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Issue 98
December 1995

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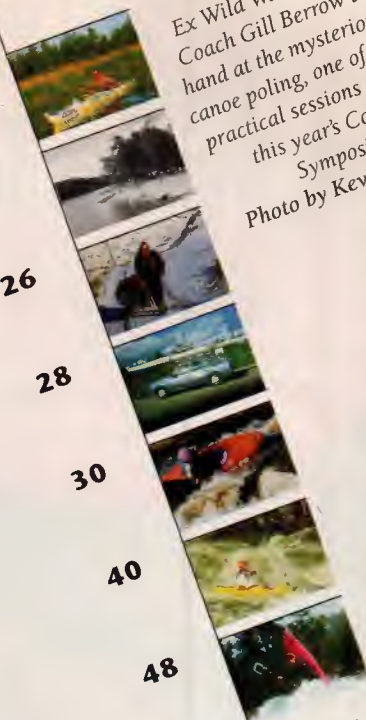
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Front Cover Picture
Ex Wild Water Racer, BCU
Coach Gill Berrow tries her
hand at the mysterious art of
practical sessions on offer at
this year's Coaching
Symposium.
Photo by Kevin Danforth



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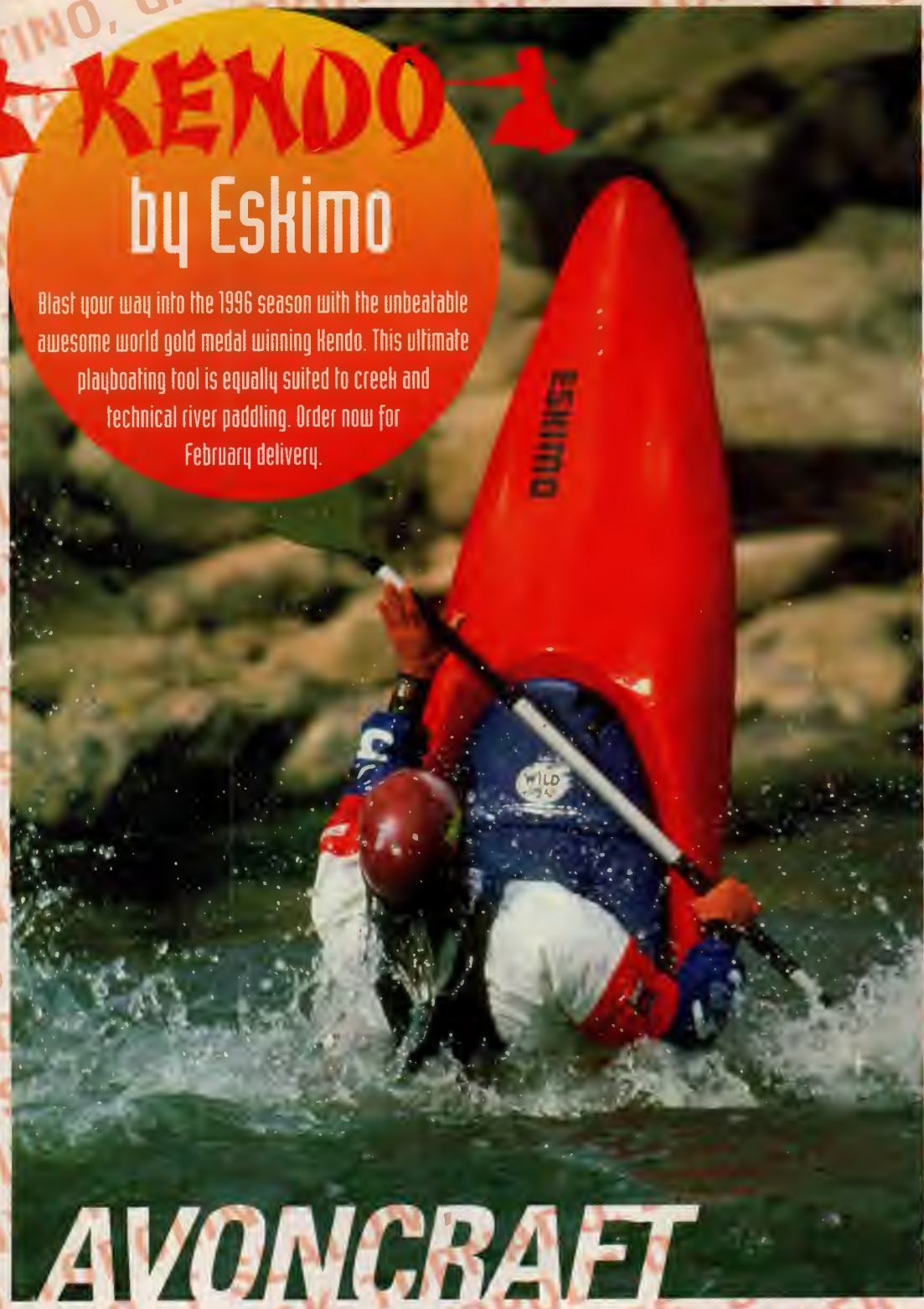


Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of the material we receive is the lifeblood of the magazine. We are always looking for new ideas and experiences to share with our readers. If you have any suggestions for articles or photos, please contact us. We will be happy to help you get started. We also accept contributions on floppy disks (3.5 or 5.25 inch) and on CD-ROM. Please use the following information to ensure we can find your work. All contributions should be sent to the Editor, Canoe Focus, 2b Greenfields, St. Ives, Cambs. PE17 4HB. Please include a return address and telephone number. We will be happy to return your work to you if possible. We will also accept contributions on floppy disks (3.5 or 5.25 inch) and on CD-ROM. Please use the following information to ensure we can find your work. All contributions should be sent to the Editor, Canoe Focus, 2b Greenfields, St. Ives, Cambs. PE17 4HB. Please include a return address and telephone number. We will be happy to return your work to you if possible.

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MAIL ORDER



BCU Annual General Meeting

The British Canoe Union Annual General Meeting will take place in Teesside on 16 March 1996. Members are reminded that under the Unions Articles of Association (article 18(b)) any motion for discussion not originating from the BCU Council shall be: Signed by two full members entitled to vote, and be lodged with the Secretary (Chief Executive) before 1 January 1996.

Any nominations for candidates for election to the BCU Council should be put forward in the form of a motion. These nominations should be accompanied by a pen portrait of the candidate, up to a maximum of 100 words in length. This year with some existing members retiring and available for re-election, there are five vacancies for Council.

To save embarrassment it is worth remembering that the membership categories entitled to vote are: Adult Comprehensive, Life Comprehensive and Adult Basic (also full and life members under the old system). Only members in these categories are eligible to stand for election to Council. Also, please remember that only original, posted voting forms are accepted - no photo-copies or faxes.

Devizes to Westminster Aims for Recovery

Paddlers have been saddened to hear that the classic canoeing race, the 'DW' is experiencing financial difficulties - just as the event is reaching towards its 50th anniversary year in 1997.

It all started with a bet in a pub in Pewsey, Oxfordshire, because of the threatened public transport strike of 1920. Two friends accepted a wager of £5 that they couldn't get a double scull from Pewsey to the sea at Christchurch, down the Avon, in less than 3 days. They won their bet, and 27 years later 3 RAF men and a local farmer met one of the crew in the same pub, and ended up betting that they could do the journey in under 51 hours, which they subsequently did.

A member of that crew then planned to travel from Devizes to Westminster, and although his idea fell through, some Devizes Rover Scouts took up the challenge and at Easter 1947 two doubles crews in cumbersome home-built doubles, reached Westminster in 90 hours - their progress having been charted with news flashes in the Devizes cinemas.

The problems have arisen for a number of reasons the most

notable being a fall-off in the number of race entries. The good news is that we can confirm that the 1996 race will certainly take place, although the impact of reduced costs will not go unnoticed.

Whilst the DW committee is striving to underpin the financing of the event through grant aid and sponsorship, the real answer for the continued viability of the competition rests with you - the paddlers. With four months to go before race day why not make the 'DW' your challenge for 1996?

Federalisation

The enclosed 'Stuffer' entitled 'The BCU of The Twenty First Century' covers the proposals currently under discussion to assist the Union in its move over the next two years to achieve a federal structure more acceptable to the Associations.

Paddleability

Running in parallel with the Slalom world championships at Holme Pierrepont in August was an international Handi-kayak event and congress. The BCU Paddleability team led the high powered forums with delegates from a number of countries interested in promoting an international championships for

people who are disabled, with a view to achieving full ICF recognition.

BCU Licence - NRA and Wey - Important Notice

At the time of going to press a meeting is about to be held with the NRA with a view to including the Medway and the Anglian NRA waters in the BCU Licence. The Thames is still a fair way off as it requires a change in legislation. On the Wey and Godalming Navigations we have not yet been able to agree the renewal of the agreement from 1 January 1996. If you plan to canoe on the Wey and Godalming in January or early February, please phone to check whether the BCU Licence still covers you; phone either the BCU office or Jim Rossiter 01883 346631. We will give you an update on all these waters in February Canoe Focus.

BCU Awards

The September meeting of Council bestowed BCU Awards of Merit on Mike Wood, Dennis Ball and Roy Hitchings for their outstanding service to canoeing. Congratulations.

A Plea and a Thank You from the Editor

In this issue you will note that there are several items on Canoe Slalom and overseas expeditions and adventures. This is because these people have taken time to let me know what they enjoy doing. If you feel tired of reading the same old stuff, how about making a New Year's Resolution. "I promise to keep *Canoe Focus* up to date and let them know what's happening in my canoeing world". Thank you to all the contributors old and new for their efforts over 1995.

...And Finally
May I, on behalf of all of the BCU staff and elected officers wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Rodeo World Championships - Thanks

The British Rodeo Team would like to record their personal thanks to Bob Vardy of Avoncraft for his sponsorship at the recent Rodeo World Championships.

Question of Sport - Starring Lynn Simpson!

Keep your eyes fixed to the screen on Friday nights during December as Lynn Simpson will be starring on BBC1's Question of Sport. It is not known which Friday in December so keep your eyes peeled! Let's hope she's on Bill's team.

World Kayak Surfing Championships 1995 - Costa Rica

British Teams and Individuals achieved outstanding success at the recent championships. Out of 12 possible medals British paddlers brought home eight. In the Team event Gold - England, Silver - Wales. In the Individual Events - Juniors - Gold - Tim Thomas of Wales, Bronze - Malcolm Fawcett of England. Ladies Gold - Penny Allan, Silver - Sue Davey, Bronze - Lesley Harker all from England, and in the open event Tim Thomas took Gold. Our congratulations to all who took part.

Exeter Canoe Club Talent Identification Regatta 1995

Three city middle schools, Montgomery, John Stocker and Countess Weir competed in the first Exeter Canoe Club Talent ID Regatta.

John Stocker took the team prize with wins in all the main finals. Lewis Firman, of John Stocker, in the boys races took double gold, narrowly beating Lee Maxwell, Montgomery, in the K1 race and partnering Christopher Stuchfield in K2 to take the doubles race. In the girls races honours were shared, Eleanor Lister, John Stocker, winning the singles whilst team mates Christine Fullam and Samantha James clinched first place in the K2. In amongst the cut and thrust of the racing the spirit of good sportsmanship was exemplary, Hannah

Hooper, Montgomery sacrificed her race in the girls singles to help team mate Kirsty Luke to 4th place following a collision mid race. The good deed was later rewarded by Kirsty's sister Heidi when she handed Hannah one of the two medals she won at the Regatta.

The Regatta concluded a program of canoeing sessions introducing the children to basic canoeing skills and canoe racing. As the first of its kind in the country the Exeter Canoe Club project could provide a model for other clubs to try. It is clear that from this first regatta that there is canoeing talent with potential in our Exeter Schools. For further details contact Richard Ward, c/o BCU.

Grants News

Foundation For Sport and the Arts

Grants awarded up until August were as follows: Stewart Pitt/Mike Milar £1,000 to attend Slalom World Championships. Axe Vale Canoe Club £9,000 erection of club house and boat store. Welsh Canoeing Association £8,000 purchase of mini-bus and Exeter School Canoe Club 3,200 expedition costs.

Sports Aid Foundation Grants

Successful applicants for grant aid from the Sports Aid Foundation are: Damien Chapman, Heather Corrie, Louise Cheyne, Daniel Golder, Andrew Hamilton, Mark Hoile, Stuart McIntosh, Andrew Morgan, David Oliver, James Perrier, Ashley Starr and Marie Walker.

Sportsmatch

The Sportsmatch Awards Panel recently approved grant aid to the East Sussex County Council in the sum of £1,145. to be used to purchase canoeing equipment for use at the East Sussex County Council Canoe Centre at the Seven Sister Country Park.

Meet the Challenge with the BCU Touring Awards Scheme

The Strand Awards are for achievements in any one calendar year whilst the BCU Awards are for cumulative achievement. In both cases mileage must be logged. The inter-club touring trophy is for the total miles club members have logged in the year (Last years winner totalled 1650 points). Full details from M Hubbard, 78 Derrydown Road, Birmingham B42 1RT.

THE BRITISH CANOE UNION TOURING AWARDS SCHEME

Meet the Challenge

There are 4 sections

- 1 The elementary award for paddling 15 miles.
- 2 The Strand Touring awards (sponsored by SCOTT BADER).
- 3 The BCU Touring awards for greater distances.
- 4 The Strand inter-club touring trophy competition.

For full details of the award scheme send a stamped addressed envelope to:

Mr. M. Hubbard
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Wild Water Racing Information Ansaphone

The telephone number for the Wild Water Racing information line has been changed to: 01483 450101, the old number will run in parallel until 17 January 1996 when it will cease.

The ansaphone can be used on a Thursday before a race prior to 2100 hours. The Wild Water Racing Committee ask that all race organisers phone or fax the following information to the new line:

Whether the race is on or off. The river level at the time or the predicted river level, and the location of the organiser at a set time prior to the race start to receive entries or answer queries.

The ansaphone can also be used by people wishing to make enquiries about Wild Water Racing or to gain advice about the sport. The phone is often answered personally, please do not ring off as the information will still be given. A fax facility is also available on this number.

Andrew & Harley Masters - Fund Raisers

Andrew and Harley Masters are both members of the GB Rodeo Team and competed at the World Championships in Augsburg, Germany this summer. Whilst still youngsters themselves they would like to pass on their experience by encouraging other children to take part in canoeing. They are currently seeking and raising sponsorship to provide canoes for their schools, these will be used in a safe environment to introduce people to the water. A number of different events are being planned to raise funds to purchase equipment and it is hoped this will be matched by grant agencies.

Member of their local canoe club, South Avon, have offered to help train the teachers at the schools.

Andrew and Harley have appeared on the ITV youth programme *No Naked Flame* to launch their fundraising.

If you have any further questions or would like to help Andrew and Harley please Tel: 01934 632220 or write to them at 20 Lower Church Road, Weston super Mare, BS23 2AG

Classic Adventures for Schools and Colleges

Classic Adventures aim to encourage young people within schools and colleges across the UK to plan, prepare and complete their own overseas adventure expedition.

Mr Stephen Venables - Everest without Oxygen 1988 is the Company's Chairman and Dr Mike Stroud OBE - Trans Antartica 1993 the organisation's Doctor.

Over a 21 month period Expedition Members raise their own funds, plan their own expedition and complete relevant pre expedition planning. The team attends lectures, seminars and each individual completes a personal development programme. The overseas expedition lasts from 4 to 6 weeks in a country of the schools choosing.

For further information please contact: Mr Ian Anderson, Classic Adventures 0181 541 3444

Playboater Playvest Exchange

After a mix up with materials at their factory Playboater are offering to exchange certain Playvest buoyancy aids. Playboater believe that there are about ten Playvests in circulation that may suffer from slight delamination of the outer shell. The delamination in no way affects the safety of the buoyancy aid and is purely cosmetic. The Playvests in question can be identified by a square piece of black webbing sewn on top of the shoulder seam.

Playboater asks paddlers and dealers to check their buoyancy aids regardless of age. If you are lucky enough to have one of these models, Playboater will upgrade it free of charge, by return, with the latest '96 Cordura version.

Before returning your buoyancy aid please telephone to confirm it is eligible for replacement.

Contact: Shaun Baker, Playboater, The Haymill Centre, Burnham Lane, Slough, SL1 6LZ Tel/Fax: 01628 602622

Calling All Canoeing Poets

If you are into canoeing, you may well be the person that Arrival Press is looking for. They are looking for canoeists or people into canoeing to pen a poem about their favourite sport, or about a canoeing personality. The best poems received will be included in a new anthology about watersports. Make sure our sport is not left out, by penning a poem and posting it off.

Send your entries to: *Arrival Press, Canoeing Poets, 1-2 Wainman Road, Woodston, Peterborough, PE2 7BU*. You can send up to two poems, 30 lines max. They must reach the above address by 31st December 1995. Those lucky enough to have their work published will receive royalties from the sale of the book, which will be published early in 1996. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope - unused work will be returned.

Sponsorship for Regional Hasler Racing Scheme

Marsport (UK) have agreed to sponsor a Southern region club marathon racing championship scheme for the next five years. Under this new scheme the most successful club, judged by its performance throughout the season in divisional marathon races (the Hasler scheme) will be presented with a framed certificate to commemorate their achievement.

At a recent ceremony, Paul Ralph of Marsport presented the first winning certificate to Heather Brough representing Reading Racing Club with Dolphin Adventure Centre (Pangbourne) in second place and Basingstoke Canal Club tied with Banbury and District Canoe Club in third place.

It is hoped that this award will further encourage participation in the divisional marathon racing scheme and promote a healthy competition between the Southern Region clubs.

The Best of Women in Canoeing - Win a Yak Buoyancy Aid!

Taken any photo's of women actively canoeing lately? Does it show that canoeing can be an appealing sport for women? Want to win a prize? Then send in your photos and you could win a YAK Buoyancy Aid kindly donated by Alan Mason at YAK.

Please ensure that your name, address and membership number appear on the back of your photo. If you want it returned then please enclose a stamped self addressed envelope. Closing date 31st January 1996. Send your entry to: *Chris Lawler, 162 Hough Lane, Wombwell, Barnsley, Yorks S73 0EF*.

The competition will be judged at the International Canoe Exhibition on 24/25 February at the NEC, Birmingham.





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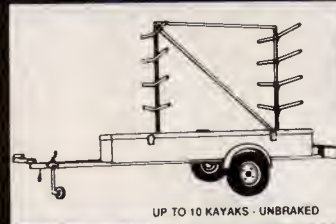
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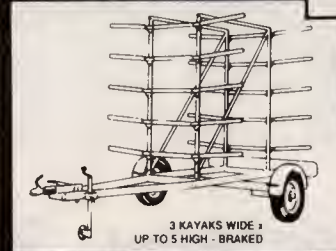
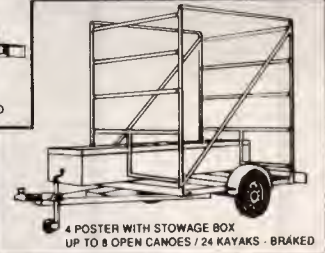
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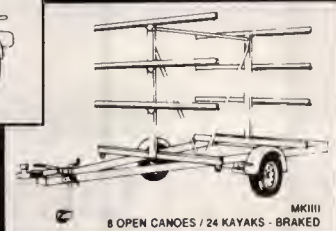
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Young Explorer's Trust - Iceland Expeditions

Nordur Ping, Trent College, Long Eaton, Nottingham - Saturday 3 February 1996. This year's Ping gives future expeditions to Iceland the opportunity to discuss travel arrangements, expedition areas, fieldwork ideas and hosts of other aspects with Iceland experts including past expedition leaders. There will be much to interest Iceland Travellers and to stimulate younger members as well as expedition leaders. Attendance with meals is £8 (£6 for YET members) students £5.50 (YET members £4) with further reductions if you do not require a meal. For an application form to attend the days talks, discussions

and slide shows contact: **Ted Grey, Stretton Cottage, Wellow Road, Ollerton, Newark, Notts, NG22 9AX Tel: 01623 861027**

Canoe Polo AGM

The Polo AGM will be held on 7 January 1996 at the National Water Sports Centre, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham commencing at 12.00 noon.

Marathon National Championships

Please note that the Marathon National Championships traditionally held over the August Bank Holiday have been moved and will be held on 13/14th July in Reading.

Twilight Slalom

Groovy News! Something New! Twilight Slalom - watch out for details - 16 March 1996 Holme Pierrepont. Music, lights, short slalom, rodeo and more - pure entertainment! Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the course and the last 100 days before the Olympic Games! **Contact Sue Wharton for more detail.**

National Pool Slalom

At the moment - the International size pool at Coventry seems the favourite with a provisional date of 18th February. **Contact Sue Wharton for more detail.**

Important Notice

Access meeting to discuss the NRA's Navigation Authority Order - Consultation Document on 13th December, 7.30 for 8.00pm at Holly Barn, Symonds Yat, Wyedean Canoe Club. **Contact Paul Howells on 01594 833238**

Devon and Cornwall Access

Adam Box the RAO for Devon and Cornwall now has an e-mail address through which he can receive access enquiries, and through which access permits can be issued for the River Exe. The address is "adam@cred.zynet.co.uk" Much of the information for the Exe and other rivers in Devon and Cornwall is available through BCU SW region's pages on the World Wide Web at "http://www.zynet.co.uk/dartsoft". Get surfing!

River Wye - The Continuing Saga

It is well known that there is a public right of navigation on the Wye from Hay-on-Wye to the confluence with the river Severn.

Upstream of Hay the right of navigation is disputed although there is now an access agreement in place for part of the river.

During the past few years there has been much activity. The "Wye Project" investigated the river corridor and its uses in considerable detail. Last year the N. R. A. prepared a Catchment Management Plan for the lower sections of the river and wide consultation with interested persons and groups took place. The final five year plan is now awaited.

Other interests have now come forward - A navigation company created by Act of Parliament in 1809 wants to reconstitute and reinstate the old navigation, dredging the river and building locks and weirs to recreate a navigation suitable for motor craft, etc.

The opposing camp wish to retain the present day natural aspect of the river.

The N. R. A. feels that navigation powers would serve everyone better if they were in their hands with their role of balancing conflicting interests and uses of the river. The N. R. A. are currently joined in battle in the High Court with the 1809 company.

To be able to respond when the time comes to do so it is important that the B. C. U. knows what Clubs and Members think.

1. Do you want the river to remain in its present naturalised condition?
2. Would you prefer if it were canalised with locks and weirs?
3. Leaving aside the alternative of there being no Navigation Authority controlling the river corridor and its many uses in the future what body would you favour to exercise such powers?

- such as the old navigation company - a private company.
- perhaps several such organisations each with control of part of the river.
- the N. R. A. - to be succeeded next year by the

Environment Agency. A statutory body with wide powers and duties.
- other suggestions.

4. If opportunities arose what extra facilities would you like to see for canoeists. i.e. more access points - parking - toilets camp sites - information points - etc. and where?
5. How can we all promote "responsible" canoeing on and off the river to gain more support and sympathy from local residents, farmers, riparian owners and other river users?

To all canoeists and canoe clubs, please contact me preferably in writing (hard evidence is best) or telephone. We need to know what you think.

Ideas on other issues affecting the river would also be helpful. Is there anyone out there willing to become part of the B.C.U. access team for the River Wye?

John Westlake. 33, Golden Vale, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2LU. Telephone 01452 531218 L.A.O. (Hay to the confluence).

Eastern Region Access

Chris Marshall has been appointed as Access Officer on the Hertfordshire Colne. He would like to hear from all users of the river, particularly the Rickmansworth /Batchworth Loop. **His address is 40 First Avenue, Garston, Watford, WD2 6PZ Tel: 01923 670313.**

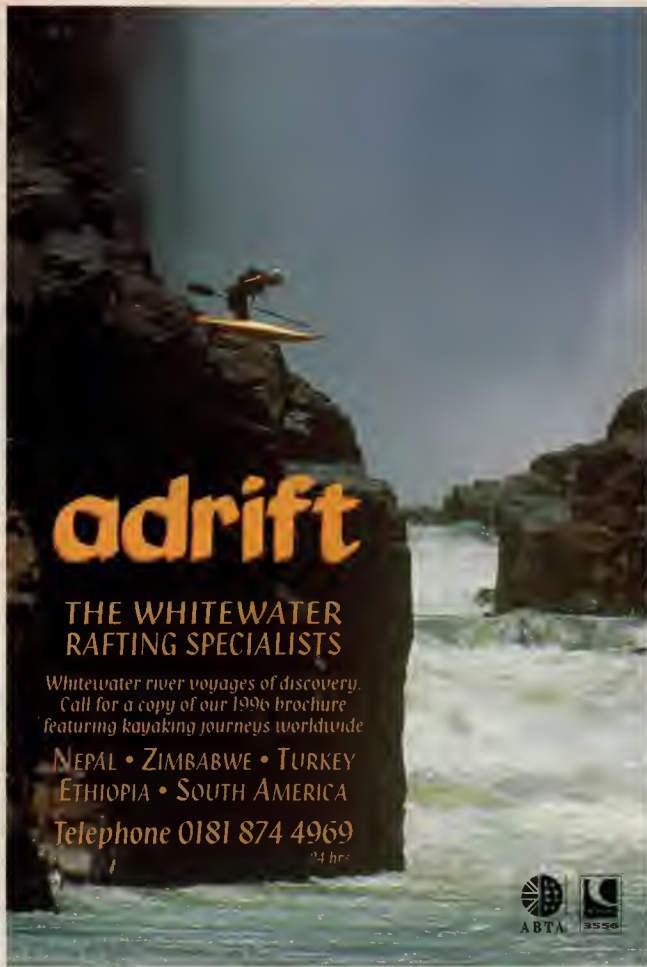
Lesley Quinlan has been appointed as Access Officer for the Suffolk Stour. She continues to be Access Officer for the Essex Colne. **Contact her at e-mail: quinlan@essex.ac.uk, or 108 Fleetwood Avenue, Holland on Sea, Clacton, Essex Tel: 01255 815093.**

Many thanks to Chris Carter and to Andy Forsyth, who are stepping down from these posts after several years of hard work.

Access Officers are needed for the following rivers: Gipping, Glaven, Ivel, Lee above Hertford.

Eastern Region's Internet site has been granted a zippy new domain name. The site is <http://webzone1.co.uk/www/canoeing>. The list of numbers used previously to access the site will raise the pages.

Roger Hardman retired as Access Officer at the BCU Eastern Region AGM on November 20. We thank him for his sterling work over the years.



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Gold, Silver and Bronze in Denmark

A team of ten were selected for this year's Tour de Gudena race in Denmark over the weekend of 9/10th of September. Duncan Capps & Jim Ross in senior K2, Dave Hallam and Richard Bushell in senior K1, Ian Clark & Ashley Starr in junior K2, Scott Wilson in junior K1, Sarah Bennett & Beth Campbell in ladies K2 and Jenny Hands in ladies K1. They were joined by Barking & Dagenham club paddler Danny Beasley in senior K1.



Above:
Back row:
Capps, Ross;
centre row:
Wilson, Beasley,
Clark, Hallam,
Hands;
Bottom row:
Starr, Bennett,
Campbell, Bushell.

Problems on the Big Lakes

The weather this year was warm and mainly dry but with a fresh wind on the Saturday causing problems on the big lakes. The low water levels meant there was no chance of beating last year's record times.

All the men had two stages on the Saturday - 30km. and 17km. split by a 30 min. stage stop. Ross & Capps were 5th. after the first stage and finished the day like that, 10 minutes down on the leaders who had won in 1994. There were only four junior K2s this year so there was no separate race for them and they were re-classified as seniors. Clark and 16 year old Starr finished the day in a creditable 10th. place and as second junior crew.

Dave Hallam was the best of the K1s in 12th. with Richard Bushell 15th. and Danny Beasley 16th. while Scott

Wilson was 10th. junior K1. The ladies only had the 17km. stage to race and clearly enjoyed themselves. Bennett & Campbell took the win by 2 and a half minutes and Jenny Hands was 2nd. K1 only one minute down on the leader.

Sunday was an early start. 7.30am. for the men with 32km., 24km. and 16km. split by 40 minute and 20 minute stage stops. Everyone had a better day than the Saturday. Ross & Capps had a storming first stage to finish with the leaders and rise to 3rd. place overall. They stayed with the second placed boat over the last two stages to hang onto the bronze medal position. Clark & Starr pulled back 5 minutes on the crew in front of them and finished 9th. overall and second junior crew.

Hallam, Bushell and Beasley finished the first stage together but Beasley then broke away to pass Bushell on overall time and rise five places to 11th. Hallam made up two places to 9th. and Bushell two places to 14th. Scott Wilson hung onto his 10th. place in the juniors.

The ladies were meanwhile having an easier day not having to race the 32km. opening stage. Bennett & Campbell with the luxury of a 2 and a half minute cushion from day 1 could afford to let the others do the work and make the moves. They then outprinted the second placed Swedes to take the gold medal. Jenny Hands stayed with the leading K1 but could do nothing about the 52 second deficit from day 1. She did drop the rest of the field by some 6 minutes in taking the silver medal in her first international marathon.

Many thanks to all of the team. Their cheerfulness and co-operation throughout the gruelling race and the 1,600 mile minibus journey made the team managers job a very easy one. A special thanks to John Wesley of Nottingham who shared the driving and only had the use of the team bicycle to support the ladies through out the race.

Results

Ladies K1

- 1 **Jeanne Thomsen**
DEN 4.12.59
- 2 **Jenny Hands**
GBR 4.13.51
- 3 **Katrine Andersen**
DEN 4.20.29

Ladies K2

- 1 **Sarah Bennett,
Beth Campbell**
GBR 4.03.01
- 2 **Anna Pettersson,
Emma Andersson**
SWE 4.05.43
- 3 **Helle Hansen,
Susanne Findsen**
DEN 4.12.06

Senior Men K1

- 1 **Kenneth Pedersen**
DEN 8.22.22
- 2 **Erik Verduyck**
BEL 8.25.24
- 3 **Einar Rasmussen**
NOR 8.32.17
- 9 **Dave Hallam**
GBR 8.48.10
- 11 **Danny Beasley**
B&D 8.51.45
- 14 **Richard Bushell**
GBR 8.53.19

Junior Men K1

- 1 **Kim Knudsen**
DEN 8.35.12
- 2 **Peter Sorensen**
DEN 8.38.58
- 3 **Martin Hansen**
DEN 8.42.07
- 10 **Scott Wilson**
GBR 9.44.10

Senior Men K2

- 1 **Thomas Christiansen,
Karsten Solgaard**
DEN 7.51.34
- 2 **David Larsen,
Mads Kongsgaard**
DEN 7.57.12
- 3 **Jim Ross, Duncan Capps**
GBR 8.01.45
- 9 **Ian Clark, Ashley Starr**
GBR 8.59.48

Solihull 60km Relay Record

On Sunday 8th October, in near perfect conditions, the Nottingham Kayak Club team of James Block, Richard Horsley, Jimmy Butler and Ashley Starr took over 17 minutes off the K2 relay record for the Solihull 60km race.

The 60km loop of the canals around Birmingham includes 50 locks arranged in 5 fights including an uphill flight of 13 under the centre of Birmingham as well as the Brandwood tunnel.

The winning time was 4hrs 26 mins 26 seconds. The second fastest K2 relay crew were also from Nottingham: Matthew Enoch, Paul Enoch, David Hewlings and Bryan Newbutt with a time of 4:41.01 were also inside the old record by 2 and a half minutes.



Right:
Block and Horsley take over at the 32km mark at Shirley Drawbridge.



Right:
Richard Bushell finishing stage 1.

Articles and photos by David Enoch

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Pre-Protecting a Rapid

Article by:
Franco Ferrero
Head of
Canoeing,
Plas y Brenin.

When you run a river and get to a more difficult section you may decide that a bank inspection is in order. Often, it will be simply a case of getting a good look at the rapid and deciding which line to take. Sometimes you will decide to portage. Other times you may decide that you can run it but that it would be foolhardy to do so without taking some precautions. Pre-protecting a rapid, could make the difference between an exciting day out and a 'religious experience'.

Assess the Situation

Having weighed up the skill of your party in relation to the difficulty of the rapid you need to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are the hazards that our chosen line down the rapid is designed to avoid?
2. At which points on the rapid are we most likely to blow our line / make mistakes?
3. Into what sort of trouble and where will those mistakes land us?
4. Where should bank or boat based rescuers be positioned?
5. Which rescue techniques are most likely to be needed?

Basic Principles

When deciding on the above points 4 and 5 the following principles should be kept in mind:

- A. Rescuers should not take avoidable, unnecessary or unjustifiable risks.
- B. Never do anything that will put the victim in a worse situation than they were already in!
- C. Keep it simple.
- D. Be flexible.
- E. Use back-up systems.

Risks

Point A. should be self-evident. However, whenever you plan a rescue try and deliberately step back from the situation, pause, and ask yourself if there is a safer way of achieving the same objective.

Better off without you!

Consider the situation in Fig. 1. There is a 'magnetic rock' at the top of the rapid. You decide that some of the party may, should they fail to avoid the rock, take a swim on the river right, with the consequent risk of being caught in a strainer. In this case submerged tree branches. (Strainer = an obstruction through which a strong current flows which could trap a swimmer under water).

To cover this eventuality a rescuer with a throwline, let's call her Helen, is positioned at point X. The plan is that when the swimmer at point Y grabs the line

they will be swept into the safety of the eddy at point Z.

The paddler, let's call him Wally, is a real star. He manages to defy all logic and outwit you completely. He ends up swimming on the other side of the river.

The best thing Helen can do is not throw the line. That way Wally has an easy swim down to the large eddy on the river left. Should Helen throw her line across the river, Wally will instinctively grab it, be swung away from his relatively safe swim and into the potentially lethal strainer.

Simplicity

The simpler a rescue is, the quicker it is to set up and the less there is to go wrong.

Flexibility

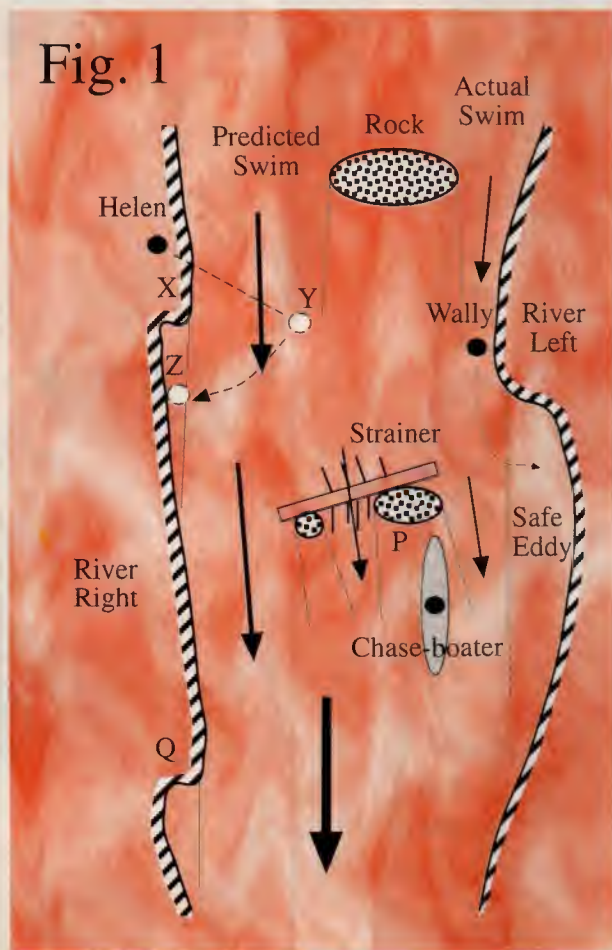
Rescuers should be prepared to 'think on their feet' and think for themselves if things don't go according to plan. Look at Fig. 1 again. Once Helen decides that she can't help Wally from point X, the best thing she can do is run down to point Q, just in case Wally doesn't make it into the big eddy.

Back up

All sorts of things can go wrong. It doesn't pay to rely on one person or one rescue method. For example if Wally does come down on the river right, Helen can't afford to miss. So it would be wise to have two people with throwlines at point X. If we also positioned a 'chase-boater' in eddy P in the middle of the river, he or she would be in a good position to help Wally if he came down on the river left. The chase-boater would also be able to get to Wally in the worst case scenario, which is if he ends up in the strainer.

In a future issue we will look at the various techniques we can use to pre-protect a rapid.

Fig. 1



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New Thinking on

In July-August 1994 an international team of canoeists successfully undertook a sea kayaking expedition in Finland.



The team paddled the whole length of Finland's coastline in just under five weeks using single seated sea kayaks. The total distance covered by the three man team was in excess of 800 miles. The three who undertook the challenge are Matti Joutsikoski (Finland), Hywel Griffiths (Wales) and Chris Townsend (USA), all ex-students of Atlantic College in South Wales.

The expedition was a part of a long term international project which encourages cancer sufferers to embark on challenges as a part of their rehabilitation programme in order to give them self-confidence and a new outlook on life.

Previous events have included a 130 mile sea kayaking expedition in the Finnish archipelago by Welsh cancer sufferers (reported in Canoe Focus 72/Aug 91) and annual visits of Finnish cancer sufferers to an outdoor activities centre situated in the grounds of Atlantic College in South Wales.

Kari Ojala, the managing director of the Cancer Society of South West Finland, emphasises the importance of such projects: "Patients' positive attitude and active life style play a crucial role in their rehabilitation programme in conjunction with medical treatment. It is important that young people are given opportunities to experience challenges and adventures that will give them goals to aim for."

Raising Funds - Increasing Awareness

This year's project, whilst not directly involving cancer sufferers, had two main aims.

Article and

Photos:

Matti

Joutsikoski

The first, to raise funds for both Finnish Cancer Societies and Ty Hafan, which will be the only Children's Hospice

in Wales. The second, to increase awareness among cancer sufferers and the general public of the value of outdoor activities in the rehabilitation of cancer patients.

The programme has attracted widespread support, including that of the Prince's Trust, Thor Heyerdahl, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (UK), Warwick University and Mikko Kolehmainen, the Finnish Olympic gold medallist and World Champion in kayaking. Support from the business world ranges from internationally operating companies such as Finnair and John Laing Construction Company to local companies such as Radio 100 in Finland and Owens Fuel Ltd in South Wales.

The expedition was regularly featured on 17 radio stations, numerous Finnish and British newspapers and also HTV News Bulletin, thus providing good media exposure for the sponsors. The expedition also featured in the International Canoe Exhibition in London in February 1995.

Destination Finland

Finland proved to be a perfect location for a sea kayaking expedition. The southern coast presents a countless number of islands which provide an interesting navigational challenge.

Canoeists and ocean tankers alike have to negotiate their way through the passages between islands which lead to small villages

and busy towns. As islands become more sparse along the western coast, a granite shoreline gives way first to a coastline with countless scattered rocks and then to sandy beaches - some several kilometres long. The northernmost coastline provides the last challenge with very shallow passages between islands which make manoeuvring even with a kayak difficult in places!

The lack of tidal difference allows for almost 24 hour paddling conditions during the light summer days and nights. Late evenings and early mornings are probably the best times to paddle as often the wind conditions are very favourable. The wind tends to pick up a little in the afternoon as the warm air rises above the mainland creating a gentle on-shore wind. The weather can be very sunny and hot although absence of rain and colder weather cannot be guaranteed!!

En Route

Apart from one full rest day we paddled every day of the 32 days it took to complete the distance of over 800 miles. Depending on weather conditions, the daily distances varied from about 5 miles to 50 miles. Although the weather provided us with plenty of very warm and sunny days we had the pleasure of paddling with, rather than against, the wind for only three days. Several calm days enabled us to cover considerable distances but, most typically, we had to strive against a headwind! While we were making our way along the



Encouragement

Cancer Care

southern coast, the wind was blowing from the West and when we turned to the North, the wind started blowing from the North with increasing strength. Several local fishermen not only found it hard to believe that we were going to paddle the whole length of the coastline in sea kayaks but were astounded that we were still able to carry on in winds of over 35 miles per hour. We had studied weather maps of the area in advance and talked to the Meteorological Office in Finland and were told that there are no prevailing wind patterns in the Summer along our route but this summer probably changed the statistics!

Equipment

We started the expedition with one Sea Tiger and two Sea Lion sea kayaks. Unlike the Sea Tiger, made of fibre glass, the plastic Sea Lions proved heavier to paddle and tended to be affected by the wind too much. This led us to change the Sea Lions after about a week and a half and, thanks to a local Scout group,



we completed the expedition with faster fibre glass kayaks. In addition to kayaking gear, our equipment consisted of normal camping equipment - easily stored in the ample hatches. We used dome tents as they can be pitched on bare rock without any pegs. Main meals included dried food (with superb recipes and exotic Indian beans provided by Chris) and fresh food from local shops. There are several shops along the coast and on the small islands. This is particularly important for replenishing water supplies but, at times, we had to paddle an extra half a day to reach a shop!! Other equipment included a mobile phone (for safety and communication purposes) and a weatherproof smile! The phone was kept in the cockpit of my kayak in a waterproof bag and taken out when needed! This practice led to having a number of long interviews with local radio stations during some open crossings, and floating a couple of miles from the coast trying to keep the kayak balanced and the phone dry!

Team Sport

This expedition was a dream come true for me. It provided me with an opportunity to spend almost five weeks kayaking along one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe with good friends. It also showed me that paddling a single seated sea kayak is a team sport. Yes, that's right!! Unless you are a hermit and go totally solo, you work in a team; you plan, prepare and paddle as a team.

Achieving a physical goal was very rewarding in itself but perhaps the greatest reward for me comes from hearing about young people who read or heard about our expedition and volunteered to help and encourage others to tackle their own challenges.



Should you be interested in knowing more about this on-going project,

please contact:
Matti Joutsikoski
13 Conway Gardens,
Beacon Park,
Plymouth,
PL2 2RT

If you would like more information on canoeing in Finland,

please contact:
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then proceed by canoe via a
series of interconnected lakes
onto the river Drwenca and
then the Vistula, eventually
ending up back in
Chelmno.**

The scenery is quite beautiful. Pine forests, sandbanks, little islands in clean, fresh water lakes. The Drwenca is about 30 feet wide, very winding with high cliffs in places and many shady open glades or fields for lunch stops and camping. The Vistula is hundreds of feet wide with sandy, tree-lined banks.

There were participants from Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, England, America, Holland, Germany and Norway. Each person was issued with a name and country badge which made communications a lot easier.

Day 0 We arrived in the late afternoon after a tiresome journey. The campsite at Chelmno is by a lake below the medieval town and approached via a beautiful avenue of trees. There was plenty of room for camping but the toilet facilities were communal, smelly and without hot water. Still it was good practice as there was worse to come!

Day 1 After signing in there was a long wait in the sun interrupted by a bread, soup and sausage lunch. This was followed by speeches and presentations with many local dignitaries present. The tour is clearly a big event in the Chelmno social calendar. The 300 plus participants then marched through the town behind a band to board coaches for the trip to the starting point on Lake Robotno. We pitched camp in a beautiful forest by the lake and, although we were within walking distance of the nearest village, it was a wilderness site in that there were no facilities whatever other than those

provided by the army. Unfortunately mosquitoes were something of a problem.

Day 2 A rest day! A bit odd as we had not yet actually started.

Depending on our inclination we took a trip round the next lake, went for a walk or swim, or just sat. There was a camp fire and noisy music and singing till gone midnight. No problem as the tour proper does not start tomorrow either! Many of the Poles are using borrowed canoes for the first time and this is their annual holiday. There are families present complete with small children, teddy bears and even dogs in the canoe.

Day 3 A short trip with flags of all nations flying on six foot poles to a holiday camp on a nearby lake. Swimming and paddling competitions were held for the energetic while we went off for a meal and ice cream.

Day 4 At last the tour proper has started. We left Lake Robotno by a narrow, almost hidden, outlet. The water was covered in water lilies with brightly coloured dragonflies. After a series of small lakes and winding interconnections we reached a small weir that had to be portaged and then into the much larger Lake Bachotek. We camped in a scruffy piece of overgrown woodland, in a lakeside holiday camp. The site was very crowded but at least there was a proper (cold) shower block, shops and a restaurant.

Day 5 Another rest day for the weary or an optional circular tour to the next lake. We rested, having been kept up half the night talking and



drinking vodka with the natives.

Day 6 We paddled down the remaining length of Lake Bachotek and, after portaging another weir, joined the river Drwenca. At least there was now a bit of a flow to help us along. My partner had never been canoe camping before

and we had bought a very wide stable Coleman Canadian with a view to doing 10 kms a day in Holland, carrying all our luggage. The Poland trip became available at the last minute due to both of us getting early retirement unexpectedly. Today's trip was 33 kms and with, effectively, only one person paddling it



**Article and
Photos by
Peter Minch**

was very tiring. The organisation came into its own today. There was a pilot boat leading the way which no one was supposed to overtake and a sweeper at the rear to mop up any stragglers. We were to see a lot of the sweeper during the rest of the trip. At any dangers such as weirs or fallen trees there were safety people to direct and help us. The day ended at the ancient town of Brodnica on an official camping area, but one which had earth closets and no washrooms. Yuk.

Day 7 An official guided tour of the interesting old town was provided unfortunately the guide only spoke German which frequently lapsed into Polish for a few sentences. In the afternoon the army laid on a huge portable shower tent for a mass communal wash with hot water. Luxury indeed!

Day 8 After a week of hot weather it rained heavily in the morning. It was a very long paddle for us of 35 kms, again through lovely scenery and after passing plenty of open country side, we camped in a very narrow strip, almost a footpath, at the river side. For some people this involved a long trek from the baggage lorry to their tent site.

Day 9 Another long day through beautiful country side. We were now going so slowly that the sweeper would not let us finish our lunch. We were exhausted by the time we reached the ancient town of Golub-Dobrzyn. The camp site was new but very small and crowded and had only one shower and two earth closets. A camp fire was held in the evening with a talent show provided by the campers themselves.

Day 10 Another much needed rest day with an included visit to a fine refurbished castle. Unfortunately again without an English speaking guide. As yesterday there was loud music till late at night.

Day 11 A repeat of day 9 still on the Drwenca river. The safety crew were much needed with several fallen trees and other obstructions. 38 very tiring kms to reach a tiny village called Mlyniec II. Once again we camped on what was effectively a footpath after passing open fields.

Day 12 After a few kms on the Drwenca with several tiny rapids we reached the wide river Vistula and everyone stopped at the confluence for lunch. The flags of many nations were erected again on such canoes as could carry them and a colourful mass entry was made into the old town of Torun. Unfortunately the spectacle was lost on my partner and I as we were so far behind by then.

Day 13 An excellent tour of Torun was provided with an English speaking guide. Torun is a large old town full of interesting historical buildings including the house of Nicholas Copernicus. What's more it had that final arbiter of human progress, a Big Mac. A really nice ancient and modern town.

Day 14 A dreadfully long day of 42 kms. There were a lot of sandbanks exposed and almost no flow. Several people had to get out and walk when they picked the wrong side of a sandbank and we were reduced to poling when

we ran aground. We were the last to arrive, totally exhausted, after 8 hours of non stop paddling. The camp site was once again a more or less derelict piece of land and we had to flatten the undergrowth and remove broken bottles and pieces of metal scrap before we could pitch our tent.

Day 15 Another killer day of 38 kms. Too tired to enjoy the scenery. The last few kms involved fighting our way upstream along a narrow channel to return to the lake at Chelmmo. In the evening there were speeches and the presentation of souvenirs followed by music and dancing till the early hours of the morning. Despite the noise we slept like the dead.



The trip runs from the 1st-15th of August every year, regardless of which day the 1st is and the contact person is **Hilda Baar**, **Lavendelstrook 14, 8256 JE Swifterbant, Netherland, phone number from England 0031 3212 2222**. Alternatively you can contact me, **Peter Minch**, on **0181 304 2330** if you are interested in or know of any other good camping tours.

Weekend Touring in Europe

European paddlers have retained the tradition of making journeys by canoe. It is practical for them to attend a different club each weekend to join in the social activities and paddle the local waters. In many cases each weekend is in a different country as the borders have been almost non existent for many years.

With the choice of Channel crossings, competition in prices, the lack of formalities and the practicality of sharing the costs between three or four in a car, we too can now join in.

You are on a touring event therefore you should anticipate longer journeys than at

For more information on touring events see the touring programme in your 1996 BCU Yearbook. Colin Kempson - Chairman BCU Touring Committee

home 20 to 30kms is normal but venues vary. March could be Brugge, close to the ferry at Zeebrugge, for a Sunday paddle through the canals in this beautiful old city centre. April - the Tulip Rally, Haarlem to visit the flower parade and see the bulb fields by canoe. May- Zwartsluis,

northern Holland for four days in the lakes, marshlands, small and commercial waters of this attractive area. Free use of the pool, Friday evening film show and a barbecue on Saturday evening with a choice of base camp or touring.

June - Venlo on the Holland/German border for two quite different waters and high jinks on Saturday night.

July for Kortrijk, southern Belgium, only an hour from Calais, for two days on the Leie, a local canal.

August for Kasterlee, northern Belgium for two days on "the cleanest river in Flanders", the Nete.

The first weekend in September is a highlight with Saturday sightseeing and in the evening paddling with 300 other paddlers through the heart of Amsterdam with an extended waymarked tour on Sunday.

It normally requires Friday before the event for travelling and sometimes it is not practical to get home on Sunday night.



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European Canoe Polo Championships -

Over and not forgotten

You may have wondered why the success of the British Teams at the European Championships was not reported in full in the last issue of Focus. Well as usual its a combination of a number of people doing their best, and that best just not quite coming together and being good enough. I attended the Championships, and agreed with Focus that I would write an article etc. However on return from the time off work for the event, my employers had other ideas and I was left unable to complete the task by the required deadline. This despite a reminder from Wendy at BCU HQ. Whilst I feel that this is a desperate omission and a genuine regret that the athletes concerned did not see their achievements in print at the appropriate time, I could not have juggled the multiple balls of my life at once without dropping one.

So to all those who were looking forward to reading a British canoeing success story and particularly the following athletes and coaches, my apologies.

British Success at Polo

The second European Championships for canoe polo were held in Rome between the 9th and 13th of August. 10 nations were represented, with

Men's Team

Ras Bayne
Paul Brain
Colin Davis
Simon Davison
Paul (Sooty) Harrison
Stuart Moffitt
Andy Petrie
Alan Vessey

Women's Team

Claire Allen
Sue Berry
Ginny Coyles
Jane Hillyard
Jo Kirkbride
Lynn Knowles
Jackie Marlow
Dianne Ratcliff
Coaches
Peter Mitchell
Mike Moffitt
Chris Parkes
Greg Smale

Article by
Curly Barker

some notable teams missing, at least partly due to the relatively late change of date and venue for the event. For both Latvia and Switzerland this was to be their first major Championships.

The Opening Ceremony was staged efficiently in the heat of Thursday morning, with teams wishing that their official uniforms were vests and shorts.

Thursday afternoon and Friday were taken up with the qualifying round games that determine final seedings, with all teams knowing that to do well here can make all the difference. In the Men's competition these games went largely to form, with the four seeded teams coming first and second in each of the two groups.

The closeness of the competition between the big four nations: France, Germany, Great Britain and The Netherlands was confirmed as France drew with Germany and GB drew with the Dutch, leaving both groups to be decided on goal difference, a battle that was won by the French and British.

In the Women's competition close contests were the order of the day, but at the end of the first rounds the British had won all their games, giving them a straight route to the final, with the French and Germans joint favourites to join them.

Repechage System

Final placings were to be decided on a repechage system, this will be the system used at the World Championships in Adalaide in 1996.

For the men this meant playing the French, with the winners progressing to a kind of half-final, and the losers dropping down a rung and having to play off with the Dutch and Germans. The game was furiously contested, with the Brits seeming to dominate the play, but two goals from the French, one just before halftime and one just prior to the final whistle were enough to give them a 3 - 1 win and the easy run through. The British had to wait and see if they could now battle their way back up through the ladder system.

The Germans and the Dutch played the game that decided who took on the British in what proved to be one of the most exciting games of the championships, both teams knew that the winners could go on to win the event, but the losers could only finish a maximum of third.

The game was close from start to finish, with the Germans holding a one goal lead throughout as the scores progressed to 3 - 2 as the final whistle approached. The Dutch started one of

their typical breaking moves and the only way the Germans could prevent a certain goal was by conceding a penalty - this was converted and the game went into extra time.

No score over the six minutes meant that penalties were to follow and this proved to be test of nerve that once again at a major event the Dutch proved they were no match for. The Germans were to be the gateway to a semi-final for the British Men.

This game was played later in the day and really now the pressure was on every team for every game, as a team lost, they could not regain a place in the ladder, and winning meant a move up the rankings and a shot at the next team.

The British beat the Germans 3 - 2, setting themselves up with an early morning game against the French again, but this time for a place in the final.

8.00am saw the next round in the epic battle against the French, with the game enjoying all the flair and excitement you would expect from two of the most open playing teams in the world, but once again the French were to score a hairsbreadth from the final whistle to win 4 - 3.

This meant that in an hour and a half time the Brits would have to play the winners of a game between the Dutch and the Germans (it all sounds rather familiar doesn't it), for a place in the final with the French.

The Dutch were able to reverse their earlier result with what transpired to be an easy 6 - 1 win over a German team that could just never get into their stride. This guaranteed the Dutch at least 3rd, which would put them on the medal podium for the first time at a major championship.

They were obviously not content with this as on a high they rolled to the British Men, who had to soak up some massive punishment with some very fine saves from Simon Davison before they could eventually run out 2 - 1 winners. Once again the Brits had earned the right to play the French - but this time it was the final.

British Women

Meanwhile the British women had to watch and wait. They had already got a place in the final, but the other teams had to play off to see who would meet them there. The decisive game in the was between the French and German Women, with frankly the under-dogs the Germans finding a way through 3 - 2.

The Women's final was played immediately before the men's and really was a game of missed chances, the play swinging from end to end,

with no result. Both teams looked as if they were more scared of losing than anything else. Ultimately the British went a goal down and the game opened up with our girls suddenly looking as if they wanted to win. An equaliser was scored and it looked as if the Brits were going to run away with it, but despite a series of concentrated attacks they could not get the winning goal. A German break from a hard press forward by the British resulted in them pulling back their lead and in the time remaining they successfully defended and played out the clock to become European Champions for the second time.

The men's final was bound to produce a new team as European Champions as in Sheffield last time the British

were second and the French third. The holders Germany had been relegated to 4th by the Dutch. The final started as had the previous two games with open end to end play by both teams, but this time the French took the early lead, which they held for most of the game. Ras Bayne was to be the saving light for the Brits as it was their turn to score just before the final whistle. This was not the winner it felt like, but did take the game to extra time and kept the door open.

The first period of extra time was frantic, but no goal ensued. In the second period one began to wonder if the teams could keep up the pace. As the dreaded penalty shoot-out loomed Sooty Harrison made one of his trademark runs at the French defence, ducked

and dived his way past the defenders and scored from about 3 m out.

There was still about a minute and a half play left and the French were not to be denied easily. Their attack was stopped by a very rough foul and the hero of the moment, Sooty, was sent off. 25 seconds were on the clock, the French had a free shot in front of goal. Simon Davison saved - the ball dropped free and as the French scrambled for it they gave away a foul. Paul Brain just held onto the ball and time ran out.

The British Men were European Champions, the British Women struggled to recognise the achievement of their second silver medal. All in all British polo had put itself at the top of Europe again.

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Worlds Diary 1995 -

Sunday 20th August

or - The
Diary of
Joe Lyons
aged 30
something!



Drove over the hill road to Bala again! Hope its the last time this year. Got to the team hotel about 6pm - its quiet - not a lot of the team here yet. This isn't like a usual Worlds no dash across Europe in a minibus or meeting in some airport. Its an odd low key start. Andy and I take the C2 on the lake, which we hear has got blue green algae - typical!

Monday 21st Head up the river for a paddle. Here is another difference at a home Worlds. If we'd been abroad we'd have been hammering up and down the river trying to learn it. I remember arriving at the Savage river in 1989 to find it covered in mist. We never did learn that river. This year the boat is on the other foot and the Yanks are all over the place. We pass a French boat 'garaged' on the wrong side of the river - its nice to see the best crews making hard work of it!

Tuesday 22nd River on full for the first time. Worked on the middle sections and did one flying topsite. Feeling good and going well. Most of the rest of the team arrive tonight, and it starts to feel more like a Worlds.

Saw John Handyside today, and told him he ought to get the MBE for organising it all, but they won't let him in the place as she will still be wearing the same clothes and won't have shaved! Guy Sellwood (Team Manager) hands out souvenir programs. The slalom section starts with a list of the organisers. Glad to see the slalomists get their priorities right again!

Wednesday 23rd Quiet day today non-stop tomorrow. Get the start list and we have a problem. The random draw has put us behind 3 very slow boats. I expect we'll be doing a lot of overtaking! Nervous tonight - tomorrow needs to be a good rehearsal.

The opening ceremony starts at 6pm so we go around 5.30. As the oldest member of the team I get to carry the flag. Actually it is a pleasant honour and I am proud to do it. Up Bala High Street we march, last team in the line, holding up the traffic. Mainly cheers from the pavements. Speeches are fairly short, thank heaven, and we rush back to the hotel for dinner,

successfully leaving the Team Manager and DRH behind. Too slow, guys.

Oh, I almost forgot, we ran a sweepstake on what JH would be

wearing to the opening. I drew those same white shorts, and the official organisers shirt. I won! Perhaps its my lucky week.

Thursday 24th Non-stop day. A good warm up run then up to the top for the start. Tense - need to relax, 30 seconds, 15, beep-beep GO. A good run down the top to the fingers, then missed the slot in the rocks above the haystack. We're going in! No we aren't Huge support on my side - I don't think I've ever had a C2 so far over and got it back. But I'm winded and I can't get breath! The rest of the run is a struggle and we catch up three crews too. 25.03 too slow! It shakes my confidence, and Fiona, my wife and Matt Brown, our coach, spend the rest of the day trying to rebuild it. The other Brit boats come in around the same times, though Dave Belbin and Phil Caunt are quickest as we expected.

Friday 25th Rest day so lets get away from Bala. Fiona drives me to Barmouth and we have an ice-cream on the beach. Sally Doodey gives me a deep massage and finds a large bruise under my ribs. Good job we aren't racing today as I am really tired!

Saturday 26th C1 and Ladies race today. Get on the NRA bridge to watch the C1s go through. Ewan Mackintosh, now paddling for the Aussies, swims at the fingers, but rescues himself and heads determinedly for the finish. The Brits go well and its off to the finish to cheer them in. They all make it. Ladies next. This year Cynthia Berry is as fit as I have seen her and she storms to a top 10 place. Brilliant! All the girls go well and looking at the times they have a really good medal shot in the team. It's a real buzz to see them race and I'm ready for tomorrow now!

Sunday 27th RACE DAY! Up early for breakfast then up the river for a warm up run. Loads of people on the riverbank offering support - its a really good feeling and helps to make you positive.

Up to the start and Sally Doodey does a warm up massage. She's been brilliant all week. All the British boats are off together and we all get on the river at the same time and wish each other good luck. Then down to the start and sit and focus on what we are going to do. Onto the start line and the familiar voice of Mike Tordoff counts us down. A bit wobbly on the graveyard, but into rhythm and moving well on the middle section. Up on the splits and pulling hard. Wonderful support from the bank - a real help. Into the Mill and a Yank boat appears in front of us, and we have a few desperate moments while we get past. Down the chicken shoot - drive for the line and finish. 24.16 one second slower than predicted to Mog

Morris, the C2 coach. Excellent! Now for the other Brit boats. A team place is riding on this, Cloughies come in 20 seconds down, then the Blackmans, 3 down, and then Dave and Phil 25 up. Second boat in the team event! Can't relax now, got to do it all again tomorrow!

12th place overall with Dave and Phil 10th, Howard and Neil 13th, Iain and Andy 14th Good Results.

Back at the team hotel we discuss team tactics. It won't be easy, as the Italians are very close and have moved the C1 World Champion into C2. We have got to race well to do it. I am more nervous for this than the individual. Others are depending on me. I find it hard to get to sleep even though I'm tired.

Monday 28th TEAM EVENT. GO FOR... BRONZE. We are on a mission and the Italians are in front so we'll get splits. The start line is awkward. Whoever designed this is not a racer! It adds to the stress levels which are already high. We watch the C1s and Ladies go off, then we get on the start line. Stress is high - we mustn't fall in - we must paddle well - we must get a medal, we must...!

Off the start together, and a good run down the slalom site. We get behind Neil and Howard and dig in hard. At the road bridge we get an up split but not much up. Top of the Mill and I don't hear the split. Are we up? Down the Mill site my back seems to disintegrate but we get a 10 up split. No mistakes on the Mill. The crowd are deafening. Over the line and hear "into first place" over the tannoy. 3 C2's go mad

This is the best feeling I ever had in canoeing. 22 years of paddling distilled into this one moment. People on the banks taking photos. In come the French and Germans to take gold and silver but have we got the bronze! We get out on the bank. A kiss and a hug from Fiona and handshakes all round. JH approaches, shakes my hand and says "drug test!" I don't believe it! This is the second time this year. Last time it took 10 minutes, this time it was to take 2 hours, and I was "chaperoned" to the medal ceremony.

The Ladies got the Bronze too, and they are there to collect it. We watch them then get into line and march out to the rostrum. The crowd roar, and there is a sea of faces smiling and shouting back at us. Up goes the Union Flag. A brilliant moment - that flag is flying for us!

Back at the hotel and the final team meeting. Its been great a great Worlds, with a great team feeling and excellent support. Loads of people have worked very hard and our success is for them too. But now its time to PARTY.



Article by
Joe Lyons



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The Round of K

Knoydart is often billed as the last wilderness in Britain. Whatever the truth of that statement I have had a long love affair with this bleak vastness.

It's geography is simple. Bounded on the south by Loch Nevis; on the north by Loch Hourn. It is separated on the west from the Isle of Skye by the Sound of Sleat. The eastern boundary is made up by Loch Quoich and the River Carnoch. It was these boundaries we were to follow. It just happened that my time off was in March.

We were into the usual confusion of packing. The gear spread between the canoe and car. The first of the snow storms caught us by surprise. The canoe and scattered gear were muffled below inches of white. As the tide retreated Mallaig harbour gained a black snow free rim. With ice axes and crampons, snow shoes and ski poles, as well as the paddling kit. Brummy (Martin Dutton) and I were prepared for the best and the worst.

Uninviting Leaden Grey

A following wind harried us across the entrance to Loch Nevis. Even in the sun between showers the sea was an uninviting leaden grey. The temperature was low and we were both using pogies. At least this part of the trip was in clear view of Mallaig. The swell built as we left the shelter of the coast and was confused by waves running out of Nevis. We traded nervous comments as we headed towards the Knoydart Peninsula. The run up the western coast was sheltered from any swell and with the wind behind us progress was quick and easy. We spotted a lone crofter, one of the small community that is dotted along the shore.

Beinn Sgritheall's snow covered bulk dominated the northern shore of Loch Hourn. Deer grazed close to the waters edge. One stag got itself trapped between a cliff and ourselves only running clear when we sat absolutely still. Further on an otter sat chewing a fish, one eye on us the other on dinner. The otter's timing was impeccable, it waited all the while it took me to charge the lens, then as I put the camera to my eye it dived!

The scenery became yet more spectacular as the Loch narrowed to Kinloch Hourn. The wind dropped



away as darkness fell. Coldness began to eat into us. Eight hours from Mallaig and we were ready to camp. We managed to get the canoe up on to its trolley without unloading and set off up the road. Suddenly we both felt dreadfully cold. Was it the blood going back to the legs after sitting all day?

Roar of the Stove

The stalker, he and his wife being the only people who live here, readily gave us permission to camp. The roar of the stove was comforting in this frozen landscape. Climbing boots and ski poles completed the outfit for the pull to Loch Quoich, the road gaining eight hundred feet in height over three miles. Unfortunately it was snow covered with two icy ruts where the stalker's Land Rover had been up and down. It was on one of the one in five sections that our system showed its short comings. We were both in a loop of rope but right at the front of the canoe. One of us was always teetering on the edge of the iced rut. Martin slipped. Desperately I dug the edges of my boots into the snow. The only thing preventing a



crunching slide with the boat were the ski poles. Martin regained his footing and the pull continued. It was only on the flatter upper section we came up with the easy solution; one short rope, one long.

We made a food stop just short of Quoich. Martin studied the map and our route from the end of the Loch and down the Carnoch. He came out with the opinion that it wouldn't be too bad. I kept quiet. Five years ago I had carried up the

**Article and
photos by
Ray Goodwin**

Knoydart



Carnoch. The ground was awful and this time it was snow covered.

With no wind, snow to the waterside and blue skies, Loch Quoich was idyllic. Great sheets of fern ice were forming across the surface thickening to a solid covering as we went further. Our trail wound out behind us. The noise was incredible as the canoe forged through. A tinkling as the ice shattered ahead of us. The rustle and scratch as it ran along the boat. A place of stunning beauty and latent danger. One tiny mistake and we would not last long enough to get ashore.

We dragged the boat to the next wee Loch. The ice was at the awkward stage too thick to paddle, too thin to walk on. We resorted to combined tactics. Me with a rope hauling from the bank and Brummy using paddle or pole from the canoe.

Hauling, pushing and cursing

Another kilometre of shallow stream and a combination of hauling, pushing and cursing got us to Lochan nam Breac. We managed to stay in the shallows to start, walking on the ice and hauling

the canoe, but the water beneath us became deeper and the ice uncertain. We resorted to combined tactics again only this time the bank was a nightmare of small cliffs and trees. Every foot of progress was costing us dear. A thinner area enabled us to paddle to the opposite shore. Most times the paddle smashed down through the ice creating a slot; the pull was against this not the water beneath. The final pull to shore was done with ice axes with neither of us prepared to trust ourselves on the ice. A short session of poling took us to the start of the gorge. We had had enough for one day. This was a claustrophobic campsite hemmed in by steep mountain walls. Our only visibility being upwards. Way above, the summit slopes of Luinne Bheinn caught the last of the sunlight, a plume of snow streaming skyward. We had hoped to climb up there but we were getting no radio reception and so no weather reports. This was no place to be caught in a blizzard so we would push on.

Long Winter's Night

The whole of the next day was taken up by triple loading. Occasionally we could drag the canoe but even then the terrain was so bad that it had to be empty. Each mile had to be covered five times. Two loads each then the canoe. Brummy's studying of the map became more intense with every stop. Towards the end of the day it started snowing and the route across the hillside to avoid gorges and waterfalls was not simple. A final sledge downhill with a fully loaded canoe got us along the flat valley that led down to Loch Nevis. With food inside of us we settled in for another long winter's night. The constant uncertainty of the weather gnawed at my mind as I tried to sleep.

The ground was level enough so we went back to manhauling the loaded canoe. One short rope, one long. Once we got moving the trick was not to stop. Small dips were done at the run. Even so, stops were more frequent and each time the canoe froze itself to the ground. Starting up again was brutal until we discovered that we could



shake the boat loose before beginning the pull. Soon there was enough water in the Carnoch to float the canoe. After some wading and leaving plenty of plastic on the rocks, there was enough depth to float and pole. It was sheer bliss to be moving again. Brum walked along the bank as I poled downstream. There was no fancy windmilling with the pole, in these temperatures dry hands were a necessity.

Loch Nevis was mirror calm. Brummy suggested lunch. I looked around with that dubious feeling. The conditions were too good to be true. Take advantage of it and keep going. Lunch could come later. (Robert Egelstaff describes this as Eskimo time: 'When the going's good, you go'.)

We had an escort of seals to the narrows. The tide sped us through and into the outer Lock. Out of nowhere the wind sprang up against us. Within minutes there were white horses cresting the waves. We stayed close to the shore and struggled to make it into Tarbet. Lunch was late but we were going nowhere against that wind.

Loch Morar was a mile away across a good track. With luck its northern shore would be sheltered I broached the idea to Martin; after the Carnoch portage I had no idea of his reaction. He was on. Back to the trolley and an hours effort saw us on Morar.

Although we could have made it to the car that evening we camped on one of the islands that litter the end of the Loch. I needed one more night in this wilderness. The outside world could wait.

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Uphill All The

"Liz, can we paddle a lot faster? That way I can't

When you hear that coming from the back of a K2 you know you're into a damage limitation exercise.

I'd been half expecting it long before the start of the race - Ruth had injured her shoulder at a slalom and physiotherapy and painkillers hadn't worked. But who wants to pull out after paying all that money to get to the Arctic Circle?

We'd had a non-stop drive up to Kilpisjärvi in northern Finland on the Norwegian border. Ruth got so stiff and bored in the car on a slow stretch with road works that she started jogging. As she ran past a reindeer on the roadside, the animal looked up and watched her disappearing into the distance - she still doesn't believe us.

The Arctic Canoe Race, a 537km marathon of mixed water conditions, long flat stretches, short turbulent rapids and long rippling rapids with rocks, starts on the big lake at Kilpisjärvi. Soon after comes the first grade 5 rapid, Peerakoski. We got down three-quarters of it and I was beginning to enjoy myself - too soon! The boat tilted on a wave and we kept going but it was no good - we couldn't pull up again (it looked quite interesting on Finnish TV a few nights later). Once we were in the water we concentrated on guiding the boat around the rocks. Unfortunately the rescue kayakers have a frustrating habit of going for the swimmers, not the boats. If you don't obey their orders to let go of your own boat and hold on to

theirs you are disqualified. End of K2. On the river bank we emptied the boat through the cracks and holes and tried continuing but the rudder had been ripped off as well. Being picked up by the tail end Charly rubber boat is no comfortable option. It goes very slowly at the speed of the last paddler and is a steady route to hypothermia, as I found out. Finland was enjoying some of the summer heatwave

but not enough to dry off anyone really wet. Carol, our driver/support crew, managed to provide us with brilliant dinners as well as partying with the other support crews. She also found the perfect answer to cope with Ruth's inability to wake when tanked up with painkillers - she just spooned porridge into her ear. I never did find out exactly why it worked. Food on a long race, over many days, is important and the cooked lunches provided by the race organisers were delicious. It tasted even better on the day when the Finnish Army Military Band played for us, standing immaculately on the grassy bank in their light blue and grey uniforms. At the end of lunch as people got back on the water they played 'Anchors Away'.

Finnish Whitewater Rafting Championships

We spent the rest day chasing around watching the Finnish Whitewater Rafting Championships and then visiting the Sled Racing Husky kennels in Muonio. Over 145 dogs, puppies to retired racers, which teach the youngsters

(sounds like canoeists), all colours from very dark brown to cream and many with ice blue eyes. Meanwhile the local boat repair expert was patching up over 30 boats so the race could continue. Both my boats were among them. On the third day the spare boat had swamped in some rapids due to an inferior spraydeck (not an Eclipse not a Palm). There were no airbags in the front, so as it sank I started floating up. Ruth was left alone in the boat at the back where the airbags were. She couldn't steer it so turned the boat backwards and continued down the rapids alone, me swimming after and longing for a waterproof camcorder. Eventually the boat sank anyway but not before she'd done more damage to her shoulder. The race doctors wanted her to withdraw but she declined. Instead they stocked her up with ice packs, pills and physiotherapy on condition she gives them due warning next time she goes.

Lot of Pain

Injury was very frustrating to both of us - I still had problems from a DW injury and Ruth was trying to push on in spite of a lot of pain. I'd done the race in 1992 in K1 and was determined to do

Below: Grade 4 rapid.

Right: Checking the Arctic Circle.

Far Right: We limped to the finish line after all.

All photos by Carol Evans



Article by Elizabeth Young (Worcester) West Midlands representative for Women, who paddled with Ruth Cantrell (Hastings) - Driver/Support Crew, Carol Evans from Malvern, Worcs.

Way feel the pain."

it Ladies K2, because Ruth and I would then be the first women ever to do the ACR and Classic Series - if we could reach the finish line. We limped on to the end, forced to make portages, longing to let rip but knowing Ruth had to be very self-disciplined. It was made all the harder by dismissive comments from some of the men on the water and on the bank. The BCU wants to encourage women paddlers but the message does not seem to have got through to everyone yet.

In the British crews, there were two men's K2 with members of the forces, Ian Grogan with Simon D'Albertson and Jonathan Gloyne-Walters with Stephen Mannion (as well as us in Ladies K2). Nick Lowton paddled WWR and David Holdsworth paddled K1. They all paddled brilliantly, but Nick Lowton had to retire through injury, a great disappointment for him.

The Arctic Canoe Race provides wonderful water from northern Finland to the Gulf of Bothnia each August. You can get information from the race organiser Heikki Kivinen himself at the International Canoe Exhibition in February, while travel is arranged by Sporting Travel Services in Hertfordshire. The ferry crossing is a holiday in itself.

We have wonderful memories of the ACR and we each want to go back and do the race again, preferably without injuries - that is, if certain of the men will let us!



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Tyne Tour



The third annual Tyne Tour was held on November 4th and 5th at Hexham, Northumberland, and attracted 1,200 paddlers from all over the UK.

Clear crisp autumn weather and water releases from Kielder reservoir into the River North Tyne gave a great combination for enjoyable paddling.

The water releases are designed to help salmon to their spawning grounds in the upper reaches of the river where some are captured to stock the National Rivers Authority hatchery which is used to restock the local rivers.

The releases gave an added bonus to paddlers with a good level in the North Tyne when a dry October had left many rivers low for this time of year.

On Saturday the annual Tyne Descent race was held from Wark to Hexham. This is a fun event for all classes of boat which attracted a good turn out of open canoes. The 24 kilometre course includes several small rapids and the Grade III Warden Gorge, which is tricky in an open boat as many of the racers discovered.

The fastest open canoe was paddled by Mark Stoddart and Francis King, who retained the title they won last year despite stronger competition.

Brilliant Atmosphere

Exhausted after non stop paddling for a whisker under two hours, Francis King said "It's a brilliant atmosphere at the start with everybody setting off together. We managed to get ahead early but could see the others over our shoulders every now and then. It was a great event and we hope

even more open canoes take part next year."

Article by

Simon Banbury

Runners-up John Knight and Simon Clooney were only one minute behind despite taking a dip in Warden Gorge, Simon said "We were catching them on all the flat bits but I think we tried to go down the gorge section too fast. We could see them up ahead once we had emptied the boat but their paddling was relentless."

On Saturday evening a video, a lecture and slide show were held at the Wentworth Centre before the main event - a ceilidh with band 'Blame the Dog' who had about 600 canoeists and friends stripping the willow and dancing reels and jigs.

After the band packed up their instruments the weary canoeists who were sober enough made the frosty five minute walk back to the campsite at Tyne Green. Judging by the number of shopping trolleys found at the campsite on Sunday morning there must have been a few who couldn't quite manage to stagger to their tents without the help of wheels.

A frosty morning and an abundance of hangovers led to a later start on Sunday morning with paddlers heading for Barrasford for a final run down the North Tyne.

The tour organisation went well with the experience of two previous successful events and two Mike Jones Rallies at Hexham to help smooth things along. Close co-operation with the Tyne Occupiers and Riparian Owners



Association, Tynedale Council and the National Rivers Authority ensured suitable access was agreed for an event on this scale.

Support was also given by North East Water and Hexham Marts who provided water and parking for the campsite.



Access to the Tyne

If you return to paddle the North Tyne in the future then please note the information below:

Warden Gorge - At this years Tyne Tour the top of Warden Gorge was marshalled to stop canoeists landing to inspect or portage. This has now become part of the access agreement and canoeists are asked not to land at all at the top of Warden Gorge, and safeguard this great piece of water.

Tyne Agreement - This informal agreement is between the BCU Northern Region and the Tyne Riparian Owners Association. This agreement runs well within the following dates.

1st November - 31st March
1st April to end of June
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The Future of Slalom

Dear Focus

Recent comment on Canoe Slalom seems to focus on the symptoms of the problem rather than facing the cause. Is the real problem too many competitions or the structure of the ranking system? I believe that the real problem is the same as that faced by many sports, too few new people starting to compete. The life blood of any sport are the youngsters entering it, we have to do two things; make them aware of slalom and motivate them to stick to it.

What is required is a junior version of slalom, perhaps "short slalom" where juniors can compete against their own range in a fun event. "Short Slalom" could be a maximum of 10 gates made up of conventional gates, target's, limbo's etc. Make the rules as simple as possible as possible, no restrictions on equipment except for safety, simple penalty rules, no BCU membership required, for competition - no paddler that has competed in the ranking slalom events.

This should then be actively promoted to schools through LEA Sports Development Officers, youth groups such as Scouts and Guides and of course canoe clubs. Events could be held between groups, if these were team events with

a team from each age group, this would satisfy the push for team sports in schools.

Once youngsters have had a taste of slalom through "Short Slalom" we need to make sure that getting into the mainstream sport is easy and they are properly motivated. The problem that youngsters have with the current Div 5 is that they need clear motivation but receive very little. Unfortunately giving medals for junior classes is very little motivation, I use points and percentage of winners time as a measure of progress. If they earned points to gain either promotion of just a ranking in Div 5 this would be a big step forward, and why not rank the juniors in Div 5 by age group. A youngster would rather aim at being 5th in J12 than 100th in Div 5 as a whole. Further why not run alongside the U16 and U14 Championships a U12, its all about giving targets and recognition of those entering the sport.

This would bring slalom to youngsters and introduce them to the sport and encourage them to stick at it until they can get promoted to Div 4. These youngsters would then feed into the other divisions and secure the future of the sport.

Dave Radmore

It's Time To Change Slalom

Dear Focus

I find myself in agreement with Roy Bradshaw (letters; Canoe Focus No.96 August 95) in that Canoe Slalom needs to change but I cannot agree with his solutions.

It appears that most of the problems in the sport stem from a lack of competitors. If we are to attract more paddlers to races we need to find out why people are no longer attending. I certainly do not see the future of this excellent sport as becoming non-competitive which would be the result of the actions Roy describes. Paddlers wishing to enjoy that form of event already have the option of the Associates Division which is hardly over-subscribed.

Huge advances in boat technology have been made in the last 15 years to which slalom has paid only grudging attention. When I began as a Youth in Novice the finest white water boat you could buy in Britain was a slalom boat. If you were serious about paddling white water you had one - the other tubs just didn't perform. Alright they had an awkward tendency to break when you hit rocks but we paddled all the major rivers in Austria in them and learnt a lot about fibre glassing in the process. Now, you can do it much better in plastic. Not tied to the 4m length restriction in the slalom rulebook, designers have produced ever more exciting and specialist designs. And, as a dedicated racer who hates to admit it, the standard of

paddling is much higher than before. It appears to me that as the standard grows, many of our river paddlers will find the UK provides few challenges in the dry summer months and will look to other ways of testing their ability, hence the growth of rodeo. Let's face it, someone who can paddle grade four is not going to see any attraction in racing their piece of expensive performance plastic on Bingley or Cardington or any other of our Div 5 race sites where you are lucky to get a whole blade in the water through most of the summer. They need to be able to race at Division Two level.

Those who know their rulebook will say they already can, they simply have to apply for ranking status, register with their ranking officer for their division and class and write off to obtain their bib with a deposit cheque, proof of membership and copy of the letter granting ranking status. Then, provided they send off their entry so as to arrive fifteen days before the commencement of the event with a SAE and the correct fee they get a paddle. "Fancy doing the Div 2 at Bala this weekend?" is not a realistic option. In other words, slalom has become too bureaucratic.

People will say that slalom is a complex sport and needs that level of organisation to run properly, that bibs and prior entry make it simpler to run events which makes for smoother run events which can only benefit the paddler. At championship and division

one events I agree. But if we are to encourage people back to the sport we need to make our lower ranking events fun again and we need to make them easily accessible. So what is there that can be done to address this?

Well, Division One and Premier seem to work well. The standard of competition is rising and as a paddler who has competed at international and local events in Europe and North America I am convinced our top divisions are the best in the world. That said, this season has been particularly disappointing for Division One with cancellations of key events and a race on a site at a time of year which is evidently completely unsuitable - presumably because the organising club has been priced off the Tryweryn yet is determined to maintain their income. Indeed, with no Division One races at Canolfan Tryweryn there is a problem here that needs addressing.

It is at the lower division events that changes should be considered. Events in Germany are held on a regional basis with paddlers from novice to elite all competing on the same course. Whilst I would not go so far as to include Divisions One and Premier, allowing entries from every class at every event would overcome the problem of a short-fall in numbers, saves parents with children in different divisions wondering which event to go to and encourages clubs to attend events in larger numbers overcoming

transport problems, particularly for younger paddlers. A strong dub structure can only help the development of the sport and some form of inter-club championship could easily be incorporated within such a structure.

Next a claim often made against slalom is that so little time is spent on the water at events. With less people attending events we have much more time available and should be using it better. At a Canadian foothills cup event I remember paddlers racing in the slalom, competing in a rodeo on the Saturday afternoon and being coached in "slalom clinics". Not only would these additions make slalom more fun but they would add much needed revenue to the organising club funds.

The act of entering lower division events must be made simple. Paddlers should be able to turn up on the day, pay an event membership and paddle. Those wishing to be ranked at the year end should be full competition members and would therefore be open to promotion. Promotion within the season could continue as normal. A supply of bibs should be present at each race to aid judging and remove the need to stick all that horrible tape on your nice new boat. Paddlers should be able to compete in any boat at these events provided it fulfils minimum safety requirements.

Prizes should be awarded on a far more rational basis. It is irking for an adult who has worked hard all day, still found time to train, driven to an event for several hours on a rainy Friday night through rush-hour traffic and still produced a good result to see prizes awarded to youngsters who they have beaten despite the lack of difficulties that has had to overcome. I see much sense in prizes being awarded for places one to three and also for a variety of age group categories, for example K1M12, K1M14, K1M16, K1M18, K1M25, K1M35, K1M45 and so on provided those classes are quorate. At year end national championships would be awarded based on the highest end of year ranking in each class (not division).

We should make a determined effort to nurture and develop talent within our sport. At present results are seen as the only marker of a paddler's ability. We have many youngsters who are gifted but who lack parental or club support to achieve the results of which they are truly capable. Slalom clinics and a developed club scene would help but the real onus lies with our coaches to go out and discover talent. This technique is well proven in the Eastern-Bloc and more recently and effectively in Australia. Do not forget that our country's most gifted sporting talents are not generally canoeing on week-ends as youngsters.

Neil Buckley spent much of his time with Shrewsbury Town Football Club while his peers were winning J12 and J14 prizes.

I started by saying we need to find out what people want from slalom. My solutions would be as proscribed as Roy's and may be no more popular. The first stage of this process is for the clubs and executive to recognise that some form of action is required. I then suggest that the slalom committee co-opt volunteers to discover what people are looking for at every level and in each part of the country. Paddlers in other disciplines should be asked why they do not attend slaloms and what would encourage them to do so. The result of this action would be for the slalom committee to lay before the 1996 AGM a proposal for change for ratification or amendment. I would willingly give of my time if requested.

Finally, a plea from the heart of a competitor to all slalom organisers. Most paddlers ask only three things of an event: that it runs on time, that the judging is fair and of an appropriate standard and that a challenging course is set making best use of all the water available - putting lots of gates in a small space does not make courses harder, it simply makes them more awkward.

Oh and a bit of sunshine always goes down well.

John Atkinson

Surprise!

Peter Knowles alias Green Slime, Chairman of the BCU Expeditions Committee - had a surprise 50th birthday party - the following snippet of text is his Thank You to all who attended.

Just a quick line to thank you for coming at the weekend. I know just how difficult it was for many people - that lovely M6 - and I'm quite flattered and honoured that so many friends came from near and far - I think the total was about 150!

I hadn't heard a whisper about the party - the first I knew was when we turned up at the Swinside pub on Friday night - supposedly to some reunion do of Sue's friends. I knew my friends were special, but I thought they were nice open, outward going people - not deviant conspirators capable of weaving a 3 month conspiracy of silence!

I suppose I should have smelled a rat in that all last month the phone has been silent with everyone scared to talk to me in case they let the cat out of the bag. At one time I was thinking of buying some new wet suit boots!

Dave Manby did an excellent job of organisation, but I'd like to say thank you to everyone - the party just flowed - food just seemed to appear, nicely laid out, all night long. It was wonderful to have a birthday party given by your friends, where they do all the organisation, do all the clearing up, and they pay for it! There must be some catch to this?

For those who didn't stay the full course of the night, you might like to know that Alan's band finished playing after dawn, and then they climbed the local hill to see the sun rise over the Lake District. I confess that I didn't last that long.

I don't think anyone took any photo's everyone was too busy enjoying themselves. But who needs photo's with such warm memories? I'm still grinning like the proverbial cat - it's great being almost 50 and having such wonderful friends!

*Thank You
Peter Knowles*

*Quote from Dave Manby
"I enjoyed being a deviant conspirational type!"*

Reply to the above letter from Mr Roy Bradshaw

Dear John

Thank you for supporting me in my view that Slalom needs to change. Naturally I do not agree with some of your comments but that is what debate is all about and hopefully it will encourage the Exec. to think of other ways to encourage people to take part in Slalom.

There is one point however that should be answered within the context of Focus, and that is the one where you imply that clubs run events solely for profit, and your example could be considered to be aimed at Manchester Canoe Club.

The September Div.I event on the Tryweryn came about because the original event on the Serpent's Tail, run by Manchester Canoe Club, was stopped by the W.C.A and Slalom Exec. after the local angling society decided to extend their fishing season. (It was particularly galling to the club when a survey of the site during the relevant weekend showed no anglers fishing).

There was no guaranteed release on the Tryweryn about this time but we were able to liaise with a Charity Group who were willing to pay for a release. Despite the high charge for use of the site we have run several Div. 1 events there, but for the past two years the releases that have been made available to the White Water Racing Team have meant there was no possibility of another guaranteed release even if payed for. The Charity Event found an alternative site and we were offered the possibility of running our event on the Tryweryn on the chance a release could be forthcoming.

We investigated the situation and handed the problem over to the Exec. whose decision we would follow. The choices were:

1:- Book the Tryweryn and cancel the event if no release transpired. (Not

M.C.C.'s choice as it believes competitors would prefer any event rather than none).

2:- Book the Tryweryn and the Exec. pay the reserve fee to Mile End Mill in the event of the Tryweryn being available. (There was no way M.C.C. could pay both fees).

3:- Move to Mile End Mill.

The Exec. chose the latter. (For interest this event last year attracted one of the highest entries to Div. 1 that year, so it pleased some people).

I would also like to make the point that affects all Organising Clubs not just M.C.C. With a little thought you will see how much time and effort has to be expended in solving one little problem like the one above. Who do you think provides the poles and terylenes? M.C.C. has its own Tutti which releases B.C.U. equipment for clubs who don't have their own. All this equipment needs maintaining, paper supplied, forms printed for judges, etc. etc. People give their time to setting up courses and providing canteens. We have never done a strict financial analysis but often it has been said we would have far less worry and effort if we simply donated our expenses, which we don't claim, and forgot about running Slalom events altogether. The real profit is negligible.

Meanwhile we shall get back to all the problems of running Mile End Mill and the Serpent's Tail, but, sorry, even we can't guarantee sunshine.

Finally, it is unlikely that talking for 15 months will achieve any more than in 3. So why wait for the 1996 A.M..?

Roy Bradshaw

1995 British Open Championships/Final event national championship series

As ever, there were winners and losers at the final Premier event of the season held on 21/22 October on the Dee at Llangollen.

The race, which also doubled as the one-off British Open Junior and Senior Championships, coincided with the first frost of the year and was held on a river with a water level felt by the majority to be the lowest October level ever and hardly suitable for the other purpose, to select the Olympic training Squad in the final run up to the 1996 Olympic Games.

Few triumphed as dramatically as the young Division 1 Juniors who had qualified to participate following earlier victories. Faces flushed with excitement, fear and then pride as they successfully negotiated both the 'Pot' and then 'Town Falls', this group reminded us of our reason for being there.

The majority of the British Senior Team made the annual pilgrimage to Llangollen following a gruelling race season. It was hardly surprising that some had difficulty raising the necessary enthusiasm and that the Team atmosphere was curiously flat, but several were required to compete to qualify for that much needed place in the Olympic Training Squad. There were few surprises in the 'results-based' selection, however, the inclusion of three new Olympic possibles is encouraging news.

Support to our sport from the Llangollen Chamber of Commerce

was much in evidence and their donation of a new trophy to be presented bi-annually to the best British woman's performance in the World Championships was gratefully received. At prizegiving, staged in the SCTARC chapel, Stuart Davies, Vice Chairman of the Chamber, presented Lynn Simpson with this new award and Paul Ratcliffe with the Albert Kerr trophy, the corresponding award to the best British Men's kayak at each 'Worlds'. Ian Janes, retiring England Manager, received the Pan-Celtic Cup trophy on behalf of the team who had once again been victorious in the annual competition between the home nations.

Other annual awards presented in Llangollen included the Delapre Blades award which this year was won by Thomas Rees of Llandysul and the Phoenix of Nottingham award, won by Verity Swain of Nottingham KC. Both awards are presented to the best 'newcomer' into Division 1 and

we are fortunate to have the continuing support of both companies.

British Open Champions

- K1 Men**
Tim Morrison Banbury
- K1 Men Junior**
Andrew Roden Stafford & Stone
- K1 Women**
Rachel Crosbee Nottingham
- K1 Women Junior**
Laura Blakeman Stafford & Stone
- C1 Men**
Gareth Marriott Arrowcraft
- C1 Junior**
Andrew Hamilton Stafford and Stone
- C2**
Philip Green/Steve Green Olney Paddler
- C2 Junior**
Ian Banfield/Matt Dodson Viking

1995 British National Champions

- K1M**
Shaun Pearce
- K1W**
Lynn Simpson
- C1**
Mark Delaney
- C2**
Phil and Steve Green

Olympic Training Squad

- C1**
Gareth Marriott, Stuart Bowman, Mark Delaney, Toby Morgan
- K1W**
Lynn Simpson, Rachel Crosbee, Emma Player, Heather Corrie
- K1M**
Paul Ratcliffe, Andrew Raspin, Shaun Pearce, Ian Raspin, Anthony Brown
- C2**
Philip Green/Steven Green, Mike Millar/Stuart Pitt

Slalom Snippets
Slalom Yearbook 1996 - there just might be a new format!

British Canoe Slalom Car Stickers - 50p each - send sae and either cheque or postal order payable to BCU Slalom Committee.

For further details about canoe slalom and about the above can be easily obtained by contacting

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The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Raham, Newark, NG23 5RZ Tel: 01636 705363



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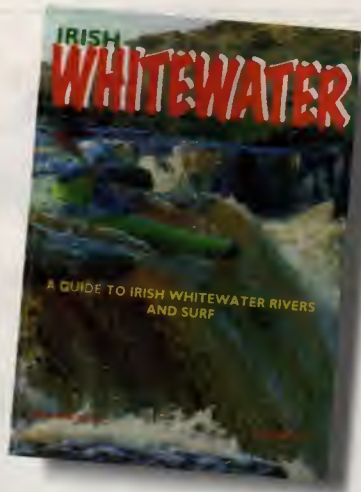
All books and videos reviewed here are available from BCU Supplies. Ring 0116 283 0659 and ask for a brochure if you have not received one in your Focus mailing.

All reviews for this issue were by Wendy Blackman unless stated otherwise. Please note that all books and videos reviewed in this magazine are the personal opinion of the reviewer, not necessarily that of the BCU.

Christmas Time is Upon Us The age old question of "What shall I buy so and so for Christmas?" Well here's the answer, something for everyone in the Book and Video review and Paddler's Gear. Take a look at all the new stock on offer through BCU Supplies, and I am sure you will solve all your present buying problems.

**Irish Whitewater
A Guide to Irish
Whitewater Rivers
and Surf**

Seamus Mac Gearailt £9.95



An excellent book with black and white photographs showing what's in store on a rainy day in Ireland (there's plenty of those!). The rivers are graded using Terry Storry's dual grading system, as in his guide to British Whitewater. The book is divided into regions of Ireland, stating the location of the river, maps to be used, access and egress points, river grade and any potential hazards. With further detail on the character of each stretch. I would recommend this book for anyone planning a trip to the Emerald Isles. We must be the only group of people who are actually pleased when it rains on holiday!

**Whitewater and
Sea Kayaking -
Kent Ford £10.95**

Written for the American market this book is naturally, very Americanised and some of the terminology rather strange. The topics are very general and would perhaps be of use as an introduction to the sport as a whole. Highlighted learning tips and warm up exercises are good, but his videos are much better. One or two minor basic errors such as when showing a picture of



a Wild Water Racer the caption indicates that it is in fact a slalom boat would be best ironed out.

How to S*t in the
Woods -**

Kathleen Meyer £5.99



A risque title for a book to be reviewed in *Canoe Focus*, but however, an excellent choice. This book would be an ideal Christmas present. It tackles the taboo subject of "just how do I go about my business in the wilderness?" A humorous but nevertheless authoritative book on the environmental effect we have on our surroundings. With sections on how to treat 'Trekking Trots' and even a special chapter for us ladies, so that's how you do it without getting your feet wet! Brilliant!

**West Midlands
River Guide -**

Mike Nicholls and Mike Hubbard £9.95



The fourth edition of this BCU publication. Each page gives a brief description on the section of river, its canoeable length, the O/S map reference and NRA water quality rating. It then splits each trip down into more detail, indicating bridges, possible hazards, and access and egress points. A clear and concise book, an essential guide to rivers in the West Midlands.

**South West Region
Small Craft Sea
Touring Guide,
Dorset and South
Devon Coastline,
Volume 1**

This title is in its final stages of production. Designed to cover Dorset and South Devon coastlines the Guide provides a reference to nearly 200 locations where small craft may launch or land. Chart information, HM Coastguard, shore coverings, tidal streams, surf conditions, outfalls, local amenities and points of interest are all covered in this handy 86 page, A5 paperback. The Guide forms part of a trilogy which will ultimately cover all of the South West peninsula

Continued on page 42



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Junior canoe Slalom

Trip to the Pre-Worlds

Article by
Neil W. Simpson,
Junior Ladies
Class Coach.

Meeting up at Manchester airport on the Tuesday morning the team started to come together not only in numbers but in spirit. As everyone lined up for the team photo in the middle of the concourse, and passers-by started to take an interest, the nervous and worried looks turned to smiles.

After a two hour flight and a three and a half hour coach journey the team arrived at Lipno, a Czech ski resort with a very large lake, (very similar to Bala lake). A very popular area for Austrian tourists as it is only about a two hour drive away from the border.

Wednesday was a practice day with the water time being shared out between the 23 nations. Everyone had to know what was going on to allow the full use of the water and the paddlers using a course that had been set by the organisers. The coaches had taken lots of video which was reviewed in the hotel that evening. Thursday, the course was shut so the teams had a free day. The British were down to the beach at the lake early in the day, beating even the Germans!

Friday, the first day of business, non-stop practice; the fore-runners gave the first real look at what the course was about. It definitely was an impressive sight. The water was being released from the top of the dam and the course flowed about 500 metres long with a

drop of approximately 12.5 metres with 18 cubic metres per second of water gave the course a slight Bourg look and feel to it. With the team having no major problems with the course or boat control and a good video review session under its belt the team was feeling good.

Saturday was the individuals event and Britain took its first medal of the Championships with Kath Pigdon showing a blistering pace but picking up penalties on her first run but on her second run was able to afford a few seconds to guarantee a clean run to claim the Gold Medal and the title of Junior Pre-World Champion. Anita Bennett put a good first run in to gain 7th place, Laura Blakeman was 19th, Helen Cardy and Gillian Barrett came 25th and 26th respectively. The C2 crew of Ian Banfield/Matt Dodson put a very respectable second run together to show that with a 6th place the British senior team are going to have to be looking over their shoulders.

Campbell Walsh had the best men's kayak result with 9th, Tim Baillie in 30th place. Andrew Roden, Dan Cook, Alex Burt and Tam Paterson all finished within the same second to take 34th, 35th 36th and 37th respectively. Ian Davison finished 61st and Rick Hendry 76th. The Canadian singles had Rob Turner in 8th place, Stuart Morris - 28th and Andy Hamilton in 34th place.

Sunday was 'teams' day, and the

ladies team of Kath, Laura and Anita were over 16 seconds quicker than the rest of the field but unfortunately picking up penalties to take the Silver Medal. Helen and Gillian teamed up with a German girl and finished 11th. The C1 team of Rob, Andy and Stuart took a fifty on both runs but still finished 8th. Matt and Ian joined the most junior of the 8 Czech C2 crews and came 6th.

The men inspired by the ladies charged down the course and Don, Alex and Tom took the Silver Medal. Campbell, Tim and Andy came 7th and Rich and Ian teamed up with a Swiss to come 12th.

Results from the European Junior Championships - Liptovsky Mikulas

Laura Blakeman 12th, Kath Pigdon 13th. Helen Cardy 29th, Gillian Barrett 31st and Anita Bennett 32nd. Ladies Team of Kath, Laura and Helen came 6th.

C2 crew of Ian Banfield and Matt Dodson finished 13th.

C1s - Rob Turner finished 18th, with Stuart Morris 34th and Andrew Hamilton 43rd. In the C1 team event, Andrew, Andy and Stuart finished 6th.

The KIM event - Alex Burt 17th, Campbell Walsh 28th, Rick Hendry 33rd, Tom Paterson 37th and Dan Cook 42nd, with Ian Davison 55th. The KIM team of Alex, Campbell and Rick finished in 10th place.

Derby Mountain Rescue

Article by
Charles M
Chesters -
Equipment
Officer

Pyranha recently helped the Derby Mountain Rescue Team to acquire three kayaks, with paddles and buoyancy aids. 'Why does a Mountain Rescue Team need canoes?' you may well ask. I am sure someone will have a picture in their minds of persons with large rucksacks struggling up steep rock faces with a kayak strapped to the top of the rucksack. Wrong!

The overall responsibility for search and rescue in the United Kingdom rests with the Chief Constable of the Police for the area in which the incident occurs. During the last few years there has been a considerable increase in the number of requests by the police for assistance in searching and rescuing in a non mountain or open country environment.

Derby MRT is part of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation, and although, like all teams, is prepared to assist wherever required, the primary territory is the Peak District. The River Derwent rises in the North of the Peak District and flows south to join the River Trent near Sawley on the Nottinghamshire / Derbyshire / Leicestershire border. Searches for missing persons have been carried out from source to the junction with the Trent and of some of the larger tributaries. In the upper reaches a bank side search is the only method and is satisfactory if somewhat arduous. In the lower reaches where the banks are densely overgrown with fully established trees, searching becomes much more time consuming, difficult and with considerable uncertainty of being able to see under tree roots, bank overhangs and in weed patches. Under these conditions a River based search using canoes is a valuable supplement.

At least one rowing boat has been used in Scotland to assist in evacuation of a casualty, kayaks have been occasionally enlisted in the past to assist in searches of the Derwent on an ad hoc basis. The main event leading to the Derby Team involvement in water searches occurred on a wet summers evening in 1993, a widow had placed her

financial affairs in order and had left her house. Her umbrella was found by the bank of the River Derwent, then running considerably above normal level. The Team started a bank side search downstream from the East Mill in Belper. Three kayaks started a river search, one to each bank and a guard boat. Team members were told by security guards at a factory beside the River that one of the workmen had seen what looked like a bundle of old clothes going down river that afternoon. The river search intensified but without success. A debris catchment area above a weir was identified. Two further unsuccessful searches were carried out over the following three weeks. Early the following month her body was seen and recovered from the debris catchment. The Derbyshire Constabulary asked the Derby Team to assist in such searches and made a donation from their property fund. The Team agreed to provide such a service as part of any general search by the Team of areas containing rivers or ponds. The canoeists are fully trained Mountain Rescue personnel, who are also experienced canoeists.

Although the Team are nowadays called by a pager system and have a rapid response, it is inevitable that by the time a person has been reported missing and routine enquiries have been carried out it is extremely unlikely that life saving is possible, the most we can hope to achieve is to reduce the extent of grief for relatives and others. An example of this occurred during a hot spell in the summer of 1994. A young man had found the weather too hot for his liking and had gone to cool off in the early hours of the morning. His clothes were found beside a gravel pit. The Team searched the surrounding areas augmented by a water borne search. His body was found by one of the canoeists floating just under the surface.

A recent BBC TV '999' programme described three canoeists being rescued from the Conwy gorge by the Ogwen Valley MRT. Is the Derby approach one of 'if you can't rescue them - join them?'

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Two Ladies and O

Jane Edwards and Maria Stanley's Liffey

Borrowed two weeks before the event Ace Canoes of Chester loaned us a brand new violet coloured boat still wrapped in the plastic bag. Panic "No not us!", but we did whizz off to Winsford Flash where we had a long clear lake to get some speed up.

It was soon obvious that steering was a whole world different from paddling a single, and the split buoy in the middle of the Flash was testimony to our lack of steering skills. The venue gave us a chance to get the feel of the boat, and an opportunity to 'wobble' in private. From here and a weekend at Four Mile Bridge, Anglesey, and moving water. By now we were getting used to each other, and decided that Maria would paddle in the front and Me in the rear. Maria is convinced that this arrangement was deliberate in that I wouldn't see the hazards until the last moment.

Long distance paddles where the order of the day, out on the Ebb and back in on the Flood, and in the slack a chance for us to have a go at rolling. Problem no1 Maria is left handed and me right, despite all sorts of attempts at adapting our roll it was decided that Ace canoes might not be too pleased if the boat was returned with a twist in the middle. We conceded that a capsized was going to end in a swim.

We had the luxury of being able to set off on the Thursday, and set up camp at Branhill Rugby Club where we had a leisurely day, inspecting some of the weirs (which had no water flowing over them) looking at where to shoot them. . . Maria. . . "Or where we could be swimming."

Day of the race and up at the crack of dawn, Maria took the car to the finish whilst I waited in the car park and watched the chaos, cars parked willy nilly, lost paddles, lost tempers. One of the organisers was pulling his hair out announcing over and over again for people to park their cars in neat little rows. . . The heavens opened up,



and soaked us, was this an omen we asked?, the Porta loos were being well used by this time, especially by me.

Time to carry the boat the three quarters of a mile to the start, a very nice man came and helped us to the gate, once through here we were on our own. Oooh Mother!

I couldn't understand why I needed more rests carrying the boat than Maria needed at the front, until during one of the portages I realised that the back is heavier. Nice one Maria.

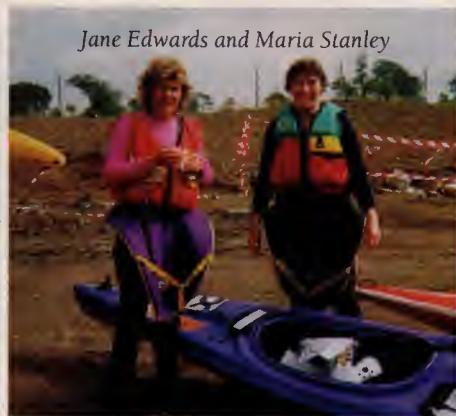
The last meal, a packet of crisps and a chocolate bar whilst looking at Straffan Weir, this was also an opportunity for a last visit to the loo, or tree.

Extremely Difficult

Gradually the water was getting faster, so we decided it was time to paddle to the pre start area, which was a good job as the people who started later found it hard going as the flow got stronger. At one point we found it extremely difficult until we realised that there was a team in a canadian hanging on the back of our boat.

Just before getting on an Irish lad with a Dragon riding pillion (shouldn't he be in Wales I asked myself?) on his canoe showed us a picture of all the weirs, so impressed were we that when he offered it to us we snapped his hand off. . . If he's reading this many, many thanks from two grateful ladies. Due to a typing error there were

ne Boat account of the Descent '95



Jane Edwards and Maria Stanley

two group 4s, and being too late to change it, it was decided to have a 4a, trouble was no one in these groups knew which 4 they should be in. Well it is Ireland!

We were parked up on a very convenient tree awaiting the start when all of a sudden we were joined by another K2 who hung on to us, Maria held on to their boat but it drifted off when she let go to scratch her nose. Maria... "I don't know who was more surprised!"

People Capsizing

It was bedlam when the first group set off, people capsizing, and fighting for the same piece of water. All hell broke loose at Straffan Weir the TV was commentating over a loudspeaker, and the crowd was being entertained by all the swimmers. Ramming our knees under the cockpit we paddled like fury and met with another double who wanted our bit of water, they paddled on to the top of our boat. This made us paddle even harder and with a sigh of relief we made it. Maria... "we had repelled boarders, no room for passengers on this trip!"



Next the jungle, many racers were swimming under the trees but we kept to the middle and didn't budge from it. Temple Mills next we hadn't seen this one before, but again with a sigh of relief we made it, although several unlucky canoeists were testing the water.

Celbridge rapids and "what's this?" a boat stuck just where we wanted to go, again more swimmers.

As we paddled across a lake we felt like some sort of boil in the bag recipe, as we had kept our cagoules on and the sun had decided to shine.

A portage so out came the drinks, biscuits and camera, "hang on Maria while I just fix my hair".

It was here we thought we had come across some sort of ceremony, or despondent canoeists as they were setting fire to their boat, in fact they what they were actually doing was repairing their fibre-glass boat. It was here we thought the course had been devised by the Royal Marines, as we had to abseil down a steep bank, the straps we had brought came in to their own. Gently lowering ourselves to the water we had not counted on the lemmings who were throwing themselves and canoes from the top trench warfare fashion.

Suspended Boat

A nice diver helped and pushed us out into the flow, again our helmets proved themselves as we were passing under a bridge, climbers were hauling boats up which had been pinned around the arches. As we passed under, one was suspended in mid air neither going up or down, whilst others were waiting their turn to be unwrapped from the arches. This is where the competition comes into being because as if by magic the suspended boat was dropped just in front of us. MISSED.

We passed several broken boats and paddlers running up and down the bank. Maria... "Seems to be very much the norm to be on the bank."

The Sluice weir, the plan was to go down it and paddle on the right we arrived to find a broached boat and five or six people swimming it, if we had gone down according to plan we would have killed them all. The divers here were working overtime. A camera crew beckoned us on, "is my hair alright?" it was our turn to amuse the crowd as we shot the weir only to get stuck end on. A nice rescuer came and passed the time of day with us before eventually lifting our nose of the obstruction. I saw a channel to the right but Maria shouted left, so we went through the middle and

a reed bed.

Lucan weir we were psyched up for a 45 degree slide down but the water was too low, the TV and the crowds gathered in front of the drop, drop to the right then a sharp left, musn't get this wrong as I'm sure we could be picked for the UK team. The divers were waiting close by for us and we came over the crest Maria shouted to them "we're seventeen feet long" at this they withdrew tactfully. A man in a Spud showed us the line and what a drop it was.

Roar of the Crowd

Wrens Nest we were ready to shoot next to a tree and heard the roar of the crowd, ushered round to the right, a diver shouted not to go under the trees but we had to get the line. Boats were being sucked back it was so strong. Maria disappeared in the crest of the wave, I shouted "paddle" and Maria shouted "get out you bugger", eventually we moved forwards, the crowd were delighted as were several other paddlers.

We looked back to see a Canadian shooting by the tree and taking out five boats. They ALL swam, Maria... "No wonder this weir had so many spectators."

Palmerstone weir and this was the hardest, we had been primed by a local canoeist the day before on the line to take. We went over two foot to the left, were sucked in on the left and sculled on the right, Maria did a paddle twirl and held onto the seat of the boat Was she about to leave me? I thought she was leaving the boat, eventually she decided to lean the same way as me and we paddled free.

Maria did not contribute much at this weir, due to trouble staying on her seat. Still she did give me all the credit.

Only Glenaulin the rescue boat, was at the top to show us the route down, though we missed it slightly we did survive.

We were tired now the boat was starting to go left and right of its own accord so we stopped for a picnic before paddling in a straight line over the finish.

Our time was three hours twenty six minutes.

We welcomed a hot shower and meal, the talk was of a broken Topolino, and Mountain Bat which had split in three places.

Our ears were ringing at the party the band was so loud or is it that we're just getting old?



Thanks

Thank you to Ace Canoes for loaning us the boat we had a wonderful time.

This was a really great event, and we certainly had a wonderful time. The Irish hospitality was legendary...

Thanks to everyone for a memorable weekend, and of course to Ace canoes who without their boat we would not have taken part in this event.

including the Isles of Scilly up to the Severn Road Bridge. Issued by the BCU South West Regional Committee and compiled by their Sea Touring representative, Nigel Hingston.

Volume 1 will be available early in the new year. For further information contact *Nigel* on 01626 854175 (H) or 0421 610705 (mobile)

Know the Game: Kayak Canoeing

Loel Collins

A & C Black £3.99

ISBN 0-7136-3976-8

The ever-popular Know the Game series has finally been re-written and brought up to date. The text and diagrams have been produced by BCU coach Loel Collins and reflect a modern and up to date approach to introducing beginners to the sport. The range of skills presented here present a good basis of techniques which will transfer



readily to most branches of the sport. More importantly the techniques are good building blocks on which to eventually produce the 'seamless' paddler.

The book is designed to be usable as a self help guide to getting started and it fulfills this brief, as well as pointing the aspiring paddler in the direction of the best help available for rapid (!) progress...BCU qualified coaching.

The photographs have been carefully directed by Loel to depict snapshots of key positions in strokes and have been taken in such a way that they are not too

prescriptive. The diagrams are clear and concise. The book is tremendous value at the price and leaves the reader with two major benefits: The desire to continue paddling and the basic skills with which to continue paddling. Mission accomplished!

Reviewed by Kevin Danforth

Liffey Descent 1995 -

Video £14.99

A great video, summing up the, thrills and spills and the atmosphere of one of the biggest events in the canoeing calendar. A must if you are thinking of going next year, buy it now and learn the routes. One downside I couldn't see myself on it - the helicopter must have been too high!

Paddler's Gear

Latest Design T-Shirts

A series of four new designs are now available from BCU Supplies.

The waffle shirt, my favourite of the four is 100% cotton, natural dye, with the Paddle People logo on the reverse. Comfy and stylish with a drop tail at the back, it's just what the best dressed paddler around town should be wearing. Looks especially good when viewed from behind on a paddler with broad shoulders! £24.99

Paddle People T Shirt - Good quality thick 100% cotton T Shirt, with Paddle People logo on reverse. Washes well, available in royal blue. £12.99

Aquarell - 100% Cotton T Shirt,

natural dye with colour logo on reverse. The logo depicts 3 paddlers meandering down river, attractive design. Making an ideal present for that special paddler in your life.

Science of Paddling - another good quality 100% cotton T shirt. It has a kind of 'Fat Willys Surf Shack' feel about it. Depicts a muscle bound 'crash test dummy' type demonstrating the scientific processes behind the art of rolling, logo appears on the front. Available as T shirt at £12.99 or Muscle Shirt £10.99

BCU Supplies now has a wide



range of stock from books, to T-shirts, videos, jewellery and posters, there really is something for paddlers of all ages, shapes, sizes and interests. Take a good look at the new colour brochure supplied with every issue of *Canoe Focus*.

Keep it Safe

Ever wondered where to put your keys when you are out canoeing. Instead of the obvious under the wheelarch, why not try the new 'Keep it Safe' available from BCU Supplies. Made from a hard lightweight plastic, this container is waterproof, and has enough room to keep those essential items such as your keys, mars bar, or loose change, safe and dry. Measuring 7cm wide, 11cm high and only 3.5cm thick it will fit in your buoyancy aid pocket or you can wear it around your neck. At only £7.50 including VAT it could save you rummaging around under the car trying to remember just which wheel arch it was.





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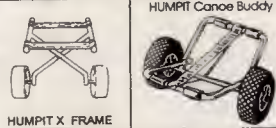
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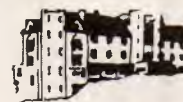
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Corsica Overflow, good condition, only used for one river trip, can't afford to keep it, full set of airbags £345. Corsica S bought for one expedition only, full airbags £345. 6 Mirage kayaks, 10 years old, all for £400, individual sales will be considered. For all sales please phone: 01392 50329 ask for Pete. Exeter

Pyranha Slalom Kayak, fibre glass and kevlar, Premier Image model, with neoprene spraydeck, VGC, offers £120 Surrey 01252 702910 day Andrew or P/X WW plastic boat.

P&H Sirius sea kayak, made in April '94. vgc, pale blue with yellow declines. Retractable skeg, foredeck Chimp COMPAC 50 pump, oval rear hatch, round fore hatch. A separate foredeck hatch is mounted with a Silva Type BS compass £750. Also red Lendal Seamaster paddle, vgc £40. Yellow Lendal Seamaster split paddle unused £50 Tel: 01756 798962 (Skipton)

WWR, glassfibre, old with lots of repair patches but still sound with no leaks. only £25, no offers, buyer collects, Bognor Regis (W Sussex) 01243 582110

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Slalom Kayak Mystery M S carb/Kev I construction, good condition £230 Carbon Double Torque shaft with pro energy blades 201 RH nearly new condition £140 Tel Darren on Exeter 01392 468013

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Pyranha Master kayaks 10, yellow, most only 6 months old including paddles and spraydecks £230 each Tel: 01565 653141

Gaybo King WWR, excellent condition, hardly used, includes backstrap, also asymmetric racing blades (carbon) also in excellent condition £275 one. Tel: 01482 440814 (Hull) or 01332 812167 (Derby) anytime.

Slalom Kayak Extreme (black) kevlar/carbon construction. Sound, tidy boat, no bad/carbon, just had a full make over! £190. Tel: Vicky 0161 434 7253 (Manchester) Could also arrange to view at Bala, Llangollen, Stone or Matlock.

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Ply/Epoxy Canadian 13' long with two paddles, ideal for flat water, little use and well maintained, only £35 Tel: Ken on Frodsham 01928 732194

Pyranha Cross Link Rotobat ww spec, yellow, excellent condition £250 Tel: John 01257 482672

Sea Kayak Norkapp HM includes new hatch covers Tel: 0115 989 3659 eves £250 ono (Notts)

Corsica S, red, excellent condition, complete with air bags and Yak deck £190 Tel: John 0114 230 3348 (Sheffield)

K1 Sprint Racer (Chancer), carbon kevlar, white and yellow, good condition £350 ono Tel M/H 01858 433767 (Leics)

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Two piece open ply canoe, 16', 3 seater, nests to 8'x3' for car top, built 1993, incl 2 s/b paddles, vgc £120 Bury (Lancs) 0161 764 5277

Dagger Crossfire cross link, new June 95 immaculate £400. Dagger Crossfire 2 years old, VGC £350. Three Perception Pirouette S' VGC Each £300. All five kayaks have full buoyancy full plate footrests, backstraps, neoprene spraydecks and paddle. Tel: Swindon 01793 870005

Racing K2 in good condition, carbon fibre seats recently fitted £300 ono Tel: 01784 460841 (Staines)

Stuntbat, Aquamarine, VGC, 2 years old but only used for one season, garaged. £280 will part exchange for Corsica S or T Canyon, with cash either way. Please ring Andy on 01942 222150 anytime (North West) can travel.

C1 WWR's for sale, ACE II, kevlar epoxy £250. Ace II kevlar carbon, epoxy, airex foam sandwich, vac bagged, new £900. Spray decks and paddles free with boats Tel: Mark 0181 758 9825

Wave Ski, Breaker 225, excellent condition, hardly used, with leash £75 ono Tel: 01223 210367

Mi 415 tourer, blue, spray deck, paddle, extra buoyancy £135 Tel: Dave (eves) 01922 475962 (West Midlands)

Wave Skis for sale, Raider Pro, in good condition, intermediate to advanced ski, complete with fins, seat belt and power pad seat 4 years old £180 ono. Dirty Habits XP95 in brand new condition, ideal intermediate ski complete with fins, seat belt and power pad seat £300 ono. MI Breaker beginners ski - Polyurethane with velcro seat belt and fins £60 ono Tel: 01703 456696 (Southampton)

Perception Reflex, red, ww spec £130 ono Tel: Plymouth 01752 814937

3 Aleut Sea II sea kayaks, 94 large cockpit model with bow steering white deck & hull. All three used for only 15 days on expedition therefore all three as new £900 each ono. Contact Essex Police on 01375 391212 ask for DC 971 Gary Dean

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Prijon T Canyon, very good condition, complete with airbags and full plate footrest, stored indoors, used mainly for instructing £225 ono Tel: 01664 66887

10 Mirage Plastic Kayaks for sale, old but watertight, most with skegs £75 each Tel: Martin on (017687) 78463 Keswick

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Prijon Spud mark 1 for sale, backstrap and air bag included £300, Banana Squirt Boat 1 of only 2 in the UK for sale, also £300 Tel: Justin 01752 225952

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Perception Dancer 2 years old, ww spec, back strap. Mainly flat water use, blue, vgc £220 ono. Also Pyranha Everest 390 GP plastic kayak vgc £100 ono Tel: 01474 326215 (Gravesend)

Rikan K1, carbon/kevlar (9kg) Mark Gees seat, foot pump, immaculate condition £600 ono Tel: 01502 677574 (Suffolk)

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K2 Kirton Mirage 4. Stable boat in good condition, can be tried in Exeter by arrangement £300 Mrs Perry 01297 678293 (Axminster)

2 Superstar Wild Water Racers both good condition £450 and £375 each. Also assorted paddles R feather length 214-218 from £10 up. Ring Bain 01480 461007 (Huntingdon, Cambs)

M1380 Pro, pink, vgc, white water boat, fitted paddle footrest, airbags, bow cap, £200 Tel: 01480 411224 (Huntingdon) eves

Lance K1 with rudder, excellent condition, £300. Pyranha Rotobat, ww spec, with neoprene spraydeck, good condition £200. Slalom Reflex, Perception fibreglass, good condition, little used £150 Tel: Hereford 01992 581831

Fanatic, spheretex deck/kevlar carbon hull, well used boat but well looked after £130 Tel: Rob (Nottm) 0115 9822267 eves.

Valetta, buoyancy aid, paddle - good condition £180 ono, Raider Pro Wave Ski, 7ft 4in leash, and power pad. Will suit 10-12 stone person inc Teepee paddle bag £250 ono. Mountain Bat , full plate footrest £160 Tel: 0117 9409505

Pyranha Stuntbat, green, well used but sound, with hip pads, backstrap and full plate footrest £300 ono Tel: 01622 744216 (Maidstone)

Mirage Club - red, adjustable footrests, hardly used, stored in garage hence excellent condition, includes spraydeck £185 ono. Falchion 385 - Blue, hardly used and stored in garage, includes spraydeck, all in excellent condition £180 Reason for sales, want to buy a sea kayak Tel: Mike on 01202 523575 eves (Bournemouth) 01202 206274 day

Enigma Squirt Boat suit taller paddler, good condition/stored under cover, offers around £200. Also Perception Sabre very good surf boat, small professional repair so will accept £100 Contact Robin: 01737 768876 eves Surrey/Kent

Baidarka Explorer excellent condition, Chimp pump, declines, tow-bleat etc £300 ono or swap for a smaller boat Tel: 01535 630275 Yorkshire

K1 Slalom Boat good condition, adjustable footrest, ideal for beginners £75 Tel: 01695 579525 eves Lancs

As new Thule Roofbars and uprights to fit camper van with extended roof. Cot £171 new will accept £100 no offers Tel: Eves 01363 866758 Devon

K1 Tiger white carbon/kevlar hull and deck excellent build quality (Kirton) and condition £350 ono Tel: 0181 568 7768 day or 0181 892 4984 or Richmond CC ask for Marten.

Talisman K1 by Kirton Kayaks, excellent fettle OS and US £200 Write to: Mr D Cook, Heulfan, Market Street, Llangollen, Clwyd LL20 8PS

Dagger Freefall LT vgc, accept £290, Pyranha Freestyle, old fashioned but very sound boat, excellent for a beginner, full white water spec only £100. Split Paddles, pair of splits suitable for ww trips (converted Ainsworths) Flat blades suit left or right handed paddler £25 Tel: 01291 673402 (Gwent)

Pyranha Rotobat, hot pink, ww spec, full plate footrest, good condition, Palm gasket spraydeck £250 Tel: Nick 01443 401974 South Wales or 01993 704284 Oxford.

Wanted

Open Canadian suitable to carry three people, reasonable condition, will pay going rate. Tel: Stephen Saunders 01420 479000 Day or 01730 816797 eves (Hants)

Gaybo Olymp junior child's kayak Tel: 01283 703576 (nr Derby)

Dancer XS or similar, small kayak to suit child. Also, paddles, spraydeck, buoyancy aid and helmet, please telephone Christine or Mike on 01633 258179 eves (Gwent)

Second hand k1/k2s for small club. Also required a stable K1 similar to Discovery Tel: 01784 460841

Rotobat and Magicbat (ww spec) to replace lost equipment Tel: 01444 456411 (Sussex)

Quality open canoe wanted will pay up to £700, good condition only, preferably lightweight, will collect Tel: 01665 577109 (Northumberland)

Perception Dancer must be in good condition Call Tom: 0181 310 9497 eves

Paddle Partner needed, 30 something female TSI kayaks/canoes grade 1-3 N/S lives temporarily South Wales: write to T Mackay c/o 29 Sychem Place, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6TS

Information on white water rivers in Greece, names, locations, season, etc Cal Andy: 0151 327 8563

High Volume C2, suitable for the larger paddler, anything considered, an old "end holer" may be ideal, contact Nigel on 01622 653147 work, or 01732 355750 eves and weekends (Tonbridge, Kent)

Pyranha Rotobat, ww spec, reasonable condition, preferably Warwickshire/West Midlands area Tel: 01203 542007 eves/weekends

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Canadian Canoes and Paddles wanted any condition considered, Dealers or Centre with second hand kit WELCOME TO REPLY Tel: John 01903 527449 Anytime.(West Sussex)

Canadian Canoe any type and condition considered. Ideally tough enough for some river use. Tel: Brian 01492 622 287 (N Wales)

Kayaks polyethylene single general purpose. Also buoyancy aids. Tel: 0171 794 4002

Expedition - Wanted over 50's. Okavango Over 50 Expedition. Team members required for a charity fund-raising adventure expedition that aims to raise funds for Survival International and Tusk Force and will involve an unsupported 600km canoe journey down the length of the Okavango Delta, Botswana, in July 1996. Expedition expected to take about 30 days plus 10 days mob/demob.

Besides canoeing time will be allowed for birding, game watching and fishing. Members must be over 50, relatively fit and prepared to rough it.

Experience in canoeing, sailing, video photography, first-aid and/or medicine, bird watching and fund-raising advantageous. Approximate cost £1500 Contact: Jevan Berrange, 6 Wheel Josiah Cottages, Gulworthy, Devon PL19 8NZ Tel: 01822 832027

Calling All Civil Servants. The Civil Service Canoe Club (a small friendly club based in London) wants to find out how many other civil servants, nationwide as well as locally, are involved or interested in all forms of canoeing - regardless of ability, discipline, age or gender! We are thinking about the possibility of a national association to cater for everyone eligible for membership of the Civil Service Sports Council, and at this stage imply want to gauge possible numbers. If you might be interested, want more information, or a chat, we invite you to get in touch with us: write to the club c/o Department of the Environment, Room C11/11, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB or phone David Pearson on 0171 276 4435 (work) or 0181 686 4739 (home)

Raft Guides required to work for all or part of '96 season guiding day tours on rivers in southern Turkey. Season runs from April to October. Must be qualified to guide minimum grade 3, grade 4 experience and advantage. Knowledge of German useful but not essential Alternatif Turizm Tel/fax 00 90 252 413 32 08

YMCA seeks water babies. The YMCA is recruiting now for instructors for it's children's activity holidays in Middlesex for the summer of 1996.

The charity's Day Camps scheme, runs day time activity holidays for children, needs RYA fully qualified sailing and windsurfing instructors and BCU qualified canoeing/kayaking instructors to help teach children at its Watersports Camp in Harefield. Part-time instructors are needed for 2 days a week for 5 weeks over the school summer holidays, to run watersports activities for 9 to 14 years. Instructors will be paid up to £10 per instructed hour depending on qualification and experience. For application form contact John Weston the Director of YMCA Day Camps on 01992 652272

Stolen

Stolen from locked compound at Ethrow Country Park. 15ft Pyranha Traveller Canoe in early September. Boat is clearly marked Stockport LEA and makers registration. Can you help locate whoever is depriving young people of the facilities for water sport. Call Paul on 0161 477 5657.

Turkish

Lessons East

Fortunately for us she was very friendly and trusting, taking our word that the kayaks, laden with equipment, were no heavier than 10 kg each (thanks must go to Pyranha for their lightweight kayaks!!?).

Sigh of Relief

Once the boats had been taken we heaved a sigh of relief. Our next sighting of them was in Istanbul where every passenger had to identify and claim their luggage on the runway in order for it to complete the journey. What a wonderful way to get to know your fellow passengers.

Getting the boats to our destination was only going to be of use if we had some way of transporting them around while we were there. This came in the form of a hire car, a brand new hire car - no doubt the lesson was learnt and kayakers will in the future be given the dregs of the hire fleet. Gorkhan, our contact while in Turkey, was a great fellow whose only wish was that we did not get into the local newspapers for any reason. He gave us a crash course in basic Turkish, consisting of hello, good-bye and thank you, before waving us on our way.

Never Trust a Turkish Map

Our first encounter with a river was the Dalaman. On the map it had looked like a suitable river to do a warm up on, as it was close to the airport. Our first lesson was never trust a Turkish map. This was immediately followed by our second lesson, the roads in Turkey take time to negotiate. After the best part of a days drive we thought we were nearing the top of the river only to find out that we had only driven 70 km and that there was still another 30 km to go.

Eventually we found a section of whitewater to paddle. This was a real gem with continuous whitewater winding its way between big boulders, around blind corners and over drops. It ended with a sheer sided gorge that opened out all too soon after a couple of hundred metres. While the water was not desperate the Spirit of adventure, in that we did not know what to expect, was most definitely with us.

The take out was at a small village that provided us with an experience that was to recur throughout our travels, that of chay. Chay is tea taken without milk and with lots of sugar. The Turks are avid tea drinkers never letting an occasion for tea drinking go by. Their passion for tea drinking is surpassed only by their hospitality which is extended at every opportunity. On more than one occasion we had to suspend all activity



The idea of a trip to southern Turkey came about after a conversation with Dave Manby at the '94 International Safety Symposium.

A DKV (Deutschen Kanu Verbandes) guidebook described a few rivers in the area. The descriptions were far from revealing in that they tended to be rather brief with comments like "With high water we did not venture into these stretches; with summer low water it may be possible to paddle them". The guide was written by a group

Article and photos by
Dave Grant

who had been out there in June 1988. They had encountered "high water", which led us

to the conclusion that we had to go out either earlier or later. We opted for the earlier trip as we wanted to get away over the Easter break.

With a venue and date set we were practically there. Well almost! Equipment and more specifically kayaks must be the bane of airline companies throughout the world. There can be nothing more disheartening for a check in steward than to see a bunch of people arrive at their counter with kayaks, paddles and the other necessities for a ten day trip. This was certainly the case with the young lady at our check in desk. Her initial reaction was "I don't need this today".

ns at er

for a chay break. Lesson number three, time moves slowly in Turkey.

We decided to venture into one of the "Verdon like gorges" as mentioned by the Germans. As we were unaware of how long we would be on the water we took overnight kit, just in case. The Germans had considered the river too high at 2m, we had yet to find any gauge to make any comparison. We approached the mouth of the gorge with trepidation. The entry rapid was a gate way to we did not know what. We decided that we would give it a try. With a bit more information we would have probably changed our minds. Lesson number four, hindsight is a wonderful thing.

Gods of the Gorge

We shot the rapid committing ourselves to the gods of the gorge. It was while sitting in an eddy at the bottom of the rapid that we found the gauge, it read just under 3m. The thoughts that run through one's mind on such occasions are fast, furious and unprintable, suffice to say the situation was taking on a whole new light. We paddled on up to the next rapid, where a rock fall had created a platform for viewing the rapid. We got out and decided to see what came next. What we saw was 'interesting', the third rapid was harder though with a definite line down it, and was immediately followed by another longer rapid that seemed to continue on around the corner. So far we had seen continuous hard paddling and this was the first 500m of what we thought could be 30 km of gorge.

The 'what if?' game was working overtime at this point, what if there was an unportageable terminal fall, what if there was a sump and, most



Dave having a bit of fun - Kopru river
Below: The 15m climb up the river gauge to get out of the gorge - Dalaman river.

importantly, what if we ran out of food. From what we could see there were very few other sanctuaries like our platform. We decided it was best to get out. Next problem, how? The cliffs were too steep to consider climbing without proper climbing gear. Our only other option was to try to paddle back up to the gauge, just below the entry rapid, and climb out up a big pipe. By eddy hopping and a lot of effort this was possible, though only in the larger boats. John's Microbat, while fine going down a river, was not designed to go against the current, as a result of which he was unable to get out. With darkness rapidly approaching Al and I made a corporate decision to leave John in there over night. Lesson number five, never trust your mates. We thought it would be easier getting him out on the following day when the sun was up. To date John has never really talked much to us about our decision, I can not imagine why.

Rescue

After a night's hospitality with a Kurdish family, Al and I went back to the gorge and managed to get John out, by lowering him one of the longer boats. The adventure was not yet over as we had to get back to our car at the bottom of the river. Mehmet, the head of the family who put us up for the night, came to our rescue. He offered to drive us down in his old Renault. The fact that he did not have a roof rack did not deter him, he just put the boats in the boot. Lesson number six, where there is a will there is a way. What made this even more impressive was that no one

seemed to bat an eyelid at such a spectacle.

The rest of the trip was just as eventful with adventure after adventure. The paddling that we did was fun, though due to high water the many gorges that we saw were not really viable. The people of the area were very friendly and hospitable, though my taste for tea will never be the same again. And the final lesson, expedition paddling is about more than just the white water; the people, the scenery and the off river adventures are as equally important for a great trip. A "low water" trip is in the pipeline for '96.

Thanks

to Steve White, of PALM, and Pyranha for their assistance. And special thanks to Gorkhan, from Seriously Turkey, for all of the abuse he and the car took.

Dave Grant paddled with Al Barrett and John Blair.

PS. I am in the process of putting together a small guide for the area Watch this space.



Above: Kayak transportation - Turkey style!

Right: Alun sharing the moment and chay with our Kurdish friends



Coaching Symposium & Youth Conference

Holme
Pierrepont was set humming by the recent coaching conference, which was the best attended for a long time, with around 100 participants taking part in a variety of practical 'clinics' from white water safety to open canoe sailing.

Article by
Geoff Good and
Kevin Danforth

The decision to switch emphasis from a pure 'conference' to a symposium was made to try and attract those who would rather get wet than talk about it! The water-borne workshops were both popular and diverse. At the same time as white water paddlers were practising with throw bags and surviving in stoppers, canoes were being sailed and poled on the glassy regatta lake. Sessions on teaching beginners and teaching styles contrasted with rough water sea kayaking on the white water course, and while all this was going on there were also informative sessions on NVQ's, pool awards and video coaching workshops.

Amongst the fun and frivolity, important business meetings were held, determining the BCU's response to the Young Persons Safety (Activity Centres) Act.

Kayak for the Future ?

In the evening a resume of the evolution of white water kayak design was presented by Graham Mackereth, of Pyranha who posed the question of whether 'sit ons' were the future, and what challenge did they represent? Graham is also interested in producing all new kayaks designed with the beginner and

juniors in mind.

From Crewe to the Solomons

Bill Taylor (from Crewe, not the other Bill Taylor of Round Britain fame!) then created general envy by giving a pictorial presentation of his 5 months' sea kayaking around the Solomon Islands - he apparently suffered the privation of studying an idyllic climate and way of life all in the cause of science!

Geoff Smedley Stands Down

Besides all this, there were sessions on the implications of the EC Directive on lifting insofar as our provision for canoeing for people who are disabled is concerned, and other related issues, besides the AGM of the advisory committee concerned. Geoff Smedley stood down as chairman, having been in the driving seat for many years, steering the Union to its present level of commitment and provision. He is succeeded by Steve Devlin.

Youth Conference

On the Sunday a second conference was superimposed - the BCU is nothing if not gluttonous for punishment. This concentrated on how to attract more young people into the sport on a permanent basis. Sue Campbell of the Youth Sports Trust outlined the opportunities available to the Union to obtain help in their outreach from the Youth Sports Trust and Roger Davis of the Youth Development wing of Sports Council summarised the delegates' debates and ideas to show that a meaningful, workable programme is all now realistically within our grasp.

Meanwhile out on the water: the show went on. Some of

Saturday's sessions were repeated and a few others added. Lots of people went for a paddle and enjoyed the opportunity to meet friends old and new, both on and off the water. The format was enjoyed by most and the suggestion is that we do it all again next year. Can anyone suggest a venue? Please write and let us know.

Grateful thanks to those who headed up sessions and workshops:

Jason Buxton
Bob Campbell
Mike Devlin
Ross Faragher
Franco Ferrero
Ray Goodwin
Dave Grant
Howard Jeffs
Graham Mackereth
Kevin Mansell
Keith Morris
Peter Scott
Geoff Smedley
Bill Taylor
Nigel Timmins
Graham Wardle

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