W/Mids, N/Wales, Holme Pierrepont. Tel: Graham 01203 226198 (day)

Pyranha Mountain Bat, full ww spec with reinforcing 'cage', airbags, plate footrest etc, x-linked. 4 years old. Reliable boat, plus neoprene spraydeck. £270 ono Tel: 05394 33734 (Cumbria)

Plastic Freestyle, white, good condition, stored indoors £125 ono Tel: 0453 825426 after 6pm.

Mountain Bat ww kayak, crosslinked, black, full ww spec. paddle and neoprene deck, good condition £250 ono. Dagger Freefall ww kayak, cross-linked, pink/plum, hardly used, in good condition. Paddle and neoprene deck £450 ono. Dagger Crossfire, ww kayak, cross linked, black, white, blue, "jaws", an eye catching design. In good condition incl. paddle and deck £450 ono. Tel: Leeds 0113 2687594

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Dagger Freefall, VGC, white/blue £350 Tel: 0594 836900 (Glos)

Machete WWR Kayak, Good Condition, Diolen Hull, £120 contact Dave Webb 081 390 9784 (Surrey)

1 x Canoe Trailer large, galvanised. 1 x Canoe Trailer small, galvanised, miscellaneous eqpt, prices negotiable, will split Tel: 0222 692108 (Steve Aldridge - Cardiff)

Dagger Freefall LT Multi coloured, bulkhead footrest £450. Dagger Transition Multi coloured, Yakima footrest £425. Both boats in excellent condition, spraydecks available.

For details contact Jackie 0272 504703 (Bristol)

Perception Reflex, purple, ex demo, 2 yrs old, little used £200 Leeds 0532 585120

Stuntbat, green, plate footrest, thigh braces, vgc, £275 includes neoprene spraydeck, Tel: 0865 65388 after 6pm Mon-Fri (Oxon)

Centres Read - Canoe Helmets - Buoyancy Aids, Spray covers boots, caving suits, wet suits, granite harnesses, stoves. All in excellent condition, plastic canoe (tourer) Please phone N Yorks 0765 604071 or 0748 833614 day time

Palm Extra Slalom Kayak £110 ono. Hardly been used. Comanche general purpose kayak £75 ono as good as new. (Hants) Tel: 01420 472547

M1370 Pro Slalom, white, excellent condition, little used, low volume, now outgrown, suit medium to small paddler £200 ono. Tel: 0923 245664 (Walford)

Obsession II, hardly used, excellent condition, full epoxy kevlar construction and designer seat £450 ono. Tel: 0695 574788

Clearout, 1993 Pyranha Mountain Bat, nose, cone, full plate etc and playboater shock deck £275 ono. Paddle and b/aid £60 ono. Mirage Kayak (ex cond) paddle, spraydeck, b/aid and wild water centurion helmet £250 ono. Tel: Paul 01633 482688 (Gwent)

Corsica S, full, ww spec, red, 1 year old, good condition, cost new £475, sell for £275 Tel: Graham 0117 979 3130 (Bristol)

Perception Corsica, excellent condition, airbags, footrest, etc, suitable for heavier paddlers £190 ono. Prijon Hurricane with competition seat and invader thigh-braces, vgc £300 ono Tel: Kevin 0376 348691 (home) 0702 386862 (work)

Pyranha Master, full plate footrest, backrest, nosecone, thighbrace, spraydeck, b/aid, helmet, paddles £195 ono. Tel: 0932 246275 Surrey

Nordkapp HS, three hatches, electric submersible bilge pump, all the deck fittings, paddle park, map holder, quick release tow system, compass recess, complete with £60 Sestrel compass. Other accessories include totally waterproof flare cases, fittings to hold these are both inside the cockpit and on the deck. Any sensible offer approaching £400 will be considered. MI Pro Adventure, ww spec, with spraydeck £350 ono. Tel: 0252 616692 (Hants)

Fjord Sea Kayak; complete with retractable skeg, storage cover and spray deck, all in good condition £400 ono Tel: 05394 47352 (Cumbria)

Prijon T-Slalom. Red plastic, full plate footrest, rear airbag, backrest, Gul spraydeck, £250. Schlegel Tramp paddle R/H 212 £40. White Water Buoyancy Aid Large £40. All ono Tel: Colin 01453 758640 (Glos) evenings.

Orion Sea Kayak in excellent condition with all usual equipment for extended cruising, including spraydeck, cockpit cover, portable wheels, chimp pump, deck mounted compass, Nordkapp modified crank paddle and Seamaster split shaft paddle. Sale also includes padded 'V' roof rack canoe holder. Oh Boy... this really hurts, sale due to business commitments, wife's nagging and no spare leisure time in foreseeable future. First offer near £600 secures the lot. Tel: Tony on 0181 519 4600 (day) or 027984 3204 (evenings).

Vauxhall roof bars, to fit old shape Astra £60 ono. Tel: 01246 455788

Tiger K1, glass construction, vgc, red/white colour, includes seat and boat bag £180 Tel: 01892 825067 (Kent)

C1 Slalom. "Double Dutch" good condition with as new Bush deck £120 Tel: 0924 430785

WANTED - SWAP

Old Town Discovery 158 or 164 complete with paddles, must be in very good condition Tel: Hincley 0455 613130

Klepper Aerius single. Tel: 0634 727195

Magic Bat, crosslink, tel: 0224 732754 (Aberdeen) or 0625 430375 (Macclesfield)

Anything in good nick between Aberdeen and Birmingham considered.

Baron Scimitar WWR and Blue WWR Wavehopper Tel: Susan (day): 0225 713355 (eve) Mon-Fri 0225 753137 (Hants)

Crossfire, good condition, x-linked, keeper footrests, contact no: (eves) Gerry 0742

553390

Female Paddling partner for ladies K2 in the Classic Series 1995 ie Devizes-Westminster (Easter) and Arctic Canoe Race (August). Must be fit enough to run the portages without dropping her end of the boat! Tel: Elizabeth Young 0684 572280

Swap. Corsica S, good condition (no serious scratches) ww spec. Teal colour with full plate footrest, would like to swap for Dagger AQII in similar condition. Contact Julie or David 051 339 8527

John and Penny Allan would like to get in contact with any other canoeing couples who have a young child/children and would like to share baby sitting duties on a trip to Corsica this Easter, or on future trips to the Alps. Both paddlers should be happy on Grade 4 Water. Tel: 0752 674910

Cristo polyethylene wave ski, contact Dave Webb 081 390 9784

Open Canoe, any construction considered, but must be in serviceable condition. Call Darren on 0254 872339 (Lancs)

Prospector, Dagger 15 or Discovery 158 or similar Tel: 0779 472091 ext (w) 7471 ext 7282 (H) ask for Chris Humphries room 26.

Prijon T Slalom £200 ono. Full ww spec, good condition. Wanted Magic Bat in good condition, full ww spec, will consider swap. Tel (Walsall) 01922 417677

LOST & FOUND

Found on the river Tees, Egglestone Abbey area, on the 6.11.94 Ainsworth paddles. Tel: 0482 666799 Brough

C1 paddle, found on the River Dee, North Wales on 5th November 1994. Leave description for Brian on 0483 283515.

Lost, a New Wave paddle, black and white marked DA on the River Wye at Bulth on 20 Nov Tel: 0584 877698

Found: in the Dee below Llangollen following events in November, 2 bent river races Tel: Ian 051 648 1095 (Merseyside)

Lost, wooden azzali slalom paddle 10 Dec 1994, on the Ogwen, contact Graham 01203 226198 (day)

STOLEN

Stolen from Peterfield area on 6.12.94, Pyranha Tuffy Master S with WW spec, colour yellow, hull ID Number FBU54048P-1 and new wave K90 Rim flat paddle (black). Both in excellent condition only used 3 times! Any info please phone 01730 264285

Stolen from Burnley Kayak Clubs premises on the banks of the Leeds Liverpool canal, Burnley during the first week in October. A pale green Chris Hares Hudson Canoe with built in end buoyancy, webbed seats, rigged for sailing. Can be identified. Contact Mick Smith tel: 0535 657686 Also 4 Canadian paddles taken.

Stolen from trailer at Castle Hill Centre, Maidenhead. Xmas '94. Red Dancer, good condition, branded SL6 1PB on stem deck. Any info please contact Helen Smith on 01628 31963 or Maidenhead Police on 01753 506972

A REWARD IS OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO AN ARREST

A yellow canoe and three paddles were stolen from locked premises in Hemel Hempstead sometime in late November. This is the latest in a series of break ins. A sizeable reward is being offered for information leading to an arrest. Description, "Magic Bat" single seat plastic canoe - all yellow. Made by Pyranha. Pink seat with black foam hip and knee pads. Black end handles. Multi-coloured bat design on rear deck and word "Magic". Marked inside "Graham Bourne HP2 7NR". Carbon fibre Schlegel slalom paddles. Pink decal and lettering. Straight shaft, right hand feather. Carbon fibre Propulsion slalom paddles. White lettering and possibly yellow sticky tape on ends. Cranked shaft, left hand feather. New Wave kayak paddles, white blade with red (?) lettering, left hand feather. This equipment might be offered for sale in the near future or it may be dumped/hidden somewhere. Please help us to retrieve this equipment. If you can help in any way or know where it is please contact Graham Bourne on 0442 219532.



Paddles and Injuries

by Anne Kendrick: Part One

After much forearm and wrist injury along with trying several types of treatment, I became very aware of all movements involving the wrist and forearm.

In particular I noticed a definite relationship between the severity of pain and the type of paddle used. Stroke modification having been my first course of action, without results, I began to examine the paddle itself in more detail.

The following text is a summary of the information I have gathered during the course of my injury which covers: types of forearm and wrist injuries, and paddle specifications in relation to the paddlers size.

It is worth noting that this information was gathered originally to aid my own recovery and I am passing it on in the hope of helping others. I am not a qualified practitioner of any type and this information is intended to be complimentary to seeking expert advice and treatment.

Forearm and Wrist Injuries

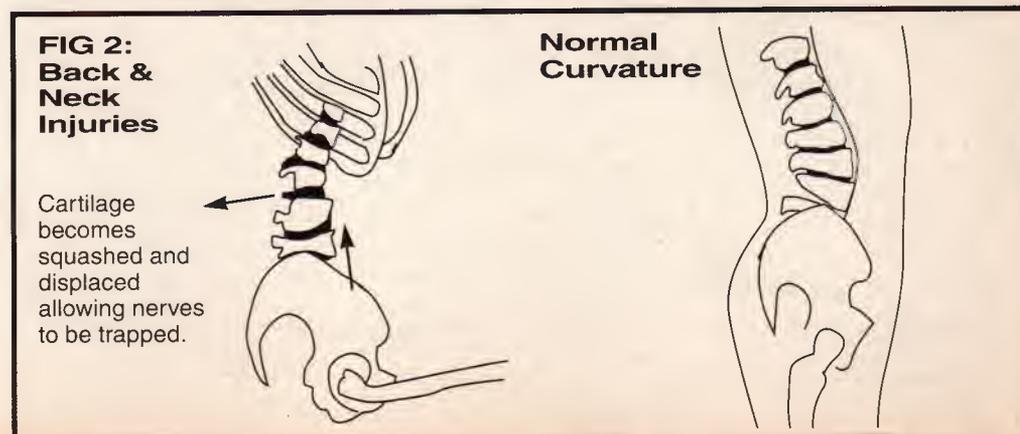
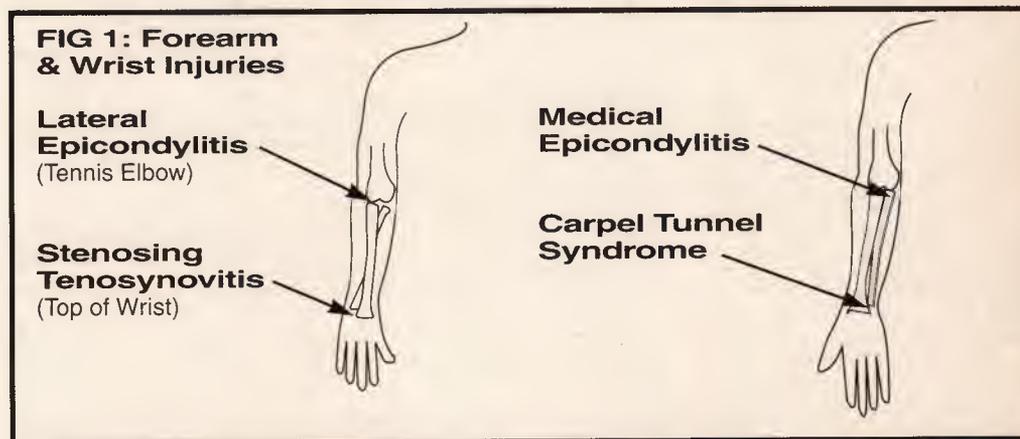
- 1) **Carpel Tunnel Syndrome** - chronic inflammation of the underside of the wrist caused by overuse. The inflamed tendons cause the median nerve to become trapped with associated pain and numb tingling in the fingers.
- 2) **Stenosing Tenosynovitis** - inflamed tendon sheath at the top of the wrist, caused by the friction created from movement of the tendon within its sheath, resulting in redness and swelling with a grating sound.
- 3) **Lateral Epicondylitis** (Tennis Elbow) - Occurs at the outside, lateral epicondyle of the elbow. Pain is due to stress placed on the origin of the muscles which control the wrist. Often caused by cocking of the wrist for example during a bow rudder, or a cocked

wrist (extended) during the pull phase of the forward stroke.

- 4) **Medial Epicondylitis** (Golfers Elbow) - injury of the forearm muscles at the origin, on the inside, medial epicondyle of the elbow. This is less common than Tennis Elbow but can be caused by a inwards deviation (flexion) of the wrist during the pull phase. (Refer to fig. 1 for sites of injuries.)

- 5) **Back and Neck injuries** are often a cause of forearm wrist and shoulder pain in paddlers. A common cause is due to the slightly hunched sitting position of a paddler. This causes the vertebra to squash the cartilage which eventually becomes misplaced causing pressure on the nerves supplying the arms. (See Fig. 2).

This is by no means a comprehensive list and does not cover complications.

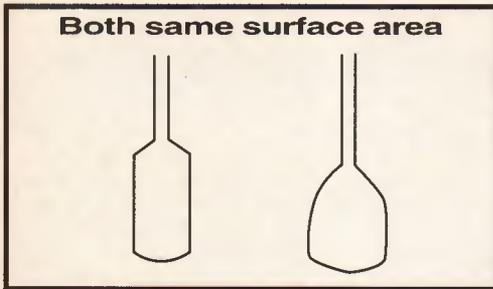


Paddle Specifications

I have considered the following aspects: the kayak paddle as a lever including length, weight and blade area and shape; shaft diameter; blade and shaft construction material; shaft design; degree of feather.

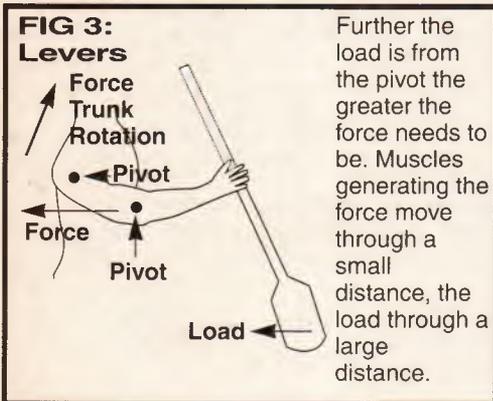
The Kayak Blade As A Lever

The length, weight and blade area are important if the kayak paddle is considered to be a lever acting upon the structure of the arm. Joints of the arm act as pivots and the muscles provide the force



for movement.

The greater the length of the paddle so the increase in the length of the lever. A greater weight and blade area cause an increase in the load at the end of the lever. Differing blade



Further the load is from the pivot the greater the force needs to be. Muscles generating the force move through a small distance, the load through a large distance.

shapes with the same surface area can also affect the load. A squarer blade will remove the load away from the pivot effectively lengthening the lever. A more elongated shape will bring the load closer to the pivot which is preferable. (See diagram below)

Any factor which increases the load will mean that the arm must produce a greater force with each movement in order to overcome the load. However, a point is reached at which the arm musculature can no longer accommodate the strain of repeated movements at too great a load.

Shaft Diameter

Two schools of thought prevail: if the shaft is too narrow this allows the hand to grip extensively which causes injury; if the shaft is too wide the hand must grip extensively in order to maintain control. In the book, 'Sports Injuries, Prevention and Treatment,' by Doctors Petersen and Rhenstrom, it is recommended that the grip of any sports equipment does not exceed the distance, 'from the tip of the middle finger to the crease of the middle of the hand.' (See fig. 4)

Blade and Shaft Material

FIG 4: Circumference of Grip

Palm of Hand: Peterson and Rhenstrom recommend the circumference of grip to be no larger than the length shown: from the tip of the middle finger, to an imaginary line, drawn from the crease below the base of the middle finger.



The lightest material available is carbon. Unfortunately, whilst being light and strong it is very inflexible. This means that because the material does not flex, very little of the energy transferred from the water to the blade can be dissipated as heat energy. (The action reaction principle: energy applied to the water through the blade causes an equal and opposite force to be applied to the blade by the water.)

Fibre glass on the other hand is relatively more flexible but not as strong or light.

Mixes of carbon and fibre glass are available. Lendal recommend paddlers with a history of injury to use their all fibre glass or carbon 1F shafts.

Degree of Feather

It is becoming more and more popular for paddlers to reduce the degree of feather of the blades. This reduces the amount of extension required by the controlling wrist and hopefully, associated injuries. Traditionally, degree of feather has been set at 85-90 degrees but is now being set in some cases as low as 60 degrees.

Shaft Design

Double - torque, crank shafts were originally designed to increase power, however, paddlers found these difficult to control during complex stroke sequences. Consequently, the modified crank was designed. One of the benefits of the modified crank is that it allows a kinder angle on the wrist and the ability of the third and fourth fingers to aid the first and second in taking some of the strain, during the pull phase of the stroke. The benefit of cranks appears to be filtering down from elite paddlers to the recreationalists. (See fig. 5)

Paddle Conclusions

A paddle of the correct ' size ' is essential to avoid injury and reduce pain of existing injury. Correct size entails being as light as possible whilst maintaining flex, a suitable length for the type of paddling and height of the paddler, a suitable shaft diameter for the size of hand, a suitable blade surface area for the weight and strength of the paddler.

In part two of this article which will be published in the April Issue of Canoe Focus, Anne will offer some self-help suggestions on how to cope with paddling injuries.

FIG 5: Crank Shafts



Modified crank



Double Torque



Straight Shaft

Ann Kendrick





Ender

Editor's page

IN YOUR
APRIL ISSUE

Rafting in
Peru

Canoe mums
and dads:
paddle
parenting

Slalom and
Polo at
Crystal Palace

Paddlers
Gear:
All the new kit
from ICE at
Crystal Palace

Never let the truth spoil a good story

The Press and Canoeing

Now the Lyme Bay Court case is ended and we are now able to include in Focus the plain, unadorned facts, it is timely perhaps to make note of the press attitude to the recreational aspects of our sport. Over the past year in particular BCU office staff have had to deal with the media. For the most part it has not been a pleasant or satisfactory, but it has most certainly been revealing.

There have been exceptions, particularly the Telegraph and the Times, who have been painstaking to listen, and print only that which is factual. They have even asked for clarification on technical points.

Unfortunately they are the exceptions: the rest are somewhat economical with facts. Call me cynical, call me a disgrace to the journalistic profession (one TV researcher did when I refused to give her all the gory details!), but I can hardly believe a printed word these days. I even mistrust the football results.!

I am deeply saddened by the intrusive nature of some of the 'journalism' which took place after this tragedy. I am disgusted by the unwillingness of some hacks to let the truth spoil a good story.

Last year we had a newspaper describe and inci-

dent in North Wales as 'a raging torrent' when in fact the only reason an incident occurred was because the river was too low to be run safely! One man's torrent is another man's trickle, obviously.

I am resigned to the fact that some parts of the press will only ever be interested in their angle on the story, and will disregard hard facts if those facts interfere with any chance of sensationalism. We seldom have the right of response, or even input.

Do we have a real problem here, or is it just my personal opinion?

My only positive suggestion here is that as paddlers, BCU members and sports persons we should make every effort to tell the press when we do something noteworthy. Perhaps if we bombard every newspaper and TV company with 'good news' material we could in time redress the balance: at the very least we should start the process of educating the media to the point where they accept that canoeing is much safer than crossing the road.

It will be very interesting to monitor the amount of coverage this year's World Championships attract in the tabloids, compared to the Lyme Bay tragedy.

Thameswey Canoe Club - Tell The Truth

Media Exaggeration (extract from Western Daily Express)

12 Minute Ordeal of Canoeist in Weir Death Spin Rescue Drama

Canoeist Peter Climer was recovering in hospital last night after an accident while shooting a weir on the River Avon.

Mr Climer aged 40 from Cirencester, was dragged into the strong under-tow and was trapped spinning in the powerful 'stopper wave' for 12 minutes.

Colleagues from Thameswey Canoe Club, Swindon, saved his life by fighting through the current to reach him and drag him from the water.

Firefighters called to the scene at Bathampton Weir, near Bath, immediately began resuscitation and continued until an ambulance crew arrived.

The accident described by a fire brigade spokesman as horrific, mirrored the death of Royal Navy Wren Sinead Williams in April last year.

The 18 year old keen canoeist from Bath, drowned after capsizing and being dragged into the stopper wave

death spin as she tried to shoot Pulteney Weir in the city alone.

Mr Climer was with a 21 strong group from the Swindon based club when he tried to cross the Bathampton Weir just after 4.30pm yesterday.

A fire brigade spokesman said "Eleven had gone over and the next ten went. One man got caught in the stopper wave and was pushed over from the centre to the old mill side. Just as the Brigade arrived the other club members managed to get him out. We started resuscitation and continued until ambulance crews arrived."

After Miss Williams' death canoe experts warned of the dangers of trying to shoot weirs alone and advised enthusiasts only to tackle the challenge in groups.

Last night a spokesman at Bath Royal United hospital said Mr Climer was in a satisfactory condition.

The facts

Nearing the end of an enjoyable trip on the river Avon, the last weir Bathampton was approached. The first group had shot the weir and were working in the calm water next to the egress point.

Instructors were set up for safety and rescue for the second group. Pete, who had successfully shot three previous weirs got his line slightly wrong and after shooting the weir was pulled into the stopper on the left. Within moments, our BCU Instructors had Pete out of the water and on the bank. The whole incident took less than three minutes.

As Pete and I were discussing what happened we heard the emergency services arriving. At no time did Pete need resuscitation. The fire brigade wanted to give Pete oxygen as a precaution. As an ambulance had been called they took him to hospital for a check, and he was released 3 hours later with a clean bill of health. The next day Pete went to work as usual.

J Simpson,
Chairperson TCC



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