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February 1996

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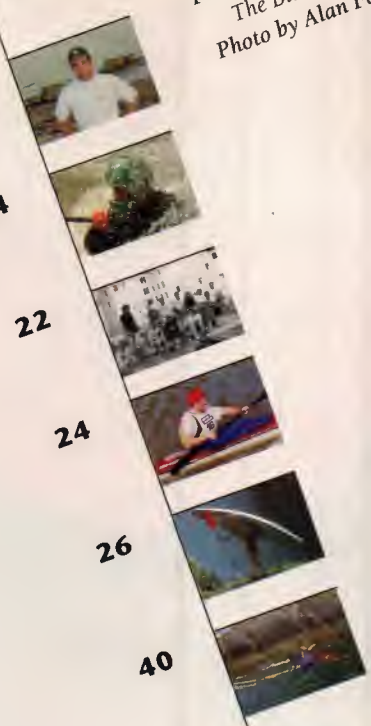
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Photo by Alan Fox



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International Canoe Exhibition

The International Canoe Exhibition takes place on Saturday and Sunday 24 and 25 February at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. This new venue comes about as a result of your requests and brings this important BCU event to the Midlands for the first time.

Sunday Times Award

Following on from her successful World Championship Lynn Simpson has become Sunday Times Sports Woman of the year, congratulations Lynn and good luck to you and both of our teams in this year's Olympic Games. Further congratulations to Sue Wharton who was awarded the Sunday Times Sports Administrator of the year.

AGM

The BCU AGM is being held in Teesside on 16 March. Please read the enclosed leaflet concerning motions and elections. Please exercise your write to vote.

BCU Diamond Jubilee Year

1996 - the BCU's special anniversary year will see many changes in Canoeing and in British Sport. As we go to press the BCU is preparing its response to the Prime Minister's statement "Sport: Raising the Game" and the more recent proposals concerning the British Academy of Sport. The open forum session at the AGM will be dedicated to "The BCU and its Place in British Sport" and the BCU is also well advanced in the preparation of it's new young people's initiative. Information concerning how your Club can be a BCU Top Club will be revealed shortly.

Sponsorship

We are pleased to announce that YAK will be sponsoring the BCU Coaching Service for three years. The Yak deal will be supplemented by a grant from Sportsmatch, the Government £ for £ grass roots sponsorship scheme and full details will be available at the Canoe Exhibition.

BCU Awards

Congratulations to the following members who received BCU awards during 1995:

Dennis Ball, Mike Wood, Roy

Hitchings, Francis Weatherall, Martin Meling, Grace Barnard and Graham Wardle were all presented with the BCU Award of Merit for services to canoeing. Brin Hughes was presented with an Award of Honour.

Be Legal!

In this issue we give details of more waters covered by the BCU Licence. From 1 April 1996 it will include the NRA Anglian rivers and the River Medway. We do not have the Thames yet, as this requires a change in legislation, but the NRA are keen to add this to the BCU Licence as soon as they can. Members must display their stickers and carry their membership cards: this is part of our agreement with the various navigation authorities. So, please don't make life difficult for waterway officers, because they have to challenge you for not displaying your sticker. Included with this issue is a leaflet showing how we have agreed with the NRA that membership numbers AND EXPIRY DATES will be shown on canoe stickers from now on.

Congratulations

To David and Clare Gent on the birth of Thomas David, a very welcome early Christmas Present! Congratulations from all at the BCU.

NW Brown Insurance Update

We have just completed the annual review of the Canoe Insurance scheme and are pleased to announce that rates have been maintained at the same level as last year and that this year's negotiations have essentially involved "tinkering" with the cover.

The scheme is still costing the insurers money to run but the ratio of premium paid in to claims paid out is improving and we would hope to be in a position next year where we could offer a rate reduction or introduce a No Claim Bonus. We have realised that we can

do little to influence the number and frequency of claims but we can try to reduce the amount which is paid out without detriment to the service which is provided to the policyholder.

This can best be achieved by introducing a nationwide approved repair and replacement service for all canoe claims. We have successfully operated this on a limited basis for a couple of years now and have decided that all claims should be administered in this manner. Indeed, this is the way in which most motor and many household insurance claims are now handled. The advantage of this is twofold:

1). We are able to negotiate price discounts with the repairers concerned and lower claim payments ;will eventually be passed onto all policyholders in the form of premium reductions.

2). 'The repairers can also offer a "loss adjusting" role and comment on any fraudulent claims which, unfortunately, still occur. Eliminating these is, obviously, a desirable aim.

All nominated repairers are approved by The Association of Canoe Traders and you would be put in touch with one at the time of a claim. Policyholders will still retain the right to have damaged canoes and equipment replaced by their local retailer but the insurer's liability will be limited to the prices quoted by an approved repairer.

Other Changes

In the future Grade III and Sea Surfing use will be classified as White Water and will attract the appropriate premium rating. Previously White Water use was anything above Grade III.

Damage to paddles will not be covered when being used for canoe polo.

No damage/loss cover will be given to canoes and equipment being used in The Exe, Liffey and Sella descents.

Proposal and claim forms and policy certificates will be amended accordingly.



Paul Owen
Chief Executive





October Competition

For those of you didn't guess right. The answer to the October Canoe Focus 'Name the River

Competition' was the Durance.

Some of you may have been caught out by the new road!

Thanks to Peter Knowles for supplying prizes of his new book 'White Water Europe'.

Helen Barnes Does it Again!

Helen Barnes carried out 250 eskimo rolls to raise £1037 for the BBC Children in Need Appeal. The BBC filmed the event and invited Helen along to appear on the show. Citroen have replaced Helen's sponsored car with a new ZX Turbo Diesel estate to mark her appearance on Record Breakers and for her fundraising efforts for Children in Need. They have also decided to sign her up for 1996, congratulations and well done!



Masters Boys raise their first £500

Natwest Bank have started the fundraising by the Masters Boys (as detailed in December *Canoe Focus*) The photo shows the Masters Boys receiving their cheque at the local canoe club. They have borrowed some old fibreglass boats and have more children than boats. They have also been given hats and spraydecks from P&H, Quip-u-for leisure, Performance Kayaks and help from Nookie. They are still writing to companies to ask for help with equipment and hope to raise the money for boats, paddles and a trailer themselves.



Latest Technological Innovation for Slalom

There are strong rumours on the riverbank that a new wave of slalom boat manufacture using the very latest in composite materials is about to be launched by Premier paddler Graham Mulholland.

When questioned about the project, Mulholland was obviously reluctant to go into too much detail at this stage only to say that he has been working on a new material, which, if performs as expected, would revolutionise the sport for youngsters (and parents) coming into slalom for the first time.

With hints of good savings and durability to match that of plastic based canoes, Mulholland has high hopes of offering a different but competitive option to the standard production canoe to paddlers in all divisions of the sport.

With experience in composites ranging from Jaguar Racing Cars to Building Structures, who knows what Mulholland has up his sleeve?

Did anyone notice what he was paddling last time you saw him on the river?

Watch this space!!

Wey Kayak Club Annual Triathlon

James Block won the Ironman Senior Section of the Wey Kayak Club's annual triathlon, making history by finishing the course in a record time of just under two hours. The Ironman Senior is the most demanding of all the categories with athletes having to complete a 8km run followed by a 24km cycle and finally a 10km kayak. James completed the following times Run: 0.32.22hrs Cycle: 42.15 and kayak 0.44.27hrs. A Domestic category is also held for those of us who are not quite Ironmen were competitors complete exactly half of each of the distances specified for the Ironman competition.

Surf's Up?

Wave heads thinking of trekking down to the South West any time this year can get a free 1996 Tide Timetable from Gul by simply sending a stamped addressed envelope to: *Gul International, Callywith Gate Industrial Estate, Launceston Road, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 2RE*

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Grants News
On page 6 of the December issue we reported that the **Axe Vale Canoe Club** had been awarded a grant of £9,000 from the **Foundation for Sport and the Arts**. In point of fact the club did apply for a grant, but when awarded a **Lottery Sports Grant of £17,267** the application to FSA was withdrawn. They did not receive two grants for the same project.

Further Sponsorship News
Mark Delany, Scotland's number one canoeist and Olympic hopeful is now being sponsored by **Racal** in his attempt to win a medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Swale Charity Paddle 1995

From the proceeds of the Swale Charity Paddle 1995, the Swaledale Outdoor Club has presented 'Breathing Space' with a Kiwi double, complete with paddles, buoyancy aids and helmets. Breathing space provides a wide range of leisure activities including canoeing for use by adults with physical or learning difficulties. A great deal of enjoyment, personal achievement and pleasure is gained by all.

A donation of £435 was also given to the Samaritans who although need no introduction do need financial support to continue to provide the 24 hour helpline. Many

thanks to all who paddled the river Swale and helped to raise money.

For the next SOC charity paddle come and join us for the 16th and 17th March 1996. A real fun weekend, amid beautiful Yorkshire Dale scenery and with good water levels an excellent grade 2-3 river and help to raise money for very worthwhile causes. Contact: **Charity Paddle, Swaledale Outdoor Club, 17 New Road, Richmond, N Yorks DL10 4QS**

Marathon Racing - Autumn K4 Series

A total of 99 K4s competed in the years 5 race autumn K4 series with events at Woodmill, Reading, Royal, Worcester and Nottingham.

27 clubs took part with the Army Canoe Union and Reading being the only ones to compete in all 5 races.

The overall series and Spanish Galleon Trophy was won in a tight finish by Nottingham Kayak Club by one point from Royal Canoe Club.

Northern Electric - Stars of the Future

Simon Jackson, 14, from Acklam, Middlesborough is a slalom canoeist and winner of both the British, English and Scottish U15 Slalom Championships. He has been selected for the 1996 England U16 team and hopes to gain selection for the U17 team later this year. His achievements have been recognised with a Northern Electric Foundation for Sport Achievement Award, presented to him by World Record Triple Jumper, Jonathan Edwards.



Did You Know?

On 5th January 1895 Hiram Layman of Little Rock, Arkansas had a patent application for Improvements to Portable Boats accepted by the British Patent Office. The patent specification describes the then novel concept of a portable boat "having a continuous tubular inflatable oval-shaped body". The wide range of inflatable boats on the market today have sidestepped one of the most ingenious aspects of Layman's idea. He describes a pair of "watertight boots or leggings" which extend from the bottom of the boat, into which passengers can insert their legs in order to provide added propulsion. He also proposes a watertight cape fixed to the top edges of the boat which can be drawn up around the users to keep them dry in rough water!

New Valley - Knoydart Sea Kayaking Link

In 96, Sea Kayaking enthusiasts will benefit from a new trading link between Valley - one of the worlds longest established sea kayak manufacturers, and Knoydart - the Cumbria based outdoor clothing specialist, as Knoydart Kayaking Systems opens its showroom at 4, **Daleston Court Southey Hill Trading Estate Keswick Cumbria CA12 4HH (017687 75519)**, to become Valley's main UK distributor for kayaks, accessories, spares, fittings, clothing demonstration boat trials - and of course friendly advice.

The ever increasing world demand for sea kayaks means that Valley want to concentrate their skills on

manufacture and design development, while Dave Felton at Knoydart is keen to extend his range of clothing into high performance kayaking gear and accessories - New products will be on show at the International Canoe Exhibition this February on the Valley/Knoydart stand.

The Valley team will still be there to meet familiar faces and newcomers at this years series of Sea Symposia with - Anglesey and Jersey coming up soon in May, and Squirt paddlers will still be looked after from Valleys Nottingham workshop.

Overseas kayakers will also benefit from the new development because Valley will export the Knoydart Kayaking System range along with their boats.

P & H Gorilla

Gorilla Technology (part of the P & H Company) have launched a new range of Estdash/Nylon 12 Gorilla's. River Play (Estdash LF blades), Rodeo and Rodeo X (Nylon 12 blades). Gorilla guarantee their Nylon 12 blades for 12 months against breakage during paddling and will happily demonstrate the invincibility of the blades at the

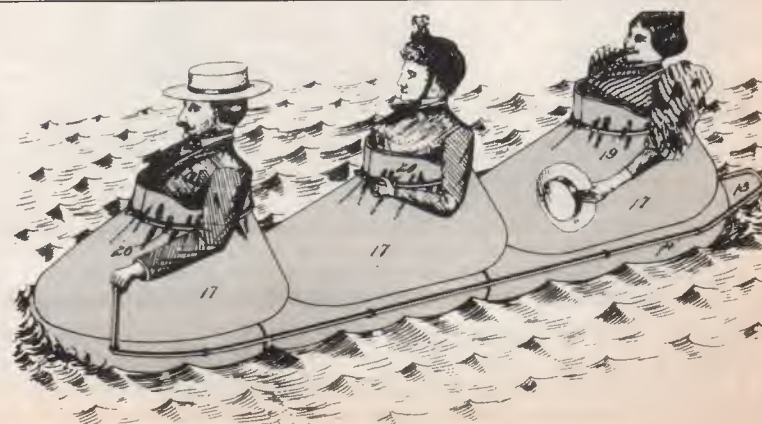
NEC show. Gorillawear is a new range of on the water clothing aimed at the more interesting paddler. Initial products include cags, buoyancy aids and spraydecks for Rodeo, Whitewater and Polo.

The P & H Company will also show two new polythene kayaks at the NEC show. The Amour RM is their eagerly awaited sea kayak and the Calypso is the basic pool trainer.

A Change of Name for Palm

After 16 years as Palm Canoe Products Ltd it has been decided that a name change was needed to bring the Company more in line with its current activities as innovative designers and

manufacturers of kayak and canoeing accessories. The Company will now be known as Palm Equipment International Limited.





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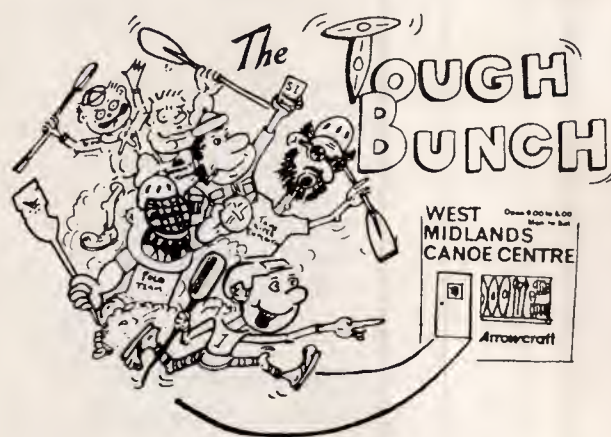
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What's On ● What's On ● What's On ● What's On

BCU Surf Committee EGM & English Surf Committee AGM

30 March 1996 commencing at 19.30 at Valley Caravan Park, Polzeath. Agenda: To ratify new constitution and elect English Surf Committee. Copies of the proposed new constitution are available by sending a large SAE to:

*Taddy Williams, Highlands, 17 Southdown Rd, Horndean, Waterlooville, Hants PO8 0ET
Tel: 01705 597639*

Stafford and Stone Canoe Club Slaloms 1996

23/24 March -

Stone 4/5 Double - James Roden, 18 Wesley Ave, Bilbrook, Codsall, Wolverhampton WV8 1JZ

22/23 June -

Paul McConkey Premier Double - Dave Royle, 65 Sutherland Ave, Dresden, Stoke on Trent ST3 4EQ

20/21 July -

Stone 4/5 Double - Phil Gooding, Flat 10, The Hayes, Longton Rd, Stone ST15 8SY

28 July -

Stone Regional - Roger Roden, 18 Wesley Ave, Bilbrook, Codsall, Wolverhampton WV8 1JZ

21/22 September -

Holme Pierrepont 1, Andy Neave, 7 Wesley Drive, Lambert Park, Stone, Staffs ST15 8FQ

National Canoe Polo Championships 1996

This years' Championships are to be held at the fantastic venue of Ponds Forge in Sheffield over the weekend of 2nd and 3rd March. The de-coupling of this event from the International Canoe Exhibition is regretted by the Canoe Polo Committee but it has permitted a change in format of the Championships owing to the considerable pool time that is now available.

The Championships will have a similar feel to the European and World Championships which were held in Sheffield as not only will there be non stop polo but

there will also be the polo stand and four trade stands selling all the best for Canoe Polo.

The support of the trade is greatly appreciated and without their help this event would not take place so please recognise the input of: Delapre Blades, Paddle Sport, P&H, Peak, Phoenix of Nottingham and Ras Dex.

The first rounds took place in November and December under a new format this year. Preliminary feed back suggests that those concerned appreciated the chance to play teams of similar divisional status before qualifying to play teams from divisions 1 and 2. The results of the rounds are published in the Canoe Polo Newsletter but the qualifiers are as follows:

Women:

Kirkcaldy, Luton tigers, Mutineers, Pennine, Phumblers, St. Albans, Wimpy Dragons and Woodmill

Youth:

Fairlop, Friends of Allonby, Kirkcaldy, Meridian, Pennine, St. Albans A, Tynemouth and Viking E.

Open:

Viking A, The Wimps, St. Albans A, Dudley and Sandwell, Luton Tiugers A, Bere Forest A, Meridian A, Humberiders, Friends of Allonby A, SOAK, South Shore Pirates, St. Albans B, St. Johns, Stubbers A, Viking B and Woodmill.

I would like to record my thanks for the organisational efforts to Valerie Vessey, Bill Mercer, Brian Moore and Joan Jackson.

Paddlers beware, the events don't run without these people. If there any volunteers who would like to help in Sheffield please contact any of the polo Committee.

Phil McClintock National Championships Organiser 1996

Boston Charter Event

1996 will be the second year that this event has run. It was implemented to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Boston

receiving its Royal Charter. We decided to make it an annual event with trophies in various classes for those who wished to race. For the rest of us it is a family fun day.

The event runs over a circular route around the market town of Boson of about eight miles. It utilises the River Witham and various drains which serve the area, including a tidal section through the centre of the town. There are four portages spaced fairly equally around the course with two pubs 9th May.

Boston Canoe Club is a relatively newly formed club with a membership of approximately 60. They run Beginners and Advanced pool courses in conjunction with Boston College during the winter months and courses and club session on the river from the Spring to Autumn, with trips at weekends around the country.

Richard Davies - Secretary Boston Canoe Club

Leeds Canoe Club Events

Sat 24th Feb -

Washburn Open Cruise

Sun 25th Feb -

Wharfe Div B WWR

Sat 9th Mar -

Washburn Div B WWR & Inter Regional Championships

Sun 10 Mar -

Washburn Open Cruise

23/24 Mar -

Appletreewick Div 2 Slalom - River Wharfe

18/19 May -

Washburn Open Cruise

31 Aug/1 Sept -

Div 2/3 Slalom

Sat 26th Oct -

Div A WWR & Club Championships

Sun 27th Oct -

Div B WWR Wharfe-Burnsall

All Washburn events are subject to Water availability please check the water information line prior to the event 01426 978654. For further information on all the events listed above contact:

*Ian Needham, 14 Inglewood Drive, Otley, Leeds L21 3LD
01943 463199*

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Dinky

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Solo Circumnavigation of Ireland

22nd June 1995 - 23rd Aug 1995

On August 23rd 1995, Nigel Smith a 29 year old lifeguard and previous member of the British Infantry from Buxton Derbyshire, returned to the shores of Scotland after completing his record breaking attempt, to Solo Circumnavigate Ireland from Scotland and back again in his seventeen foot Baidarka sea kayak, completely unsupported by rescue craft.

Leaving Portpatrick on the morning of 22nd June 1995, Nigel crossed the Irish sea luckily to be blessed with good weather. Six hours and eighteen miles later he arrived at Donaghadee, this was the closest port for the crossing and also the start point for the circumnavigation, he hoped to return within forty paddling days.

The good weather was to hold for the first ten days, allowing him to complete the East coast. 20 miles per day was to be the average distance at the paddle, this was to be cut in half once the strong Southerlies and Southwesterlies took hold on the South coast.

His first real experience of big rough seas came on reaching Hook Head, a notorious danger spot which has claimed many lives in the past. Twenty foot waves in no set pattern tossed him



around, making every forward paddling stroke a bracing stroke as well. This was not to be the last of the big water, as the huge rolling swell of the Atlantic ocean lay just around the corner on the West coast. The South coast was a terrible place for sea mist, sometimes the only way across the bays, was to set a compass bearing from your chart and paddle sometimes as long as three hours before any sight of land would be made, only true confidence in his compass and navigational skills allowed him to do this sometimes in force four to five winds.

Mind-Blowing

The coastal scenery of West Cork and up the West coast was to prove mind-blowing. Stacks of rock separated from the mainland jutted up some 400 feet above the waterline. Deep dark caves and archways carved out of the rock by the pounding waves of the Atlantic swell, along with the towering 500 foot cliffs of Mower, a tourist was to plunge to his death only days after Nigel had paddled beneath them.

Numerous species of sea birds were to keep him company, on legs which were now increasing to forty miles and lengths of time at the paddle increasing to nine hours. His strength and confidence now pushing him out into

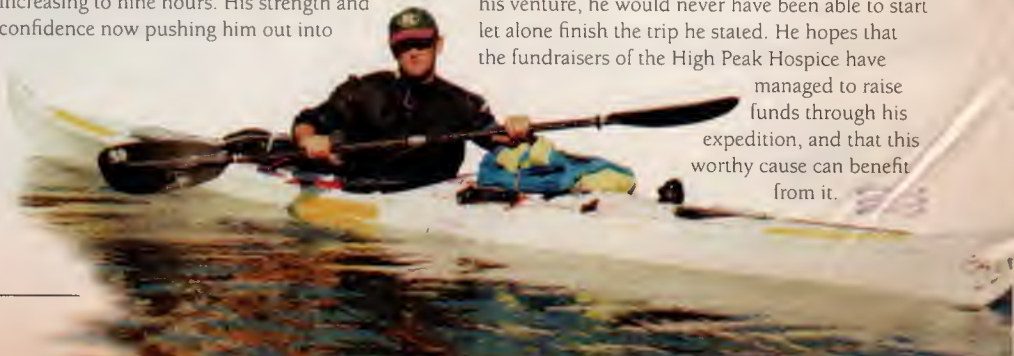
rougher conditions up to force six. Seals were a common sight all round the coastline, very inquisitive they would come right up to his sea kayak. He would sometimes catch the odd seal snoozing with its huge head bobbing high out of the water. Photographic opportunities he made full use of.

The highlight of the whole trip was to experience a huge basking shark trawling for plankton, it cut twenty feet across his bow, its massive dorsal fin cutting through the water as its tail swooshed from side to side behind. An amazing sight he said he was privileged to have seen.

The Irish people are well known for their hospitality, it was very obvious only having to sleep in his tent once, the locals made sure that he was always comfortably looked after and that his equipment was secure. Classed as a celebrity by some and a madman by others.

He returned to Donaghadee on the fortieth day as planned, and after kayaking the final leg across the Irish sea back to Portpatrick he fired a white spot flare into the air, this was to end his 1035 mile expedition which he had completed in 250 hours at the paddle. Every part of his body ached as he vowed not to go kayaking again for at least the next month or two.

Without the sponsors which so kindly backed his venture, he would never have been able to start let alone finish the trip he stated. He hopes that the fundraisers of the High Peak Hospice have managed to raise funds through his expedition, and that this worthy cause can benefit from it.



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Making Toast

Mike and Al's Most E

In the summer of 95, having survived Nepals spring rafting season the two White Water Warriors headed to the northern most state of India, Jammu & Kashmir, searching in a strange land, for the stranger canyons of the Tsarap and Zanskar rivers!

The story began way back in August 1994, when all three White Water Warriors, having ventured from the three corners of the globe, found themselves chasing a raft load of manic Israelis down the adrenal flow of the river Beas, Himachal Pradesh, Northern India.

One fateful day, the river gods decided to test the Warriors, who were currently hunting the lesser spotted cartwheel, and safety kayaking for Equator Expeditions. The boys cruised the morning, epic free, but just before lunch. . . ?

"Woow, man, wasn't there a huge hole here yesterday?" Mike questioned as they drifted across the ominous depths of . . . a lake?

"Yeah, must have been a flash flood! Check that out!" Jonny pointed to the frothing mist, rising from a rather terminal looking horizon line.

Later that day Jonny philosophized "Totally wild ride man, you just went in at the top, get worked, and pop out, after about a minute, just like Making Toast!"

From that day forth, the warriors description for any time you get worked, in the wet sense of the word, became, 'making toast', 'toasted' or just plain, no butter, 'toast'.

Unknown to the warriors, this was later, to have a slight, but ever present effect, on a handful of Nepali River guides perception of western culinary preparation.

Following a Fall season making toast, on Nepal's raging, clear, warm, sunsplashed, bug free, rivers. It was a small wonder that two of the boys returned for Nepal's Spring season, whilst the third, stayed home for much missed baked beans, and even a girlfriend.

Article and photos by Allan Ellard

Mike and Al cruised the Kali Gandaki many times. Their perception of river

running became, to put it mildly, complacent, the days of worrying about the next blind corner, were but flickering slide shows from previous years. Peering through churning mists of a brewing rum punch, the boys dreamed of some serious toastage.

After that days paddle, Al was wondering where his river running skills had taken their vacation. The Beas was thumping as usual and toast was just waiting to be made. Spring season over, monsoon imposing, a motley crew of guides and girlfriends trudged, kayaks in hand, up to Manali and back in Himachal Pradesh.

The rivers speed may have something to do with Manali's altitude, or maybe one of the valleys 365 resident gods. The main flow is fast, the channels faster, even the eddies are fast. A paddler is left wondering just which eddy he might

actually catch, before the next chaotic jumble sale of holes and haystacks. The boys paddled the Beas, from Manali to a hydro lake 100km downstream. The rivers general characteristics change only by the added volume.

After a few weeks, and the loss of a boat n' paddle tip or two, the motley crew departed, and the warriors went trekking, despite their bodies arguing that gravity sports was where its at.

Awesome River

On day one of the anti-gravitational mission up the Parvati valley, another truly awesome river, passing straight by Khirganga hot springs, Mike was heard to utter, "Ooh, would be awesome to chill in that hot spring for a day or three." But no, they laboured on.

Two days later. . . "Aaah, yeahh, cool, why didn't we just stay here to start with?" puzzled Al. descending into the sulphury waters, leaving a scum that would probably end up in some poor Sikhs beard.

Having given way to the harsh elements, altitude, or was it diminishing supplies of chocolate, the warriors planned their great adventure, which was to involve kayaks. In the days to follow, two warriors on a mission, ran two most excellent, steep rivers. With his micro blades, Al was wondering when he'd not make the move, and end up toasted! The Sainj was totally awesome, though Al hadn't quivered in his wetsuit

shorts for years. So as not to give the game away, all that should be said of the Sainj is, use a fast boat, full size blades, and don't let the mellow start to give you a sense of security, because where ever you are, it's always harder around the corner!

When celebrating after a gnarly river, never ever do it with local brew, Shimla No1. This stuff brings the word volatile into a whole new dimension, and a longing urge for your body to jack it in for a day or two.

The road up the Tirthan river to Banjar seemed to have more holes and bumps than an adolescents face! But the Tirthan was looking more like a river should, from a Poms point of view! But the Kiwi was concerned whether his boat would fit round, and down the narrows and drops. This was more Al's cup of Chai, as it were, through the Welsh shaped chutes, and boofs were still very Indian when it came to eddies!

That night without a whiff of Shimla No1, in the hydrocarbonised air, the boys relaxed as afternoon rush hour of smelly traffic, spluttered through the main bazaar of Aut. Their minds wandered and searched for the solution . . . for their next mission!

With monsoon rearing it's saturated face, it was time for the warrior mission that was to change the life of a particular pair of novice monks, currently devouring the stomach churning gooiness of a bowl of Ladakhi tsampa!

Close to Absolutely Nowhere

The boys were to head north, over the Rhotang la, Baralacha la, Lachalang la, Tanglang la and down to Leh (3500m). then back over Tanglang La, Lachalang la and down round the corner to a small river near Takh, or Sarchu, depending on which map you look at. From this moonscaped Ladakhi valley, the Tsarap chu carves its way through the Zanskar mountains to the trekking post of Padum. Padum is very close to absolutely

Glossary of Terms

Toasted = Got hammered

Awesome = Really pretty dam good, hard or scary!

Kiwi = Native flightless bird of NZ

Gnarly = Scary hard or pretty damn good!

Chai = Sweet milky tea

Whoopie = Tail squirt, back ender, reverse loop or life!

Hooning = To move quickly with stylish finesse.

Dhal Bhat = India and Nepals staple diet of rice 'n' veg lentil soup.

Job Description of Average raft guide

Cook and cleaner that rafts 30km to work each day.

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nowhere, from here the river becomes the Zaskar, and heads north towards Leh, its chilled waters filling the bottom of the infamous Zaskar gorge.

From the babble of a drunken Scottish doctor, and a bizarre story of a three day portage, the boys concluded that the 300km journey (again depending on which map you look at), may take anything from 8 to 10 days. "Hmmm, that's a lot of rice", thought Mike, following the wiggly route on the token map.

One afternoon in Leh, experimenting with load configurations, the warriors were still to be convinced the boats would float and would the thermarest, jammed beneath the split in the front help fight off frostbite, in water that's cold enough to send a brass monkey packing, clinging to its family jewels, searching for sellotape.

German Dude

That same afternoon, one of life's little coincidences occurred. When questioned by a larger than life, bearded, archetypal German dude, "Where are you going in that contraption?" Al offered "Sarchu, then down the Tsarap and Zaskar." "You know young lad, I did the first descent, two decades ago. It totally changed my life."

For a couple or three hours, the warriors sat absorbed by their discovered guru. As luck would have it, guru had an awesome memory and many a strange tale. This unpronounceable German, made a film of his descent, and won a place in the European Alpine show the same year that Leo Dickinson won, with the first Everest kayak expedition; small world!

Next evening in what could meaningfully be described as, the middle of nowhere, the boys pulled at the first of many mugs of sweet ginger chai. "Well dude we're here." "Yeah man. I hope those boats float."

The put in was at a breath and warmth sapping 4300m, even the take out is perched at around 3000m in the Himalayan rain shadow.

Al's micro mothership, carrying the heavy luxury items, such as stove, pot, kerosene and camera, floated surprisingly well. Mike was unnerved as the Acro's tail dredged for gold in the Tsarap's silt. From now on the theme turned surreal, as the Whiskey river joined the numbing surges of the Tsarap, on its way down from Baralacha la.

They were off, hooning away from the truck infested Leh-Manali road, towards the surreal world of the Ladakhi Zaskar, monument of erosion. As with many canyon systems, everything is eroding, from the towering frost shattered peaks, right down to that house sized boulder, defying physics high above the river.

On that first day the warriors cruised winding canyons and gorges passing into increasingly



surreal worlds. Unbeknown to the warriors the river was 'way high', and trucking. If the water had been clear, the boys would have noticed the underworld flying beneath them at a considerable rate of knots, as it was, a feeling of surreal mellow cruising was experienced.

Yelping Lunatics

On day two of the mission, the warriors spotted two bizarrely hatted, burgundy cloaks, scree running. They eventually found an eddy and awaited the yelping lunatics descent. "Err, sorry mate, you can only fit one person in these things". After explaining the solitudeness of a kayak, Mike glanced at Al and procured, "Must be getting near Phuktal Gompa".

The Phuktal Gompa, perched on the lip of a whitewashed cavern, high above the river, struck the boys to be in a rather weird spot for a Buddhist monastery.

Thanks

The Warriors are eternally grateful to Iqbal and Himanchu Sharma of Himalayan Journeys. The best and most friendly adventure tourism company in Manali.

The Warriors also wish to thank: Pyranha kayaks, for the most excellent kayak designs, Canyon Gear, providing awesome gear and aid parcels. Yoz Blades and Paddle Sport for cool blades. Ishwar and Cumla Dutt for good times and tasty Dhal Bhat.

The Warriors are: Mike Abbott, Allan Ellard and Jon Pearson.

After scaling the heights they discovered at the heart of the cavity sprang a well, and the acoustic potential was revealed later that evening when the earthy drones of the monks 'ohming' was heard in all its amplified spiritualness.

As the rice boiled over, the extinguishing hisses distracting the boys from their map, which had just informed them it should take two more days to reach Padum, their psychological halfway. Before which, Reru falls stood, or rather fell, in the warriors path.

As the boys wrestled the food bearing kayaks around the teeth of fresh rockfall, the jumbling chaos of Reru was, maybe runnable, if you didn't goof up and end up in that apocalypse of a pourover.

Shreds of multi-aqua polyethylene, and a few stubbed toes later, the boys entered the gushing volumes to be sucked, thrown, flipped and flushed to yet another inspiring gorge. Somehow the map skipped, and the warriors arrived at Padum a day early. From Reru the river's iciness rushed in a read runnable



rollercoaster, bringing the boys out from the Tsaraps numerous narrows, to the rather colder openness. Valleys of textbook perfection, deliver the Doda river to the Tsarap, to form the Zanskar, who's flat vastness meanders towards the darkening peaks of the Zanskar mountains.

The threat of rain, snow, or hail prevailed as the ice pop crusaders cruised rapidly towards the Zanskar gorge. The imposing cold and stories of the gorge forced the warriors to call council from an increasingly inaccurate map. Finding a sheltered beach the boys settled down for an intense safety talk.

Once you enter the gorge, you're in until you're out, and it's a full day long. Already being midday, it would be unfortunate to get to the gorge prematurely. Feeling far more relaxed about the situation, the warriors continued to drift towards the ever nearing canyon. The river was getting pretty wide, the murky boils and fold lines surged and gurgled, occasional whirlpools swallowed pockets of air and the odd kayak or two.

Surfs made in heaven beckoned as the warriors adopted stay dry tactics, and Mike thought Al's lips were turning another shade closer to the blue of the Acrobat. A solitary beach in the midst of 1000m canyon walls was stumbled on, and the boys settled in for yet another pot of rice, and a confused conversation on their whereabouts.

Worst Weather in Ladakh for 20 Years

The next day began before the last finished, as the worst weather in Ladakh for 20 years moved over the gorge and dumped on the warriors. Warm sleeping bags turned to shrink-wrap ice blocks as they waited for the sun to rise. Not a chance boys. With first light the warriors emptied their sleeping bags and confirmed the facts that they had no food, no dry clothes, and no idea of their exact location. So the warriors cruised on down the rain soaked, grey shrouded canyon. A small splash was heard as the extremities of yet another brass monkey plummeted into the iciness of the gorge and hit the river.

Paddling head down, with the Srinagar-Leh highway as the goal, dry clothes and a bucket of chai were in the thoughts of the warriors, along with, 'I'm too young to become a

popsicle!'

The volume of the Indus is more than doubled when the Zanskar's icy discharge joins it at Nimu, but the warriors didn't notice as they scrambled through the paddy fields in search of the first steaming cup of chai.

Unfortunately, luck was lost somewhere in the gorge, and the boys found the chai stall shut and the road closed! Standing beside the deserted road the warriors contemplated their fate. Luck returned in the form of a Morris Oxford taxi with a roof rack, trundling along the highway. So the warriors hit the capital city of Ladakh, Leh, where their dry gear was securely locked away in a guesthouse with no key.

The warriors made tracks back to monsoon ridden Manali, and eyes bulged as they looked at the rubble that used to be the riverbed. Even Mangobaba a friendly holyman or Sadhu, known for providing some influence at the confluence of Doobie Nullah, showed some concern, as he stood in his Shiva temple up to his ankles in flood water.

The warriors veins strained with adrenaline for the next couple of weeks before they split. They were to meet back in Nepal for a prematurely ended Fall rafting season with Equator Expeditions, and to be reunited having dragged themselves from India, Nepal, and the concrete canyon of Nottingham, for Warrior tour of the rivers and cider taps of the UK

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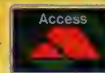
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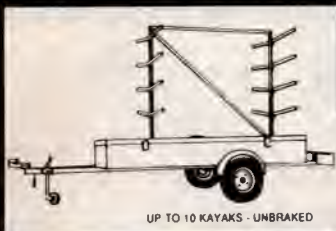
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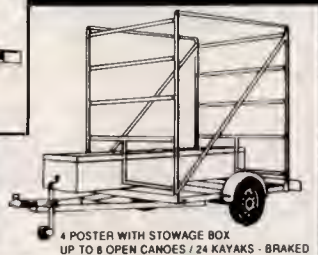
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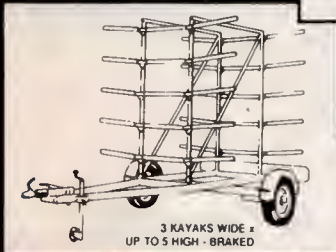
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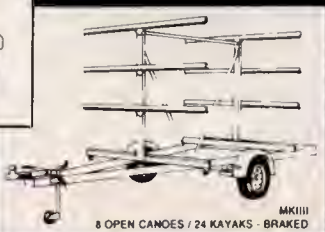
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The BCU of the 21st Century

Consultation

The stuffer in the last edition of Canoe Focus set out the reasons for change and the outline proposals. Members were invited to send for the full Consultation Paper and copies had already been sent to all members of Council and, through their Chairmen, to all members of BCU Committees etc. Copies were also sent to members of SCA, WCA, and CANI through their respective National Associations. The closing date for comments was the 18th December and eight written responses were received. Most members clearly considered that the proposals were substantially acceptable.

The 'federal' BCU organisation

The written comments received, together with a number of verbal contributions made at various meetings, have been reflected into a Proposed BCU Structure document (and the revised Agreement between the BCU and the National Associations) that will go to the Federal Committee in January and to Council for approval on the 16th March.

The intention is to have a very small BCU Board, with no committees of its own, delegating

work down to the national specialist committees. The BCU will only retain responsibility for those British matter which go across national boundaries. Examples are international competition and Coaching matters. The cost of running the BCU will be met by a per capita contribution shared by the members of SCA, WCA, CANI and the English.

The target date for implementation is likely to be November 1996.

The English Organisation

There have been some material changes proposed of which the most important is that the English Council should be much smaller than the existing Council. It looks as if the nine Regions will be grouped geographically and have four representatives, Sports Management Committee (representing the eight competition committees) three, Access and Coaching and Recreation one each.

Lifeguards will report through Coaching, Touring and Recreation, Sea Touring, Expeditions and Rafting will report through one joint recreation representative. The various consultative Panels will report through the appropriate parts

of this structure.

There will be four seats for representatives elected by the membership. The elected members will certainly be expected to make a substantial contribution in this smaller Council.

There is now a strong commitment that the English will operate as "The British Canoe Union in England" - the English Canoe Association. Any question of the English becoming a totally separate body from the BCU is left for a future date when they consider the time appropriate and the benefits justify the associated problems.

The written comments received, together with a number of verbal contributions made at various meetings, have been reflected into a Proposed BCU in England Structure document that will go to a meeting of English representatives on the 12th February and to Council for approval on the 16th March.

The changes to the way in which committees operate and detailed matters will be worked on over the next few months for approval at Council in September.

It is possible that the English changes will go ahead in November 1996 even if the changes to the BCU structure are further delayed.

Reviews: Book & Video **Focus**

Christmas, the Flu, production of the BCU Yearbook and this edition of *Canoe Focus* has somewhat hindered my capacity to review many books over

the last two months, however, one book that I just could not let go by without a mention is:

The South West Region Small Craft Sea Touring Guide (Dorset and South Devon Coastline) Volume 1

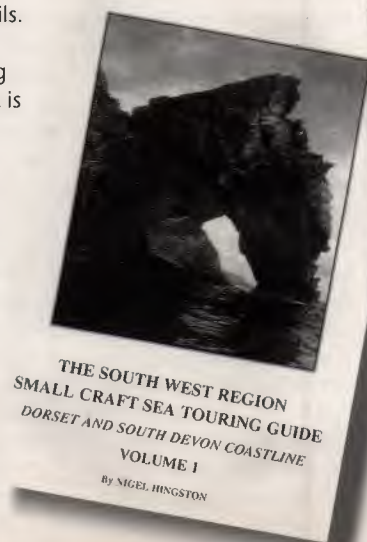
by Nigel Hingston -

Published by the BCU SW Region ISBN 0-900082-09-7 and available from BCU supplies later this month.

This A5 book is the first of three volumes covering the SW coastline. A very comprehensive guide with detailed reference maps of the Dorset and S Devon coastline divided into 18 sections. Each section gives beach conditions, tidal characteristics and general information, such as where is the nearest shop, pub, cafe etc. The book also contains general information on the area

including surfing and HM Coastguard details.

If you have any intention on paddling in this area, this book is an absolute must. Written by Nigel Hingston a Senior Instructor Sea and Inland for the past 15 years and the SW Regions Sea Touring Representative, this man knows what he's talking about! The most comprehensive guide you could ever need.



Reviewed by
Wendy Blackman

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Rainbow Awards

Dear Focus



We at the Mike Jones School of Sailing have over the past 12 months tried to bring into the sport young canoeists.

To keep their interest and enthusiasm we gave them a little test and awarded them our own certificate.

The One Star Test proved to be very hard for some very young children and many lost interest and left because they did not receive a BCU badge or certificate. We were so pleased that the SCA/BCU introduced the Rainbow Awards and we are the first school in the area to award them. This has done a lot for canoeing for the young and we now have many very young canoeists on our books, so well done!

The photo shows 5 year old Jonathon Brown with his instructor Tony Bennett. He was awarded the red badge and this photo was in all the local papers.

Mike Jones



Canoeing Ethics

Dear Focus

We decided to paddle the Dee to co-ordinate with the WCA Open Tour - why not travel all the way from the North Pennines and have a good weekend paddling with like minded people? We sent for our tickets; read the info' and made a note of 'helping other canoeists in difficulty'. Wondering why this had to be mentioned. We took advice and pitched on the official tour campsite, sorted our gear and went off for an early meal and hopefully an early start in the morning.

During our supper the campsite had filled up considerably - that shouldn't have been a problem - but it was. Vast numbers of mini buses had arrived each accompanied by a trailer and a bus full of either drunk or going to get drunk very soon students (I've chosen not to call them canoeists) Many of your readers may be saying "How can I generalise like this?" My answer is you should have been there. Sleep was impossible. The melee around was a cross between freshers fortnight and the Bigg Market in Newcastle at throwing out time - people shouting, screaming, throwing up, collapsing others tents, urinating and shouting obscenities. This continued until about 2.30am - the campsite owner resorting to turning the campsite lights out in order to try and calm the situation.

Several questions arose in those long hours as we lay in our tent - most of them answering themselves, why do locals often resent canoeing tours? Would any non-

canoeists on the campsite realise that these people surrounding them didn't represent most of the canoeing fraternity?

Why was a special request made by the tour organisers to help swimmers or those in need? Was it because they realised that people were still so drunk or hungover as to not be able to help themselves or others?

We left the campsite very early on Saturday morning, having been awoken by shouts across the campsite. The area was littered with empty bottles, cans, vomit and half erected tents.

We looked at the river Town falls, Serpents Tail and decided that it really wasn't worth it. Not because it didn't look fun - but because we couldn't be sure that we wouldn't spend all our time rescuing hungover students and not canoeists.

We headed north to leave Llangollen and get on rivers paddled that weekend by canoeists.

I offer open forum to those running university/poly canoe clubs particularly those at the Dee that weekend (17-19 Nov). What are you doing to encourage your students understanding of the wider ethics of canoeing? If nothing then why not? If you are then why did those ethics not filter through that weekend?

In the end, students graduate, canoeing tries to go on.

S Graham, P Jackson

Interclub Newsletter

Dear Focus

As Publicity officer of the West Midlands BCU I am somewhat alarmed that members of West Midlands Clubs tell me that they do not see the West Midlands Interclub Newsletter. Since this often carries important information, like the recent meeting concerning the River Teme Catchment Management Plan Document, and advertisements that members might like to act on, I am concerned to know how they are being kept in ignorance.

Would any member of a British Canoe Union member club who does not see the newsletter contact me so that we can look at the system and see where it is breaking down. The West Midland Committee spend a lot of time and money trying to get information to the members so we are concerned to rectify this "hiccup" in the system. Individual members can obtain newsletters by supplying the regional Secretary, Peter Jones, 173, Longmore Rd., Shirley, Solihul B90 3EL with four A5 stamped and addressed envelopes each year.

I can be contacted at "Nimrod", Queens Drive, Malvern, Worcs. WR14 4RE (drop me a post card) or Tel: 01684 563408.

Rosemary Preece

High Standard

Dear BCU

As I am over 68 I have sold my canoe and will not therefore be renewing my membership.

May I thank you for the efficiency displayed to me over the years in dispatching magazines, letters, etc. and compliment your organisation on the high standard of your publications.

In recent years I have found your arrangement for canoeists to use canal waters particularly useful, and a very good bargain.

Best wishes for the coming season.

P C King

Eds note: Thank you Mr King, it's good to know we get it right sometimes!

Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre

Dear Focus

In the spring of 1993 Leicester City Council pulled out of the running of the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre and tried to close it down. As users of the centre we were determined not to let that happen, so we approached the Council to ask if we could set about running the centre ourselves. At that time there was a small core of individuals who took on the main responsibilities of running the centre.

The idea for a club came from the then Chair of the Management Committee, Keith Hampton, who asked me to look into setting up a Youth Club that any young person (with parental consent) could come to. The original philosophy behind the club was to make it as cheap as possible for young people to progress in outdoor pursuits and become Instructors.

The centre had for many years run a very successful playscheme which was grant aided by Leicester City Council. This was to continue. What we wanted to do was bridge the gap between the child who came to that playscheme and the adult who became the Instructor, it was clear to those who were successful had got there by sheer perseverance, or were lucky enough to have parents already involved in the sports.

The club was set up with the young people in mind at all times. They set the agenda, the adults instruct what they want them to. The young people themselves are customers - not an annoying group of other people's kids. There is a strict code of conduct but the young people themselves are involved in setting that code and do a lot of the

reprimanding themselves. The club is not just about canoeing. It also teaches quad biking, climbing, archery, air rifles and orienteering. More importantly it develops the young people as they get older they are given responsibilities. They nurture the younger members, and they work as a team.

The original philosophy has not changed. What has changed is the club's achievements. In the past two and a half years some five thousand youngsters have attended the Saturday Club. This years income alone stands at around £4000 from the club, and 24 people are now Instructors after training with us, with another 14 Trainee Instructors ready to take their assessments soon. The club has become a training base for potential instructors from all around the county. This is great for me. It alleviates a great deal of the hard work. The club now runs itself - they don't need me anymore!

The Saturday Morning Club is achievable by anyone no matter where they are. A club itself may not be able to attract youngsters to its regular evening paddle some young people do not want to go to a place that is adult dominated. I certainly didn't. A club that is youth centred not only provides opportunities, but it also attracts young people that may not have otherwise got involved in the sport.

Yes it is hard work, but the rewards of the club far outweigh the work involved. The youngsters that we get, who all get along so well despite their differing background, is an achievement in itself. The club was set up originally on a recreational basis, but just recently a Marathon section had been started

and the intention is to create a Slalom section next year.

More and more people are getting involved in the club, which again is superb for all those involved, because it takes the pressure off us all. To finish - if anyone wants to set up a similar club I would be more than willing to lend a hand and can be contacted at the LOPC on 0116 2681426.

Andy O'Connor

First in C1 Sailing?

Dear Focus

I would like to claim this as a first in C1 sailing (or is it?)

The photo was taken by my wife at the South West Region weekend at South Cerney. The wind on that day was gusting 5-6 which made the handling rather tricky (most outings ending in either sinking or capsize) but it did sail, it has double dagger boards, double rudders and twin sails but no outriggers fixed on two sections which bolt onto the Delta C1. I normally race it in Div 8 amongst the kayaks, but enjoy paddling wherever I can. The Great Western (silver) Symonds Yat and the Axé mouth open canadian weekend sea paddling.

I took up a challenge to fix a sail on it and its added some lighthearted fun getting it to work.

A F Gallop, skipper Griffon Canoe Club



In days of old when knights were bold

This Summer, St. Andrews University Canoe Club made a trip to the French Alps to discover the sunnier side of white-water paddling. Paul Grogan describes the agony and the ecstasy of the Alpine experience and suggests a few handy hints for survival.



Picture this: a gallant knight stands astride an Alpine riverbank clad only in a thin membrane of shining neoprene and closed-cell foam. Beside him, a knave of dubious worth nervously clutches a carefully coiled length of twine. Gazing intently upstream, Sir Gallant surveys the scene with searching eyes, seeking any sign of misadventure. Suddenly agitated, he glimpses something in the seething white chaos far above.

Momentarily, the sun breaks through the mountain clouds and all is lost in the glare. As normal reception resumes, our hero is horizontal and river-bound, leaping headlong into the munching maelstrom with little more than an egg-shell between his tender melon and oblivion. Within seconds he grapples an angry, bucking kayak into submission and heaves it body and water into a swirling eddy, whereupon he breathes deep and easy once more. All man, hero, in short, professional nutter.

Michael Bruce is a man who appears to make a living out of leaping into situations that are fast, freezing and potentially fatal. Each year he organises intermediate and advanced canoe rallies through Alpine Options, and with thirteen years experience under his tow-line, he is surely the Gallant guru of alpine kayaking. For some, it seems, a swim down a grade IV is a walk in the park. For us, it meant the difference between success and failure.

St. Andrews University Canoe Club arrived in the Alps with high expectations, although it would be safe to say that

a 'no fear' slogan would have looked more at home on a Sunday afternoon sofa-snoozers who think he knows better. In retrospect we approached our very own alpine white-water wash cycle with all the maturity of a toddler let loose in a shopping trolley, but true to the spirit of the club we were willing to attempt something a bit more challenging than the weekly weekend trip to Tully.

It was not without mishap that we succeeded in reaching the Alps at all, a feat formally proposed as one of the expeditions main aims. Having spent a night in Newhaven attempting to replace a trailer wheel once owned by the Wright Brothers, and a week in Lyon trying to get back out again, we arrived ready for bed (Surely 'some serious white-water action' ?, Ed.).

Staying on the banks of the Guisane overlooking a permanent slalom site provided the perfect opportunity for budding ducks to find their flippers, and tentative trout to find their fins. Although other groups came and went during our stay, Mike was prepared to paddle with us every day, leading the rivers and (quite literally) throwing his all into it.

Woefully Unsuitable

Each day the rivers became progressively more difficult. Nature's carefully structured alpine grading system allowed us to divide the river into increasingly harder sections and paddle them accordingly. However, as white became whiter and lines became tighter, it was obvious that our equipment was woefully unsuitable for the prevailing conditions (i.e. white and fluffy, with a hard, cold-front coming in from the north). Rightly chastised for inadequate buoyancy in the bows, we learnt our lesson the hard way.

The Claree proved to be the climax of our particular walk in the park, and as walks in the park go, it went. Putting in just below the grade V section, we were faced with the exhilarating prospect of continuous grade IV for two kilometres, in ice-cold mineral water beneath a blazing sun. Nervously snaking a line towards the first lip, the river disappeared, off stage right. Paddling at the back I

watched one helmet after another drop out of sight, and held my breath. Each chute was fast, white and wet, each turn a reaction manoeuvre, and each line the near side of probable pinsville. I saw Jon in difficulty ahead, struggling for an age to maintain direction in a sinking cement-bucket, before succumbing to a large granite parcel ready to be wrapped in linear plastic. Jon's deck had popped in the first drop and I was amazed at how long he'd kept out of trouble. He was crawling up the bank by the time I reached him, grinning from ear to ear and taking care to indicate that both his thumbs were OK. 'Sans kayaker', the kayak disappeared downstream.

Unfortunately it was as white as the river. Fortunately the end-caps were black. Unfortunately the end-caps were soon torn off. Fortunately, some way downstream, a gallant knight was standing astride the riverbank clad only in a thin membrane of shining neoprene and closed cell foam... Half an hour, and two kilometres later, Jon was reunited with his kayak, an event which proved to be an emotional if unsuccessful affair. His right leg was so swollen that he could barely walk, and it became clearer in the cold light of the hospital waiting room that a two mile walk was distinctly not what the doctor ordered.

A matter of minutes passed before another casualty stood stranded in the middle of the river, with a dislocated shoulder and an arm hanging down among his legs. Usually quiet and modest, Tom became a splendid fountain of beautifully crafted Queen's English, the production of which, I am assured, continued long into the operating theatre. How ironic, then, that Jon was the only driver on the trip. It was time to call it a day.

Despite our inexperience, and perhaps more importantly, our inadequate equipment, everyone learnt an enormous amount from the trip. Paddling Alpine style provides a great opportunity to inspire confidence and stretch potential, but there were lessons to be learnt: take a dozen reasonably competent and confident canoeists, an equal number of white-water specification boats with all the trimmings, and a guide who really knows his fluff. Just add water.

Article by
Paul Grogan

PHOENIX OF NOTTINGHAM

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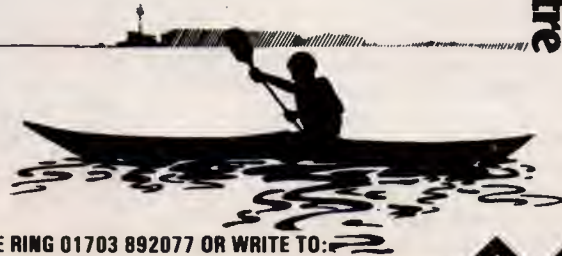
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Royal Berkshire and Rescue Service Canoe Endurance Race 1995

Bristol to Windsor

**Saturday
9th September
1995 had arrived. The day we had all trained hard for. The day of the longest canoe race in Britain. The 12th year of the gruelling Bristol to Windsor Canoe Endurance Race, organised by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and sponsored by TOTAL Oil Great Britain.**

T Teams of eight compete in this endurance relay race, over the 127-mile course, portaging the 160 locks from Bristol docks, along the River Avon, onto the Kennet and Avon Canal, to where it joins the River Thames at Reading, then on to Windsor, finishing at Eton bridge under the watchful eye of Windsor castle. The course record is 20 hours 24 minutes.

I was competing on behalf of the Surrey Police. The team is drawn from across the county and two of the team were "Black Rats" from our Northern traffic department - one of whom had to join us late and leave early as time off had not been allowed. One, from the CID at Egham, a fingerprint officer, our only (but not token) female, and an inspector from H.Q. The other three of us just plain "Woodentops" from across the county. Our support crew drawn from spouses, colleagues and friends, all have big hearts and get little sleep in return.

Having left home at seven on the morning of the race with my wife, (leaving word with our three teenage kids that no parties were to take place), we drove to Woking to pick up another 'fool' before heading to Little Sandhurst to swap vehicles. This allowed us to collect one of our support crew vehicles, in which my wife was to try and navigate over the course of the next day. We then made tracks for Bristol.

The start time was nearing, when the announcement came that the Farnham Fire Station team had broken down en route so the start was delayed until 12.45.

Unfortunately, Farnham never did start and eventually, 21 teams set off to compete, raising money for charity and the sheer enjoyment of taking part! From the start, Broughton Fire Station, the 1994 runners-up, set a fast pace with Surrey

Police hard on their heels. At Keynsham, as I got out of the kayak, I suffered cramp in my leg, causing my knee to give way and for me to stumble. Worse was to follow - as we ran the portage with the kayak upside down on our shoulders, the whole of the seat housing came away from the bottom of the kayak. The team struggled on with the seat moving until we got to Bath.

By the first time point at Saltford Lock, Broughton had opened up a two minute lead on us, with Windsor Fire Station lying third, two minutes behind us. The paddle then took us along the stretch of River Avon to Bath - the second timing point and the start of the Kennet and Avon Canal. A five minute wait at Bath to compensate for the main road crossing before portaging from the bottom lock to the top lock, we were lying second at this point, but lost time as our support crews had stopped at a hardware shop and purchased pop rivets so that the hull of the kayak could be drilled to refit the seat, covering the hull of the boat (where the pop rivets came through) with tape. This idea worked well, although we did have some water seeping in. Dorset Fire Brigade and Wraybury Warriors "A" were joint third, Windsor dropping back to fifth.

All the crews had different techniques for portaging. Broughton had two of their eight as non-paddling members portaging each run. We used the spare paddlers. The Staverton time point saw the first four crews in the same positions with Wiltshire Fire Brigade moved into joint fifth with Windsor. Prior to Devizes is the Caen Hill flight of 16 locks covering, I am told, a mile and a quarter. Again teams had different ideas on how to portage this. Our strategy was to have two to team members run the bottom to half-way point, then two more to run from half-way to the top. The trouble was the paddler who had to take over at the top was in the wrong car, so he got dropped off at the bottom of the flight, so he had to run before his paddle started. This is no way to get fresh paddlers into the kayak.

On to Devizes

Past the start of the Devizes to Westminster race, this was the fourth timing point with no change in the top six. The first crew went through at 19.26 hours, the nineteenth crew at 22.26 hours. The next timing point was Wootton Rivers, which had seen us take in the Vale of Pewsey. After this the Savernake Forest tunnel (Bruce Tunnel) had to be negotiated. Our crew paddled through, some teams portaged over the top, past the hotel. Rumour has it that at least one team called in here, (and it was not for coffee!) The Crofton run was also encountered before the next timing point at Kintbury.

By the time we reached Newbury at 1.46 in the morning, Broughton Fire Station were 37 minutes ahead of us in second place, and 36 minutes separated second to sixth placed Wraybury Warriors "B" crew. This is where Windsor Fire Station had to retire at 3am and Thames Truckers (a team from TOTAL Oil Great Britain - the sponsors) retire three and a half hours later. Aldermaston saw our best paddler Alistair Bayliss having to leave due to his early shift at 6am and we also had Paul Wiltshire "blow himself out" with his relentless doubles paddling with Alistair. We also had two others who were feeling the effects of the flu bug.

County Lock, Reading, the next timing point, saw



us drop back to fourth (our finishing position) behind Dorset Fire Brigade. Hambledon Lock saw Dorset take second place off the Wraybury Warriors "A" crew with 56 minutes separating second to sixth place. Bray lock saw the same positions from first to sixth. It was then "downhill" to the finish at Windsor, Broughton finishing at 10.08 on Sunday, 21 hours 17 minutes after the start.

At the finish line a photo call was completed of all the teams, then showers and a hearty breakfast was on offer at Windsor Fire Station which really went down well with all the teams.



Thanks

A big "Thank You" must go to TOTAL Oil Great Britain for supporting the event and to all the marshals and helpers along the way. Also Rose for cooking the breakfast, and all the support crews! The final top three positions were:

Result

- 1 Broughton Fire Station 21 hours 17 minutes
- 2 Dorset Fire Brigade 22 hours 21 minutes
- 3 Wraybury Warriors "A" 22 hours 26 minutes

If you are a member of the emergency services, and would like to get involved in the Bristol to Windsor Canoe Endurance Race, please contact **Norman Gosling, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service**
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**Written by
Peter Harris of
The Surrey Police
Canoe Team
Photos by
Peter Vintner**

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The Blue

“The Blue Nile pours very quietly and uneventfully out of Lake Tana in the northern highlands of Ethiopia. There is no waterfall or cataract, no definite current, nothing in fact to indicate that a part at least of this gently moving flow is embarked upon a momentous journey to the Mediterranean, 2,750 miles away.”

Alan Moorhead



The description at the start of Moorhead's book, *The Blue Nile*, draws the reader deeper into its pages to discover why the river has been the focus of so much attention over the last few hundred years. Since James Bruce controversially discovered the source of the Blue Nile in the eighteen hundreds explorers have been making countless journeys in an attempt to discover the true nature of the river in its journey down from the highlands and out into the desert to meet the White Nile at Khartoum. Only recently in its history of exploration have explorers had the means and technology to attempt descents of the river rather than follow its course on foot. These attempts have been ambitious, and at times foolhardy, and have then only concentrated on particular sections of the river. The accounts of such attempts have detailed triumph and tragedy with hazards that range from bandits and crocodiles to thundering and impassable cataracts.

“Faranji”, “Faranji”, “Faranji”. The chorus grows louder and louder as we emerge from the hotel gate and into the throng of people that have gathered. Our kayaks are sitting on top of a rickety two wheeled cart that is being pulled by a reluctant

mule. The mules' owner is trotting alongside urging him on with shouts of encouragement, “Che!, ush!, che!, che!”. The mule breaks into a canter which threatens to bounce the kayaks off the back of the cart and so we are forced to run alongside holding them steady.

It is only a half mile from our hotel to the Tana Bridge yet is sufficient distance in which to attract a large and curious following. People on their way to market stop and stare as we pass and then shrug their shoulders before continuing on their way. It is mainly the children who run alongside us shouting and screaming and banging on the boats. We halted on the bridge. The kayaks are unloaded and without further instruction they are carried down to the waters edge by eager members of the crowd.

The parapet of the bridge has now become a spectators gallery whilst down at the waters edge we have barely enough room to move as the crowds press in against us. It was an incentive to get on the water as soon as possible and back into the tranquillity that life on the river has to offer. Paul and Steve set off first and ten minutes later

Guy and I follow. We look back and wave goodbye to the surrounding crowd and then turn and head off into the wide and slow moving waters of the Blue Nile. Ahead of us lies eighty miles of river and an estimated five days of paddling until we reached Sabera Dildi, the second Portuguese bridge. From there we have arranged for mules to portage the kayaks out of the gorge to the town of Mota.

Family of Hippos

As the river curved into a right hand bend we encounter a family of hippos wallowing in mid stream. Caution is required in these circumstances for the hippo is a naturally aggressive animal. If they sense that their family is threatened they are liable to attack. We new what they were capable of after suffering six solid days of hippo encounters on the Omo. We switched automatically into ‘hippo psychology’; let them know where we are and who we are, show them that you are not a threat, make a noise by slapping the paddles on the water and edge swiftly past. If they sink out of sight then

**article and
Photos by
Alan Fox**

Nile



accelerate your paddling speed. The right hand bank which we are close to is lost amidst tall reeds. Every so often we catch sight of a splash and an ensuing torpedo like wake steaming away from us. It is evidence of crocodiles, nothing to worry about as long as they are small ones. In addition to the large animals there is a plethora of birdlife that inhabit the banks or find sustenance from the river, Kingfisher, Heron, Cranes and Black Kite to name but a few. Our presence does little to disturb them.

After two miles or so the river begins to divide into a maze of channels. Each channel is lined with tall palms and dense undergrowth giving no line of sight to indicate in which direction we were headed or if indeed that there was a route through. For half an hour or more we drift on the gentle current choosing the widest passages that we could find and hoping that there were no crocodiles hiding in the confines. Our luck held and then, almost as suddenly as the islands had started, they finished. We were out into open river again but now we were perched at the lip of a large fall.



We are now faced with the inevitable debate of which line to take or if indeed it is runnable. There are only two possible routes. The first is on the left over two vertical drops with a possibility of entrapment and the second is on the far right, running a fast shoot where the main current heads into a jagged boulder choke and then disappears over another drop which is out of sight to us. This last route is not clear from where we are standing and so we cross the river for a closer inspection. It is not promising, the route looks even worse. The first shoot ends in a long lateral hole that leads the current into a cheese grater array of rocks and then barely yards after that the main force of the river drops over a two tier fall with seething recirculating hydraulics at each stage. We spend half an hour debating various options, all to avoid portaging the heavy kayaks a hundred yards around the falls. Eventually Guy opts for a route on the right straight through the most difficult section in the theory that most of the water is going that way and will hopefully push the kayak through.

We hold our breath

Ten minutes later and I can see Paul waving to indicate that Guy has begun his run. A helmet shows first above the fall, then the purple and pink of the buoyancy aid and finally the turquoise of the kayak as Guy emerges into full view at the top of the first drop. He slows for a second taking in his route and then turning the kayak at a slight angle to the flow, delivers a power stroke to pull the kayak over the crest of the drop. Another stroke follows and then another in quick succession, he has barely a second to accelerate

faster than the speed of the water in order to maintain control. Guy has deliberately angled the kayak to the left in order to punch out of the dangerous lateral reversal at the bottom of the fall. If he fails to achieve sufficient speed at this stage the river is likely to take control and push him into the jagged rocks over which the main current flows. There is a burst of spray as he hits the hole. The force arrests his momentum and for a second

he disappears from view. We hold our breath, watching, waiting and hoping until we see the bow of his kayak rise out of the water and shoot forwards into an intermediate eddy. We can see him shake his head to clear the water from his eyes and ears before he turns into the final run. From above it is difficult to make out the route and so he relies on Paul to guide him into the top of the final drop. Again it is speed that is the order of the day, this time to achieve sufficient air time to ski jump the first tier of the final



drop and avoid a powerful towback. Guy plunges over the drop hidden from view by the churning water except for the fluorescent tip of his paddles. Pulling hard, stroke after stroke, he frees himself from the tow back and descends into the final chute engulfed in water from all sides until he is spat out into the calm below.

Mid afternoon on our second day brings us to the top of Tissisat Falls and after a brief negotiation for a suitable fee we arrange for our kayaks to be carried to the foot of the falls where we intend to spend the night.

Early morning is the best time to view the falls with the spray clouds that rise from the plunge pools creating multiple rainbows. Tourists that wish to visit the falls have to leave Bahar Dar

early in order to drive the thirty or forty kilometres to the falls and then walk for another thirty minutes to gain a vantage point to see the rainbows. We, on the other hand, have only to turn our heads whilst still in our sleeping bags to view the water plummeting for thirty meters over the first drop. It is one of the most impressive camp sites that I have experienced.

The Tissisat Falls are over fifty meters in height overall and drop in several sections, depending upon the river levels, into a canyon that runs perpendicular to the flow of the river. This gives a superb head on view to the visitor on the walk in and creates a tight narrow exit canyon for the kayaker to negotiate. The only problem will be to ensure that at no point do we turn sideways as the gorge is narrower than the length of the kayaks.

One by one we descend the top section and pass below the arches of the first Portuguese bridge to the shouts and cat whistles of the assemble crowd. Fifty yards further on we round a corner of this deep twisty canyon and are suddenly on our own again. The only sound now is the rush of water against rock and of our paddles breaking the surface.

High Chance of not Surviving

The following day we arrive at another severe

Thanks

Alan Fox paddled with Guy Baker, Paul Mackenzie, Steve Thomas and Johnnie Walker. The team also descended 220 km of the upper Omo River. The team were supported by Ethiopian Airlines, Pyranha Canoes, Palm Canoe Products, HF Sportartikel, Pelican Products and North Cape. Vehicle Hire through Experience Ethiopia Travel. The expedition was approved by the BCU.

hazard. This time the river drops violently into a narrow undercut gorge. We spend an hour scouting a section that is five hundred yards long before we realise that we are about to enter a more significant section of gorge. The entry rapid is grade six, which means that there is a high chance of not surviving it and it is impossible to provide adequate safety cover. We decide to portage the first two hundred metres secure in the knowledge that sometime in the future and with the right water conditions, someone will attempt it. Having made our decision we then enter into brief negotiations with the crowd of onlookers for potential porters. Ten minutes later we have agreed a price and the kayaks are portaged along the top of the gorge and then passed down a steep cliff face to a put in point below the entry rapid. The canyon walls are smooth to the touch

and the eroded basalt columns have left geodesic sculptures that any modern artist would be proud of. Trees cling precariously to the sides of the cliffs their roots stretching out seeking every possible hold.

The rapids continue in their difficulty. In places where the river narrows the water surges and boils pulling the kayaks down and spinning them around. It requires continual alertness and presence of mind to negotiate them safely. At one point we are forced to inspect for the route ahead appears blocked with large boulders. One by one we clamber up onto the rocks on the bank to view the rapid. It is long and messy with two main drops. The first is strewn with boulders except for a whale-back shute that projects far enough beyond them. The outflow from this shute then runs into a boulder choke where a whirlpool of a boil gyrates and the exits appear limited. A chicken run on the left, that squeezes between boulders, appears to be a better alternative to this last drop. The inspection becomes too time consuming as we try to gauge the nature of the rapid and we soon realise that we are running out of daylight as the shadows slowly crawl in to occupy the gorge. With them comes the cold. It is enough to force a quick decision. Take the first drop over the whale-back then cut left to the chicken shoot.

I lead off with Steve behind. As with all of these rapids the view from the river level is totally different from the bank and your markers all appear to have changed shape and position. I eventually recognise the large boulder on the left that marks the top of the whale back, there is no point hanging around. I turn to check that Steve is behind and then, taking a deep breath I accelerate towards the fall. Either side of the whale-back the water slides off sharply into messy holes. I stay on my intended line and with one final pull punch through the tow back at the end of the shute. Shaking the water from my eyes I cut out to the left hand eddy and wait for Steve.

Boiling, Churning Water

Steve appears to take a similar route but he finds himself a fraction too far left and slides off the whale-back into the lateral hole. The boat is jostled by the rocks before being swept free as Steve tries desperately to roll. Once, twice he tries and then the spraydeck pops off. As the boat fills with water he is forced to swim as the river sweeps him relentlessly into the final boulder choke and into the whirlpool. I watch in horror as

I see him disappear into the boiling, churning water. Quickly I turn and head down through the maze of boulders on the left to get below him whilst Guy and Paul head off to retrieve their boats. As I pass the whirlpool I can see Steve's kayak rotating vertically, but there is no sign of Steve. There is one more narrow gap to negotiate before I am finally below the drop and able to cross the river. As I look upstream I see Steve re-surfacing and swimming for the bank. He climbs out breathless and choking. Seconds later his boat follows reappearing almost fifty meters beyond the whirlpool. I pick it up and nose it into the bank so that Steve can grab it.

Thirty minutes later after several swift rapids we are swept into sight of a stone structure that attempts to span the river. It is the bridge. Slowly we drift below the fallen arches and look upwards. There are no mules or guide waiting to meet us as we had planned. Instead there are a dozen men armed with kalashnikovs scrambling down the rocks towards us. It is an intimidating sight and one that fills us with concern. I edge my kayak into the bank as the men beckon to us, a rough hand grabs the bow loop and pulls my kayak up onto the rocks. "Tenyest Telling" I say in greeting wondering what reaction I will get. There is a pause and then his face breaks into a smile and he extends his hand in friendship. I shake it and smile back. This is going to be a long and interesting night.



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- 6 **Information.** Whether you are a newcomer to canoeing or an expert, the BCU Information stand will be staffed as ever by our helpful personnel. What you need to know in canoeing, we can tell you. Membership will also be available for newcomers, and old friends who wish to renew their membership.
- 7 **BCU Coaching.** This is an exciting year for BCU Coaching. The new revised awards will be launched at the BCU Coaching Stand, and the Coaching Service will be sponsored for the next three years by YAK, one of the largest manufacturers of canoe equipment and clothing. 1996 will see improved coaching resources, a new awards directory, and the implementation of National Vocational Qualifications for canoeing. For help and advice, visit the Coaching Service stand.
- 8 **The Pool.** Although NEC does not have a permanent pool, there will be a small demonstration pool situated near the Coaching stand and video wall. There will be an opportunity for youngsters to take part in 'Come and Try it' sessions on the mini pool. However, they will need to bring costumes and towels with them (Changing accommodation will be available). The pool will be available at other times to try out demonstration craft supplied by manufacturers.
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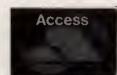
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Y&Y/25JUNEC

The Rivers Wye and Lugg Update

Thanks
 Thank you to those Members and Clubs who have provided feedback to my article in the December issue of *Canoe Focus* and the S. W. Regional Newsletter.

Matters are developing fast on these rivers and with *Canoe Focus* being bi-monthly what appears tends to be soon out of date. However, in between times please telephone or write to me to find out the latest and let me have your views. The High Court Action between the NRA and those seeking to restore the navigation with locks and weirs under the 1809 Act of Parliament. Round one has gone in favour of the NRA but there could well be an appeal.

The NRA As Navigation Authority

Since the item in December's *Canoe Focus* - which was written in mid October - the NRA have carried out an informal consultation for opinions on their becoming the Navigation Authority for the Rivers Wye and Lugg and their tributaries.

The BCU Response

BCU HQ has responded as have I as LAO for the River Wye in England. Also the WCA These have been within the background of BCU access policy.

The Main Issues Affecting Canoeists

The need for a formal Navigation Authority Order.

- (a). This was questioned as it would restrict the use of the public right of navigation and waters covered by the negotiated access agreements.
- (b). The present arrangements with the Wye Users Forum (representing a wide range of users and interests and the NRA) and the Wye Management Group (The NRA and Local Authorities concerned with representatives from the Wye Forum) exist to help and should first be proved to be ineffective.

The free right of public navigation.

- (a). The BCU believe this extends to the whole river system although it is disputed on the Wye above Hay.
- (b). The proposed Order would extinguish totally these rights and replace them with conditional statutory rights.
- (c). This clearly seriously erodes existing rights for Canoeists and is not acceptable.
- (d). The BCU will continue to strive to protect Canoeists rights to paddle the waters now used and also to arrange for increased access, particularly on the Upper Wye, to meet the increasing demand.

If there is to be a navigation Order how much of the river system should be included?

- (a). The BCU's view is the whole of the rivers Wye and Lugg and their

tributaries.

- (b). The draft Order does not include all.
- (c). The WCA is, of course, particularly concerned about the Upper Wye.

The building of locks and weirs.

- (a). The NRA proposals talk of safeguarding the present natural character of the rivers, however, the draft Order would give them powers to build locks and weirs.
- (b). The BCU is very opposed to this and to any 'commercialisation' of the rivers.

Representation on committees in the draft Order.

Two committees are proposed.

- (a). Wye and Lugg Advisory Committee which would be consulted on substantial matters concerning navigation or use - fisheries - riparian ownership and conservation. Membership is limited to 20 persons, 11 of whom are to be from Local Authorities and Statutory bodies - only TWO (Sports Council and Sports Council for Wales) are likely to hold any brief for Canoeists.
- (b). The NRA talk of balance but it is difficult to see this being achieved in this way.
- (c). The BCU should be assured a seat and Canoeing interests should also be represented to achieve an equitable voice for our major river use.
- (d). The Upper Wye Permitting Sub Committee which would deal with the granting of NAVIGATION PERMITS for use on the Upper Wye.
- (e). The Members of the sub-committee, their number and the way it operates would all be dictated by the Advisory Committee. Four Statutory bodies are assured a seat.
- (f). The draft Order sets out very bureaucratic provisions concerning permits.
- (g). If such a sub-committee is eventually formed clearly a balance to achieve fairness for Canoeing needs to be addressed.
- (h). The WCA should have an assured seat and Canoeing should be given an equitable voice as the major potential permit holding use.
- (i). The whole matter of Navigation Permits gives the BCU grave concern. Its likely effect is to limit Canoeing whereas the BCU strives to protect existing and arrange increased rights for Canoeists as has been said.

Boat Registration

- (a). This is clearly on the Agenda. Generations of free use of the public navigation gives rise to a

considerable strength of feeling particularly amongst Canoeists local to the Wye against a scheme being introduced.

- (b). The BCU's position questions the need for a scheme particularly for manually propelled craft. If such a scheme were introduced the BCU would work for the 'BCU Licence' arrangement to be incorporated.

Bylaws

- (a). Those proposed in the draft Order are bureaucratic and need much redrafting to make them relevant, i.e. what applies to a motored craft does not necessarily apply to a Canoe.

NRA powers under the draft Order

- (a). As drafted these are very wide without sufficient qualifications and duties to respond positively to users wishes and needs.

Management of the catchment

- (a). The BCU supports management of appropriate waters. The amount of water available for legitimate water users in the U. K. is limited.
- (b). The BCU works to protect what use is available to Canoeists and seeks to increase access by access agreements and other lawful means. In the long term also to influence changes in the law to favour wider access.
- (c). With increasing pressures on our limited water resources the BCU seeks fair-sharing with other water users, regulated when essential by a scientifically proven threat to sustainable use. A single Navigation Authority. is likely to be more beneficial than several bodies.

Formal Order.

- (a). If the NRA decides to promote a formal Navigation Authority Order a further opportunity will be available to make representations and legal objections.

A meeting is being arranged with the NRA's Solicitor to address these and other matters to try to persuade them to agree changes. I am working closely with the British Access Committee and BCU HQ. With the WCA the access teams are working hard for Canoeists on the Wye and Lugg.

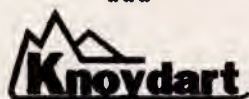
BUT It is also up to Members, Clubs and non-Members to help fight to protect our present rights and the right to be able to paddle more waters.

To those Who Have Contacted Me and Others Who Hopefully Will

I am building up a list of 'Contacts' who

continued on page 34

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continued from page 32

show interest in putting forward views and helping by writing. I will keep them posted between issues of FOCUS on any developments and how they can help further.

Every canoeist is important when it comes to influencing statutory bodies to modify or change their proposals.

I need to know on an ongoing basis Members', non-Members' and Clubs' views. **Please contact me**, preferably in

writing, as hard evidence is best, or telephone. **John Westlake, 33, Golden Vale, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2LU. Tel: 01452 531218. LAO for the River Wye in England.**

Usk

Over the past few years a number of new riparian and fisheries owners have come onto the scene, who were not involved in the original negotiations for the Usk Access Agreement. Some of these can see no reason to allow canoeing at all, while others are prepared to accept canoeing in principle but are concerned about the numbers involved, and the congestion to local roads. At the beginning of the season, some owners were refusing to agree to any canoeing and local community councillors were also putting pressure on owners not to allow canoeing. In order to get the agreement signed it was necessary to make concessions, such as the restriction on canoeing dates from Talybont, and agreeing not to use 'unofficial' access/egress points which have become popular on the Sennybridge-Brecon run. Negotiations are under way on a continual basis, to strike a balance that is acceptable to all parties, but in the meantime, if we are to keep the agreement on the full length of the River from Sennybridge, it is essential to adhere strictly to its terms. There are plenty of riparian owners who are in

sympathy with canoeing, but they cannot help us unless we can be seen to act responsibly.

Riparian owners are monitoring the situation closely and checks on canoeists for compliance with the agreement are becoming increasingly frequent. The police have been involved on a number of occasions where canoeists are on the water without permission. A number of riparian owners have complained that they have stopped groups of canoeists on the Usk who have no written permission but have stated that they thought it was alright to paddle as they are BCU members. This is causing problems with the agreement, as members are perceived to be openly flouting it. Please take note that ALL paddling on the Usk is, and always has been, by written permission only. Please ensure that you have written permission before you paddle, that you take it with you on the water, and that your membership number is displayed clearly on your canoe. If you have any problems, let Pam Bell know as soon as possible.

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News from Canolfan Tryweryn - Water Releases from Llyn Celyn

At the time of writing the situation for water releases for the early part of the year is very poor with indications already having been given that the outlook for releases in February is poor.

Three to four weeks of rain is desperately required to bring the reservoir to the level expected at this time of year.

The next guaranteed release is scheduled for the 9/10 March but early indications are that this will be subject to review in the next month when the weather situation over the next few weeks is known.

The situation for the whole of 1996 including the guaranteed release dates is therefore serious.

The water information line 01678 520826 will be updated on a regular basis as information becomes known and members and users are therefore requested to telephone this number before travelling to the centre including the guaranteed release dates.

An Exercise in Intertextuality, or What you will

"Devise, wit! write, pen! for I am for whole volumes in folio!", and "whilst methinks the lady doth protest too much", yet Sally ought not to be crossed!

So "it was a hot summer night" when we cried "'Havoc' and let slip the dogs of war", or at least the intrepid members of Y-paddle of London's Central YMCA. The party was sundry and various: our leaders Sally and Graham, with Oscar our youngest member; Andy, shepherd of paddlers; Gary, purveyor of good things; Martin "Out of Africa"; Olaf the vigilant judge; Philippa, true to her name; Roger, purveyor of exceedingly good breakfasts; Ross, erstwhile defender of "this scepter'd isle"; and your reporter. Alan and Alison added to our numbers. The journey from London over, we found "the tented field" already raised by the advance party "where

lucid Avon stray'd". A moment's sorting was allowed, then we found ourselves "just like a coffin clapt in a canoe" [for once not the Bard!]. The evening paddle was to familiarise ourselves with the 20 gates that made up the course. "The current that with gentle murmur glides"

hid dangers for the unwary novice [me], and I was marshalled "the way that I was going". The notion of the ferry-glide was introduced and practised, where with bow to the current, one "let the world slide" and moved magically across. The consensus-general was that it was "a naughty night to swim in". Returned to shore we frequented a local hostelry, followed by the consumption of some local delicacies on a forced march to regain the selfsame house of publick resort before dosing time. Then back to our stately pleasure domes, "to sleep, perchance to dream".

Up betimes, "I scent[ed] the morning's air" and paddling we did go. Practice, practice and more practice was the order of the day. Breakfast was followed by paperwork, as entries both team and individual were made. Then came official practice, and then the team runs. All were braver than I, running gates 12 and 13 with the concomitant risk of drinking "the green mantle of the standing pool", when the current from the weir proved "false as water". But "honour is the subject of my story", and those who ventured, gained. "But I would fain die a dry death", and took "tactical 50's" on 12 and 13.

After competition on Saturday saw more practice, and I was guided through 13, whilst the others got better and better at 12. When school was out, a ferry ride brought us to an ale house, where we sat "down to that

nourishment which is called supper". Good wine proved to be a good familiar, though for some "one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack" proved too little, when the sack was a diamond. And so to bed.

Six am is very early, and my final call was at 6:17 [the head-under-the-pillows routine doesn't work very well when there are no pillows; I must remember for next time!]. "The morn, in russet mantle clad" was seen and practice [again] was undertaken. The competition runs followed, by division, class of hull and sex. "Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear" it is said, but it is hard to miss not going through the first gate! Still. As we prepared for our second run in Div 5, K1, Mens, the "gentle rain from heaven" began to fall, though in more truth someone had said "Let the sky rain potatoes!" However, the cry was "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more" and we were off. My second was as pitiful as my first, but as the footballing fraternity would say, I got a result. "Comparisons are odorous" [sic], and I shall not engage in any here; the races were run, and the prizes won - notably by Sally and Graham in their newly-purchased [Sunday morning] C2, though their rapid promotion from Div 5 to Div 4 almost cost them their second run.

However, for me, "play's the thing"; we returned, not "wretched souls bruised with adversity", but with happy memories of a weekend's paddling. Much credit and greater thanks are due to all the experienced paddlers who shared their knowledge and skill of canoeing with beginners to such good effect, for as the bard of Avon himself has written: "no profit grows where is no pleasure taker".

Dion C. Smythe
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For more information please contact **Trax Order Department, Remploy Ltd, Unit 1, Plymouth Avenue, Amber Industrial Estate, Pinxton, Nottinghamshire NG16 6NS**
Tel: 01773 521 478

Trax Expedition Shirt

Works on the same principle as the salopettes and constructed in the same way. A very versatile piece of clothing that can be worn for numerous activities.

I don't really know why its called a shirt it is more of a pull over jacket. Two way zips at each side allow good

temperature control with a large fleece lined through pocket at the front this keeps the hands like toast. Inside the pocket is a draw strap to pull the jacket close to the skin for a snug fit.

Velcro ties at each side, on the cuffs and a crutch strap stops things blowing around and keeps your body warm into the bargain. The collar is nice and high with a fleece lining which gives a lovely snug fit feeling when zipped right up. A hood attached by Velcro is available separately for those braving the severest of conditions.
I tried the top as bank wear

whilst competing where it can be thrown over your race kit and as the manufacturers claim keeps you warm even when wet. It has also been to Derbyshire twice mountain biking with me during December and proved superb in the very cold weather. I bottled and put a helly on underneath but a friend with the same garment wore it next to the skin and like me was sweating and warm at the lunch time pub stop without a hint of cold in the sub zero temperatures.

Open boaters may find this a real blessing with its ability to dry quickly whilst the wearer is exercising. The garment is said to be weather resistant to the rate of 12mm per hour. I don't know quite how to work the hourly rainfall out whilst canoeing, biking, walking etc but as long as you keep going you'll dry off in the end, so they say! Warmth rating 10 out of 10, versatility 12 out of 10 Functional 10 out of 10.



Trax Salopettes

Outdoor enthusiasts will greatly appreciate the qualities of this garment. Manufactured from two grades of Pertex (thicker on knees, ankles and bum) with a fleece lining these are seriously warm. They are fully adjustable on the shoulders and around the waist to give optimum comfort, and seal in the heat. The ankles also have ties to seal up the legs preventing any unwanted impersonal drafts.

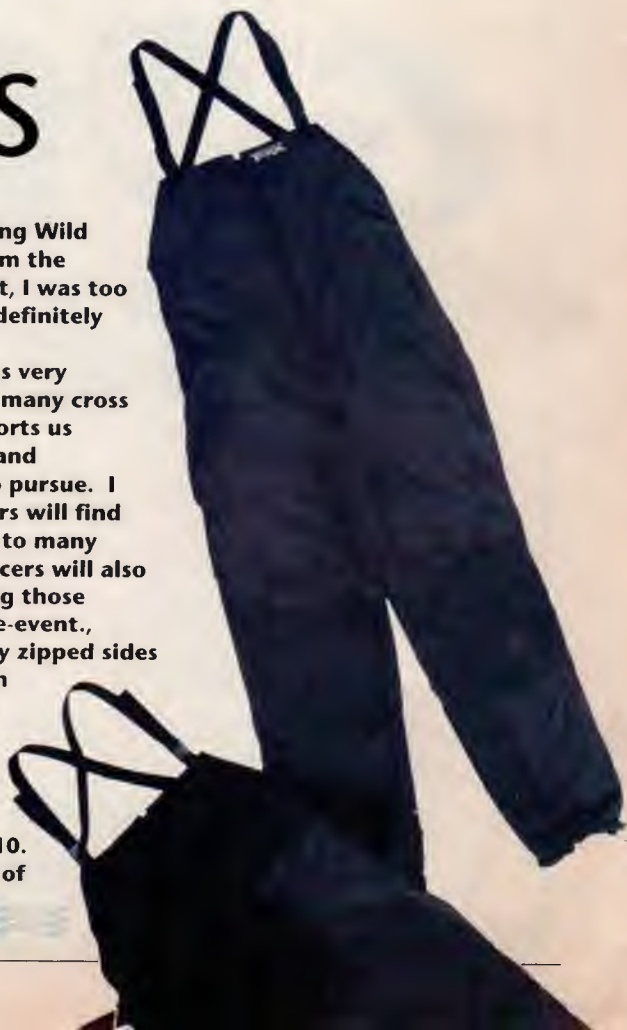
The manufacturers claim that the garment should be worn next to the skin and will perform even when wet. They say the design qualities of the garment will wick water and moisture away from the skin and evaporate out through the Pertex outer.

I wore these salopettes as suggested whilst in Scotland in the very cold weather of

December coaching Wild Water Racing from the bank. Dare I say it, I was too hot! Well, I was definitely sweating.

The garment is very versatile and has many cross overs to other sports us canoeing chaps (and chapesses) like to pursue. I think open boaters will find these the answer to many prayer. Serious racers will also benefit by keeping those muscles warm pre-event., having completely zipped sides these can be worn over your kit and taken off with ease before the pain begins.

Warmth Rating 12 out of 10. Versatility 10 out of 10 and Function 10 out of 10.



Reviews by
Neil Blackman
GB WWR Team



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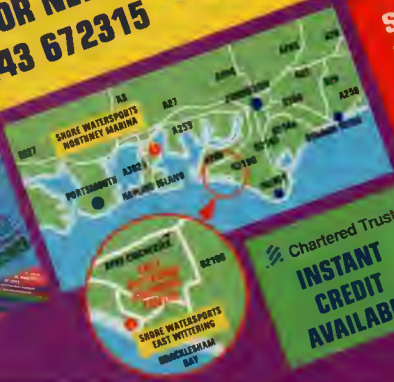
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9C Nookie Extreme Buoyancy Aid
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 9G Cowstail £27.99



9H Palm 15m Belay Line £34.00
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9L Palm Instructor 2.5m Tow Line £15.00
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If you would like any information about the items included on the right, or indeed, about anything related to Canoe slalom, please 'phone our Development Officer, Sue Wharton, Tel. 01636 705363 or write to: BCU Slalom, The Old Bothie, Broadgate Lane, Kelham, Newark. NG23 5RZ

Olympic Year

1 996 Olympic Year - in just five months time, the British Canoe Slalom Team will take on the rest of the world at the Olympic Games. Once again, the world will be looking at our team, but this time, on the Ocoee river, Tennessee and 45,000 spectators are expected with around 3.5 billion people watching on TV.

Although a natural river, the Ocoee is managed as part of a hydro-electric system. Situated in a forested wilderness area in the Cherokee National Forest, some one hundred and thirty miles north of Atlanta, the river has been subjected to massive modification to accommodate the facility required to make the Course worthy of world-class slalom competition. Studies began in September 1992 and work commenced in June 1994. The whole project is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 1996, after which the Tennessee Ocoee Development Agency under the direction of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games will develop the facilities needed to accommodate 150 athletes and an estimated 14,000 spectators each day.

It's a fact ...

that about 288,000 cubic feet of water flows through the Olympic Slalom Course during an average three minute run. That's enough water to flood the surface of a football field to a depth of six feet!

7,200 cubic yards of concrete have been used in construction at the Ocoee whitewater centre - that's enough concrete to pave a driveway 10 feet wide and 11.5 miles long!

Tickets -

enquiries to Sportsworld Travel Tel 01 235 554 844. We understand that they will be in short supply and that accommodation will be even more difficult to find.

So far, Britain has qualified for a maximum of two places in both men's and women's kayak and just one in canadian singles. Final opportunity to qualify one extra C1 spot plus one C2 place is in mid-April 1996 on the Ocoee River itself. GBR Team selection will be finalised there, although both men's and women's kayakers will know their fate by then as their selection is

completed at Grandtully on 30/31 March.

Alan Edge, our Olympic Team's Coach is optimistic about our qualification hopes and feels that there is even a chance that three men's and women's kayak might be on offer to GBR! With extra funding from the Sports Council's special "Atlanta" fund, additional coaching is on the cards for our hopefuls, many of whom are off to warm "climes" in January to prepare for that elusive slot on the team. Chile and New Zealand seem to be the popular venues - still, one can dream!

Slalom News

Whilst the paddlers are enjoying life on the river, spare a thought for all those who officiate at slaloms and go virtually unnoticed. Without these officials there would be no events.

There's no glory or glamour, no sympathy when it rains and no special consideration, which is probably why so few have ambitions to become officials! The sport needs a constant influx of officials who, contrary to talk on the river bank, do not need previous experience - just the will to help - if you would like to help, but are not sure how, do please give us a ring and we'll put you on the right path!

The UK is the envy of the rest of the world with its structured judging examinations beginning with the "Gate Judge" exam - those of you aspiring to attain this qualification are invited to give us a call for more details!

What's New in Slalom?

Dedicated followers of Focus will be awaiting the outcome of all the suggestions included in correspondence to the Editor over the past months. A few of you will have attended the Slalom Committee's AGM, where there was unanimous agreement to the Yat Racers proposal that a working party be set up to examine the discipline and bring forward conclusions to a Special General meeting in around eight months time. Your sport is Club based - the registered Clubs form the Slalom Committee who decide policy and fix the rules, the entry fees - everything!

Slalom Yearbook

The 1996 edition is available now. If you are ranked in Divs 4 - Premier, you will already have received your free copy - that is providing you gave your Ranking Compiler your correct address - these volunteers spend Christmas time addressing your envelopes - please don't blame them if it goes to your previous address and remember that there is no direct link with the membership records at BCU. If you would like to buy a copy, please send a cheque payable to BCU Slalom Committee, for £3 to address as below.

More groovy news

Did you know that this year, you can paddle any boat in Div 5 right through and including Div 1! Just the existing weight and safety regulations still apply - watch your end radii, keep safe and enjoy it!

Twilight slalom

Looks good and is to take place on the evening of 16 March - light show, open canadian slalom demo and slalom in plastic with a new boat to boot! Racing and demos between 1800 and 2200 - call us for details

National Pool Slalom

We just had to continue with our annual event and this year, it's to be at the International Pool at Coventry on Sunday 18 February. We're continuing with an Inter-Regional format and expect almost 250 to compete. With support from Desperate Measures and Phoenix of Nottingham, Organisers Sue and Ken Trollope are confident of success!

And finally, a plea to you all with the season just weeks away - please enter early!

Question of Sport

TV STAR - Lynn Simpson achieves another ambition and performs amongst the best on BBC's "Question of Sport" - we're sorry Bill's team lost, but didn't she do well!



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For more details on the RAS DEX range send for our free colour brochure RAS DEX, Unit 7, 6-10 Convent St, Nottingham, NG1 3LL. Tel/Fax 0115 9243522

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The usual assortment of kit was piling up chaotically on the slipway in Mumbles: sleeping bags, cooking gear, dry clothes, food and maps jostled for space on the tarmac.

A wind surfer making his way up from the bay gingerly picked his way through our clutter, sailboard clamped under his arm. The brilliance of the sun was starting to fade and we had to pack our weekend kit into the canoes and paddle off pretty rapidly if we were to make it to Pwlldu Bay before nightfall. We had driven to Swansea after work on Friday evening eager to steal a march on the weekend by sneaking in a quick paddle and an extra night's camping. Fortunately the Mumbles was an easy place to launch the kayaks, there being ample parking near the pier and a decent slipway on hand, so our departure went pretty smoothly.

Eventually, everything was stowed, the hatches sealed and the kayaks launched. We paddled under the struts of the pier and past the rocks which marks Mumbles Point. Clouds of gulls whirled overhead, dipping and diving into the sea. Rollers rhythmically lifted the kayaks before travelling on and spending themselves in a foam of white water on the rocks. Shafts of light played on the water, diamante and dazzling.

Masterpiece of Innovation!

The sun had already disappeared behind the bank of trees which flank Pwlldu Bay by the time we caught a small wave onto the beach. Having hauled the boats above the high water mark, we set off on a hunt for driftwood. The storm driven pebble banks yielded little firewood and we had to content ourselves with a modest blaze, sufficient to char our kebabs but little more. Our

barbecue grill was a masterpiece of innovation! A section of redundant canary cage, it slotted neatly



against the bulkhead yet was big enough to hold enough meat or fish for two or three people. There could be no doubt about it, being able to cook food in this way revolutionised our camping meals. Catching fresh fish with the hand line and toasting them over hot coals made a very welcome alternative to tinned steak. The settled spell of weather meant that packing the tent was a purely academic exercise, it stayed firmly inside

the hold while we slept under the stars cocooned inside our bivvy bags.

Saturday morning dawned clear and sunny, small waves lapped on the shore and the lightest of breezes stirred in the trees. This day's paddle incorporated several headlands; Oxwich, Port Eynon and Worm's Head, all of which, like the Mumbles Point, generate meaty overfalls. However, given the moderate conditions and

Article and photos by Rob Stratton

Gower

neap tides, the possibility of making an acquaintance with seaman Davey (Dai?) Jones seemed remote. We paddled as close as we could to the cliffs, keeping a wary eye on the waves rolling in before cutting across Oxwich Bay to the headland. The overfalls enthusiastically marked by Rob onto our Ordnance Survey map where nowhere in evidence, and only a few mild corrugations washed politely over the deck as we rounded the headland.

Relaxation in the Sun

We decided to pull into Port Eynon for lunch. Avoiding the main beach we found ourselves a deserted sandy niche on the rocky promontory jutting into the bay. The boulders yielded clusters of mussels, which made a welcome hors d'oeuvre to our planned meal of bread and cheese. Cooked up on the stove, they had a deliciously sweet flavour. We could enjoy a little relaxation in the sun before catching the tide around Worm's Head.

The cliff scenery from Port Eynon to Worm's Head is the most spectacular on the Gower. From the low position occupied by a sea kayak these towering pinnacles clawed the sky, at their base jumbles of boulders broke the path of incoming waves and disappeared in a wash of green water. This stretch of magnificent scenery culminated with Worm's Head, a dramatic tail of rock thrusting far into the sea like a prehensile sea monster. Its tapered tail meets the land in a slender strip which provides access for walkers at low water, while the head rears up ferociously from the brine. No worm this, its demeanour is

far too imperious to snivel its way apologetically along the ground.

On the westward approach the headland seemed quite unpretentious, only when we slipped around the point did its full glory hit home. Gulls screamed as we passed beneath dizzyingly tall cliffs, circling above our heads before alighting on their perches once more to clamour their protest at our presence. Our destination for that night, Burry Holms, seemed far away, a mere dot at the furthest end of Rhosili Bay. In fact, it wasn't much more than an hour's paddle, but the afternoon heat haze distorted the perspective.

Mecca for Surfers

Rhosili is a particularly beautiful beach, and is something of a Mecca for surfers. There was no chance of riding the tube today, however, as the surf racing up the beach was relatively small. Crossing the bay, Rob dropped a hand-line in the hope of catching some fish for our dinner. Allowing the line to trawl behind while he paddled, it proved a fairly effortless method of snaring supper. As luck would have it he pulled in two slippery, gleaming mackerel almost immediately.

The receding tide had exposed acres of damp sand and we had a long haul to get the boats up to our bivvy site. Burry Holms was deserted on this glorious evening and we explored the headland before setting down to fry the fish. In the shimmering evening light Worm's Head looked positively mystic.

The next day we decided to paddle to

Ferryside on the Tywi river, although anyone who was short on time could paddle across the Loughor estuary to Burry Port or alternatively paddle up to River Loughor or Island House. The section from Burry Holms to the Towy Estuary is very shallow and is noted for groundswell. The sandy bottom was clearly visible not more than four feet beneath the boats. At one point we spotted squadrons of colossal jellyfish drifting silently under us like amphibious parachutes.

The cliff scenery of the previous day was replaced with undulating sand dunes and the uniform ranks of pine which make up Pembrey Forest. The long uninterrupted beaches are popular with land yachters. We cruised onto the sand to have a bite to eat. There was no one else in view. The hot sun burned in the sky, the freshness of morning having long since given way to the languid heat of the afternoon.

The final leg took us up the Tywi Estuary. The banks narrowed, sandwiching the river between rolling grassy hills. On the one side was Llanstephen, picturesque with its hilltop castle, and, practically opposite, lay the small town of Ferryside. We landed at the Yacht Club, where we were very kindly offered a shower. Clean and salt-free we turned our thoughts to booking a taxi to take us back to the car.



Fact File

N.B The telephone number for Swansea

Coastguard is: 01792 366534

Tidal anomalies: Mumbles: Flood runs north out of Swansea Bay at H.W Milford Haven +0160 for 3 hours only (1 knot springs).

Flood runs anti-clockwise in Swansea Bay for nine and a half hours from H.W Milford Haven - 0315.

Spring tides along Gower approx 3 knots.

Tides, surf and groundswell can be complex over Hooper Sands at the mouth of the River Loughor!



Please forward all adverts to appear in the Members Classified direct to: BCU Headquarters in Nottingham. MEMBERS ADS FREE

FOR SALE
Obsession II WWR by Nick Pink, Kevlar/Carbon, competition weight, knocked about a bit, but light, strong and dry £275. Contact Nig Morley on 01430 422971 East Yorks.

Surf Ski Palm Reflex 95. Twin skeg 7ft long, fully adjustable foot loops and seat belt £110 Tel: Rob 0121 353 3765 West Mids
Delphin C2 WWR, kevlar hull, left front cockpit £50 tel: Huntingdon 01480 860894
Aleut Sea 2 double sea kayak. Three oval hatches, front controlled rudder, pumps. Ideal expedition boat in good condition. £875 demonstration paddle available in North Wales Tel: 01248 680949 eves and weekends.

Kobra K1 fully carbon, vac bag construction 10kg with seat, a great sprint boat in excellent condition £800 ono for quick sale. Eclipse Cyclone K1 blue and white deck, excellent first boat, good condition £120 for quick sale. 2 sets of paddles for sale, both South African (Senior) flat water blades, one pair used, but in excellent condition has fully carbon adjustable shaft £120. Second set brand new, not put together, with fully carbon shaft, again quick sale required. Tel: 01386 860862 (Fleabury)

Pyranha Master kayak, 4 months old, as new, used on placid water only, stored indoors, full ww spec, air bags, full backrest, full plate footrest, thigh braces, and bow cap. Colour purple £260 ono Tel: 01702 614804 any time (Essex)

Priljon Avenger (heavyweight) black, full ww spec, full plate footrest, air bags, backstrap etc, nearly new condition £350 ono. Also matching black Quaser spraydeck £35 Tel: 01372 452152 eves and weekends

Talon ideal sprint boat, 2 layer carbon, perfect condition, hardly used, £550 ono. Tel: Lea 0181 592 9863 after 10pm

Chancer K1 racing, carbon kevlar, colour yellow & white, good condition £375 ono Tel: 01858 433767

MI300 ww spec, full plate footrest, purple, good condition, also Ainsworth paddle, helmet and spraydeck £130 ono or will separate. Tel: 01623 743840 can deliver to Holme Pierrepont.

Baldarka Explorer Sea Kayak blue deck, white hull, retractable skeg, fore and aft hatches, good condition/little used £295 Tel: 01785 662348 (Stafford)

Mountain Bat, yellow, full plat footrest and backrest, plus extras, excellent condition £260 ono. Schlegal Topline paddles right hand 206, hardly used, as good as new £60 ono. Bushport neoprene spraydeck £20 Tel: Tim 0171 584 9405

Restored Plywood Touring Kayak only needs painting or varnishing over bare plywood. Boat will look beautiful when finished, space needed £80 Tel: John 01299 270 975 Worcs

Fibreglass enigma Squire boat £150 ono VGC Tel: 01980 654043

White Water K1, Caybo, good condition with adjustable footrests, spraydeck and paddles included £110 ono Tel: Ann on Leeds 0113 2789010 (eve) 0113 2482449 (day)

Corsica 5 good condition, 2 years old, red, ww spec, full plate footrest, Tel: 01286 672136 (N Wales) and ask for Simon.

Roof Rack 1- Vauxhall Cavalier, 1989 onwards new model £35. 2- Thule rack for guttered car £35 Mark, Ross on Wye 01989 562868

K2 Regina u/s rudder, carbon/kevlar, red and white, good condition £375. K1 Talon lightweight, good condition £200 Tel: 01278 780430 (Somerset)

2 Joker Wild Water C1 river racers, both kevlar/epoxy, C1 assymetric river race paddle, both deck to suit above £540 Tel: 01502 711376

MI335 Adventurer, yellow plastic, full ww spec, good condition £120 Tel: 01509 853660 Loughborough.

Perception Mirage neutral colour, peg footrests, bow cap, centre buoyancy, bow and stern grabs in good condition £225 Contact Nick 01548 856757 South Devon

Pyranha Stunt Bat, full ww spec, well looked after and in good condition £250. Also Long John wetsuit as new size medium £25. Anas Actua fibreglass sea kayak, complete with deck pump and bulkhead hatches, good condition bargain £170 Tel: Pete 01236 424292 (w) 0131 317 7127 (h) Edinburgh
Pyranha Magic Bat Aquamarine £275, Buoyancy Aid, blue size S 32-34 £15 or part PX for Pirouette S Tel: 01246 865609 Derbyshire

Gambler Priljon blue, three years old, ww spec, good condition £250 ono Tel: Chris 01491 571111 (w) or home 01734 484961 Reading
 Canadian Canoe GRP, immaculate Oulton Broad touring boat (Granta) £300 Tel: 01603 737456 (Norfolk)

Wave Ski Palm Laser 7ft 9" excellent starter ski, fast mover, good condition, green/red & white. Adjustable footstraps and seat belt £210 ono Tel: 01582 457628

Valley Weekender including retractable o/s rudder, very light and very fast. Suitable for canals, estuaries and the sea, especially good for camping trips. Slightly damaged £50. Derwent Ultra, High volume f/glass GP canoe. Has been used on canoe camping, sea and river trips £25 Tel: John or Sally 0114 268 5334 (Sheffield)

Pyranha Magic Bat brand new condition, only used on flat water, selling due to long term injury. Also Ainsworth paddles, B/aid and BDH the lot £300 Tel: Dave on 01427 873 063 (S Yorks)

Creek with subtle artiline, 8 months old, good nick £320 ono Tel: Marc 01494 471 308 (Bucks)

Pyranha Image kevlar slalom kayak, 4m long, metallic red deck, natural hull, neoprene deck VGC £95 Tel: 01276 63734 (Surrey)

Pyranha Stunt Bat aquamarine, good condition, 2 years old, ww spec £230 ono Tel: Jamie on 01224 488224

Pyranha Stunt Bat aquamarine, Schlegal paddle, Palm canyon b/aid, Palm double seal dry bag, neoprene spray deck, Wild Water helmet, Palm 1.5m throwline £400 ono Tel: 01200 22479 (Blackburn area)

Savage Slalom Kayak, bright yellow, with red trim, VGC, bargain and good reason for sale £140. Perception Dancer, blue, good condition, with paddle and helmet £150 Tel: Dave on 0181 767 0577 (S London)

Slalom K1 Lettmann designed Olymp, Epoxy/Carbon construction, brand new, still in wrapper. A deadly serious competition kayak £495 ono. Magic Bat, white & swirly, airbags, good condition two years old £280 ono Tel: 01305 784491

Trailer canoe/kayak galvanised Conqueror trailer will carry 8 open canoes or 16 plus kayaks, two cages, good condition, little used, less than 500 miles. Braked system. Jockey wheel and spare wheel. New price over £2000 bargain at only £1200 Tel: 01297 21928 day 01297 33070 eves (East Devon)

Falchion 385 Blue including spraydeck, this kayaks has hardly been used and always stored in garage hence it is in excellent condition £180 ono. MI380 REC - Blue, adjustable footrests including spraydeck, skeg and deck lines, this kayak is in VGC, always stored in garage and only used on the sea £180 ono Tel: Mike 01202 523575 Bournemouth

Perception Dancer in good condition, ww spec, footrests, airbags, declines, back rest. Two years old £165 Tel: 01827 62074 (Tamworth)

K1 General Purpose Boat 13' glassfibre with footrest, built by Granta. Excellent condition. Stored indoor and hardly used. Includes paddle and spraydeck. Superb value at £75 ono Tel: 01480 462379 Cambs

Dagger Vortex ww spec, purple, good condition, linear. Excellent ww boat for the medium/larger paddler £275 Tel: 0181 890 0625 Rob

Dancer, white VGC with paddle, red WW helmet, blue spraydeck, and medium size wetsuit. Palm drycag virtually new and J bars for roofrack, b/aid £200 for boat or £300 for all, will split, offers accepted. 0117 9507761 ring weekends (Bristol)

Pyranha Acrobat 300 £275 contact Jim on 01555 666114 Scotland

Plastic Reflex, Revenge and RX300 £300 ono each all excellent condition Tel: Andrew Laird 0191 226 0544

Priljon Gattino good condition, red, full plate footrest, air bags £300 ono Tel: Matthew on 0113 283 2494 or 01274 865403 eves

Pirouette Proline in quartz, new style, hardly used, VGC £350 ono Tel: 01323 639354 Eastbourne

MI415 stable tourer, red, only one season's light use, always stored under cover, with removable skeg £220 ono Tel: Paul Smith 01773 856090 (Nr Matlock)

Perception Pirouette Proline just over 1 year old. Good on all types of water. Good playboat for the heavier person. Smart looking boat with high specification. Excellent

condition, used mainly on the flat. Looking for something smaller, cost £450 new offers around £350 For more details tel Matt 01778 346702 (Peterboro')

Perception Reflex K1 Slalom kayak, diolen construction, good condition, £150 ono or swap for Dancer or other plastic kayak Tel: 01342 714815 W Sussex

Marsport Stealth K2 inc Marsport Racing blades and Palm spray decks. All in excellent condition. Used only twice £550 ono Tel: 01904 411550 (York)

Nomad Extreme K1, kevlar with reinforced kevlar seams, new seat and completely watertight £110 Contact Mike 01904 652768 (York)

3 Man Ace Pioneer canadian canoes x2 at £200 each, excellent condition x1 at £80 a little bruised. Valetta as new only used on canal, one blue, one yellow £200 each. Wave Ski as new Raider Pro up to 13 stone, belt, Tri fins, the whole trimmings, used once £180 Australian racing ski over stern rudder, as new £300 Tel: Sam 01288 321765

WANTED
Durable Canadian Canoe in reasonable condition, 15' to 18', Old Town, Grumman or similar 01497 847422

Slalom Kayak to suit a weight of around 11 stone. In reasonable condition £100 to £200 Tel: Myles 01482 897760 Hull

Pyranha Acrobat 270/300 or similar. Also any other equipment such as spraydecks, buoyancy jackets or cags suitable for beginners. What have you got? Please phone Dennis on 01737 353240 Surrey.

Six sets of paddles and/or spraydecks for Sea Scout group kayaks. Tel: Iain on 01436 676561 Dumbartonshire

Red or Black Revenge plastic, polo spec Tel: 01980 654043

Perception Slasher plastic C1 or anything similar - will collect Tel: 01524 843804

Pyranha Stunt Bat fair condition, fair price, or swap for ww spec roto bat. Tel: 01752 814937 (Plymouth)

15ft Aluminium Grumman any condition considered, as long as it floats! Write to: Simon O'Connor, 24 Beat Bays, Kendal, Cumbria, Lake District LA9 4JT

Topolino Spud or similar wanted, Tel: Rob on 01905 451590 (Worcs)

British Columbia Wilderness Whitewater, padders wanted. we are looking for experienced kayakers to make up a team for next summer, heading for the dramatic wilderness of Canada's Pacific Coast Mountains. Rafts may also be available for non kayaking partners or friends. The 2 weeks will

cost in the region of £650-£750 pp including kayaks, local guide, land transport, food, campsite fees and beers, excluding flights and personal insurance. Contact Mark Herriott on 01989 562868 for more detail.

General Purpose Fleet required by developing canoe club. We will consider any number of plastic craft and equipment in good condition. Tel Richard at Boston Canoe Club 01205 760902

Fusion Slalom K1 wanted in good condition Tel: 01422 834965

Slalom K1 epoxy kevlar carbon design sought after include Razor, Mystique, Fury or any of the Reflexes, must be in good condition Tel: Robert 01953 602887 (Norwich)

K2 wanted for descent racing kevlar preferred, anything considered Tel: 01256 472950

STOLEN - LOST & FOUND
Stolen from car. Exclusive patchwork fleece jacket, purple, grey, black and green with eyes of Katmandhu embroidered on back, Canyon design, this is a one off jacket with sentimental value. Stolen from Holme Pierrepont Slalom Car Park Tuesday 7.11.95. Any info please contact West Bridgford Police or Mrs Eillard on 01788 810076.

Found whilst canoeing on the Llugwy at Jacks Bridge, by the A5 services Mon 23 Oct to Thurs 26 Oct, a canoeing helmet. If the owner would like it back ring Simon Jennings tell him the make of the helmet and the name within it. 01203 410412

Found open canoe - the remains off on River Wye 11/11/95. Could have been lost for some time Tel: 01634 222037 Steve would like to keep the canoe if nobody claims it.

Found at Stenningford Mill 19th Nov. Canoeing clothing, please contact 01484 663172 with description. Found Kober paddle on Scottish River in Pitlochry area, mid November 1995. Tel: 0191 477 6180 with markings.

MISCELLANEOUS
Situations Vacant Instructor required, must be BCU Instructor minimum, be over 21 with a driving licence. Good wages, accommodation and food provided. Start March 96 CV to North York Moors Adventure Centre, Park House, Ingleby Cross, Northallerton, N Yorks DL6 3PE

Birchbark Canoe Building Course 16 days, summer 1996, on Lake Superior (Wisconsin) 3750US, including lodging Contact: David Gidmark, Box 26, Maniwaki, Quebec J9E 3B3

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12th May	B.C.U. Three Star Course
8th June	B.C.U. Two Star Course
22nd June	B.C.U. One Star Course
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6th October	B.C.U. Instructors Assessment
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13th October	B.C.U. Inland Proficiency
19th October	B.C.U. One Star Course
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ASAMAT Personal Locator Beacon

Article by
MH North

The BCU Sea Touring Committee recently discussed some feedback from the Coastguard on the usage and effectiveness of the ASAMAT personal Locator Beacon which is being marketed in the UK for use by sea kayakists.

An extract from Mike North's letter on behalf of the Coastguard follows for your information. The Sea Touring Committee felt that the feedback from the Coastguard should be made available to all paddlers so that the limitations of the equipment were firmly understood.

The Sea Touring Committee would also like to make the point that sea kayakists should not regard general electronic equipment (e.g VHF radios and

GPS) as a substitute for sound decision making and good judgement.

Extract from letter received from Mike North, District Controller, MRSC Liverpool HM Coastguard

... The system is designed to trigger an alarm or alarm plus homing capability on the vessel from which the person has fallen overboard. This is a quite different concept from the claims that the PLB7 will alert the Coastguard by its signal being received by either a high flying aircraft or the COSPAS/SARSAT Satellites. Though the PLB7 has a tiny output, just 25mw, I believe there may be instances where the satellites have received such a weak signal. Basically its concept of use has been broadened from a

very localised alarm system to the status of a full distress beacon, which it is not.

The claim of 10 to 80 minutes to get a response seem pretty optimistic, even providing an aircraft or satellite did receive its very weak signal.

As for the trials on the Solent - the lifeboat was launched to "home" in on the transmission - but how were the Coastguard alerted in order to launch the lifeboat? Similarly with the helicopter.

It is a man overboard alerting system for use with mother craft, not a stand alone distress beacon. Though I acknowledge it may trigger a satellite "strike" given more good luck than technical specification. . .

Whitewater Throwbags

Article by
Kevin Danforth -
Coaching
Development
Officer

Following recent meetings and practical seminars to clarify the syllabus for BCU White Water Safety Courses it has been decided to review the BCU Information given with regard to throwbags. The current body of opinion amongst our most experienced practitioners is that all throwbags should be supplied without handles or knots at the throwers end. Please note that this applies only to the rescuers end. The receiving (swimmers) end will still need knots/handles to secure the bag and give some purchase to the swimmer.

This 'clean rope' practice is desirable for a number of reasons, but mainly:

- to reduce the risk of snagging, (on river banks, tree roots, rocks, river bed)

- to facilitate clean and rapid handling through rescue systems (i.e Karabiners, pulleys)
- to increase options once the rope has been thrown (recoils, second rope, belays, harness work)

Should a knot or handle be needed a overhand or figure of eight knot will take a second to tie. (Handles and other knots can take an age to get rid of, especially in an incident and time-dependant rescue situations)

In future all BCU approved safety and rescue staff will deliver training in tune with this philosophy. Advice to coaching service members and white water paddlers, will be that 'clean rope' throwbags are the way to go. The BCU booklet 'The Throwbag' will also reflect this philosophy when it

is revised early 1996.

There are obvious implications for all manufacturers who currently produce bags with handles. I am aware that some customers will not fully appreciate the reasoning behind the situation and will only see that they have been sold a bag without a handle!

I have written to the major manufacturers and informed them of this development and suggest that they may wish to review their advice to customers in the light of this advice. Should they wish to continue to supply throwbags with handles, it would be prudent for them to point out the drawbacks. There may also be a legal liability issue to address should someone have an accident as a result of any handle or knot.

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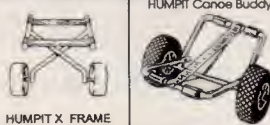
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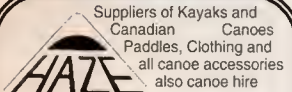
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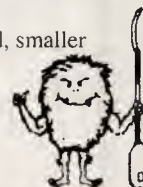
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Article by:
 Dave Hallam
 Team Manager -
 Jim Rossiter

British Marathon to South Africa



channels, many of these ran through thick undergrowth or under trees which were impassable. If you took the wrong channel you had no possibility of turning round so had to portage. We were lucky that Tim Cornish had raced on the river a few weeks earlier and could show us the best routes to take, this was to be the situation for the whole of the Brede race with many places to gain or lose time. The next day the organisers managed to signpost most of the main channels.

Grand Prix Race Day

Simon, Mark and Dave were entered in the K1 event, Neal and James in K2 and Lea in Junior K1.

Lea who had coped very well with the river conditions during training, unfortunately had two swims on the race day and finished fourth, without those swims he would have been in contention for first place.

The K2 of Neal and James were just beaten to third place by a SA crew and finished fourth.

In the Senior K1 a leading group of four K1s broke away, Simon was riding comfortably in this group but unfortunately broke the nose on his boat and finished eighth. Mark who had been ill over the previous few days did well to finish seventh, Dave was third boat in a group of three across the line and finished sixth.

After the race several of our boats had to be taken away to be repaired but compared to the damage done by some of the foreign teams our boats survived well.

The next day we drove back to the site of the Berg Race and the next few days were spent training on the early stages of the Berg. The major problem on the first day was to be a section of river which was blocked by fallen trees, you had to negotiate a route under, over, around or through them, as the river was flowing so fast you did not have much time to think before you were swept into them, this section was to cause problems for many paddlers.

The British team was one of ten international teams to take part in the first grand prix marathon to be held in South Africa. The Grand Prix was to take place on the Brede River and cover a distance of 38km. Part of the sponsorship deal which enabled us to take part was that the seniors would also be competing in the four day Berg River event covering 200km. Both rivers are situated in the Cape Town area of South Africa.

Since they were banned from international competition in the '70s the South Africans have developed their own style of marathon race which is quite different to what we are used to. The majority of their races are over three hours long and are river descents (similar to the Exe and Liffey descents and the Sella series in Spain). The South Africans are very much into endurance events. The biggest race on their calendar is the Berg River event which has over 200 people competing, all in the K1 class. The next biggest race is the Dusi marathon near Durban, this race covers 125km in three days. The unusual thing about this race is that up to a third of the race involves

portaging dry sections and all with a 12kg minimum boat weight. The South Africans were allowed back into international competition in the early 90's and since then have been planning to hold an international race.

The first three days were spent kitting out our boats and training on the first stages of the Berg River event. This winter the Cape Town area had the lowest recorded rain fall for 70 years, this meant that the river was very low and technically difficult to find a way down without damaging your boat. The next day we met up with Tim Cornish and travelled down to the site of the Grand Prix race. Tim is the SA Canoe Federation President and an ICF Representative.

We arrived at the Brede River late afternoon and decided that we just had enough time to complete a 26km stretch. The Brede River was much like the Berg in that it is shallow and very technical with many drops and rapids. The nearest comparison I can make is with the white water race on the River Washburn. The river had another problem for the paddlers in that as the river was so low it would split into many fast flowing narrow

n Team Trip

Below: Some "local" paddlers
Middle: Dave Hallam
Bottom: Mark Gibbins

Berg River Day 1 - 59km

All our team had good seedings for the Le-Mans style start. The race got under way and a breakaway group of six paddlers including Simon Dark got away. The rest of our team in the second group. At one point all except one of this group of six fell in at a rapid when the second boat through got turned sideways through a narrow shoot. This allowed the second group to make some headway on the leaders. About half way through this stage we encountered the tree block section, this had the effect of splitting up the groups and most of us completed the remainder of this stage on our own. It took nearly five hours of very hard paddling and all of us except Mark had at least one capsize.

Day 2 - 43km

This was the shortest section of the race and again there was a Le Mans style start. Shortly after the start we had to portage a section of river blocked by water hyacinth. Due to the flow on the river the plants are swept together to form a floating platform which you could run over albeit sinking to your knees. This stage again had many channels to get lost in so we quickly learnt to form groups with the SA paddlers and follow them, this stage took three and a half hours.

The race was extremely well organised the sponsors KVV wine merchants provided as much food and drink as you wanted at the overnight stops. The food was prepared by the local farmers whose barns we slept in overnight. At each stage stop six large tents were put up, one of these was for the medical team who follow the race and try to keep as many people racing as they can. The race was covered well by the press, a helicopter followed the race every day and provided film for the local TV station.

Day 3 - 55km

The start of this stage was a mass start for the first 50 paddlers. Unfortunately a large group of paddlers had been ill overnight with a stomach upset. Dave had been up most of the night with a stomach upset which was to affect James later on that day. Unlike the bug which was reported to have struck down the New Zealanders on the eve of

the Rugby World Cup Final this one was not as selective with about 50 paddlers being affected, most of them South Africans. Of those who decided to start the majority had pulled out by the end of the day. The race started just below a dam, after 200m the whole river went through a narrow twisting channel about two boat widths wide which caused problems for all but the first few through. Simon, Mark and Neal all went well today, Dave was struggling to finish and James who started being sick during the race had to pull out. The leading 25 boats from the 2nd days results were pulled off the water with 20km to go and finished the last section as a time trial. This was to be the turning point for the eventual winner of the race as he managed to pull back a 2 minute deficit and go into the lead. Total stage time 4.5 hours.

Day 4 - 50km

This was again a mass start for the top 50 paddlers. All the remaining Brits were in the top 25. After a 10km paddle there was a compulsory portage across a very large 'U' bed in the river. The portage was 3km long over very rough ground, this was shortly followed by a short portage 'only' 800m long. Dave who had started very slowly made up lots of time on the runs and managed to catch up with Simon. The only way back in the water was to seal launch from a four foot drop, this was quite a normal thing for the SA to do but is unheard of in GB. Unfortunately Dave and Simon hadn't quite mastered this skill and both fell straight in.

The river now opened up into a wide river for the last part of the race. At one point the four British paddlers all ended up going along together, however, Dave and Neal were finding it very tough and dropped back to finish a few minutes behind Mark and Simon. The finish line was a very pleasing sight to all of us. Last stage time 5 hours.

This was the second race of this distance that I had done this year, the first being the K1 DW. The Berg race is a lot harder due to the fact that you are always in a race situation as opposed to the time trial method of the DW, also the



technical nature of the river means you have to concentrate all the time.

All of the paddlers selected for the British team coped very well with the conditions and most of us would like to do the race again. The South Africans were extremely friendly and helped us out a lot on and off the water. To do well in this race you need to train on the river to learn all of the best routes and also be able to handle a K1 in moving water, it would be an expensive race to go out and compete in on your own but if you managed to get out to Cape Town you would be well looked after by the South African paddlers.

Final Results

1	Robbie Herreveld	SA	16.40.21
8	Simon Dark		17.26.57
12	Mark Gibbins		17.39.27
20	Neal Coleman		18.09.08
22	Dave Hallam		18.20.11
	<i>James Smyth retired due to illness on third stage</i>		
25	2nd Last place Louise Oliver from South Africa		28.24.32

Team Results	
1	South Africa A
2	South Africa B
3	Great Britain



Surf Kayaking

Future Worlds
The next Surf Kayak Worlds in 1997 sees a return to Thurso and the 1999 Worlds are scheduled for Brazil.

Thanks
The English Team would like to thank all their sponsors especially the Team Sponsors Carr Reinforcements and Mega Performance Kayaks.

Article by
Robbie Lines

When out in the surf, kayakers are looking to ride the wave in the most radical, stylish and functional way. In doing this they will perform: Take-Off's, Shoulder Rides, Cutbacks, Roundhouse Cutbacks, Bottom Turns, Floaters, Aerials, Tube Rides, 'Off the Lips', Loops, Pop-Outs and Pirouettes. When mistakes are made, they will also perform 'wipe-outs'.

September 1995 saw the World Surf Kayak Championships move to Costa Rica in Latin America. The Venue was Boca Barranga on the Pacific coast near Punteranus. Beautiful the place is not. Black ash sand with brown water courtesy of the Rio Barranga, but the waves just had to be seen to be believed. The charm of the venue was enhanced by the wild life; a 10ft crocodile, pelicans and sea life.

The break was a long left-hander, breaking onto a sandy/rocky spit. It was also fast and deceptive. It was possible to get tubed at certain times and also trashed with a vengeance. Though when you got it right you could ride the wave for over half a mile!

We had good surf throughout our two week stay at the venue. Some days were definitely bigger than others, but the mid day wind mucking the surf about made competitors tolerate the daily 6am start.

Competition Structure

The World Championships took place over seven days and comprised a Team Event and Individual Events for Men, Ladies and Juniors.

Due to the length of the break (and the amount of time it took to paddle out after riding a wave), heats in the individual events were 30 minutes.

During the heat the competitor can ride as many waves as they like. Each ride is scored on a scale of 1 to 20, depending on wave choice, grace,



judgement and skill. The best 3 waves for each competitor is positioned (1 to 4) on each judges sheet. The best 2 from each heat go through to the next round. (A knock out structure rather like the F.A. Cup.)

In the Team event there were seven paddlers in each heat (one from each country). As a result of this the heats in the Team event were extended to 40 minutes.

Competitors were judged in the same manner as for the Individual event, though at the end of the heat would finish with a result between 1st and 7th. One point was then awarded per position (1 for 1st, 2 for 2nd etc) and added to the Teams Total Score, with the Team at the end with the fewest points taking the title. In the team event there was a total of 24 heats, 12 heats (6 men's, 2 ladies, 2 juniors and 2 ski) on each of two consecutive days.

The Results

The competition was dominated by the British who brought home all four World Titles and eight of the twelve trophies.

In the Team Event, England took an early lead winning four of the first five heats. Wales and the favourites USA West tried to close the lead but were denied by an English Team that were surfing consistently well. The final results were 1) England. 2) Wales. 3) USA West. 4) Jersey. 5) Costa Rica. 6) USA East. 7) Scotland.

The Individual competitions were similarly dominated by the Brits with seven British Paddlers making it through to the three finals.

In the Junior event it was Tim Thomas of Wales who shined, taking the title from Thomas Braumann of USA West. In third place was Malcolm Fawcett whose form from earlier in the week deserted him and in fourth place was Kieran Moore of England who was hampered in the final by a broken paddle.

The Ladies event witnessed a clean sweep by the English Girls with Penny Allen taking first place, second went to Sue Davey and third went to Lesley Harker.

In the Men's event Tim Thomas was again under pressure, this time from the Americans. Spike from Canada was surfing well and Ken King had some good rides until he 'dropped in' on Tim. Spurred on by his Team mates who were standing up to their waists in the surf, Tim produced a number of excellent rides that clinched the title. In second place was Spike Galdwin of Canada and third the ex-World Champion Dick Wold.

Results

Team

- 1 England
- 2 Wales
- 3 USA West

Men

- 1 Tim Thomas, Wales
- 2 Spike Galdwin, Canada
- 3 Dick Wold, USA West

Ladies

- 1 Penny Allan, England
- 2 Sue Davey, England
- 3 Lesley Harker, England

Juniors

- 1 Tim Thomas, Wales
- 2 Thomas Braumann, USA West
- 3 Malcolm Fawcett, England

The English Team Were:

Men:

Malcolm Pearcey (Manager), Simon Discombe, Kevin Trudgeon, Chris Bray, Robbie Lines, Malcolm Fawcett, Mike Blousefield (res.) and Dave Kensdal (res.).

Ski:

Pete Blenkinsop, Simon Discombe.

Ladies:

Sue Davey, Penny Allen and Lesley Harker

Juniors:

Malcolm Fawcett and Kieran Moore



Robbie Lines at White Sands



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