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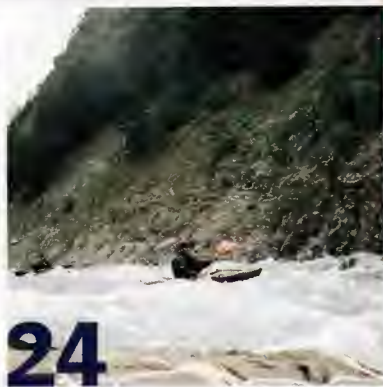
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BCU Enquiries
Above address

President
Albert Woods

Chair
Brian Chapman

Chief Executive
Paul Owen

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2b Graphic Design

49 Greenfields, St. Ives,

Cambs. PE27 5HB

Tel/Fax: (01480) 465081

E-mail: peter@canoefocus.co.uk

www.canoefocus.co.uk

Canoe Focus Enquiries

Above address

Editor

Peter Tranter: 01480 465081

peter@canoefocus.co.uk

Assistant Editor

Debbie Colt

Advertising Sales

Anne Egan: 01480 465081

advertising@canoefocus.co.uk

Design

Richard O' Donovan

Contributors

We would like to thank the
following for their articles and
photographs:

Andy Goodsell, Eddie Palmer,

Gareth Field, Mike Devlin,

Sue Hornby, David Florence,

Robyn Pearcey, Malcolm Pearcey,

James Smythe, Fiona Jarvie,

Barry Howell, Will Mawson,

Sarah Doman, Kate Stevens,

P. Doman, K. Doman, Chuck

Graham, Nigel Wilford,

Pablo Basombrio, Peter Astles,

Andy Stuart, Duncan Eades,

M Attenborough, Tony Tickle,

Helen Metcalfe, World Stunt Boat

Championships, Loftis, Empics,

Mike Dales, Mary Palmer,

Simon Chapman, Clive Palmer,

David Bell, Tom Parker,

Tamsin Phipps, Kevin East,

Chris Hawkesworth, Howard

Blackman, Ray Hudspith,

Julia White, Jeff Toser,

Andy Green, Kimberley Walsh,

Dick Constable, Ivan Lawler and

Chloe Nelson-Lawrie.

Front cover photo:

Tim Lawrenson at the 2008 Tittis

River Race in Buochs,

Switzerland.

Photos: David Jeffries, WWR

Publicity Officer

Comment by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

Welcome to December's issue of Canoe Focus

The winter is finally here and with shorter days and cooler weather many will be looking forward to the new year and the accompanying defrosting period...

Competition

Marathon World

Championships

Congratulations to Edward Rutherford

(right) who became double Junior

Marathon World Champion. Edward won

Gold in the individual men's K1 event and

also won Gold in the K2 event with

partner Tom Hide (see page 17).

Congratulations to both, a great

achievement.

Sport England

development plan

The BCU's development plan for 2009 to

2013 has been submitted to Sport

England. The development plan is part of

our application for funding for the next

four years. A decision about the funding

amount will be made by Sport England at

the beginning of December.

Sport Satisfaction Survey

Many thanks to everyone who responded

to our membership and club survey in

September. A summary of your responses

are included on page 11 of this issue.

With a sport as diverse as paddlesport, it is challenging meeting your aspirations all the time, but by knowing what matters most we can certainly prioritise our work to achieve them. Starting next February, canoeing will be one of 46 sports involved in a comprehensive and unique survey to assess the quality of regular participants sporting experiences.

Conducted by Ipsos Mori and supported by Sport England the surveys will commence February/March 2009 and run for four years involving club members, regular participants and paddlers in our talent pool.

So - if you are asked to participate, this is your opportunity to have your say and you may well be helping to shape the future of our sport! Move details will be on our website in the new year.

British Olympic

Association Chair

Congratulations to Albert Woods, the
President of the British Canoe Union, who
has recently been re-appointed Chair of
the British Olympic Association.

Annual General Meeting

The 2009 BCU Annual General Meeting
will take place on 7th March 2009. The
venue will be confirmed in the February
issue of Canoe Focus and on the BCU
website.

Office hours over the

festive period

The BCU and Canoe England offices office
will be closed from Thursday 24th
December at 4.30pm until Monday 5th
January 2009.

Seasons greetings to all and
happy paddling.



YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE CANOE FOCUS HAPPEN

The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. **Technical Information:** Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to peter@canoefocus.co.uk, or mailed to 2b Graphic Design, 49 Greenfields, St Ives, Cambs PE27 5HB. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next Copy date is the **4th JAN 2009**.

Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the **FEBRUARY 2009** issue. Canoe Focus encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated the publishers assume no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or photographs. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the BCU, its committees or members. The printing of an advertisement in Canoe Focus does not necessarily mean that the BCU endorses the company, item or service advertised. All material in Canoe Focus is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.

Competition calendar

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event	
December	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 2 North - Leeds	February	14-Feb	Canoe Polo	Div 4 North - Stockport	
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 4 North - York		14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 3 North - York
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 3 North - Stockport		14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Ladies - Leeds
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 4 Central - Derby		14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Luton
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 3 Central - Stratford Upon Avon		14-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Dove - Div B - Midland Series 1
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 2 South - Coventry		15-Feb		Marathon Racing	Waterside A
	6-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South East - Dagenham		21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Open - Leeds
	6-Dec	7-Dec	Wild Water Racing	Nith - Div B and RAF Championships		21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Stockport
	7-Dec		Marathon Racing	Stour Descent		21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 South - Coventry
	7-Dec		Marathon Racing	Essex Winter Series - Race 3 - Sudbury		21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 3 South - Bristol
	7-Dec		Slalom	Orton Mere - Winter Series - 2		21-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Bala Sprint - Biv A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Championship 2
	13-Dec		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South West - Bristol		22-Feb		Marathon Racing	Thameside 1
	14-Dec		Marathon Racing	Hare & Hounds Series - Wey Kayak Club 2009		22-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Leny/Teith - Open - Scottish Series 2
	January	4-Jan		Marathon Racing		Frank Luzmore K2	28-Feb		Canoe Polo
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 2 North - Leeds	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Grandtully - Sprint - Team Race - Div A and B	
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 4 North - Stockport	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	National Prize Giving - Grandtully	
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 4 Central - Derby	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Thistlebrigg - Classic - Div A and B	
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 3 Central - Stratford Upon Avon					
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 2 South - Coventry					
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 3 South - Dagenham					
10-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 4 South West - Bristol					
11-Jan			Marathon Racing	Hare & Hounds Series - Wey Kayak Club					
11-Jan			Marathon Racing	Essex Winter Series - Race 4 - Chelmsford					
17-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 3 North - Stockport					
17-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 1 Ladies - Coventry					
17-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 4 South East - Dagenham					
24-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 2 North - Stockport					
24-Jan			Canoe Polo	Div 1 Open - Coventry					
24-Jan			Wild Water Racing	Thistlebrigg - Div B - Scottish Series 1					
24-Jan			Wild Water Racing	Dart Sprint - Div A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Championship 1					
25-Jan			Coach Update	River Dart Country Park - South West					
25-Jan			Wild Water Racing	Middle Dart - Div B - South West Series 1					
25-Jan			Wild Water Racing	Dart Loop - Div A and B					
31-Jan		Canoe Polo	Div 4 Central - Stratford Upon Avon						
31-Jan		Canoe Polo	Div 3 South - Bristol						
February	1-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Exe - Div B - South West Series 2					
	7-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Stratford Upon Avon					
	7-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Goyt - Div B - North West Series 1					
	7-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Junior Prize Giving - Burrs Adventure Centre					
	8-Feb		Marathon Racing	Hare & Hounds Series - Wey Kayak Club					
	8-Feb		Marathon Racing	Essex Winter Series - Race 5 - Barking & Dagenham					
	8-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Irwell - Div B and Wavehopper - North West Series 2					
	8-Feb		Wild Water Racing	National Youth Prize Giving - Burrs Adventure Centre					
	14-Feb	15-Feb	Wild Water Racing	Nith - Div B - Inter-Service Championships					
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South East - Dagenham					
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 3 Central - Stratford Upon Avon					
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 4 Central - Derby					



Canoe polo : www.canoepolo.org.uk

Canoe sailing: www.intcanoe.org.uk

Flat water racing:

Visit BCU, then 'Disciplines' and 'Flat water racing'

Freestyle: www.ukfreestyle.com

Marathon racing: www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk

Slalom: www.canoeslalom.co.uk

Surf: www.bcusurf.org.uk

Wild water racing: www.wildwater.org.uk

I am new to competition events – what's it all about?

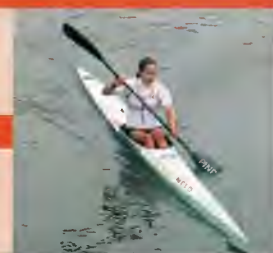
There are many paddlers who may not have thought about the competition side much, but the competition disciplines DO welcome newcomers to their sport. Information and contact details for each of the Competition Disciplines are available within the BCU Directory, or alternatively visit the BCU web site (www.bcu.org.uk) and look under 'disciplines' to visit a competition website.

Have we missed any?

We have compiled the list from those events which people have notified us of and we do our best to ensure that the information is correct at the time of writing. However, circumstances change, so if this is the case or if you know of any competition events that you think should be added, contact: Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk

Club events

We are aware that there are hundreds of club based events that take place throughout the year. Unfortunately we will be unable to list them all here, however we are very keen to publicise them on the BCU website. Email Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk



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Here at Canoe England we continue to seek great deals and discounts that members can benefit from. We look to secure only deals that we think are relevant to members.

We are now pleased to announce that we have negotiated a 10% discount at selected canoe and kayak retailers around the country. For the retailer's contact details visit the Canoe England member's area: www.canoe-england.org.uk

To take advantage of the 10% discount, just show your membership card at the time of purchase.

WEST MIDLANDS

Bear Creek Adventure, Worcestershire
Joel Watersports, Worcester
Canoe Kayak Trader, Warwick
Paddle Sport & Wave Form, Warwick
West Midland Canoe Centre, Walsall

YORKSHIRE

Fear Gear, Doncaster
Robin Hood Watersports, Heckmondwike
Wipeout, Sheffield,
Yorkshire Canoe and Kayak, Doncaster

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST

Brighton Canoes Ltd, E. Sussex
Kent Canoes, Kent - Kent Canoes offer 10% discount on boats and 5% discount off kit.
The Family Boat Shop, Surrey
UK Kayaking, West Sussex
Whitewater The Canoe Centre, Middlesex

EAST MIDLANDS

Desperate Measures, Nottingham
Tradewinds Outdoor, Northamptonshire

EASTERN

Nucleus Watersports, Clacton
Reeds Of Cambridge, Cambridge

SOUTHERN

Berkshire Canoes, Reading
Marsport Ltd, Reading
Riverside Central, Oxford
Woodmill, Southampton

NORTH WEST

Brookbank Canoes, Cheshire

CUMBRIA

Carlisle Canoes, Carlisle
UK Canoes, Lancaster
Windermere Canoe Kayak,
Bowness-on-Windermere

SOUTH WEST

Cheltenham Canoes, Cheltenham
Cornwall Canoes, Newquay
Family Adventure Store, Wiltshire
Kayak and Paddles, Plymouth
Outdoor Active Ltd, Gloucestershire
Performance Kayaks, Weston-Super-Mare
Totnes Kayaks, Devon

SCOTLAND

Stirling Canoes, Stirling, Central Scotland
Nevis Canoes, Fort William, Highlands

If you have any suggestions for improving the member benefits you receive, please get in touch – we could like to hear your comments. Email: chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk or call 0845 370 9500

Member's offers



Canoe England has teamed up with a number quality partners to offer you a range of discounts. For details of how to claim the discounts log in to the 'Members Only' section of the Canoe England web site.

15% discount at **COTSWOLD** or 20% off on selected dates.

20% discount off **LUCOZADE SPORT** products.

20% discount when subscribing to 12 issues of **CANOE KAYAK** magazine.

10% off **SUNSAIL** holidays to Turkey, Greece and Antigua.

7.5% discount on **CONCEPT 2** rowers.

5% discount on **SALAMANDER TOURS** open canoe tours.

CRAFT THERMAL TOPS – This top has become a favourite for paddlers and we are pleased to be able to offer this at a special rate of only £16.49 + p&p. These short sleeved black tops are available in men's and women's sizes. To purchase visit www.bcushop.org.uk.



Did you know you can also receive a discount at the Nene and Tryweryn?

Nene – For members its costs £10 instead on £15 per session. If you apply for a user card then the price will decrease further – £10 to £8 for adults; £8 to £6 for juniors.

Trewyem – Members receive a £7 discount (cutting the cost from £14 to £7)



Lucozade Sport Co

Win a training session with Lucozade Sport Academy athlete Lizzie Neave or a visit from a sport scientist from Lucozade Sport.

All entries will receive a £5 discount voucher for use at the Lucozade Sport online shop.

Lizzie Neave has recently celebrated finishing top of the K1 Women's canoe slalom UK rankings for a second successive year. Lizzie is part of the Lucozade Sport Academy – a group of athletes aiming for success in 2012, whom Lucozade Sport support by providing a range of products, nutrition advice and other training to help develop athletes to the best of their potential.

1st Prize: A one to one training session with Lizzie, gain a unique insight into her training and expertise in canoe slalom. Lucozade Sport will also provide you with a one month supply of Lucozade Sport nutrition products to help you get the best from your training and competition.

2nd Prize: A visit for you or your club from the Lucozade Sport performance team, who can provide sport science testing, nutrition and hydration advice and free Lucozade Sport products.

For your chance to win...

To enter, email competition@lucozadeshop.com with your name, address and phone number. On entry you will receive an email with your unique £5 voucher code (min purchase £20), to use at www.lucozadeshop.com.

The winners of the Teva Anisos are:

Pat Scott and Chris Somers
Both winners were chosen at random.

News

Cornwall's best fight it out

Students from across Cornwall College including Falmouth, Camborne and St Austell attended the first ever watersport trials for an elite kayaking team to represent Cornwall College at events in marathon, surf and sea kayaking. In total there were 35 of Cornwall's top watersport students from different courses at different sites.

The trials were set up to attract students who have some skill and or experience in kayaking so as they can take part in regular professional competitive training from top kayak coaches Glenn Eldridge (British flat water sprint member K4 1000m and 500m 2001 - 2004 World Cup, European and World Championships, Olympic qualification and Level 3 competition coach) and Steve Bowens (international competitive surf kayaker, England surf squad member and BCU surf coach) to prepare them to compete in

competitions in the south west and maybe further afield after Christmas.

The students underwent a kayak ergo meter test to ascertain power output (mean and max) which gave them some base line data and a graphical representation for future reference. The students were then taken for some skill training before undertaking time trials on the water to ascertain the final team of six to represent Cornwall College.

The intention is for these young paddlers to take part in a series of sea kayak races over the winter and some surf lifesaving ski races perhaps leading to the Waterside series and the Devizes to Westminster race! They will also train in surf kayaking and take part in the nationally ranked contests in the south west.

Matt Chambers (2nd year BTEC National Diploma in Watersports at FMS) said "This has been a

fantastic day, I have done lots of kayaking but never considered how much my technique could be improved to make me faster, the ergo machine was brilliant and has given me a benchmark to work towards beating. I am really excited about the prospect of representing Cornwall College at future kayaking competitions."

Steve Bowens (Curriculum Manager, Watersports at FMS) said: "It was great to see all these guys out pitting themselves against each other trying to secure their place on the team. Stithians Lake kindly offered us the use of their excellent facilities to conduct the trials and to pick the team. Now we have our teams some of the best coaches on the country to train and prepare them for competitions in the new year, I can't wait to see the guys flying the Cornwall College flag at these events and showing everyone just how much talent we have in the south west".



MP praises new River Lee weir

Local MP for Hertford and Stortford, Mark Prisk, opened a new state of the art weir, which looks like steps, at Hartham Common in Hertfordshire on 25th October.

The new weir has replaced an old structure and will not only protect a main line sewer on the River Lee but will also improve conditions for both fish and canoeists. The old weir, which was exposing the Stevenage to Rye Mead's main line trunk sewer has been removed and is now hidden beneath a new gravel bed by the Environment Agency.

A new two-step granite weir has been created downstream of the sewer which is low-level and unobtrusive so that it blends in with the surroundings.

Fish need a 350mm step to jump upstream as part of their migration and one large weir wouldn't allow this to happen. It also allows canoeists and paddlers to move along this stretch of the river and was designed in consultation with Herts Canoe Club.

The opening event saw the club demonstrate how the new weir has improved water conditions for members. MP Mark Prisk declared the scheme officially open by inviting members of the club to canoe down the weir, cutting the ribbon as they went.

Local MP Mark Prisk said: "I am delighted to be able to open the Hartham Common Weir. The rivers are a vital part of life in Hertford and it is great to see this investment."

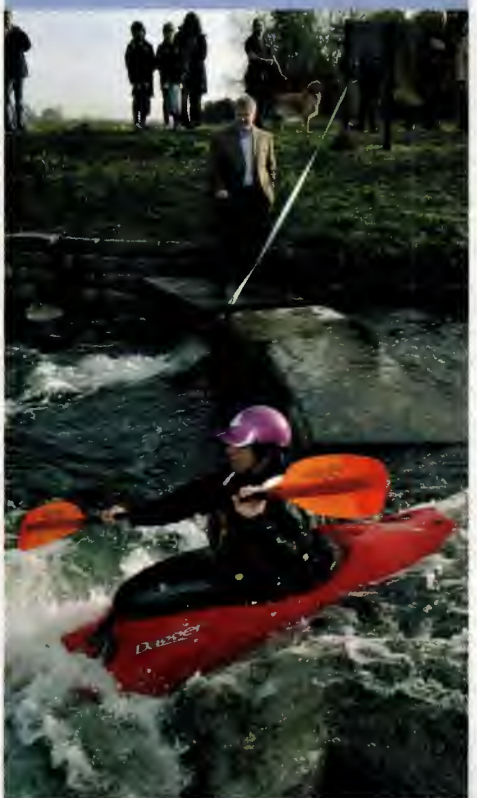
Darren Fergus, chairman of Herts Canoe Club said: "Sitting next to the River Lee, Herts Canoe Club is ideally situated for local canoeists who enjoy paddling this stretch of river. Hundreds of canoeists have learned to paddle here and Hartham Weir is often one of their first thrills of the water. Hartham Weir is a safe water feature that has given local kayakers a taste of moving water and spurred many of them on to kayak down some of the best white water in the world."

mpetition

This promotion is open to UK residents only, aged 16 or above and the 1st prize winner must have their own canoe safety insurance, and must provide their own equipment including life jacket and helmet. Full terms and conditions can be found at

www.lucozadeshop.com

[/cfterms](#)



In front of the Camera...

Modern Television are currently in production making a television series for BBC 1, *Rivers*, to be presented by Griff Rhys Jones (*Restoration*, *Mountain*) scheduled for broadcast in 2009. The series will be looking at rivers, waterways and canals all over the UK and all aspects associated with them. Filming started in May and will continue until November. Canoe England has been able to provide help and support for filming, advice as to where to film and even information about rivers access issues. The film crew experienced problems when trying to get permissions to paddle on some rivers.

Recently they have been up filming in Scotland aided by Eddie Palmer, Mary Conacher and Biscuit of the SCA. They chose a beautiful day to film and the colours and sunshine were spectacular. We floated down the Tummel to Dunalastair reservoir, with Mary paddling with Griff (and dog of course, who had to be washed and dried), Eddie behind with Ross the producer, Biscuit, our safety paddler, and the cameraman, sound man and a third in a rubber dinghy with an electric motor!

They went through the tree blockage safely and then, magically, Mary disappeared and Griff paddled off into the sunset solo, to continue his cross-Scotland trip! We look forward to seeing the whole series next year.

PICTURE: EDDIE PALMER



Lloyds TSB 'local heroes'

Lloyds TSB has launched its nationwide programme, 'Lloyds TSB Local Heroes'. This will provide up to £1,000 to 250 emerging young sports people identified each year across Britain, in the run up to London 2012 and beyond.

By investing more than £1 million in 'Lloyds TSB Local Heroes' over the next five years, the bank will play a major role in supporting GB's young sporting talent and will be delivered in partnership with SportsAid.

These include slalomists: Rhys Davies, 17 from Gwynedd; Ciaran Edwards, 15 from Carmarthenshire; Gwawr Evans, 15 from Ceredigion; Gareth Farrow, 16 from Ceredigion and Zachary Franklin, 16 from Windsor. In sprint/marathon, Scott Patterson, 18 from Fife will receive funding.

Lord Sebastian Coe said: "This initiative is exactly the kind of support British sport needs over the next five years. These young athletes are potential Olympic and Paralympic medal winners at London 2012 and beyond and the support 'Lloyds TSB Local Heroes' provides to them will make a real difference to their development."

www.lloydstsb.com/localheroes

World Quadrathlon Championships Sedlcany, Czech Republic 2008

The race started with the 1500m lake swim, and it was Andy Byatt (GB) who was first out of the water in a blistering 17:29. The kayak leg, five laps totalling 7km around the lake was very choppy due to the amount of kayakers on the lake. Miroslav Podborsky (CZ) moved into the overall lead after the kayak setting a fast time of 37:16, Andy held onto second and Dan Corner (GB), despite capsizing due to his rudder being caught around a buoy moved into third place.

The 40km bike which took the athletes over some steep hills, down some fast twisty descents, plus a strong headwind and wet slippery roads made it difficult for everyone. Again it was Miroslav Podborsky in 58:13 who extended his lead over Dan Corner on the bike leg.

The two lap 10km run is a very testing course as it sends the competitors over a few sharp hills, the sun also started to grow stronger in contrast to the cold morning rain. Dan Corner moved into first place and defended his world champion title by destroying the rest of the field setting the fastest run split of the day in

35:49 in an overall time of 2:34:07. Podborsky came second, whilst Andy Byatt just missed out on the overall Bronze in a battle to the finish line by Thoralf Berg (Germany).

Keith Longney won Gold in the veteran's 45 in 2:57:58 with Andy Grimwood taking Silver in the veteran's 40 in 3:05:39. Peter Hart took the veteran's 55 Gold 3:22:43 followed by Phillip Nye taking Silver.

In the ladies race the top places were hotly contested. Holly Hawkey (GB) was first out of the swim in a superb time of 20:22. Naomi Hoogesteger (GB) moved up into second place on the kayak, having posted the second fastest women's kayak split of 43:40. Helen Parkinson and Lucy Otto moved up the field after both putting in strong bike legs.

It was a very close run thing, but once again Helen's superb running ability saw her taking the title for a third time.

Naomi Hoogesteger took Bronze in the senior category, Holly Hawkey Gold in the Under 23, with Jean Ashley for the fourth year running taking Gold in the veterans. The legendary Ruth Fletcher, (a regular competitor from the times when quadrathlon races were at least ten hours long), delivered a sterling performance winning veteran 55 Gold.

The World Championships showed how strong British quadrathlon is becoming, it was an outstanding performance on part of the GB team generally. Consistent high places meant that team GB took team Gold in both the men's and ladies events. This without a

doubt put us on top of the world!

This Year was the first time we had taken a junior team, who complete a 750km swim, 5km kayak, 20km bike and 5km run.

The up and coming stars all had excellent performances: Tristan Grigalis won Silver in Under 16 with a superb time of 1:44:12, Quentin Otto came fourth in U16 in 2:02:06. Twelve year-old Ryan Hunt, the youngest member in the field, did really well and won Under 14 Gold in 2:12:49. In the girls, Kate Ashley won Gold in the Under 16 in 2:23:10.

It's good to see that British quadrathlon has a promising future in the hands of these young athletes.

Below: Dan Corner and Helen Parkinson.



Events

Team to canoe Windermere Saturday, August 15th 2009

Aim: to cover the distance of the length of the UK over seven days to raise funds for Breast Cancer Research in 2009. It is hoped that we canoe Lake Windermere over the seven days, at a speed of 3km per hour. Three team members will be in the water at any given time and then followed by three more team members after they have canoed the first leg of the lake. Each stage length is 17.88 km and has been mapped planned by Anquet map software.

The stage length will be marked by 38 water buoys for the team to identify. At the end of water buoy 38, a fresh team of three will enter the lake and paddle back up to buoy one and a new fresh team of three will take to the waters. By having a good

team of 12 to 15 team members, it means more rest time, before going back into the waters again, for another leg of the lake. It is hoped to cover the distance of the length of the UK without a canoe leaving the waters at any time.

It is hoped to raise funds on land at three points on the lake shore. These would be at Ambleside, Bowness on Windermere and Lakeside to the south of the lake.

www.donatetobreastcancer.org/windermere2009

BCU Paddle Weekend

June 20-21st 2009

This has been provisionally booked for the weekend at the Anderton Centre Please check www.bcuinw.co.uk from January 1st onwards for more information/booking details etc.

HELEN SHARPLES NORTH WEST CHAIR

Canoe England survey results



Many thanks to everyone who responded to our surveys in September. The invitation to participate in the survey went to all Canoe England clubs and to all individual members for whom we had an email address. Of the 15,000 individual members that we were able to email we received over 1,000 replies – an impressive one in 15 response rate! Your feedback has been extremely helpful and this article is a summary of the results and your comments.

Survey structure

Next year Sport England will be launching a unique nationwide survey to gauge what is important to people in sport and to measure the quality of their experiences in sport. We used some of the questions they will be using to test how they might work for canoeing plus some questions of our own. The Sport England questions are based on considerable research including the Henley Centre Headlight Vision, a scoping review carried out by Ipsos MORI and consultation with national governing bodies for sport. This meant that the questions were quite generic and therefore sometimes harder to complete, this included the questions relating to coaching and volunteers. We have taken note of all your comments regarding the structuring of the question, validity, what we need to improve for future surveys and any errors that created confusion and we will be taking these into account for future surveys of this nature. The survey is created by a tool called Survey Gizmo. The results come direct to Canoe England and no third party is involved. To reassure those who expressed concern with respect to how the contact details were used, we do not release member's data to any third parties.

Participation results

The participation section of the survey is helping us to find out how many of you are paddling weekly and for how long, and how many also keep active/fit through participation in other sports. From the survey responses:

- 72% of you said that you paddle more than once a week with 34% paddling three or more times a week.
- 86% of you said that the duration of your paddling sessions was two hours or more.
- 83% of you said that you participate in other sports – 41% in three or more different sports.

Satisfaction and importance results

The aim of this part of the survey was to establish what was important to you and how

satisfied you are with the current provision for this. Areas that were ranked as very important by the members responding included:

- The quality of water and the environment.
- The availability of the type of water that you want to paddle on.
- The technical ability of coaches, their ability to respond to your needs and the opportunity to receive coaching from a qualified coach.
- The availability of suitable venues where you can paddle local to where you live.

For satisfaction we looked at where we need to improve provision – and the areas that those responding were least satisfied included:

- The promotion and marketing of the sport.
- The availability of the type of water you want to paddle on.
- The availability of suitable venues to enjoy canoeing local to where you live.
- The distance to travel and cost required to participated or compete at the level you wish to enjoy the sport.
- Clear information on where you can go paddling.
- The support services you receive from Canoe England.

We certainly aim to improve on these areas and will be working to make the changes from 2009. We will update you on specific areas as we move into next year.

Additional comments

We received a great number of additional comments and whilst too many to list here (35 pages of comments) there were some key themes that you raised concerns over. We will follow up on these in future Canoe Focus magazines but in the meantime as the Olympics has made this a subject of topical debate; it is worth clarifying the funding questions.

Funding for our two Olympic disciplines is based on success internationally for which the BCUC is awarded a grant from UK Sport. This is funded primarily from the lottery and can only be spent on paddlers who have reached international standard and the infrastructure to support those paddlers. It does not cover any other competitive discipline or paddlers in slalom and sprinting outside of the qualifying standards.

So if we were not successful the money would go to another sport and if we were not an Olympic sport we would not get the money either – in short we cannot use it for anything else.

Each home nation then receives funding from their sports council. Canoe England therefore receives a grant from Sport England to support community sport – this is about attracting more people into canoeing and providing better opportunities to help them to enjoy and achieve in the sport at whatever level they wish to engage, in both recreation and competition. As an Olympic sport we have also received grants to support specific initiatives – such as improving links and opportunities for canoeing between schools and local canoe clubs. So how we fare with our Olympic success does have an impact on all canoeing – not just competition.

Once again, thanks to everyone who responded to the survey. If you didn't receive an invitation to participate and would like to in future, please send us your current email address along with your name and membership number.

- **Two members won £50 of Cotswold vouchers for taking part in the survey. The winners who were chosen at random were: Geoff Mason and Clive Neal.**



JOGLE and DW for Namibia

I (Lucy Garrard) am currently on a gap year before medical school. I spent my summer working in hospitals and bush clinics in Namibia.

Although I had a fantastic time, I came home unable to forget the more upsetting things I saw. The Bushmen children are the happiest people I have ever met. They live in tents made from scrap plastic and live off the bare minimum food, yet as a community they are so enthusiastic and go-happy.

Therefore I am trying to raise £12,000 to build a school at the N/aankuse sanctuary for the children and to provide transport for the children to get to the school that does exist.

I am asking for donations and sponsorship, to undertake two gruelling tasks. On 21st March, myself and others will be cycling the 900 miles from John O' Groats to Lands End.

The aim is to finish this journey in 14 days. This will allow James (one of the other cyclists) and myself four days rest, before we begin our next challenge.

On 10th April 2009, James and myself will be competing in the annual Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon (DW). This is a four day race spanning a total of 125 miles and 76 locks as a mixed team, in the Endeavour Class.

James paddles with Leeds University and I with the Wey Kayak Club. In the next few weeks, we will paddle together for the first time in the Hare and Hounds - a series of six mile races on the River Wey.

Contact Lucy on lucy_garrard@hotmail.co.uk or 07818 821223. www.justgiving.com/naankusejogleanddw



Equality

National School Sport Week Bellboat Sprint Challenge

National 250m Bellboat Sprint Challenge's were organised earlier this year to attract schools from across each region to have a go at the sport. Teams of up to ten paddlers entered regional competitions across the country to take part in the 250m event in Bellboats as part of National School Sport Week.

One school who jumped at the chance to take part were Collingwood Middle School near Ashington, Northumberland. Collingwood is a special school that caters for children with moderate learning difficulties with some pupils experiencing complex learning needs. A class of 34 children plus their carers took part in the National Bellboat Sprint challenge. "This was a memorable learning experience with lots of fun, laughter and team spirit," said Moria Blackhall.

Bellboats provide a versatile and stable craft for getting large numbers of mixed ability groups afloat and introducing them to paddlesport in a fun way. To find out more about Bellboats and challenge events contact your Paddlesport Development Officer. Next year's School Sports Week dates are 29th June to 3rd July 2009.

Girl's adventure day

Seventy girls from five secondary schools in Yorkshire took part in a wide range of activities aimed at increasing female participation in sport. The idea, developed by the West Yorkshire Sports Adventurous Activities Group, enabled girls to participate in sports which they may previously never had the chance to do and introduce them to local clubs.

As well as canoeing, the girls had took part in bellboating, rowing, indoor rowing, sailing, mountain biking and orienteering. Gareth Field, Canoe England Paddlesport Development Officer said: "This represents a great opportunity for us to showcase our sports and to engage young people - everyone enjoyed the day."

Oakwood High Youth Club

Oakwood High Youth Club works with young people who have learning and physical disabilities. As a Canoe England accredited club, Oakwood offer a vast range of experiences in outdoor and adventure activities for its members two evenings a week.

This year has seen them excelling in many events such as the Canoe England Wavehopper Challenges and Coniston and Ullswater distance races. Other events include the York River Festival and West Kirby Tri-Paddlethon. The club travelled to Ireland to complete multi-day sea kayaking expeditions as well as on British canal systems as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

These activities are all down to the hard work and determination of the club organisers and members. For more information and how to join Oakwood High Youth Club contact gareth.field@bcu.org.uk

Graham Lyon steps down

For almost as long as I have been a member of the BCU (30 years) the name of Graham Lyon has been one with which I have been used to hearing. A name associated very directly with the participation and coaching volunteer work of the BCU.

While not wishing to remind him of the passing of the years, I feel that as he steps down from his role of Chair of UK and English Coaching we should remind ourselves of and recognise Graham's unceasing efforts and energy in furthering paddlesports, the work of the BCU, its members, and the development of the BCU's coaching service.

For over 25 years Graham has led coaching, firstly as RCO and then as the member's representative on what was then the National Coaching Committee (NCC), becoming NCC chair and guiding coaching through the development and consolidation of a coach education scheme – the envy of many other sports both here and abroad.

In this role Graham was stalwart in his commitment and support of all involved from the coach on the ground, to those involved in the volunteer coaching network right through to Geoff Good who as the then BCU's Director of Coaching was able to consult and rely on Graham to continually reflect the need and desire for a coaching system equal to the aspirations of paddlesport as a whole.

In his role as chair of NCC Graham also found himself at the helm, on behalf of coaching, of federal re-organisation and the establishment of the UK Coaching Management Committee (UKCMC) as the more equitable replacement to the former NCC. Becoming its chair, guide and mentor in its formative period. It is a mark of his experience and the esteem of his peers that he was asked to also continue to steer the then new English Coaching Committee through its formative period.

While many would have been daunted by the dual challenge, Graham stood up to the plate and committed inordinate amounts of time to attending the range of coaching committee meetings, English council meetings and BCU board meetings, not to mention the not irregular and myriad of planning

meetings, discussions, forums, symposiums and conferences and, as ever the diplomat, numerous and often challenging disciplinary actions. The work and commitment of a BCU volunteer officer is never nine to five and Graham is no stranger to this having left many a late meeting very late indeed!

More recently as an educator himself, Graham has been unstinting in his support of the BCU's review of the Paddlepower and Star Awards – leading to the emergence of the BCU Paddlesport Performance Awards and of the much debated developments to the BCU's Coach Education programme. Whilst never going to be easy, Graham's support in influencing and supporting the principle of change and the maturing of the existing coach education programme into a 'professional' and nationally recognised and endorsed programme has been immeasurable and a great steady influence on committee and Director of Coaching.

Amidst all of this burning of energy and midnight oil, one might almost be forgiven for not managing to get out and go paddling. No need here in Graham's case. He has continued to pursue his own interests in paddlesport and in coaching, meeting many of his 'constituents' out on the water and indeed it would seem that both 'semi-retirement' and the excitement of new participation strategies and coaching education strategies has influenced our most ardent motivator of change to get himself involved at the sharp-end again with much of his 'spare' time now committed to a thriving local club.

It should go without saying that Graham's involvement in the BCU and in coaching is immeasurable and requires the highest level of recognition that the BCU is able to bestow on him. I for one would support that and thank Graham for his continued involvement in my sport, for all of his efforts and commitment in making a difference and at a very personal level, for the support he has provided to an often over stretched coaching department and a sometime lonely Director of Coaching.

MIKE DEVLIN



Thanks to the BCU

I wanted to take the opportunity to personally thank all at the BCU for your invaluable support and help you gave to the boys in the 'Carry On Up The Thames' fundraising event for MediCinema. The team of nine undertook the 119.2 mile challenge of canoeing the length of the Thames, starting at Iffley lock, Oxford on Thursday 25th September 2008 arriving at Albert Embankment three days later on Sunday 28th September. To date the boys have raised over £2,380 and the boys and we at MediCinema are so grateful to you all at the BCU and the efforts of contacting various canoe clubs that fell on route – it was a tremendous help.

MediCinema installs on-site cinemas in hospitals with 35mm projector, big screen, Dolby Surround Sound, tiered seating and nurses instead of usherettes. Through the magic that is cinema, MediCinema enriches the quality of life for patients, young and old, including those in beds and wheelchairs, by transporting them and their families far away from the reality of their hospital life and allowing them, just for a couple of hours. www.justgiving.com/carryonupthethames

GRAINNE CLARKE, CHARITY SUPPORT OFFICER www.medicinema.org.uk

Photo: The guys setting off from Iffley Lock, Oxford. The boys trained and became members of Isis Canoe Club and I know they would want a special thank you to be mentioned to the club and their coach Simon Johnson.

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Volunteers

Club volunteer coordinators – new resource!

A new resource is available for all volunteer coordinators within clubs. The resource is designed to provide support in your role including a number of templates which may be useful. Focusing on recruitment, recognition and retaining your volunteers, the handy pack offers advice as well as useful documents. The resource has been designed so that volunteer coordinators can dip in and out of the pack to support them in their role as well as a CD with easy to use templates already designed and ready for you to edit and adopt for your club.

The role of the volunteer coordinator involves specific support for their fellow volunteers with the main purpose to offer guidance on training needs, support or recognition. The Canoe England Volunteer Development Officer offers direct support to volunteer coordinators with the resource pack.

To make sure you receive your resource pack and support contact Julia Robertson:
julia.robertson@bcu.org.uk or 0845 3709530.

Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards

Nominations are now closed for the Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards. We received an impressive number of nominations this year highlighting the large number of amazing volunteers in the sport. A panel of judges will be sifting through the nominations this month to select the short listed volunteers with awards being presented next year.

Club Forums

Canoe England visited the north east this autumn to conclude the 2008 club forums. Volunteers and clubs from around the region gathered together on October 11th to meet the Canoe England team and other clubs. As well as Ray Hudspith (acting PDO) and Nigel Timmins (SDO), Canoe England's Head of Paddlesport Participation Programme, Howard Blackman and Volunteer Development Officer, Julia Robertson, joined the team to highlight the support available.

However, it was Canoe England's Director of Operations, Robert Deacon, whose repertoire of the insurance presentation was the clear star of the show! One volunteer summed up the thoughts of all who attended: "He made a serious topic enjoyable and very helpful – thank you!"

Here are just some of the comments from the club forums around the country this year:

"An informative and good humoured day." North East Club Forum.

"Much more informative than I expected – well done!" North East Club Forum.

"I was expecting to leave by lunchtime, but found the forum interesting and stayed the full day!" North West Club Forum.

"It's good to meet the officers and people from other clubs for an informal exchange of ideas and information." South Club Forum

Plans are in place to hold further Club Forums next year and all information will be kept up to date on the clubs and volunteers section of the website. For more information contact the Volunteer Development Officer, volunteers@bcu.org.uk or your Paddlesport Development Officer.

Young role model for club

Across the country, volunteers are making outstanding contributions to paddlesport. Without the coaches, officials, committee members, administrators and helpers the sport could not exist as it does today. A special thanks goes to all volunteers and this section will provide the opportunity for clubs, centres and committees to say a special thanks to their volunteers.

Name: Catherine Guy

Club: Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club

Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club has many excellent volunteers in their ranks but one that particularly stands out is student Catherine Guy. Catherine turned 18 in September and is studying child development at Milton Keynes College to eventually follow a career in teaching.

As a keen paddler, Catherine started her paddlesport career over eight years ago and can boast being national champion in the Lightning class for her age group. More recently, Catherine's competitive future has been overtaken by her passion for coaching and she is now a qualified BCU Placid Water Level 1 coach. Within the club, Catherine has the reputation to add an element of fun to the training by livening up sessions with impromptu games. Her natural ability for coaching results in the young people of Leighton Buzzard enjoying their sessions with plenty of laughs and smiles throughout each session.

Catherine's main role within the club is with the foundation paddlers where she assists club coaches to develop the young people's skills both on and off the water. In the winter, Catherine uses her skills and enthusiasm to help in the gym.

Being closer to their age, Catherine relates well with the young people and often gets the best performance

out of them through her understanding. She even uses her competitive background to encourage young paddlers to enter the race scene by entering K2 races with them.

Catherine's dedication doesn't end with the club either – she volunteers at the national regattas in Nottingham regularly helping with the Lightning classes. Catherine's input helps towards the smooth organisation for the Under 12 paddlers by checking crews, ensuring paddlers get to the right race at the right time and providing communication between the competitors and staff.

The future looks bright for Catherine as a volunteer in paddlesport and already a lot of young people have benefited from her patience and time. Whether as a coach at events or behind the scenes, Catherine is definitely a role model to the young people of her club.

Let Canoe England know about volunteers in your area for the chance for them to be recognised in Canoe Focus and receive a special gift of thanks. Email volunteers@bcu.org.uk or write to the Volunteer Development Officer, Canoe England, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham NG13 8AP.



Director of Development, Sue Hornby, travelled to Leighton Buzzard after a club session to present Catherine with flowers, a trophy and certificate of thanks.

Volunteer opportunities

Volunteer assistance needed for start gate system at BCU sprint racing regattas.

The start gate system currently used at all the National Sprint Regattas at the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham are maintained and installed by the World Class Programmes.

The BCU Sprint Racing Committee would like to train two or three volunteers from the wider canoeing community to assist with the operation, assembly, installation and removal of the gates before and after a regatta.

This is an excellent opportunity to get involved in sprint regattas with a long term possibility towards eventually leading an assembly team. If you are interested in this role and would like more information, please contact volunteers@bcu.org.uk or david.enoch@gbcanoeing.org.uk. David Enoch is available to discuss this opportunity during the day on Tuesday and Thursday by phone on 0115 9821573.

Thank you



Seasons greetings to all volunteers! A big thank you from Canoe England to all the volunteers whether at a national, regional or local level in clubs, centres or committees. Without our dedicated team of volunteers the sport would not succeed like it does.

Whether you are the chairperson, secretary, welfare officer, volunteer coordinator, coach, or official down to the volunteers behind the scenes who make the tea or fix the equipment – no matter how much or how little you do, every volunteer is valued in paddlesport! Thank you!

BCU Ball

Saturday 27th September saw the inaugural BCU Best of British Ball, which recognised the success of the BCU and in particular the staff and athletes involved in delivering GB canoeing's best ever Olympic performance. It was a thoroughly enjoyed event and a special thanks goes to Wendy Blackman for organizing the evening which took place at Stoke Rochford Hall near Grantham. People who received awards included the athletes who competed at the Beijing Olympics games; Campbell Walsh, Fiona Pennie, David Florence, Lucy Wainwright, Anna Hemmings, Tim Brabants and Louisa Sawers.

There were also awards for support staff; Mark Delaney (coach to David Florence), Jurg Gotz (professional performance coach of the year), Aileen Taylor (slalom team physiotherapist), Julia Wells (sport science support), Eric Farrell (Tim Brabant's coach), Jehan Yehia (flat water racing physiotherapist), Hugh Mantle (award for 30 years of service to the BCU), Paul Owen (CEO of the BCU), Brendan Purcell (head flat water racing women's coach Lucy

Wainwright's coach), Alan Williams (flat water racing team manager) and David Gent (BCU Vice President and Chair of Canoe England).



Albert Woods making presentations to (clockwise from top left): Tim Brabants, David Florence, Louise Sawers, Mark Delaney, Brendan Purcell, Alan Williams, Campbell Walsh and Lucy Wainwright.

PHOTOS: BRIAN PLUCKROSE – www.naturesimages.co.uk



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Competition - Marathon

Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race

The support crew

Without a good support crew, the race takes on another dimension and to do well in the race, in fact, to finish the race, the support and backup for a crew is of paramount importance.

The support crew is as much part of the team as the paddlers themselves. A good support crew is worth its weight in gold, a poor support crew can hinder the progress if they are not working together with the paddlers and the rest of the team.

Just as the crew have to be familiar with the course and have practiced and rehearsed it, then the support crew needs to have done the same prior to the race. Whilst the crew in the boat have the task of paddling 125 miles of waterway. The support crew has the task of driving considerably further, navigating their way along motorways, A-roads, country roads and finally the London traffic. They also have to run considerable distances, stay awake, feed themselves in the process and probably most important of all, be at the place they are supposed to be **on time!** Some claim it is harder to support the race than actually do it!

Ideally there should be three vehicles supporting a crew. Without this number it is very difficult to get to all the portages required in time and feed the crew. For juniors, two vehicles are generally sufficient, but for seniors on the overnight race, then two vehicles working together with a third taking time to have a break for food, refuel and rest is a far greater benefit.

There are some golden rules for support crews to remember:

Have a schedule

Know what time your crew is expected at a particular place, this is worked out from their training times and from their progress on the day. Remember, the senior K2's have a tide to catch, so being too late or too early can spell trouble at Teddington if they miss the tide or have to wait too long for it to turn.

Be there in plenty of time

Make sure that you are at the portage or checkpoint in plenty of time before the crew. Get set up and be ready. A good support crew will look for the best take out point and the best put in point, they will lead their crew through the

portage without getting in the way. They will make sure they can be identified by the crew early, especially in the dark.



Make sure you know who your crew are

It is very easy not to spot your own crew coming, particularly at night, so make sure they are easily identifiable, particularly from a distance. Light sticks arranged in a particular way on the boat or body is one way of doing this.

Never shine a torch into the crews faces

Shine the torch from behind them or on to the ground to show the way, stand behind them when they get in and out at portages. Their 'night-sight' is important during darkness, don't ruin it!

Feed and water your crew at the end of the portage, not at the start

Don't try and feed your crew whilst they are running along, get them in the boat then feed, or put the boat down and feed without wasting too much time.

Keep your crew as dry and as warm as possible for as long as possible

Wet clothes will take up a lot of heat from the body, resulting in energy loss, if they are very wet, then change them as soon as possible. As night arrives and the temperature starts to drop, that is a good time to change, both from the physical and psychological point of view. A good place to change is at Reading when they meet the river, again psychologically this provides a good boost. A lot of time can be wasted on a clothing change, so it has to be fast, limiting the time to get cold whilst undressing and cut down on the chat and gossip. Time not paddling is time getting cold again!

Test all foods and drink before the race

As part of training the food and drink that will be consumed in the race must be tried and tested, the concentrate level of drinks, the type of food and how warm it should be, all these must be tested before, the drinks systems must be used before, rehearsals in feeding and eating must also take place before race day. Little and often, regular feeding at portages, drinking along the way from drinks systems, it all helps.

Keep your crew motivated

Make sure their morale is high all the time, the period just before dawn is an important one, so make sure energy levels are high by feeding and getting fluids into them. Be positive in your comments and feedback; give as many compliments as possible in order to encourage them.

Communicate with each other

The support crews should all communicate with each other to make sure that every possible meeting point is covered and the crew feels looked after rather than neglected for long periods, particularly at night when it gets very lonely out there.

Stick to the rules

Remember that the rules of the race apply to the support crew as much as they apply to the crew themselves. Any breach could result in the crew having penalties added or even disqualified. This particularly applies to places you are not allowed to get to in order to support your crew, make sure all the supporters are familiar with these. Respect the countryside and others.

Be assertive when necessary

There will be times when the support crew has to give instructions that have to be followed, make sure this happens and that the crew understand. Don't be afraid to make unpopular decisions. It may be necessary to pull a crew out for their own safety or well-being. Don't be afraid to make this decision. Failure to care for your crew in this way could have serious repercussions later in the race or in their paddling career afterwards.

Whatever happens, don't take it personally!

During the course of a race, the support crew will be shouted at, abused, sworn at, pushed out the way and possibly many more things. It is not meant, it is not personal, it is a combination of low blood sugar, race anxiety, general fatigue and adrenaline all acting together to make even the most placid of people be demanding and obnoxious. After the race, all will be forgotten, get on with the job of supporting and the behaviour patterns will change again, Don't take it personally! And good luck. ●

Rutherford and Hyde turn Tyn to Gold

World Marathon Championships in Tyn, Czech Republic

A chilly 16th World Marathon Championships brought a first ever Junior Men's K2 Marathon World Championship title for GB and double Gold for Elmbridge CC's Ed Rutherford.

Ed delivered against high expectations, with dominant victories in the Junior Men's K1 and K2, becoming only the second British junior to achieve this result since club mate Louisa Sawers won the Junior Women's events in 2006.

Ed's K1 race was the first of the weekend, featuring reigning Junior World Champion Grant Van Der Walt from South Africa and British team-mate Tom Sharpe of Exeter CC. Tom and Ed both made an excellent start, coming into the first portage in the front group.

Throughout the race, Ed's portaging was both consistent and dominant, putting in first and leading through the final turn as if to tell his rivals that the lead-in was not in question. A lightning-fast final portage kept Ed half a length clear of the reigning champion, holding him off to win in a time of 1 hour and 33 minutes. Tom also raced extremely well to finish ninth of the 30 competitors.

The other singles races on Saturday saw an 11th place by Fladbury's James Styan in the Junior C1, Elmbridge's Louisa Sawers was eighth in the Women's

K1, Wey's Simon Fennemore was 15th and Elmbridge's Ben Farrell ninth in the Men's K1.

The British supporters took some heart from the result of the Women's K1, as Lani Belcher won a Silver medal racing for Australia. Lani had been training for much of the summer with Louisa at

Elmbridge CC and both were in contention for a medal in the early stages before a fast portage saw Louisa fall back from the front group.

Ben was also strongly placed in the lead group of the Men's K1 for five of the seven laps, before the top three (Spain's Emilio Merchan, Czech Tomas Jezek and South African Anthony Stott) managed to dispose of their only remaining rival for the medals.

Sunday's doubles races started with the Junior Men, where Rutherford doubled up with club-mate Tom Hide, and also featured Wey's K2 crew of Dean Terry and Mark Childerstone. Tom caused a scare on the first portage, falling on the rocky riverbank and sustaining a few cuts and bruises but he was very quickly back running and never lost touch with the other leaders. After dropping most of their main rivals early on, Ed and Tom finally made Sunday's race appear easy in comparison,



Ed and Tom portaging

leaving the Belgian crew on the final portage to finish 30 seconds clear of the field, while Terry and Childerstone finished a creditable seventh.

In the Junior Women's K2,

Wey's Under 16 crew of Hazel Childerstone and Vicky Croucher were unfortunate to capsize and finished 18 out of 20 starters.

Our Women's K2 race also saw some bad luck, as Nottingham's Hayleigh Mason, racing with Louisa Sawers, was forced to withdraw suffering from



Ed with medal

illness. Nottingham's Harriet Farish and Elmbridge's Nicky Taylor finished tenth in the same race.

In the final event of the weekend, the Men's K2, Britain's entrants were the Wey/Norwich crew of Jon Simmons and Tim Pendle and the Elmbridge crew of Nathan Johnson and John Sawers. This very exciting race was only decided in the last 100m with a win for South Africa's Stott and Schoeman. Jon and Tim finished a strong 12th, five minutes back, while Nathan and John struggled with a damaged rudder to finish 21st out of 35 starters.

Considerable thanks should go to David Enoch, Dyson and Ali Pendle who drove the minibus and provided coaching support, as well as our team physio, Becky Schofield. Team GB's considerable reputation in marathon racing continues to be upheld and we look forward to next year's European and World Championships to continue this success. ●

JAMES SMYTHE, TEAM MANAGER

Back together after 27 years and still a winning duo!

The fantastic thing about the Masters Marathon Championship is that you can catch up with 'old' friends, meet new ones and generally share some stories.

This year was no exception and at the Masters Championships in Tyn, where the well-known Devizes to Westminster record holders Tim Cornish (now racing for South Africa) and Brian Greenham got together to race for the first time in 27 years.

There was no rain during the event but it was bitterly cold. The course consisted of five circuits with five portages. Having so many portages might make it good for spectators but for many of the competitors whose knees are giving in to age it was an added challenge!

The weather was cold but the river was warm. It is thought that the river is fed from water from the nuclear power station, which is used to heat the town – hence the temperature. It's not often one puts ones hands in the water to warm them up!

The Men's K2 races started at 08.00 where it was so cold and foggy that we could not actually see the start pontoon let alone the competitors. Once they were off there were a couple of clashes but eventually they all sorted themselves out and racing continued. It was very eerie to see paddling figures looming out of the fog towards the portage. As the race continued the fog lifted and by the end we could see them crossing the finish line.

Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish were competing in the 55-60-age range but because the organisers did not number the competitors according to their age groups, Brian was not aware of where he was in the race. Brian and Tim had a great race, not only taking advantage of washes but they portaged extremely quickly and smoothly. They were remarkable to watch and they were in the first group to cross the finishing line. They came in fifth position but once the classes had been sorted out, it was clear that Brian and Tim were way out in the lead in their group.

It was really great to be out there racing and hear the cheering going around and around the course! Why not come along and join us? The racing is good and we have great fun too. We are looking at more kit so we look like a team off the water as well as on. Keep an eye on www.marathon-canoering.org.uk as the Masters section is being developed. It's Crestuma Portugal next year – we would love to see you there.

The results can be found at www.candemar.cz/2008/results.php

Ed finishing ahead of Grant Van Der Walt to become Junior World Marathon K1 champion.



Tim and Brian portaging

Competition - Marathon



Geoff Saunders Trophy

Another series of races which culminates at the Hasler Finals is the Geoff Saunders Trophy. The competitors take part in Lightnings and year on year the numbers taking part has risen phenomenally.

A Lightning is a stable, single, racing kayak for juniors aged from eight to 12 years. It is an excellent boat in which children can develop basic paddling and racing skills, before moving into full sized racing boats. It is used in competitions at both sprint regattas and at marathon races.

The Lightning Series is generally run alongside the Hasler Series with races held at most of the regional Hasler races. Races are over distances of approximately two miles and are organised on an age basis in four separate classes – for boys and girls under 10 and under 12 years. The Series is an ideal way to introduce children to racing.

Points are awarded to each competitor and the Geoff Saunders Memorial Trophy is awarded at the Hasler Final race each September to the club that has gained the most points based on regional races plus the race held at the Hasler Final.

The racing went very well with large numbers of youngsters taking part. Despite the rain all had a super race.

Results

Geoff Saunders final

Nottingham CC	92
Shropshire Paddlesport	84
Leighton Buzzard CC	80

The full results can be found at www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk

Hasler Finals 2008

For the first time in many, many years the Hasler Finals were held in Burton Upon Trent and run by Burton Canoe Club. The rain in the previous weeks led to a little worry about the possibility of the event being cancelled but for once the British weather came up trumps and the water levels dropped so the races went ahead.

However, on the actual day it poured with rain all day only clearing for the prize giving in the afternoon. It is a super competition with clubs from all over England and Scotland talking part. It is also good fun to race against people you do not normally have the opportunity to race, to make new friends and catch up with old ones.

The races, particularly in the lower divisions were very crowded which led to some really spectacular starts. The river in itself was not flowing very fast but the twists and turns of the river meant that one had to really read the river to take advantage of the best route. There were shallows en-route and a few people who had been riding the waves found themselves beached! This is part the joy of marathon racing – anything can happen.

Lucy Wainwright very kindly came along and gave out the Hasler Prizes. Lucy, as a flat water paddler and a 2004 and 2008 Olympian, has naturally concentrated on sprint racing. It was lovely to see her and for her to be at such a big marathon racing event. Thank you to Burton canoe Club who ran a super event.

What is the Hasler Series?

The Hasler Competition was set up in 1957. The Hasler Series is based on a divisional system and is competed throughout the season (September to August) on a regional basis. It is at the heart of marathon racing in the UK with over 100 clubs competing in some 60 or more races each year. Races, organised within regions, are held over

distances of approximately four, eight and 12 miles depending on competitor's ability. Promotions and demotions from one division to another are based on performance, to ensure that competitors of similar ability race against one another.

The top ten clubs 2007-08

Club	Points
Elmbridge CC	222
Norwich CC	216
Reading CC	216
Worcester CC	177
Wey KC	173
Chelmsford CC	163
Banbury & District	162
Basingstoke CC	159
Bishops Stortford CC	141
Nottingham CC	140

Clubs compete on a regional basis to qualify for the final which is held each September hosted by one of the racing clubs. The Hasler Trophy is awarded to the club that gains the most points at the final.

Since 1996 Elmbridge have won the overall Hasler trophy at least ten times... the first winners back in 1957 were the Canoe Touring Club. Time for someone else to take the title?

See you at Reading next September for the Hasler Finals 2009!

More information and divisional races results can be found at www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk



Competition - Slalom

Post games by David Florence

C1 Slalom Olympic Silver medallist

Having never been to the Olympic Games before I hadn't had much media coverage, so it's fair to say that winning my Silver medal changed all of that. My medal was the first Silver, first male and first Scottish medal of the games so I did interviews almost solidly after my medal ceremony at 17.00 until late into the night, finally getting to bed at 04.00. The media thoroughly enjoyed my having applied to be an astronaut (and been rejected) and it figured largely in my press coverage - 'over the moon', 'rockets through rapids' and 'reaches for the stars'.

The canoeing was based at Shunyi, an hour north east of Beijing and we shared a hotel with the rowers and sprint canoeists. I very much enjoyed their company and the friendships that have evolved. On the last night we had great fun building a human pyramid at the Team GB party.

I was fortunate enough to have my event early on in the Games, so was able to move into the Olympic village in Beijing for the second week. It was a fantastic experience, watching other events and meeting other athletes. Just sat eating dinner when Usain Bolt, Nadal or Yao Ming (7' 6" Chinese basketball player) could be sat alongside.

Being in Beijing throughout the Games we didn't really get a feel for the reaction of the British public back home so were absolutely amazed at the reception we received on arrival back into Heathrow on the British Airways Team GB flight. I made it back to Nottingham for a day before heading up to Edinburgh for the Scottish press and the Olympic medallist's open top bus journey down the Royal Mile. The crowds were incredible with some 50,000 reported to have turned out to congratulate us. The public's enthusiasm for our achievement was overwhelming.

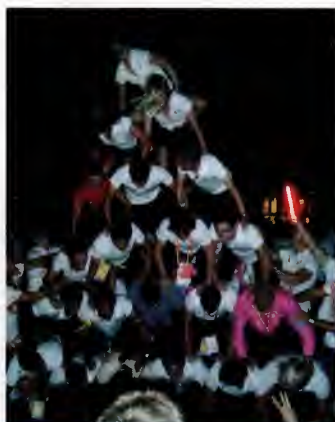
The London Bus parade was also wonderful, culminating in meeting the Queen at the Team GB reception she hosted at Buckingham Palace that evening. The following week I was fortunate enough to be invited out to Slovakia by the British Ambassador to meet the Queen at two further



receptions during her first state visit to the country. So at least I've done well out of finishing second to a Slovak at the Olympics.

I have now visited a few schools to talk about the Olympics and at the first school I went to visit, I was asked along to show the children my medal and answer some questions. When I actually arrived at the school, however, the head teacher who told me everyone was in the assembly hall met me and they were really looking forward to my talk. After having managed to wing a talk, I let the children ask any questions they had... the first question was, "Does Chris Hoy like you?"

As well as the visit to Slovakia I've been travelling the length and breadth of the UK. From Nottingham down to



Southampton to the Boat Show at lunchtime then up to London for a dinner before returning to Nottingham that night. To dinners in Scotland and to the Scotland - New Zealand rugby match. However, like myself at the Olympics, Scotland also finished second.

I was invited to take part in 'Celebrity Scissorhands' which (thankfully) I was too busy to commit to, but I have took part in Children In Need in Glasgow in my official capacity as a canoeist!

Although I have received a huge amount of attention, my success is shared with the many who have given me invaluable help throughout the years. From my uncle Scott Ramage, who first introduced me to canoeing; Kevin McHugh who saw Fraser (my

I let the children ask any questions they had... the first question was, "Does Chris Hoy like you?"

brother) and I at our first slalom and offered to train Fraser and "Ok I'll take his older brother as well"; Keith Brown for all those

nights at the canal; Johnny Brown for his work organising the Scottish training program; Rachael Crosbie when I started in the GB canoe slalom team, right through to Mark Delaney, my coach for the past five years. There are undoubtedly many others who have influenced me on the way, so thanks also go to them with particular mention of Hugh Mantle, my sports psychologist and Dave Clark, strength and conditioning coach.

It has been great fun and a real honour to have so much attention, but despite all the invites and requests, I've been getting back into heavy training too. Looking for a new challenge, I've started training in C2 as well as C1. Obviously I couldn't do that on my own, so I managed to persuade Richard Hounslow to be my back man. We've only been doing it a month or so now, but I am really enjoying it and if it goes well, who knows, hopefully we'll race two classes each next year. ●

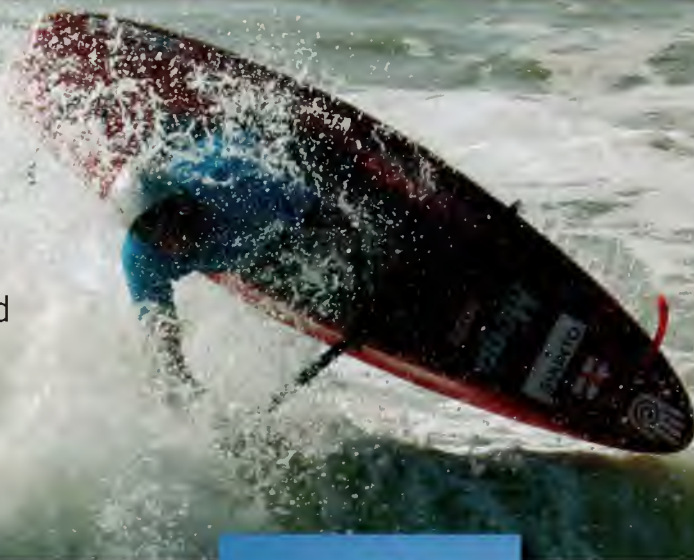


Competition - Surf

A flying squad clean up!

SURF HOME INTERNATIONALS AND WORLD CUP

The Kayak Surf Home Internationals and the Kayak Surf World Cup were held in the Ile De Oleron, south west France. Ile De Oleron is the second largest island to Corsica off mainland France and the perfect setting for two long awaited competitions.



Home International result

1st: England

Juniors:

Phillip Watson, Sam Davenport and Jack Horwell

Mens:

Dan Green, James Hawker, Richard Sims, Andy Wildman and Peter Blenkinsop

Womens:

Tamsin Green and Robyn Pearcey

Masters:

Gary Adcock

Team Manager:

John Watson

2nd: Guernsey

3rd: Jersey

4th: the 'Rest of the World'

The Home Internationals happen every two years and it is the only event other than the World Championships where competitors have the opportunity to compete as a team. This year we were welcomed with four teams, Jersey, Guernsey, England and 'the Rest of the World' team. Rusty Sage, founder, former World Cup Champion and the current World Champion was running the World Cup event this year. This brought across many competitors from various countries such as Brazil, Basque and America, thus providing us with 'the Rest of the World' team for the Homes.

Day one

The competition kicked off at 09.00 with the first round of men followed by the women and the juniors. Sam Davenport, one of England's most up and coming juniors pulled off the first aerial of the day. Sam has been surfing on the England team for many years now and is looking really good alongside some of the men as he goes into his final year as a junior.

As the day rolled on both women on the England and Jersey teams were going strong. Ailsa McDougall (Jersey) got a first for international class (IC) heat and a second in the high performance class (HP) heat. Tamsin Green (England) got a first for the HP and a second for the IC. Robyn Pearcey (England) achieved firsts in both her IC and HP heats.

Robyn Pearcey has come on leaps and bounds since her first experience of competing only 18 months ago. Already she has gained the title of Female British Champion 2007.

In the afternoon of day one, the World Cup began. All competitors were keen to get on the water as they tested

themselves against one another, hoping to reach the head-to-head knockouts of the quarter and semi-finals.

Both Sam Davenport and Phillip Watson (England) came first in round one of the junior heats. Towards the end of the afternoon Chris Harvey amazed the judges as he flew off the lip into an aerial landing right in front of them on the sand.

As day one of the competitions ended, results showed that England was well in the lead for the Homes and all World Cup competitors and were raring to go the following morning for round two of the world cup.

Tuesday presented a much cleaner wave than on Monday with the competitors beginning to appreciate the location. Phillip Watson, Peter Blenkinsop, Andy Wildman and James Hawker all flew through the men's second round of the World Cup with firsts. David Speller from Jersey along with Sam Davenport came first in the second round of juniors and for the women, Ailsa McDougall and Tamsin Green were leading the way towards the head-to-head semis.



Main: Chris 'Air' Harvey
Top: Tamsin Green
Above: Sam Davenport and David Speller
Below: Sam Davenport

The Master's heats showed some impressive surfing by both Garry Adcock (England) and Dim Tim (Jersey). Both paddling in IC the two sliced through the waves and shot straight down the line, showing some of the youngsters they could still give them a run for their money.

By the end of day two, the Homes had finished and the World Cup had seen some really positive performances from individuals. They were ready to start the head to head knockouts, the question was, was the surf?

The surf had been forecasted to drop throughout the week with a peak reappearing toward the weekend, so Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, were spent, yes that's right, being tourists around the local towns and enjoying the summer sun on the beaches.

Saturday morning

Just as forecasted, the waves reappeared on Saturday morning just in time to finish the World Cup. The crowds were starting to gather around the

judge's hut as the results of the semis were put up. Chris Harvey (Guernsey) and Edu Etxeberria (Basque) made it through to the semis, along with Sam Davenport (England) and David Speller (Jersey). This proved a lot of paddling for Sam and David as they were also through to the junior semis.

The women's final was nail biting close, both Tamsin Green and Ailsa McDougall are very dedicated and devoted paddlers and their training leading up to the event was clearly paying off.

The junior finals arrived and Sam having just competed in semis was straight back out to fight for the title with David Speller.

The points were counted and results in, Junior World Cup Champion 2008 was Sam Davenport with a high score of 37.5. The Men's World Cup Champion was Edu Etxeberria and the Women's World Cup Champion 2008 was Tamsin Green with a score of 39.5.

All competitors paddled extremely well and provided a good competition, not only themselves but for the judges also, a big thank you to Rusty Sage and Garry Adcock for that.

Information on any competitions can be found at www.bcu.org.uk

ROBYN PEARCEY

PHOTOS: MALCOLM PEARCEY



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Competition - Freestyle

Youth Freestyle Series 2008



Despite this year's Youth Freestyle Series being plagued by poor weather (two events had to be rescheduled) it has been a successful year with even more participants than last year, leading to harder competition. There has also been an increase in novice competitors and at the final event in Nottingham there was a separate novice event where participants who were not confident in the Muncher or the inlet gate showed how they could do eddy-line moves, stern-squirts, shudder rudders and cheesy grins at the bottom of the course. Extra points were given for those who were brave enough to throw their paddles in the air whilst doing pop-outs on a 'friendlier' inlet gate.

The parents were rewarded from ferrying around their children with their own competition at the Nottingham event. Unfortunately for them but to the enjoyment of the spectators, they were given a much less friendly and very sticky inlet gate to play on and mega side-surfs and swims led to big cheers.

At each event the participants enjoyed the morning coaching sessions for all abilities, which ranged from breaking in and out of eddies to planning competition runs. At the Boulters event, Kayakojacko coaches helped

with forward paddling technique and visualisation of moves (looping on the grass was quite entertaining to watch!). Surfing waves and of course perfecting the latest freestyle manoeuvres were always a feature of the coaching.

An afternoon of fun competition always follows the morning coaching sessions and the final Nottingham event saw a number of competitors fighting it out for the series win. The encouragement from the crowd and the warm October sunshine helped the paddlers produce a great variety of freestyle moves leading to huge scores in all categories on both the Inlet gate and the Muncher. Congratulations to the following (bottom of page) for getting a top three position in the event series (three out of the five events counted towards the series results).

A big thanks must go to the huge number of sponsors who helped with the series including: K3 (who funded the bibs), BCU North East (who gave a lot of support to the Teeside event), Kayakojacko, PGL, Desperate Measures and the companies that provided spot prizes throughout the series: Palm Equipment/Dagger Europe, Pyranha, Squarerock/Jacksonkayak.

The series will be back next year, although there may be a few changes with locations depending on the development of some of the white water courses we use. We welcome all Under 18 paddlers who have a white water roll. Keep checking www.youth.ukfreestyle.com for details of the 2009 series. ●

FIONA JARVIE



Top of the pops!

A big 'well done' to Ed Smith and Fiona Jarvie for their success at becoming British Freestyle Champions.

Both are highly successful international playboaters with world and European titles on their respective paddling CV's, but it's always sweet to win on home turf.

However, it wasn't easy, the event held at Nottingham's Holme Pierrepont WW course notoriously favours local talent who paddle there regularly and know the routines the site offers. Ed, now studying in Cornwall and Fiona who is a Thames Weir girl, rose to the challenge with consistent runs and a real show of experience in the knockout final. Ed also proved his form in his Dagger Agent by getting the top score of the event in during his semi-final, linking high scoring 'air' moves back to back.

Ed and Fiona will now spend the winter doing more local events before getting onto the international scene in the spring ready for next year's August World Championships to be held in Switzerland.



RESULTS 2008 SERIES

Under 12 Girls

1. Kimberlee Aldred,
2. Emily Hewitt

Under 15 Girls:

1. Gabby Bates
2. Millie Leith
3. Tasha Isaacs

Under 18 Girls

1. Poppy Layton
2. Islay Crosbie

Under 12 Boys

1. James Bennis
2. Brandon Hepburn
3. James Cooper

Under 15 Boys

1. David Wild
2. Adam Cox

Under 18 Boys

1. Stuart Parry
2. Tom Turner
3. Dom Brayfield



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By Barry Howell

It's a lot of fun checking in your kayak on an Easyjet flight from Liverpool to Nice on the Friday of a bank holiday weekend; especially when there's a Monaco Grand Prix happening as well. The pleasure of standing in a half-mile snake of people with all your kit should never be underestimated, particularly when you eventually reach the check-in to be told you have exceeded the baggage allowance.



All those lovely people in the queue behind us seemed to be delighted at the scene in front of them....I would rank it just behind sticking pins in my eyes in terms of great ways to

spend a Friday afternoon and I was thrilled to cough up another £150 for the excess. Amazingly the day got even better – the flight was delayed for an hour and then diverted to Marseilles!

Naturally we were a little late getting to the Eurocar depot at Nice airport and they were really helpful too, charging us a mere £30 excess for checking in after midnight while they presented us with the wrong car for our roof rack.

Matt had assured us it was but a short drive from Nice to Embrun in the Durance Valley, having done a recon the summer before. Consequently I was a little surprised to still be navigating at 04.30 in the morning as he negotiated the unrelenting twists and turns of the Route Napoleon. Nevertheless, it's always a pleasure to watch the sun come up over the Alps.

Alan and Big Al joined us on the second evening, having driven from Carcassonne. Naturally things got a little raucous. I think Alistair Cooke might just have had it spot on when he reflected, *"I have a deep unspoken pity for people who have no attachment to a single sport. I am almost as sorry for them as I am for teetotallers."*

It snowed overnight and we awoke to white mountains and grey skies. The drive over the Col du

Below: The middle Guil.



The Antiques R

Vars was as dramatic as ever, ending with the long winding descent into the valley of the upper Ubaye. This feels like a wild, remote place and the river plunges away right from the start. Last year I had a lot of fun when my spray deck popped off halfway down the first rapid, filling my boat up almost instantly. The subsequent dramatic and frantic paddle to the bank has remained clearly in my memory, surpassed only by the memory of it happening once more almost immediately. Ah, the joys of kit which has passed its sell by date. This year the level was a little lower and, in a more positive frame of mind, I was determined to avoid a repeat of what the party called 'showboating' when I fell into one of the big holes.

The sun came out, which always helps, and once we'd patched up Mike's head - after his kayak blew off the roof rack and brained him – we set off. It's a magnificent river, a great choice as the first 'real' river of the trip; one which allows you to stretch yourself and realise that this is why you've travelled so far.

It's probably not too sensible to indulge in too many chocolat chaud avec cognacs on the way back through Barcelonnette, because one thing can lead to another.

A very large hole

And now I am standing in a gorge on the upper Guil, examining the bottom of my boat, which appears to have developed a very large hole directly under my seat; caused, I calculate, by dropping five feet or so directly onto a submerged boulder and thereby testing the brittleness of my aging 'Creek'. The hole

is about the size of my outstretched hand, the flap held in place by a couple of inches of twisted plastic. For some reason I am not feeling at my chirpiest as I look up to see Martin examining what's left of his paddle. He has snapped off one of his blades attempting to paddle gravel. I am reassured, though, to remember that I am in the company of some of the finest the BCU coaching service can offer, only to discover that nobody has anything remotely resembling a repair kit, never mind a split paddle.

It's a little embarrassing flagging down a passing group to scrounge some plastic putty and sylglass, enough to affect a temporary repair to get me out of the gorge, while Martin borrows their split paddle. My mood is obviously lightened by Alan, who appears impervious to my feelings of loss. His advice... *"You'll never repair that! If I was you, mate, I*

would just leave it there and walk out," doesn't exactly strike the chord I am hoping for. He, somewhat surprisingly, doesn't seem too impressed by my offer

the six rafts that were setting up on our arrival have vanished instantly downstream in a cacophony of screams and muted sobs

to geld him with my river knife. It's at times like these that I am inclined towards the words of Epicurus. *"For most men, rest is stagnation, activity madness."* (Circa 300BC)

The next morning, in a Dagger CFS hired at great cost from Liquid Holidays in Saint Clement, I am sat in a boily eddy at the start of the Ubaye racecourse. It's my first time in this boat and my first time on this stretch of water. Two years ago I would taken a look at it and decided it was a good time for a rest day. The river is racing past me like an express train and the six rafts that were setting up on our arrival

Below: A gentle start on the upper Ubaye!



Below: Lunchtime on the upper Ubaye.

Above: Another sunny day on the Col du Vars.



Barry was paddling with Matt Ellis, Martin Barratt, Alistair Wilson and Alan Brenton, and for a couple of days, Mike and Doreen Tinnion.

oadshow... in the Alps

Quotes of the week...

"At first glance this river appears to be going like an express train – was it like this last year?" (M.E.)

"Martin – if you're 200 yards behind me I can't look after you!" (M.E.)

"You never break plastic boats..." (M.E.)

"What I find frustrating is trying to get a beer when I'm on holiday with the Amish" (M.E.)

"You cannot paddle gravel..." (M.B.)

"Any boat that's called 'Acrobat' is clearly to be avoided!" (M.B.)

"It's all straightforward from here mate." (AB, after 200 yards of the middle Guil)



have vanished instantly downstream in a cacophony of screams and muted sobs. I see that my journal notes *"Not the most relaxing of starts as it's immediately into a long, straight rapid that more or less continues for the whole of the trip."*

In fact it's a sensational paddle – big, demanding, and unrelenting, but nowhere does it feel nasty, although this might be something to do with the sunshine and the breathtaking scenery. The bottom stretch, down through the deep, narrow gorge under the Pont Romaine, would rank alongside anything.

That evening, flushed with success, bonhomie and red wine, Matt decides to barbecue. Now, I've tried to barbecue all manner of things, but I confess to having swerved around the idea of barbecuing whole duck breasts. For a start these are about five inches thick and then there's the fact that they

might just be a little 'fatty', but he won't be dissuaded. Have you ever seen five duck breasts burning? It makes the recent Cutty Sark conflagration look trivial. Some time later it's like eating my wetsuit boot, but chewier.

And so, on to the middle Guil – described in the guidebook as *"One of the most beautiful and least spoiled rivers in the French Alps."* I note it advises, reassuringly, that it's typical for six paddlers to start from the Triple Staircase and only two to finish the whole run. It's non-stop all day, with portages around the Labyrinth and Le Tunnel. We're standing above the final stretch down to the lake after Big Al takes a short but invigorating swim when a group of canoe guides paddle past us on a day off from steering punters down the local delights. They've paddled the whole river - some 26kms of challenging white water to this point – and most don't even look damp. We've chatted to some of them as the week has progressed and they've been helpful enough and smiled a lot. I've tended to wonder about those smiles. I watch them disappear down the river and decide that, on this occasion, discretion is the better part of valour and climb up to the road, accompanied by Martin and Big Al. The other two continue down the final stretch (the guidebook is right again), watched by an appreciative group of guides, who obviously anticipate a little sporting fun and entertainment. We meet them by the cars above the get out. The Irish lad summed it all up rather nicely, I thought. *"Sure, and it was like watching the Antiques Roadshow coming down the river!"*

Sometimes being the oldest paddler in the Alps has its moments... ●

The author, celebrating still being alive!



Canoeing on the Menai Straits

We woke up to perfect weather at our accommodation in Plas Menai. The four of us, including our coach, began to load the canoes on to the trailer and stuff the rest of the day's equipment and supplies in the back of the minibus.

It hadn't taken long to load up and it was only a 20-minute drive to the Menai Straits crossing the beautifully crafted Britannia Bridge on the way. From the bridge, we could see what we would be paddling on, however, it's not until you start paddling that you realise the true strength of the tidal waters.

We parked up in a small, hard to reach car park and started unloading the gear.

It was a short paddle from there to the swellies where we would be spending our day. It's quite unbelievable how fast the water flows past the rocks on the straits, making paddling against the current extremely difficult.

Just under the Britannia Bridge, we stopped in a big eddy to discuss what we were going to do on the first patch of white water... ferrygliding! John, our coach went first to show us what we had to do. Making it

look easy, he sorted out his 'spangle' (speed and angle) then glided across the rapid in to an eddy on the other side. One by one, we followed his lead, however, none of us found it as easy as he did and it took us a few attempts to get to a decent standard.

About 50 metres further down towards Menai, we found the perfect spot for experimenting with different types of ferrygliding including reverse paddling and using our paddles on the upstream and downstream sides of the canoe. I had a hard time trying to perfect crossing the rapid in reverse and generally found myself getting closer to doing flat spins.

At around 12.30 we stopped for lunch on a quiet and hidden away corner of the shores. The temperature was rising and the sun had burnt away the low lying morning haze. We were lucky to have such a perfect day for paddling.

As nice as it was to be lying beneath the warm sun in such a tranquil place, it wasn't hard to find the motivation to get back in our canoes and shoot through some more swellies.

The next hour or so was spent breaking in, breaking out and doing figures of eight in and out of the current. For me, it was a good job it was a warm day; I was breaking in to the main flow, making the error of not putting an edge on my canoe, the next second, I had plunged in to the cold sea water, waiting for one of my fellow paddlers to rescue me. A good demonstration of an X-rescue by John got me back in my canoe and no sooner than I had sat back down on the thwart, the usual laughs came. I was the first swimmer of the day and my group wasn't going to let me forget it. At least I had cooled down!

Canoe poling

Time had flown by. It was nearing 14.30 and the current was beginning to turn. We started to paddle back up to where the minibus was parked, on the way, stopping in a bit of shallow water to learn about poling. We had each been given a two-piece aluminium canoe pole to use. John broke it to us that we would be standing up to do this and although it looks easy, it was very difficult. My pole kept getting stuck between rocks and in seaweed clumps, almost causing me to take a swim, again. We used poles over paddles for a good half hour, by which time, all of us had done a pretty good job with it. We strapped the poles back into our canoes, picked up our paddles and carried on our journey back to the minibus.

About 15 minutes later, we paddled over to the building on an island of rock in the middle of the Menai Straits and brought our canoes parallel to the wall to practice C-strokes – a good way to move yourself away from a shore while going forward as well.

From there, we paddled back under the Britannia Bridge and headed towards the car park. It's only about a 20-minute paddle from the bridge, however, by this time, winds had got up, making it a bit more difficult after a few hours of paddling.

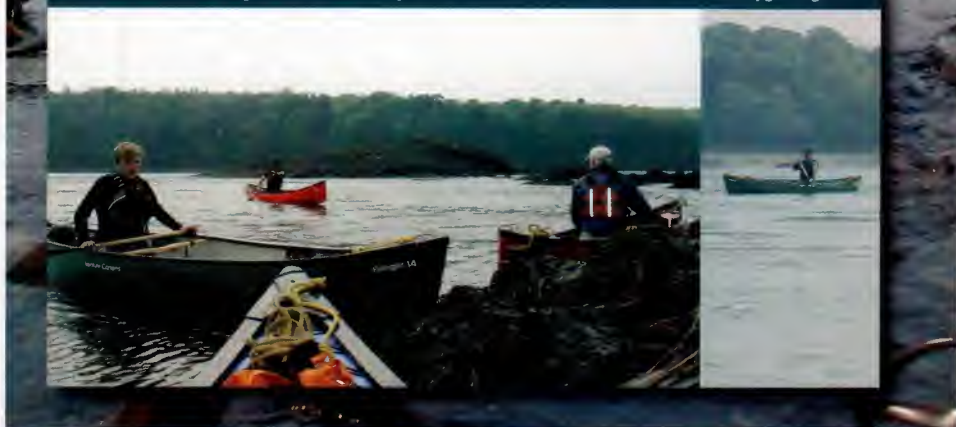
After stepping on to the rocky beach and pulling our canoes out of the water, we lifted them back on to the trailer. They felt twice as heavy as my arms were so fatigued from paddling in the swellies. John showed us how to use the painters to tie the canoes down by making a loop, threading the rope through and tying a couple of half hitches.

When we had changed out of our paddling gear, all that was left was the journey back to Plas Menai. I was looking forward to a hot shower and a cup of coffee. It had been a fantastic day on the straits and I will definitely be paddling there again! ●

WILL MAWSON



Above: Britannia Bridge. **Below:** Me, Guy and John on the Menai Straits and dad ferrygliding.



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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AUTUMN TOURNAMENT – VICTORIA DOCKS, LONDON



For everyone involved in canoe polo at a university level, the beginning of the academic year is an opportunity not only to reform old teams but also to recruit as many unsuspecting freshers as possible to have their first taste of the beautiful game!

Many new members have never even been in a kayak before, let alone paddled whilst chasing after a ball. The University of London Canoe Polo Club (ULU) was overwhelmed by the interest shown in the sport this year from new members. We felt it was vital to encourage as many of the students brave enough to try the sport, to stick at it and what better way by providing them with their first tournament to play in, than right on their doorstep. Thus, the ULU Autumn tournament 2008 was born.

With preparation beginning back in July there was plenty of time to get as many universities involved as possible before the tournament commenced on the weekend of the 25-26th October. A total of eight clubs participated, fielding 20 teams across three leagues. The tournament was held at the Royal Victoria Docks Watersports Centre in London's Docklands area, where the vast expanse of water and helpful staff provided a perfect venue for the two pitches that were to host 75 games over the weekend.

Men's league

The men's league showcased talent from eight teams with levels of experience ranging from the ever competent, well performing Nottingham down to the underdogs, local club Leaside, who had only picked up a polo ball the previous week. (Although, being very proficient paddlers in their own white water discipline, there was no way we were



Leaside and Warwick battling it out



ULU vs Birmingham- friendly play!

going to put them in the fresher's league!) Birmingham, ULU and Oxford all put in good performances with Warwick A showing the B team what they have to look forward to in the future. The tournament saw a thrilling final played out between Southampton and Nottingham with the southerners putting up a good fight but being robbed of the top spot by a Nottingham men's team that was just too good on the day.

All the men's teams enjoyed the chance to flex their paddling muscles after a summer off and we may have even convinced Leaside that paddling

with a ball is much more fun than paddling without!

Women's league

The women's league consisted of five teams from Warwick, Birmingham, Southampton, Nottingham and ULU. A round robin approach was taken whereby all teams played each other twice over the weekend.

Saturday provided a good opportunity to size up the opposition and no punches were pulled! ULU particularly enjoyed playing the new Nottingham ladies team having only just recovered from the bitter blow, which they dealt to ULU at BUSA last April. ULU ladies eventually won the league, securing victory in seven games and drawing once in a very close match against Birmingham ladies, who enjoyed second place overall.

ULU were able to enter four teams into the fresher's league along with teams from both Southampton and Oxford. Despite play being slightly slower and more cautious than in the

other leagues the rivalry was none the less intense and the leaps in confidence made by all who played were very rewarding to behold. That said, there were times when we could only just bare to watch as players were simultaneously falling in, rolling, t-rescuing and swimming whilst still managing to pull off some of the sweetest goals ever to grace a polo pitch. Prizes for the best goal, most entertaining swim and greatest goal keeping moment kept the tone of the league light and the emphasis firmly centred on fun and learning.

It is safe to say that the tournament was a great success and a tribute to the hard work of all involved. The inclement weather meant that hot refreshments provided by our long suffering parents were gratefully received and thanks must also go to all the referees who braved the elements to ref from a rocking pontoon in the middle of the docks. The ULU admin team was breathtaking in their efficiency and time keeping and scoring were carried out with finesse! Special thanks must go to Meridian, Reed Chill Cheater and Brighton Canoes for their kind support of the event and also to the Royal Victoria Docks Water Sports Centre for being so accommodating and putting up with us for the entire weekend. The tournament was great fun to organise and we look forward to holding another in the not too distant future. ●

SARAH DOMAN, KATE STEVENS
PHOTOS: P. DOMAN, K. DOMAN

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Kayaking the Galapagos

Scorpion blowhole.



Only lapping waves broke the island's silence and the intoxicating views bound us in a sort of lucid trance. Then 50 yards further, a wake-up call ensued when Craig noticed in rapid successive splashing on the surface of the turquoise blue water. "Something's going on over there," he said, pointing with his paddle toward the eastern end of Chinese.

As we approached, it was difficult to decipher what was rejoicing in the frenetic horseplay in water clarity that resembled a backyard swimming pool. Then, a pause revealed a grey, jagged dorsal fin, a bottle-nosed dolphin was slapping at the surface with its powerful tail.

As we cruised by – paddles out of the water – we startled the solitary marine mammal, which bolted behind us. Further down the broad anchorage and apparently overwhelmed with curiosity, the dolphin returned, hanging close, while streaking ahead of our bows, then keeping pace along our port sides.

As if we weren't entertained enough, a majestic bald eagle soared overhead, its distinct white head stood out against infinite blue skies. Not a bad way to start the day at the Channel Islands National Park.

Islands of discovery

Santa Barbara, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands are all unique. Only 11 to 40 miles off the mainland, adventure abounds on each islet mixed in with a superabundance of natural wonders.

Kayaking is the best way to experience this unique archipelago honeycombed with more volcanic sea caves than anywhere else in the world, with its glut of hidden nooks and crannies.

A bevy of seabirds roost and nest in the toothy grottos, sharing them with ungainly harbour seals and raucous sea lions. Many of the cobbled coves are inaccessible on foot, but in a kayak the potential for intimate encounters with biodiversity magnifies with each stroke of the paddle.

Island hopping

The west end of the largest of the Channel Islands loomed on the horizon ten miles southeast of Craig and I, as we prepared to paddle from Carrington Point at the tip of Santa Rosa to Santa Cruz Island.

The divide between the islands is known as the Santa Cruz Channel, one of the most dangerous channels in the world. Fishermen, divers and surfers also call it the 'Potato Patch' where wind and swell are unpredictable and currents collide like mighty titans from as faraway as Alaska and Mexico. I've paddled the channel several times always with a twinge of anxiety gnawing at my gut, and this occasion was no different.

However, visibility was fair, the wind calm and there was a northwest swell. The first four miles paddled smoothly, with Skunk Point on my distant right as a point of reference, its wind blown beach acting as a sandy finger pointing toward Christy Beach on Santa Cruz.

Then, without warning, a dense wave of fog rolled in from the east as the west end of Santa Cruz vanished before us. Up to this point, Craig and I were paddling about 50 feet apart when I raised my voice to catch his attention. "I don't want to put pressure on you, but we need to increase our pace to get across as quickly as possible," I yelled. "Let's paddle closer together too."

Without saying a word, Craig narrowed the gap between our kayaks, now only a paddle length apart. In my mind I ran through all the worst-case scenarios in the channel: miss the west end completely and find ourselves in the shipping lanes, or maybe a fishing boat running us down. At this point Santa Rosa was engulfed too; nothing to do but keep paddling in 50 feet of visibility.

A slight ache in my shoulders and arms developed with the faster pace, but a boost in adrenaline offset

my twinge of discomfort. The winds stayed relatively calm, and what little pulsing swell there was propelled us to keep pace with our estimated 10 miles in 2.5 hours. I kept telling myself either the fog was going to lift, the black, volcanic cliffs would come into view, or we'll hear waves crashing into them.

For 30 minutes it felt like we were paddling on a pelagic treadmill with no point of reference. Then finally, high above the west end, I made out one of the higher island mountain tops peeking through the haze. Southeast by south, my compass reading was dead on. The fog continued to sweep by and more of

the island's daunting topography revealed itself. Western gulls soared lazily in the mist and small waves slapped against the volcanic mass. A swell of relief poured over us. Our paddling slowed to a casual pace, as we leaned back in our boats and enjoyed our good fortune.



Snowy Plover in wrack line.

"You can't take anything for granted out here," I said. We laughed a little at our foggy predicament, but we both knew a little luck didn't hurt either. Our emotions rolled with the fog, peaks and valleys in a foreboding strait.

"My stomach sank some when the island disappeared," admitted Craig. "I couldn't tell where we were paddling."

Six miles further down the front side of Santa Cruz – and with the worst behind us – we paddled inside one of the largest documented sea caves in the world. Painted Cave penetrates 1215 feet inside Santa Cruz through four volcanic chambers. It gets its moniker from the multi-coloured lichen found clinging to its entrance that reaches 160 feet high and 100 feet wide. The further we paddled inside the darker it got. Within the third chamber, we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces. It felt like the

Islands of the north

By Chuck Graham

The colossal, sheer cliff face at Chinese Harbour towered above, as my friend, Craig Fernandez and I paddled with ease toward its eastern shore. Kayaking doesn't get any more relaxed, as we both had our feet resting on the port and starboard sides of our boats, gliding effortlessly with a favourable current down the front side of Santa Cruz Island.

As the island's innards were closing in, a hint of claustrophobia infiltrated the dank cavern, so we flipped on our headlamps. Then, mind-blowing bellows echoed out of the black abyss. Our beams of light reflected off glowing eyes. In the rear of the massive grotto was a cobbled beach where a contingent of sea lions hauled out. They probably smelled us first, but if we didn't know better, those deafening bellows would have made for an impressive sea monster.

Counting fish

On our approach to Potato Harbour we were greeted by more throaty bellows, a pair of maturing male sea lions swayed flipper to flipper on a craggy cathedral, displaying their territorial claim to the craggy, volcanic outcropping.

With the ebb and flow of a medium tide, Craig and I slipped through narrow channels between the exposed barnacle-encrusted rocks, past the harbour's whiskered hierarchy, and into the serenity of another breathtaking cove. A lone sailboat anchored in the oval-shaped bay, not a ripple of ocean stirred and the silence forced us to stop paddling and absorb the island's splendour. Emerald green water barely lapped on shore. The depth of the natural harbour with its two spindly, rocky fingers protruding toward Point Conception, resembled the claw of a crab.

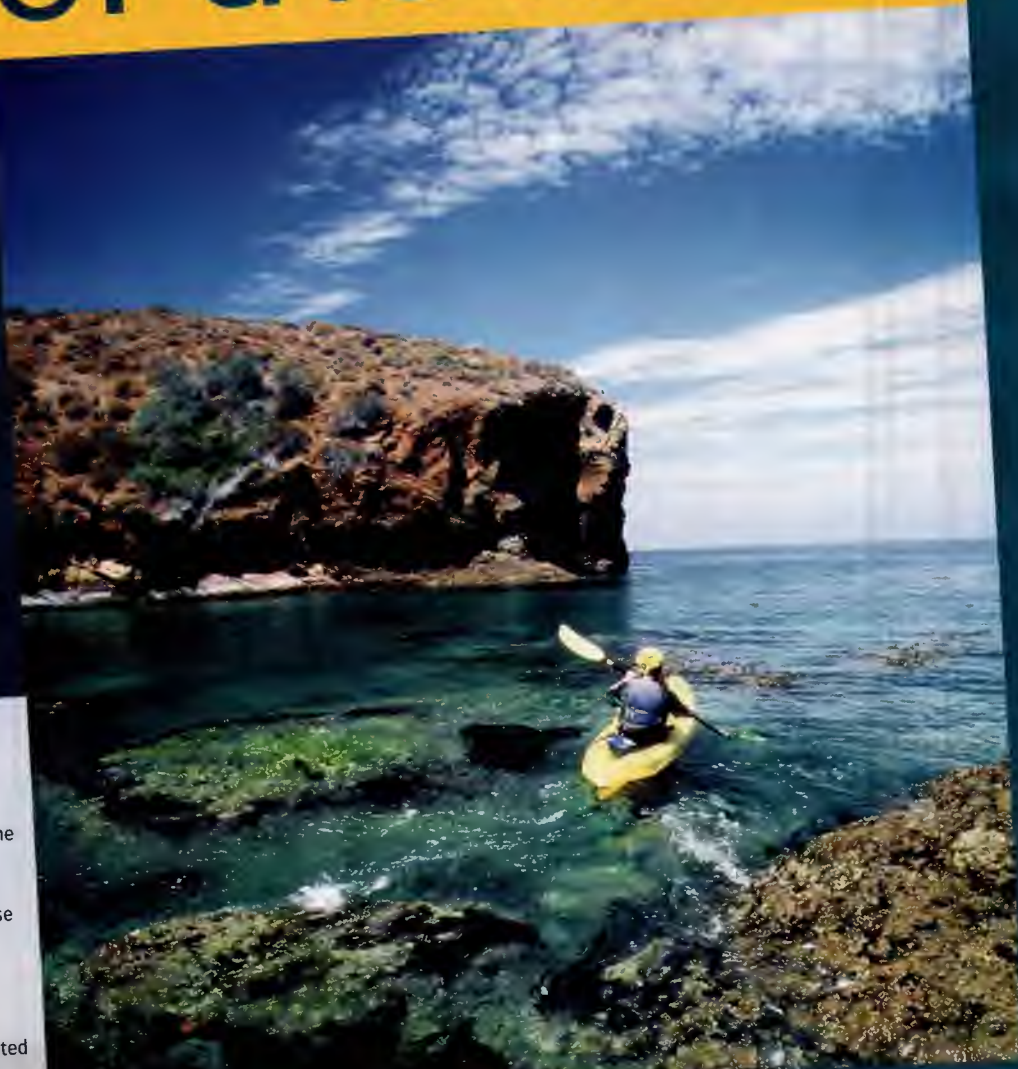
After beaching our kayaks, we walked off the stiffness in our legs, as a patch of wet sand emerged with the receding tide. "This is it," I said, referring to its scenic beauty. "This is why we paddle."

"There's too many of these coves to count," replied Craig, as he dug inside the hull of his kayak for food.

Speaking of food, a black swarm of bait fish swept inside the cove. No gulls, pelicans, pinnipeds or dolphins feasted on the millions of tiny silverfish weaving with a retreating tide in a sort of aquatic ballet. As we munched, the bait ball – in oblong shapes – swam to within a few feet of shore. Craig

stood up and gently pushed his kayak back into the water, paddling just enough to get close to the cluster of fish without frightening them off. As he sat there, his kayak slowly swayed with the receding surge. Wherever the current pushed him, the bait ball followed, surrounding the hull of his kayak hovering above.

It was a memorable way to end another paddling trip at the Channel Islands National Park, where experiences with archipelago's natural wonders never cease. ●



Kayaking Emerald Cove.

Pelican posturing.



Coches Prietos kayaker.



Recovering a capsized Kayak

There are lots of ways to empty a capsized kayak whilst afloat, this method works really well with general purpose and white water kayakers. What makes this set of techniques good is the lack of physical strength required by the rescuer. Nigel Wilford, a Level 5 coach from north Yorkshire guides us through the recovery.

For the sake of this article, we'll assume the casualty is uninjured and perfectly calm, this will allow us to focus on the technique of recovering the boat and re-acquainting it with the capsized paddler.

On this occasion the swimmer is at the bow of my boat, there is little chance of them getting hit with the boat being recovered as it's shorter than mine. When in a smaller boat, I ask them to go to the stern. If they are happy holding their paddle, that's helpful. The upturned kayak is brought alongside, its bow point the same way as the boat rescuing it.

With both hands holding the rim of the cockpit, lean to the other side. This allows the boat to lift and the water to empty itself.

Whilst still leaning away from it, move your nearest arm to the very front of the cockpit and push the boat to arms length. Then with the palm of your nearest hand, and whilst still leaning, get ready to push the stern of the kayak down into the water.

In one movement, again, whilst still leaning, push down on the stern of the kayak, and unwind your upper body to face the front of your kayak.

The upturned kayak pretty much jumps out the water and lands on your lap. Any remaining water (and there will not be much) runs from the stern and out of the cockpit.

Getting the swimmer back in the boat can be done in many ways. Experience shows that between the boats is by far the most difficult for the paddler. I have found the method explained here to be especially useful.

With the boat alongside, but pointing in the opposite direction, get the swimmer to swing their leg in the boat and simply roll onto the back deck of their own kayak. This should not involve much upper body strength at all. You can always give them a gentle pull up if they need it as well. Once on their boat, they can get themselves the right way around and get paddling again. ●



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Expedition

Transpata

The idea was to cross the whole Patagonia, ocean to ocean from the Pacific to the Atlantic and in doing so, our double kayak would split in halves and work as two sledges to cross the ice field following the steps of British explorer Eric Shipton. However, as Pablo Basombrio explains, things did not go as planned...



Paddling the Chilean fjords



Above: Caleta Tortel, Chile: our start



Diary:

Patagonia



Starting point! **Below:** Camp in the ice field and walking in the ice field



The Southern Continental Ice Field extends for more than 330km between Chile and Argentina, its total area (including 1,500km² of contiguous glaciers) being of 13,000km² and receding due to the effect of climate change. Most of the region remains unexplored because the climate is some of the worst in the world: in this sub Antarctic weather, winds easily surpass 100km an hour and temperatures fall well below sub-zero.

This was the idea but things just don't happen as per the book. Although we worked on the project for over two-years, planning every single detail (or so we thought) things were different once there.

Over two years of preparations seems a very long time to get ready for an unsuccessful expedition. However, I don't agree on that. Over two years is not a lot of time and I don't think the expedition failed. Let's see...

After two sea kayaking expeditions in south Patagonia, one to Cape Horn in 1999 and the other one to Isla de los Estados in 2001, I started to dream about completing a new project, something that involved kayaking and mountaineering. My move to London postponed everything and the arrival of my first son slowed things further. But as I am convinced that dreams need to be cradled, just like a son, I knew I was to be there.

In September 2007 my brother Juan called from Buenos Aires saying: "There's only a month left, we are leaving!" It was real. We checked up the list of equipment once and again. We had 150 kilos of kit altogether: paddles, double kayak, ropes, ice axes, boots, dry suits, tent, skies, warm clothing, food and fuel for 30 days. I couldn't help but think on how on earth were we going to move all that. We were nervous.

There were many new things to me on this trip: I am a sea kayaker and though I trained very hard on a climbing wall, I am not an accomplished mountaineer. This was a big bet.

The end of the world

A 4x4 collects us at the airport in Patagonia and we drive 36 hours to the starting point more than 400km off road. Caleta Tortel, in the Chilean region of Aysen, is a lovely little fishing village perched on the coast of the Pacific Ocean at the end of the world: 500 inhabitants, one telephone. This was the perfect gateway for our expedition.

Our double kayak is fully loaded; even the deck is full. We are now in the middle of a fjord dealing with a very strong wind, the waves crashing against us. We cannot control our seven metre long kayak under the conditions and it comes to me leaving the rudder behind to keep weight to a minimum was a bad idea, – one of many! After three hours of paddling I spot a small beach amongst the cliffs, a bit out off our planned route, but our only choice at the moment. We manage a rather rough landing and some of the equipment gets wet. There is no space for a tent as we expect the high tides to cover this little beach. We secure the kayak and make a shelter. Not bad for the first day!

We are back in the boat early in the morning to catch up on our schedule. Near the coast and on sheltered waters our kayak is fast and keeps the bearing. Today we navigate some six hours but are again unable to set the tent as the coast does not offer us many choices. It doesn't stop raining but our bivvy gives us good protection. During the navigation we have chocolate and cereal bars to keep us going; for dinner we prepare hot meals and worked out a diet of 4,500 calories a day.

The fourth day is cold and we can feel the effect of a bad night's sleeping. The waves come from the stern and wash the deck making it difficult to keep our route. We check our maps and GPS to make sure we are pointing at the right direction. As we approach the Jorge Montt Glacier we spot a farm on the coast and we



Above: Our double kayak on the coast, ready to be dragged

“ At night we count how many lives we would have lost if we had been cats! We are happy to be in one piece but it is freezing cold and difficult to sleep – like sleeping in a refrigerator! ”



An Andean deer

Below: Camping Patagonia style

decide to pay a visit to the local ‘pobladores’. We need to dry some stuff before heading into the ice. Doña Delia Sepúlveda has lived here for more than 40 years with her husband. The farm is very basic, but as with everybody in Patagonia, they greet us very warmly and offer us a room, hot bread and coffee.

Over dinner, they tell us stories of other sea kayakers and mountaineers who have been around, they even met Swiss climber Franco della Torre who died in the Stephen Glacier.

The day after, we disembark near the glacier, pull our gear and kayak across a stretch of spongy land and again paddle a beautiful lake surrounded by snowy mountains. Every now and then we can hear the distinctive sound of an avalanche.

We lay camp on the south bank of the lake, near an impressive waterfall. Glaciers covered the whole area not long ago: the lake, the moraines and the dense vegetation are silent witnesses to the retreat of the ice!

The seventh day, October 8th and we hurry to take advantage of the unexpected fine weather and carry on with the portages. It takes us three trips each and three days to move all our gear to the next camp higher up in the mountain. Our rucksacks are fully loaded and walking on such a difficult terrain is not easy where the vegetation is so thick that we actually walk not through, but on top of it! The ice is only a few kilometres away but our progress is very slow. We cross a second lake to settle at a new camp where we encounter a Huemul, an Andean Deer, which is on verge of extinction: it kept us company for a while and we take advantage for a photo session.

We consider to leave behind one half of the kayak in order to speed up our progress; this will jeopardise the entire expedition and I realise for the first time that perhaps Juan and I, have different ideas on the expedition: as a mountaineer he is keener on the land section of the expedition and less enthusiastic on the water sections.

The expedition is slipping away

The line between success and failure is very thin, we fight every day against new obstacles, we feel strong but the expedition is slipping away in our heads.

12th October: we are right outside the ice field with all our gear but only half a kayak! We camp on a very exposed terrace. To bring half a kayak along the steep rocky mountain was madness and the idea of getting into the ice in some way scares me; I can't help but think of the crevasses like deadly traps.



The landscape in the ice is a bit surrealist: an endless camp of crevasses that runs southward; the light is flat and the contours difficult to discern. We are now skiing on this vast emptiness fighting the winds and sometimes falling through the sudden gaps. We penetrate some three kilometres carrying our big rucksacks and set the first camp in the ice close to a nunatak, whereupon we dig a deep hole to prevent the tent from being blown away. It takes far too long to make any progress, as we have to make our way among hundreds of crevasses needing to stop and check if the ground is stable enough throughout. At night we count how many lives we would have lost if we had been cats! We are happy to be in one piece but it is freezing cold and difficult to sleep – like sleeping in a refrigerator!

18th October. We are fighting our way but still our progress is very slow. Our half kayak, turned now into a sledge, refuses to move: this is a big blow! We improvise a sledge with our paddles but this is of little help. There are also two broken walking poles and a stove that doesn't work. We discuss again our options as we are running out of time and we cannot afford to go any further at this speed. The expedition is falling apart very slowly.

20th October. After so many portages inside the ice field we decide to abort the expedition. It is a tough decision but we appreciate also that it was a 50/50 situation and our focus was on our safe return. Juan

falls into a small crevasse and we realise we need to be very careful. I think about all those people who died on their return home, returning from the summit... to me, the most important thing is to go back home alive!

Abandoning the kayak

To retreat faster we abandon the kayak and take with us food for six days: half a breakfast per person, some chocolate, dinners, tea, soups, juices and four tuna fish tins! The temperature rises but this is not good news as the melting snow and rain make things worse. The skis stick to the wet snow and the rock is very slippery and tricky.

New rivers appear due to the intense rain and our tent floats in the water while we are out working. Tired and soaked we solve the situation the best we can. Our satellite phone has stopped working and therefore we cannot arrange for a boat to come and collect us by the shore. The second stove has also stopped working due to the low quality of the fuel: from now on, we will share a tin of tuna fish and a chocolate bar each per day. We hope the tiredness will help us to pass over dinner. My stomach is complaining.

22nd October. The cold and the rain didn't let me sleep whilst everything is wet and getting dressed in the morning is very unpleasant. We don't have any breakfast this morning and the tuna fish turns into a commodity. With the half kayak that we had left



Adding the fjords, among icebergs, near Jorge Montt glacier

behind on the way up, we manage to cross the last lake to reach the ocean: Juan got into the hatch and I in the cockpit! It takes 90 minutes to make three kilometres followed by another night without dinner. It rains and it's cold.

23rd October. We have to take risks, as we don't have any contacts with the outside world. Early in the morning and before the wind starts blowing we decide to cross the fjord. We leave our gear behind and take only the survival kit: fifty endless minutes! We reach the opposite coast. With the help of a compass we point towards Doña Delia's farm. Every now and then we check out the sea for boats. Nobody. We keep walking and finally we spot the farm! Our legs seem to move faster now. "We haven't got any food for three days", Juan says. It wasn't necessary. Doña Delia is already baking some bread and making coffee. We stay by the kitchen trying to dry out our bones, eating and drink all day long!

Success or failure?

To me it was a success: all the work, all the planning and all the training it was worth a try. Failure would have been staying at home looking at the map! However, there would be many changes to make if we want to try again. Needless to say, we are already planning a second trip!

Many thanks to: BFU, Kokatat, Asiak, Lyon - Petzl, Primus, Silva, Specialized Travel, Bloc.

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Forty years in the canoe and kayak industry is certainly a rarity and joining this exclusive club are British kayak manufacturers Gaybo Ltd. Gaybo have been building kayaks on the south coast of England since August 1968, when brothers Graham and Robert Goldsmith set up in a small workshop. As with most pioneers in the sporting industry they were motivated by their passion for a sport they loved and a desire to take every opportunity to mix business with pleasure.

Gaybo Ltd is a crucial part of the development of the sport of canoeing and kayaking as we know it. There have been a vast number of achievements along the way including multiple world championship winning performances, numerous first descents and even Polar expeditions. A key moment occurred in 1986 when Gaybo took on the agency for Perception Kayaks in Europe as the interest in general purpose white water kayaks shifted from glass fibre to polyethylene. It is with some pride that Gaybo

Gaybo is 40

WIN A FANTASTIC PERCEPTION KAYAK

have helped take the Perception brand from this starting point of two models to its current renown as one of the leaders in the sport. The Dancer and the Mirage were these first two models. The Dancer is an instantly recognised name and helped define modern white water kayak design. An updated version is still being made.

Today production is based in a purpose built factory in Uckfield, East Sussex with a dedicated workforce and three rotational moulding machines producing the 36 different models of Perception Kayak you see as you enjoy your paddling across Europe. Graham and Bob continue to manage the company with a passion for paddling and pride in seeing people enjoy their boats that remains as strong as the day they started.

With thanks to the following photographers and organisations:

Peter Astles, Andy Stuart, Duncan Eades, M Attenborough, Tony Tickle, Helen Metcalfe, World Stunt Boat Championships, Loftis and Empics.





- 1962** Paddling since their teens, Graham and Bob Goldsmith join Brighton Canoe Club and begin to compete in slalom races, working their way from Division 4 up to Division 1.
- 1968** Graham and Bob set up Gaybo Ltd and start to make composite slalom boats such as the Pavel Bone Fun. Their key motivation is to be able to fund their paddling and travel to wherever the water is.
- 1968** Graham switches attention from paddling K1 to C1, as the main power base for C1 is in the South.
- 1969** Gaybo expand their range with boats such as the Delphin White Water Racer (WWR) from Toni Prijon.
- 1969** Graham Goldsmith competes in his first of nine World Championships, participating in both C1 slalom and C1 WWR in Bourg St Maurice, France.
- 1971** Gaybo start building Lettmann kayaks, which includes the Olymp range, the biggest selling slalom design of the time.
- 1973** Gaybo becomes the first company in the UK to build composite kayaks using Kevlar. This ground-breaking move transforms competition kayaks and canoes. It remains a key component in the construction of racing craft today.
- 1980** Production moves to a purpose built factory in Uckfield, to increase efficiency of fibre glass moulding.
- 1986** A defining year in Gaybo's history as they take on the Perception agency for Europe. At this time the Perception range is focused on the popular Dancer and Mirage kayaks.
- 1986** Gaybo build their first Polar sled. Designed for Roger Mear and Robert Swan's 'In The Footsteps of Scott' expedition.
- 1986** Jeremy West breaks Eastern Bloc domination of sprint competition by winning the 500 and 1000 metre events in his Gaybo Midas.

- 1987** Graham Goldsmith wins a Bronze medal in WWR C2 at the World Championships in Bourg St Maurice. Ironically the longest standing member of the British team bows out of competition on the same river as his first World Championship appearance.
- 1988** Perception's Chinook becomes the world's first polyethylene sea touring kayak.
- 1989** The Perception Kiwi is born and redefines recreational kayaking around the world. This short, stable and easy to paddle kayak with its extremely accessible cockpit has since tempted hundreds of thousands of people onto the water and shown how easy paddling can be.
- 1990** Production moves to the current location in Uckfield. Again the factory is purpose built but this time to accommodate a new rotational moulding machine. The Dancer and Mirage are the first models into production.
- 1993** Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Dr Mike Stroud undertake their record breaking, unaided Trans-Antarctic expedition using sleds made by Gaybo.
- 1993** Richard Fox wins his fifth K1 Slalom World Championship title in Mezzana, Italy. He is paddling a Quattro made by Gaybo.
- 1994** The Perception SuperSport is introduced as the first kayak in Britain to use the, now industry standard Superlinear polyethylene.
- 1996** Perception makes their first sit-on-tops in the UK to cry that "the water's too cold".
- 1997** The BCU commissions Gaybo to produce a plastic WWR kayak. The Wavehopper, designed by WWR World Champion Antoine Goetschy is world renowned, has its own racing series and is still made today.

- 1998** Thirty years of history comes to an end as the last Gaybo composite slalom, WWR and sprint boats come off the production line. Full attention switches to the rapidly growing demand for Perception kayaks being produced on two rotational moulding machines in the Uckfield plant.
- 1999** The Perception Carolina is released to the phrase "Introducing the most versatile touring boat we've ever made. The Carolina is a roomy new design that is stable, incredibly seaworthy and easy to paddle no matter what your experience or skill level". Again Perception leads the way in defining a new aspect of our sport with a user friendly day touring kayak.
- 1999** Freestyle is at a peak in the UK as Team Perception's Andy Stuart becomes British National Freestyle Champion.
- 2002** Team Perception tours the European freestyle circuit for one last time before Perception refocuses attention into other areas as interest in freestyle declines.
- 2002** The first Perception Scooter is made and immediately becomes the must have sit-on-top for fun seekers across Europe.
- 2004** Installation is completed on a fully automated, purpose built oven in Gaybo's Sussex based factory. This third oven is capable of moulding boats up to six metres long and 2.5 metres wide. It is quickly, but unimaginatively named 'the big oven' being the most advanced machine rotationally moulding kayaks in Europe.
- 2006** Perception brand celebrates 30 years at the forefront of kayaking development and production. The Perception range numbers over 50 different models available worldwide including white water kayaks, tourers, sit on tops, anglers and recreation kayaks. Gaybo has been with Perception for 20 of those years.
- 2007** The Dancer turns 25, with one face lift along the way, but shows no sign of retirement just yet.
- 2008** Gaybo celebrates 40 years of passion for paddling and commitment to high quality design and production.



perception kayaks

Gaybo Ltd would like to celebrate their 40th anniversary with the readers of Canoe Focus by offering you the chance to win one of their popular Perception kayaks.

One lucky winner will receive the Perception kayak of their choice*. To win this fantastic prize all you need to do is answer this question: Which Perception kayak was released to the phrase "Introducing the most versatile touring boat we've ever made"?

Please email your answers to competition@perception.co.uk by the closing date of 2nd January 2009.

Competition rules

*The chosen prize may be any Perception Sit On, Recreation, Touring or White Water kayak up to £600 retail value. No cash alternative offered. By entering this competition you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of the competition as published on www.perception.co.uk. The prize will be available for collection from the winner's local authorised Perception dealer. Please note that availability may vary with model selection

Still campaigning hard!

Campaigning for access to our inland waters is not just all about lobbying MPs or even standing up holding placards but at the moment it's mainly concerned with subtly getting the message across that canoeists, along with members of the public, need clarity and certainty of access to inland waters.

To this end we attend many meetings where we are able to help, for example, the world of sport, the environment and the waterways. Meetings include river user groups, regional development meetings, parliamentary groups and water recreation etc. Just lately we were invited to attend a stakeholders meeting to contribute to a review of inland waterways policy.

The 'Waterways for Tomorrow' (WfT) document was published in 2000. (A copy can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/Environment/water/iw/tomorrow/index.htm). It has been a tool by which government has undertaken work and developed policies concerning the inland waterways.

Not so long ago the Inland Waterways Advisory Committee (IWAC) produced a report concerning the impact of WfT and how successful or not the government had been in implementing it. The findings were part of the catalyst, which has led to the WfT document being reviewed. Whilst there have been some positive outcomes from WfT there has also been some significant shortcomings. In the intervening years other issues such as climate change have come to the fore and now need consideration in the inland waterways planning and policy process.

Areas that were neglected in the first document include the fact that it did not have a broad appeal and was in parts exclusive and not inclusive. The ideas of new users was not prominent in the 2000 document and that there are many who also want to use the waterways for recreation, freight etc.

The long but informative interactive session led to the main conclusion that obviously there were many areas to be addressed in the new WfT including:

- Climate change.
- The fact the waterways provide excellent opportunities to improve health.
- Environmental improvements.
- The waterways ability to provide for social inclusion.
- Regeneration.

We were able to press the point that canoeing is a huge sport and growing rapidly. Also that there are rivers where statutory rights of navigation does exist and the government should recognise these and act accordingly to 'open' them up for navigation.

One of the questions which was asked was, "How do we (the Government/Defra) increase participation in the waterways?" Well top of our list was clarity and certainty of access to all inland waterways! We can think of two million canoeists for whom that would make participation and actively using our inland waterways so much easier!

The day was very useful and we do believe that many of the issues raised will have consideration. The new 'WfT' document should be printed in spring 2009 but we have been promised that stakeholders will have other opportunities to make comment prior to final publication.

Rivers Mersey, Waveney, Teme and Wear canoe access studies – what has happened since October 2006

October marks the second anniversary for the launch of the University of Brighton report – 'Putting Pilot Voluntary Canoe Access Agreements in Place', the third of a series of pilot studies (known as 'Brighton 3') commissioned by the Government to look at the recreational use of inland waters and specifically address canoe access. This report acted on the findings of an earlier feasibility study (Brighton 2) that concluded additional canoe access could be achieved through voluntary arrangements. Canoe England co-operated with the university and the Environment Agency (EA) with each of the four rivers featured in these studies.

The Rivers Mersey and Waveney studies resulted in workable agreements with 365-day access with environmental protection measures from October 2006, albeit assisted by earlier Canoe England work prior to 2000 to provide a foundation. Canoe access was already accepted on the River Waveney from a partnership agreement with local authorities, EA, East of England Regional Development Agency, and local river user groups. Brighton 3 essentially consolidated this arrangement. The Mersey scheme adopted a Canoe England proposal that was reliant on the ability of local authorities to dedicate lands in their ownership as access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Despite the efforts of the University of Brighton consultants and the EA, the Rivers Wear and Teme proved more challenging and encountered the typical hostility to canoe access. Two years on from October 2006, no agreement to provide additional canoe access on these rivers has materialised. Significantly, in a review of the access studies, an IPSO MORI report for the EA fails to make any reference to either river, focusing only on the successes of the Mersey and the Waveney.

From the outset of these studies, Canoe England has maintained gaining voluntary agreements is difficult, time consuming and can also ultimately prove to be non-negotiable, as these pilots have managed to demonstrate. The liberal all year access to the Rivers Waveney and Mersey are exceptions to the norm and whilst exemplars for voluntary access agreements they still do not provide the security or certainty of a public right to access inland waters.



A new man in the hot seat!
Hilary Benn continues as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The following ministers have been appointed for Defra:

- Minister of State - Jane Kennedy
- Minister of State - Lord Hunt
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State - Huw Irranca-Davies

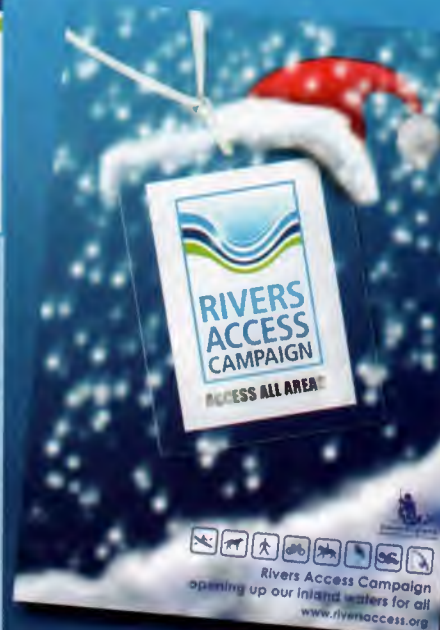
Huw Irranca-Davies MP Ogmores – Wales MP Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs.

This is his portfolio and has knowledge of the access issue in Wales too!

His responsibilities include:

- Land management.
- National parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty.
- Coastal and wider access, countryside and rights of way.
- Inland Waterways and British Waterways.

If at first you don't succeed swap the man and then try again! So now we all need to get letter writing again. We must leave no stone unturned in our quest for clarity and certainty of access.



The Government has set a new standard for voluntary access agreements with the Waveney and Mersey. In the absence of legislation Canoe England believes there should be responsible access arrangements on all inland waters based on this standard. Paddlers are all too familiar with the highly restrictive terms where there are voluntary access agreements that can limit paddling to a few weeks or days a year, or be terminated with little or no notice.

Canoe England maintains the lack of a statutory right of access to inland waters is contrary to existing and proposed arrangements for public access to other places in the UK outdoor environment including:

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) legislates for public access for heath, down, moor and all land above 600 metres and registered commons.
- Public access to the coast in England will be legislated within the forthcoming Marine Bill.
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives everyone statutory rights with responsibilities to most land and inland waters supported by an access code.

It is perhaps ironic that October also celebrates the anniversary of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which was completed on October 31st, 2005 and which was hailed by Defra, as an exemplar for access legislation and a model for future access provision!

Add to that, 2009 is also the 60th anniversary for the National Parks Act when the Government of the day said "Now at last we shall be able to see that the mountains, moors, dales and tors belong to the people as a right not as a concession. This is not just a bill. It is a people's charter... with it the countryside is theirs to preserve, to cherish, to enjoy and to make their own."

Peter Bottomley MP sees access the Scottish way

As part of the Sport England MP Fellowship Programme and because Peter is an access supporter, we took Peter Bottomley MP to paddle on the River Tay to see how successful access to inland waters is the Scottish way.

It was one of those beautiful autumnal days when we met up with Mike Dales, Eddie Palmer and Mary Conacher from the Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) who had very kindly offered to be our guides for the day and lend us canoes to paddle in. Before going on the water we gave Peter some suitable clothing (thank you so much to Palm who helped us with the kit) for the journey.

Peter's main interest for the trip was in respect to access to inland waters for canoeists. Access in Scotland to the waterways (as well as land) is fantastic. It is a really modern and fair approach of access to natural resources. Access for all is available whether a landowner or user but all the access comes with rights and responsibilities – something we are asking for here in England. Unlike CRoW in England and Wales, when the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 was passed, it applied to both land and water with the result that a statutory public right of responsible access to most inland water in Scotland has been established, for recreation and education and also for passage. This is supported by a Scottish Outdoor Access Code approved by the Scottish Parliament, clarifying the operation of the right in a wide range of practical circumstances.

This was an important initiative, redeeming a pledge made by the UK government in 1997 before devolution and shows that it is quite possible in at least one part of the UK for the administration to bring forward legislation providing for a statutory public right of access to water.

However, it further emphasises the relative disadvantage of water-based recreation and other users in England and Wales, who at present have no similar statutory rights.

We paddled down the River Tay up above Grand Tully and finishing in Grand Tully. We admired the scenery and canoed down a very exciting stretch of water. The trip also included waving cheerily at a fisherman and all in all we had a thoroughly pleasant experience. The Tay is a very popular salmon fishing river but the two sports of fishing and canoeing work extremely well together and respect each others needs and sports activities.

There are issues about access at times but this is mainly due to people not being aware of the Act or choosing to ignore it. Recently, when paddling the Tay, Eddie and Mary were told they should not be there but the anglers were from south of the border and were not aware of the SLRA. So a word with the local access officer, who then had a chat to the landowner selling the fishing rights, solved the problem. Most of the issues are from people who have bought up large tracks of land and who are unaware of the SLRA and are then 'amazed' by the liberal approach to access.

Some of the access issues are due to needing places to get on and off the water and we were shown some of these during the afternoon. Access and egress issues will be solved in time as it does take a while for any act to be embedded.

We were also shown signs which indicate river levels, where car parks are and help to inform all the users about their rights and responsibilities.

In essence England has a natural heritage which provides great opportunities for open-air recreation

and education. Open-air recreation provides people with great benefits for their health and well-being and contributes to the good of society in other ways.

A new statutory national approach is required for public access to inland waters in England and Wales. This will then deliver much of the wide-ranging benefits outlined by the Government in their various health, participation and economic strategies.

Our thanks go out to our SCA colleagues, in particular Mike Dales, Eddie Palmer and Mary, who made the day so informative and interesting.



THE SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 establishes a statutory right of responsible access to land and inland waters for:

- outdoor recreation,
- crossing land and
- some educational and commercial purposes.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code gives detailed guidance on your responsibilities when exercising access rights and if you are managing land and water. The Act sets out where and when access rights apply. The Code defines how access rights should be exercised. The three key principles for responsible access apply to both the public and land managers:

- **Respect the interests of other people:** be considerate, respect privacy and livelihoods, and the needs of those enjoying the outdoors.
- **Care for the environment:** look after the places you visit and enjoy. Care for wildlife and historic sites.
- **Take responsibility for your own actions:** the outdoors cannot be made risk-free for people exercising access rights; land managers should act with care for people's safety.

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/default.asp?nPageID=26&nSubContentID=0



Dreaming of access

Kayak Capers

Do you remember this?

The Gamefisher Spring 2006 Journal of the Salmon and Trout Association, refers and recommends that the Scottish Land Reform Act should be sort by Canoe England to solve the access situation. This is what we have done for a while and are continuing to do. Scottish Land Reform Act - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20645/51837



All I want for Xmas is access to the rivers



Alto-Tuichi expedition:

Bolivia, August 2008

By Simon Chapman

Our intention had been to canoe the unexplored River Enatahua in the rain-forested northwest corner of Bolivia. It was to be a reprise of our 1997 expedition to the nearby Rio Madidi; hire porters to carry the skin and poles of my Pakcanoe across a mountainous watershed and then continue; just me, Julian Singleton and a local guide downriver to a point where we could portage across to a larger river from where we would get back to civilisation. It didn't work out that way. Though our guide, two porters and a Landcruiser all arrived at La Paz, our canoe – or rather its green, neoprene skin did not. The airline lost it.





For three days we divided our time between hassling at the airport and at the airline office in the city centre. When nothing had arrived on the fourth morning we went to a hunting and fishing shop at opening time and bought up their entire stock of boats – five inflatable dinghies, ominously labelled ‘not to be used by a child out of its depth’.

Over two days our Landcruiser took us right over the highest passes between the snowy peaks of the Cordilleras Real and Apolobamba then down to the Tuichi River. Here at the edge of Madidi National Park, vertiginous mountain ridges on all sides – locally called Serranias, block the clouds from entering the valley. Consequently the jungle here is dry with many leafless trees. But the undergrowth is thick and, as we found out, incredibly hard to get through. The map I had acquired on a previous trip to Bolivia was a black and white photocopy of an American military satellite photo of the area. Labelled as ‘for official use only, destroy after use’, it was overlaid with a grid to show some sense of scale but it had no contours. Nor did it have the heights of the Serranias marked on. According to that map, 20kms – as the macaw flies – would get us to the headwaters of the Enatahua.

We made 10kms in five days. We climbed over two 2,000m ridges then got stuck in a series of canyons. The bamboo and wiry bracken that grew between the cloud-forest trees grew so thickly that there was no ground as such to walk on, just a mush of rotting fronds and twigs that we would often break through up to our thighs as we tried to push our way forward. When we came down to get water we were faced with cliffs. Our only rope was ten metres, nylon, second hand; I had bought it from an old woman in a street market in La Paz for around two pounds. It was intended for tying the canoe up, not climbing up and down rock faces. By the third ravine we gave up the idea of getting to the Enatahua. There was another higher ridge to cross and things were getting far too dangerous. We decided to follow our stream back to the Tuichi and build a raft and were confronted by waterfalls, first ten metres, and then 50 metres of drop. We climbed around. Julian accidentally sliced my finger with his machete; it spurted blood. Both of us fell, puncturing our hands with palm spines. One went into a vein on my left wrist, filling up an area the size of a two pence piece with blood.

It was such a relief to arrive a day later at the river. We inflated the five dinghies, tied them to thin tree trunks and launched off into straight a set of rapids.

It was thrilling, fantastic to be on the river. The scenery was inspiring. So were the close encounters with spider monkeys and tapirs. But the raft wasn’t strong enough. The inflatables punctured and though we found balsawood logs to strap to the sides to act as fenders, the back end of our craft was often under water. The rapids got worse. At one point we slid between two rocks and nearly flipped at the huge stopper wave on the other side. Two of the dinghies ripped and one of the balsa logs broke loose. Thrown onto my back, I tried to get up, but I was stuck, flailing around like an up ended cockroach. I keep my compass in my pocket tied to my belt loop. It had slid out and looped around one of our cords. We hit a whirlpool and spun. I was still on my back trying to untie myself. I was the only one with a life jacket (an old airline one). If we had flipped it’s buoyancy would have worked against me. When we got to the shore, I said I would walk around any more rapids.

This wasn’t so easy. The river was entering a series of canyons and the sides were made up of wet, car-sized boulders that Julian and I started to climb over and around. I am sure this was the infamous ‘Mal Paso San Pedro’ (Saint Peter’s bad pass) that I had read about before. An Israeli Tourist, Yossi Ghinsberg, had been washed off a raft at the Mal Paso in 1985





and ended up lost for 30 days. Two of the four in his party never came back.

Sandro, the guide, and the two porters tried to continue on the raft, then we all tried man-handling it around the rapids but soon we decided this was too dangerous. We packed up and attempted to climb out. That failed. More cliffs. We climbed back down to the river and had to traverse a rock face then scramble up again with our two pound rope looped around a feeble sapling. The river at this point spurted either side of a massive boulder. Our raft would not have made it. My canoe certainly would not have had a chance.

Next morning it rained. Sandro hid under a rock overhang, brewed coffee and chain-smoked while I got steadily angrier that we should set off before the river rose even more. There were more rapids ahead and we knew we couldn't climb out. I felt ill and I just wanted to get out of the situation as soon as possible. Finally at 13.00, we launched off. We spun in the white water, but we made it through. The next rapid was easier and what looked like the next canyon on my map had no rapids at all. We entered beautiful rainforest with toucans flying overhead and monkeys in the trees and by nightfall we had reached a place we knew from the 1997 expedition. The canyons and the big rapids were behind us. The feeling of relief was sensational. But we were out of food. We had not been able to send the porters back and were down to the last of our rice. Luckily I caught a huge catfish on a nightline. That would keep us going until we could get to the Tacana Indian village of San Jose de Uchupiamonas which we reckoned was another long day's journey down river.

We nearly missed the village. The sun had just set when we saw some cows on a river beach. We followed their tracks into the dusk and after an hour's stiff climb up a jungle trail got to San Jose. But they had little food except for as many oranges and grapefruit as we could carry, and half a deer carcass which Sandro promised we could make last for three days.



When he and the porters polished it off the next day we had another food crisis. We tried to put in another long day but the current was slower and in the heat of the day we lost focus. We went over a rock at a minor rapid where four of the remaining five dinghies ripped and we sank. Sandro sat down and chain-smoked again while Darwin, one of the porters and I swam across the river to investigate a pile of logs to see if there was any balsa wood there. Balsa is a fast growing tree-weed that springs up along river and roadsides. When the rains come many of the trees are washed downriver and left high and dry on sandbars where they dry out over the next few months.

While a jaguar growled occasionally from behind the riverside trees, Darwin and I found seven good logs and Sandro was 'shamed' into building them up into a raft so we could carry on the next morning. He caught a large Pacu (fish) and so the food situation, though on our minds, was no longer critical... for now!

The most dangerous mammals

We were charged by peccaries (wild boars) two days later. Julian, Sandro and I had gone into the forest to look for wildlife and gather food (we found some passion fruit and cut down an Assai palm to get its white pulpy heart). We could hear the grunting of peccaries nearby and we followed the herd until we were within sight of around ten of them. White-lipped peccaries have the reputation of being the most dangerous mammals in the rainforest. Their herds can number up to 1,500 individuals and, rather than running from danger such as people or jaguars – they will stand their ground or turn and charge. The ones we were looking at were standing their ground. They snapped their jaws together and 'clacked' their tusks. They grunted. Then they moved away. Hidden behind a fallen tree, we could hear and smell more behind us; a stench like sweaty, unwashed bodies. We were right in the middle of the herd. Sandro reckoned there probably 500 in total. The tusk clacking was getting nearer. Bushes in front were shaking. I turned to Julian. Started saying, "It's about time we climbed a tr..." when I heard a thud as his

Meet the creepy crawlies...



Spiders



Centipedes



Midges



Red ants



video hit the ground. He was already climbing, as was I seconds later as peccaries streamed past.

We were picked up by a tourist boat on the wide River Beni. Our by-now-repaired inflatables were leaking again. Our balsa logs were waterlogged and underwater. We were approaching the gap in the last Serrania ridge before the flat of the main Amazon Basin. Here we knew that the wind blew upriver and could well stop us still in the sheer-sided 'Bala' canyon. We were out of food again but it was good to get off the river. ●

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* DIVE*CANOE*SAIL*SURF*RAFT* DIVE*CANOE*SAIL *SURF*RAFT*



Left top: Ed Hayden

Left: Tim Stott and Clive Palmer

Left bottom: Beletz mobile

Right: Clive Palmer



Clive Palmer and Tim Stott, two BCU coaches from Liverpool, boarded a plane headed for St. Louis, Missouri, for the ACA National Championships, 29-31st May 2008. The main aim of the trip was to film the world class poling.

Coaching in UK to

Poling a canoe is a very effective method of navigating rivers in low water conditions allowing exploration without the need for time-consuming shuttles. The idea is to simply pole upstream as far as you wish to go and then pole back to your car; simple on the practicalities. Those who have encountered canoe poling will also testify that it's a pretty considerable work-out mentally and physically. However, with practice the rewards are immense. As confidence develops the poler tackles more difficult manoeuvres or ascends steeper rapids. It was the sense of physical challenge and awareness of the core skills supporting the action of poling that interested me to develop a project to support our teaching. It was the development of that project that eventually led us to the ACA National Championships in Missouri.

The canoe poling project: core stability and transferable skills

Across many sports the benefits of cross-training to develop core stability has been recognised for years, for example, gymnastic training for track and field athletes. Hand-in-hand with that has been the

identification of transferable skills that one activity may develop specifically to contribute to the main pursuit, e.g. skateboarding for surfers. The aim of this project was to highlight the links between physical preparation in a sport and to illustrate visually how skills might be transferred across ostensibly different activities but importantly, still remain within the context of the sport for which the athlete or participant is training – the example in this case being canoe poling. The novelty of canoe poling is useful for emphasising the coaching ideas behind the activity rather than for poling itself, given that the majority of my audience are not canoeists! Initial results are promising.

The 'core' skills being developed in this canoe poling project include for example; balance and posture, co-ordination, efficiency of action, risk-taking and judgement, a sense of fun and a sense of challenge, physical conditioning allied with fine motor control, weight bearing and weight transference. Admittedly, these are not the usual suspects of strength, stamina and suppleness; however the "three S's" are implicit in these practices. The range of core skills identified could be expanded upon, or could be different for

another sport. To illustrate the transferable elements of action in a sport, canoe poling in this case, several activities were selected which tied in with the core skills identified. These activities included: pole

Video footage of our activities has been edited down and is used to stimulate innovative coaching activities in whatever sport they wish to coach. A short example of our early work currently resides on YouTube, search for 'canoe poling' to view it.





Far left: Harry and Chip
 Above: The line up
 Left: Harry Rock
 Right: Clive Palmer

is, Missouri to attend the American Canoe Association (ACA) National Canoe Poling
 Nevertheless, the competition experience was excellent and we learned a great deal.

canoe poling USA

vaulting, slack lining, wobble-boarding, land-boarding (up and down hill!), balance exercises in the gymnasium on beams, parallel bars and back-bouncing (without a pole!) on the trampoline, balance exercises in the pool with open canoes and lastly, footage of competitive canoe poling in slalom and white-water racing. The key point here being that features of the poling action can be traced to each of the different (but linked and themed) practices. It was this last requirement for footage that took us to the home of canoe poling where the first ever poling completion took place in 1965 at 'Times Beach' on the Meramec River, Missouri, currently in Route 66 State Park.

2008 ACA Nationals: an historic event

This event originates largely from the energy and enthusiasm of the Beletz brothers, Al, Syl, and Frank. We had the pleasure of meeting all three brothers as the return of the Nationals to the Meramec was a celebration of their 'pioneering' efforts in this canoe sport. The dedication to their sport, and the friendship of all the competitors at this event was admirable. The famous names of American poling

had driven thousands of miles across the US to be at this historic event. Ed Hayden, the event Chair at 82, was the oldest competitor and we are all particularly thankful for his sterling efforts to organise the whole event and for driving a round trip of 2400 miles with four open canoes strapped to his roof rack! (Ed even did a recce trip for the event, by car, the previous year). Chip Cochrane was awesome on the water, winning the Open event (slalom and WW) again for the fifteenth time but for also driving further than Ed with a trailer full of boats for folks to use. Even for the Texans it was two days driving just to get out of Texas! Harry Rock was in fine form, taking first place in the Masters slalom and wild water events. Scott Stepunuck, in his early thirties, was the relative youngster taking a creditable third in the Open event behind Harry and Chip. Marti Bartels, Executive Director of the ACA also made a mammoth drive to attend this special event and acted as one of the official time keepers for the races.

Racing and competing: "Racer ready"

Stepping up to enter a race at the Nationals was a formal undertaking – also with the Beletz brothers

looking on from the bridge nearby, 'no pressure' for the first ever Brits to take part in this event. As the race slot approaches the heart rate would quicken. All mental rehearsal complete and focusing on getting a good start you would draw up to the start buoy and await the preparatory command, "racer-ready", and then blast-off with cheers of encouragement from the crowd. The excessive efforts from a floundering novice such as me were not a pretty sight compared to the elegance, efficiency and power of accomplished polers such as Chip, Harry and others. In a swift current, to see a practiced expert commit their whole bodyweight to the pole to spin, manoeuvre or just plain accelerate was an awesome and impressive sight. Tim and I achieved creditable placings in the Masters and Intermediate events and we appreciate being welcomed to participate in this special competition.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone we met on our trip, for their welcoming generosity and friendship and for providing us with such wonderful memories of the canoe poling 'family' in the USA. Thank you. ●

CLIVE PALMER



BCU PHOTOGRAPH C



October adult winner
Daryl Balcombe – White Nile, Uganda



Adult selected photo
Tasha Hull –
Vazon Beach, Guernsey

The winners for September and October (as voted by you)

SEPTEMBER ADULT WINNER

Nigel Winters

SEPTEMBER UNDER 18 WINNER

No entries

OCTOBER ADULT WINNER

Daryl Balcombe

OCTOBER UNDER 18 WINNER

Phillip Matthews

Adult selected photo
Helen Bray –
Minnesota, USA



COMPETITION

September adult winner
Nigel Winters – Island of Kalamos, Greece



October under 18 winner
Phillip Matthews – Tryweryn, Wales

Adult selected photo
Steve Weddell –
Holme Pierpont



We receive lots of photos of canoeing and competitors, but if you have any photos of the volunteers who often work behind the scenes, contributing their time and commitment to the sport, we would love to see your photos. Please send them in.

HOW TO ENTER

Send your photos in jpeg format via email to chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk or post your photos on a CD to: Chloe Nelson-Lawrie British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham NG13 8AP. Remember to label your photos and to provide contact details that include your name, address, telephone number, whether it is an adult or U18 entry plus your BCU membership number. Please also include:

- where the photo was taken (name of river/lake/stream and location)
- when it was taken (time of the year)

PRIZES: MONTHLY WINNER

A winner will be chosen each month until December 2008. Each month one adult will win £25 Cotswold vouchers and one youth (under 18 years old) will win £25 WHSmith vouchers. Winners will be announced on-line and in future editions of Canoe Focus.

HOW WINNERS ARE CHOSEN

Once we receive your photograph it will be uploaded onto the BCU web site where people can vote for their favourite image by emailing the number of the photograph to chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk

OVERALL WINNER

At the end of January 2009 one overall winner from the youth category and one winner from the adult category will win a digital camera worth £150!

PHOTO QUALITY

The images should be a minimum of five megapixels if possible.

Terms and conditions

By entering the competition The British Canoe Union will be entitled to use your photograph to promote canoeing, without needing to obtain your permission. By submitting your photograph/s you agree to grant the BCU a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive, sub-licensable right and licence to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute and exercise all copyright and publicity rights with respect to your photograph/s worldwide and/or to incorporate your photograph/s in other works in any media now known or later developed for the full term of any rights that may exist in your photograph/s.

By submitting your photograph/s to BCU, you warrant that your photograph/s is/are your own original work and that you have the right to make it/them available to the BCU for all the purposes specified above; and does/do not infringe any law.

We will only accept images as taken and will not accept any image that has been re-mastered or which are montages. The British Canoe Union will not be able to return any images. Wherever used, we agree to credit your images to you. We reserve the right to crop the images as we see fit. This competition is open to UK residents only. Overseas entries will not be considered.

Collective Editor's announcement of the winner is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize(s) must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. There will be no cash alternatives. The BCU does not accept any responsibility for late or lost entries due to the Internet. Proof of sending is not proof of receipt. No responsibility is accepted for ineligible entries or entries made fraudulently.

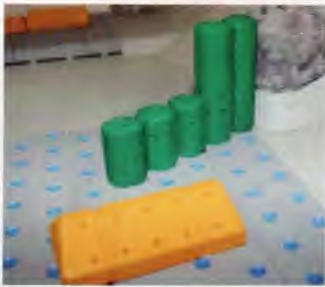
This competition is not open to employees of the BCU, any person directly or indirectly involved in the BCU or the running of the competition, or their direct family members. The BCU reserves the right to cancel this competition at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, and if circumstances arise outside of its control. Where photos of people are submitted, you agree to having the consent of those people wherever possible and if applicable (i.e. members of the general public). If children are featured the consent of their parents/guardians is needed.

Prizes unclaimed after 28 days will be deemed to have been forfeited and the BCU reserves the right to either offer the prize to the entrant whose name is next drawn at random, or to re-offer the prize in any future competition on the BCU.

Entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules and to agree to be bound by them when entering this competition. This includes entries made via email.

We reserve the right not to publish images that are submitted and to edit the comments that accompany the image. The site editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Focus on Facilities



Visit to Hydrostadium

In the French town of Annecy lies the offices and workshop of Hydrostadium. This company, a subsidiary of the huge French energy company EDF has more than any other influenced the world wide design of canoe slalom courses.

Myself and Andy Maddock the BCU's Nottingham Academy Manager, visited Hydrostadium to exchange ideas and to have a look at their latest products. We were investigating options for the proposed Holme Pierrepont WWC upgrade.

Led by Gilles Bernard and Pascal Simon, their small team have designed amongst others the Olympic White Water courses at Athens and Beijing. But in addition 20 years ago they patented their 'In course' obstacle system known as 'Omniflots'.

In the late 1970s Frank Goodman and Dr George Parr designed, modelled and oversaw the building of the Holme Pierrepont White Water Course. At that time there were no manufactured obstacles so Frank and George designed their own out of concrete. George went on to involve himself in other courses, for example Teesside and the Barcelona Olympic course but it was Gilles and Pascal who developed the obstacles that have played such an important part of any course since.

What are Omniflots?

They are a weighted plastic cylinder with an aluminium tube down the middle which fits into pre-arranged plastic lined holes concreted either into bases fixed down onto the course bottom or concreted into the base.

The cylinders are made from roto moulded plastic and come in a variety of heights. They are accompanied by a number of plastic triangular wedges that can be strapped to the caps of the plastic liners that form the holes.

The idea being that a number of Omniflots can be grouped together to make plastic rocks. From time to time they can be pulled out by hand and re-arranged to provide different water features. A course could be used for freestyle one day and slalom the next.

The first Omniflots were used at Lannion in France 16 years ago and Hydrostadium designed a second generation and are now on to a third generation.

The first two generations are round. The third generation is hexagonal to ensure that they meet flush with each other and instead of being weighted with a cast iron ring they are designed to be part filled with gravel. Water comes in and out through small holes.



Under a picture of the Beijing course are L to R, Gilles Bernard, Pascal Simon, Andy Maddock and Chris Hawkesworth.

It is this third generation that we are likely to see in the UK at HPP, Teesside, Cardiff and probably Broxbourne.

Hydrostadium are involved in the design of the new Cardiff white water course and whilst we were at Annecy we were shown a scale model of the lower part of the proposed course, now under construction.

LATEST NEWS

HOLME PIERREPONT WHITE WATER COURSE

The HPP WWC is now closed for its upgrade and changes.

There will be no paddling on the HPP WWC until it reopens hopefully at the end of February 2009. The first planned event being the Student Freestyle competition on March 7-8th. In case the contract over runs due to bad weather or high river levels and you are planning a visit close to the end of the contract, please contact the HPP Centre to check availability.

NWSC Switchboard 0115 982 1212. or Course Control 0115 982 4717.

www.nationalwatersportsevents.co.uk

Drawings of the upgrade to the HPP WWC are on the facilities section of the Canoe England website.

WASHBURN

The upgrade is now finished and the Washburn is running three extra dates over the HPP closure period if you would like to try it out.

December 28th

Organiser: Esther Mathews.

January 25th

Organiser: Peter Dawson.

February 22nd

Organiser: Esther Mathews.

Please phone the Washburn Information Line 08458 338654 for water times and availability.

TEESSIDE

Teesside WWC will not now close for its upgrade until the new year and could be open for the whole of January and February. Please phone before travelling to check. 01642 678000.

Drawings of this upgrade are on the facilities section of the Canoe England website.

CARDIFF

The contractor is now on site, cranes have appeared and £11.5m has been allocated for this exciting new white water course. More news here as it happens.

BROXBORNE

Tenders have now been returned by the three contractors wanting to build London's 2012 Olympic White Water Course. The final contractor appointment is now expected to be early in the new year with a start on site shortly thereafter.

Hydro electric turbines at weirs

My article on page 38 of the October Issue has certainly got readers thinking and it was my comments about paddlers and Canoe England objecting to all turbines at the local authority planning stage that has caused the most comment.

One letter is this one from Iain Russell and I agree with all the points he raises. My reason for recommending 'objecting' is both a legal and pragmatic.

Legal – in as much that we cannot afford to be vague about the purpose of our letter to the planners. That is, we want our view to be heard and this is the best and only way to both be heard and to follow the democratic procedure.

Pragmatic – in as much that often the first time we know about a proposed installation is when an advert appears in the local press. This gives us no opportunity to negotiate beforehand. There is a very short time limit, often only two to six weeks for 'objections' to be received by the local authority and/or the Environment Agency (EA). If we do not object within this time limit our chances of influencing the site are almost nil. We must put in a "Holding objection" pending a site investigation of our own. We can always withdraw our objection at any time. But we need time to investigate each site and a holding objection buys us some.

I do not necessarily know whether one particular site is of interest to paddlers or not. Sometimes a weir has a different name from the mill or turbine installation site. Sometimes we paddlers have built up our own generic names neither of which often bear any relation to the site name in the advertisement.

My weir on the River Nidd is known as 'Castlestead Weir' but my turbine site is 'Glasshouses Mill' and there is an operating turbine at Beeston Weir on the Trent.

With both these weirs we have no paddling interest. But the sluices on the Trent at Holme Pierrepont (HPP) are known as 'Colwick Sluices' and the planned hydro power plant would clearly adversely affect the HPP white water course. There are hydro plans for Hurley and Boulters Weirs on the Thames and at Evesham Weir on the Avon, all of which we use for recreation and these are only the tip of the iceberg.

Two weeks ago I addressed the 'Institute of Fisheries Management' conference on matters relating to canoeing and fish. I pointed out that on page eight of the summer edition of their magazine 'Fish' there is a photograph of our freestyle structure on the weir at Boulters. The caption reads "A Thames weir pool, habitat or energy?". This six page article on hydropower does not mention us or our recreation at all. Perhaps sites are visited

during the day when we are not recreating. Site promoters, planners and the EA need reminding how much we use the country's rivers and weirs.

In all there are about 3,300 structures across rivers in England that could be used for hydro power. There is an organisation of hydro power providers called the 'British Hydropower Association'. But just to show you how daft this situation can get, the BDA's own literature has muddled up a site at Linton near Grassington on the River Wharfe where we do not have an interest, with Linton on the River Ouse near York where we do. They are 40 miles apart.

What we paddlers are really concerned about is what is known in the trade as 'back channel residual flow'.

A hydro turbine takes water from the weir, through the turbine, and back into the river usually some distance down stream. This process significantly reduces the amount of water going over the weir.

In low river flows it is common for the turbine not to operate. As the river rises the turbine takes all the water until the river has risen to such a level that the turbine is working to its maximum and cannot take any more water. The rest comes over the weir. It is this interim volume that affects us most. It is here that we must try to affect the management of the facility. In particular the point at which the turbine turns on

Symonds Yat reopens

The rapids at Symonds Yat are arguably the ancestral home of British white water canoeing.

So it was hardly surprising that over 15 years ago the idea of purchasing the rapids for the paddlers of the future started to gain ground. In 1999 the Symonds Yat Rapids Preservation Group (SYRPG), headed by John Westlake agreed an option to purchase the fishing rights of the rapids from the owners, the Mott brothers. In 2003 with the help of the Environment Agency (EA), the Maurice Rothwell trust and further money raised by the SYRPG the 350m rapids were purchased for canoeing for all time.

During the purchase negotiations it became apparent that the island forming the right bank of the rapids was part of the deal and the rapids themselves were structurally in a poor way.

Later in 2003 a project was mooted such that if we could replace the groins, stabilise the island and also stabilise the left bank of the river then we really would have a site that would be worthy of calling a canoeing heritage site. Little did I know what the SYRPG and myself had let us in for?

We knew we would need two vital consents to do work. Local authority planning from Herefordshire County Council and land drainage from the EA.

No problems, we thought, we've done work elsewhere in the country and obtained both fairly easily. How wrong we were.

and at what rate it consumes water thereafter.

Prior to 1970 it was quite common for the water volume entering turbines to be so great that the river back channel dried out and no water went over the weir at all. We paddlers share this residual flow issue with the angling community who regard weir pools as important for their recreation and habitat diversity. Weirs need a fish pass which by law has to continue to function.

Fortunately for both us and the anglers the EA vet all Hydro power applications. But they are caught between their paymasters, the government, saying "We want green energy" and their function of protecting the river environment. So both the EA and the anglers need our help.

In my earlier article I mention that we are not against hydro power as such, but we cannot allow these installations to adversely impact our valid recreational use. Each weir is different and each Hydro installation is different. So a balance has to be struck. It is only by 'objecting' that we can directly influence the management of the installation and the conditions under which it is to be regulated.

I hope that my articles will draw to member's attention an awareness of the issues relating to hydro power.

CHRIS HAWKESWORTH

Bentley's machines working in tandem to build an island side groin.



For a start, the rapids are the boundary between two local authority areas, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. They are also the boundary between two parish councils, one on each side of the river who have traditionally been rivals. The site has two separate above water level wildlife designations, the British SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the European similar but different 'SAC' designation. These two designations had two separate protected species lists. The river itself had several more protected species within it.

I think you are probably getting the picture, but there is more. The island turned out to be registered common land and no one it seemed knew why or who were the 'commoners' who had the 'right' and why it was registered in the first place. English Heritage and the archaeologists had several interests; the left bank had had a railway and a lock. Above the island there had once been a weir, and the right bank had old iron workings and a mill. It turned out that the island was made up of bits of the old weir and iron slag. The left bank had several footpaths and a cycle way and we discovered that there was a drinking water abstraction downstream.

I could add more but suffice to say we needed more muscle to help us. We brought in S&P architects in the form of David Hemsley and Dean Field. Andy Laird of EPD as engineer. Cresswell Associates for the SSSI and SAC

protected species investigations and Border Archaeology. The EA themselves for the 'In river species'. All of who would have to be paid and where would the money come from?

The whole project was threatening to go pear-shaped.

The Wye at this point is a navigation. There would need to be a navigation closure for safety reasons. The EA are the navigation authority and there was a fee 'of course'.

The area had yet another designation, that of AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and there was nothing else for it but everyone had to be talked to and brought on side.

Consents – each of the consents needed a methodology study (how were we going to deliver what we were going to do). We had to prove that our work would not make the risk of flooding upstream worse.

So we drew up all our plans and made our application for the consents to the EA and to Hereford planners, who by this time were leading on behalf of Gloucestershire. This meant that though we had not made anything a secret, all our work would be immediately in the public domain and it is right that it should be so. The SYRPG hosted a public exhibition.

The calls started immediately; "Hereford and Worcester BBC Radio here, will you do a live interview about your plans to throw six ton blocks of stone into the river?" "You are going to

flood the houses at Symonds Yat!" "Why are you canoeists going to block the river to migrating fish?" "Will barges be able to come up the river anymore?" "Why are you planning a national canoe centre?" "There are enough canoeists here already, why are you bringing so many more?" The motto appeared to be "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story!"

More media interviews, all primed by local residents. More protected species searches, footpath diversions, cycleway diversion, navigation closure, portage path around the works for navigators, Natural England, Forest Enterprise and English Heritage, all had to be sorted out.

We were quickly losing the will to live. Then we got our consents, we even got the inactive support of the local anglers. Sport England, the Dept. of Culture Media and Sport, Advantage West Midlands, the SYRPG and the BCU itself all came in with money.

And hey, guess what? We got there. We were ready, and we even had a contractor. J N Bentley of Skipton.

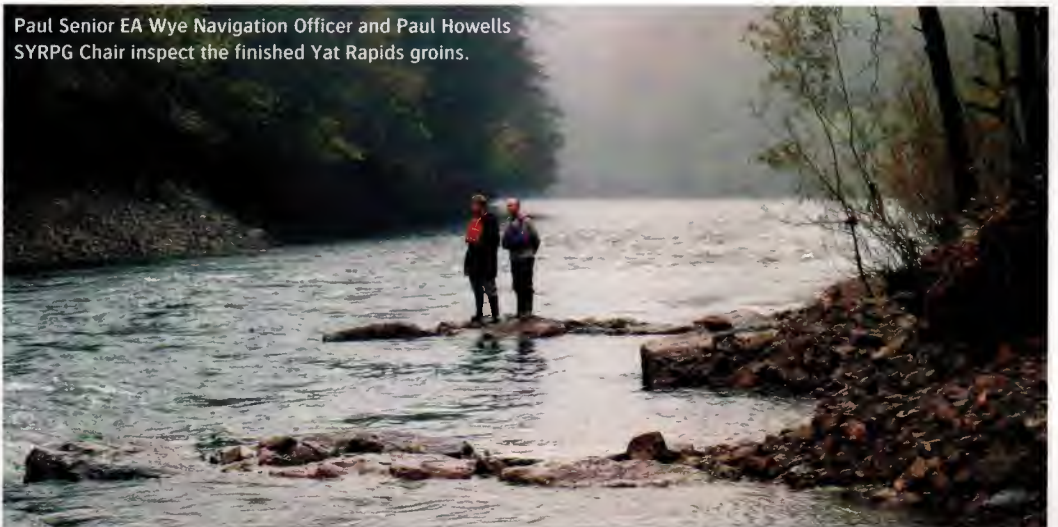
At the end of August we made a start, then the Wye came up 18 feet overnight and we stopped. The river dropped and we got going again. We had to be complete and out of the river for environmental reasons by October 15th. So we brought in an additional machine to speed things up. Which promptly broke down. The river came up again – so we stopped again. But in the end we got there.

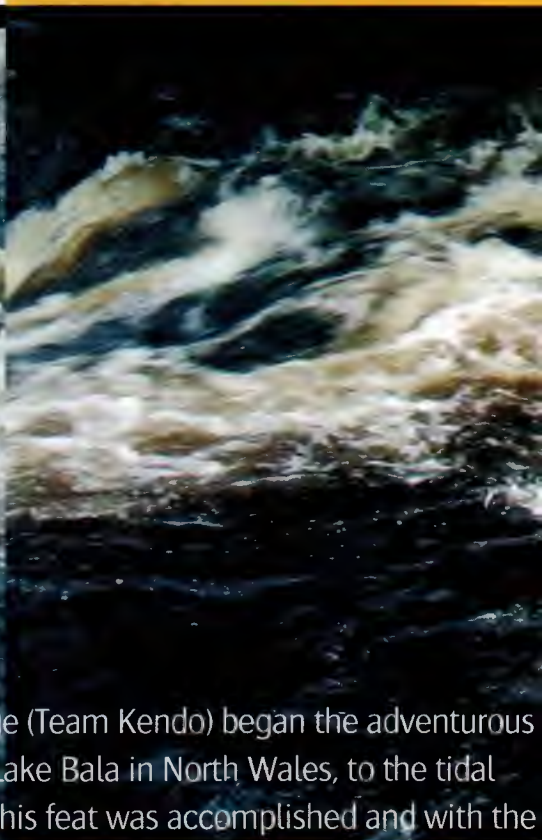
The rapids are available for use now and will be at their best in summer river conditions. More work to the island will be carried out next summer and the rapids will be re-opened at a ceremony at the Royal Lodge Hotel on March 28th. Please come along, we still have more money to raise.

Could I say thanks to all involved and in particular to Paul Howells Chair of the SYRPG, Paul's family and co-owners of the Royal Lodge Hotel, who have at no charge put up with endless SYRPG and other meetings. I would also like to thank Paul Senior the EA Navigation officer for the Wye who helped co-ordinate all the different departments of the EA involved and in the end, almost had the EA singing off the same hymn sheet.

Happy (Symonds Yat) Paddling.
CHRIS HAWKESWORTH

Paul Senior EA Wye Navigation Officer and Paul Howells SYRPG Chair inspect the finished Yat Rapids groins.





On Friday 5th September, Duncan Stokes, David Bell and Joanna Savage (Team Kendo) began the adventurous challenge of paddling the entirety of the River Dee from the source at Lake Bala in North Wales, to the tidal Dee at Chester in England. In five days of almost continuous paddling this feat was accomplished and with the help of other members of Sussex Canoe Club based in Brighton, a whopping 113km was covered in total.

Fundraising on a flood

Typical images conjured up of touring on the Dee include open tops gliding down a tranquil, meandering river and family picnics on the riverbank, bathing in the late afternoon sunshine. However, the torrential flooding that reaped havoc across much of Wales this September, caused the Dee to be slightly less friendly than had been expected. In fact the river was in spate and bursting its banks in many parts and considering that it is classed as one of the widest rivers in the UK, at times it felt like sections of the Amazon were being paddled.

The paddle was carried out in memory of fellow late Sussex paddler, Roger Bates, who died on the Dee below Llangollen in a tragic accident on April 19th 2008. Since joining the club in October 2007, Roger embodied a remarkable spirit of enthusiasm for the sport, shown through his attendance at most weekly pool sessions and white water weekend trips. Roger was a valued member of the club, a dear friend and has been sorely missed by everyone who knew him. The rescue attempts made by the people involved have been widely praised and it was felt important that the fundraising money collected should go towards both the Welsh Air Ambulance and providing white water safety and rescue courses for club members.

The warm-up

Despite our plan being to paddle the 113km of the River Dee, we started a little earlier and took advantage of the now free-of-charge Tweryn course.

We couldn't really claim that this was a warm-up but it would have been a shame to miss out when the levels were up!

Day 1. Almost Lake Bala to Corwen

Just to confess that due to some incredibly large sluice gates we didn't actually start our trip from Lake Bala. To some extent this meant that our trip had failed before it had even begun, as we were clearly not going to be able to paddle the entire length of the Dee from its source to the sea. As much as this may disappoint the poetic amongst you, the real task was to commemorate our friend and so with this in mind we set off from (just below) Lake Bala.

Due to the high rainfall, this gentle touring section was booming along. There were no rapids to negate but the flow meant that there was very little need for paddling as we drifted past cows, sheep, and the odd Heron and, surprisingly, Llamas. At 27km this was to be one of the longest sections that we paddled, but it was covered in little over three hours!

That evening we indulged in 'the Banquet Burger' at the local pub; this crazy burger consists of a 1lb beef burger, four rashers of bacon, a mountain of cheese and more salad than Mr McGregor's garden! It is the perfect post paddle snack!

Day 2. Corwen – Llangollen

The second day of our paddle started just like every other day in North Wales had done for the past week:

with a lot of rain! We split the journey from Corwen to Llangollen into two sections: firstly the touring section from Corwen to Horseshoe Falls and secondly the classic section, ending at the famous Town Falls rapid under Llangollen Bridge. As it turned out there was also a third (and more extreme) section along the canal running alongside the classic Dee.

The paddle from Corwen down to Horseshoe Falls was much like the previous day although we did pay a bit more attention when nearing the end, as we didn't want to end up in the weir. On previous inspection we had seen a tree being held in the towback; a place no kayaker would ever want to be.

With the longer paddle over and done with, our attention was now on the classic section of the Dee and memories of the Dee Tour were brought up by the older members of the team who had regularly participated in the days before crank shaft paddles and plastic boats. However, it was slightly disconcerting to find out that none of them had seen the river this high and as a result a few people decided to take the 'extreme' canal that runs alongside, instead.

For the rest of us it was an amazing run filled with huge wave trains and scary looking holes and for a while it felt like we had taken a wrong turning and ended up in the Austrian Alps. Exhausted and exhilarated, we were reminded of where we were by the name of the local shop in Llangollen: 'Ysiopfach-gardiauwrthbybontdrosyafondyfrdwyynllangollen.'

After the fun of the day, thoughts became more reflective as we realised that tomorrow we would be passing the rapid where Roger died. As some people

Roger was a valued member of the club, a dear friend and has been sorely missed by everyone who knew him.



By David Bell

ded River Dee

were returning to Brighton that evening and would not continue with us to the Trevor Rapid, we decided to take a drive down there before they left. In memory of Roger's ever-present kilt, (despite the fact that he wasn't Scottish or Irish) we tied a piece of Tartan round a tree stump on the bank of the river and left with a new determination for the next three days.

Day 3. Llangollen to Overton Bridge

We awoke to our first morning of glorious sunshine to the noise of the cows being milked on the farm at Llangollen. To Dave's great excitement the only way to get from our campsite to Overton Bridge was via the river (as we had left the minibus there the night before) and it was here that the adventure really began.

We trekked down the hill to the river, our boats fully loaded with kit and put on just below the weir at Town Falls. The river was still going like a train and we arrived 6km downstream at the Trevor Rapids, the site of the first UK canoe slalom competition in 1939, in no time at all.

Further on we had to portage two rather nasty looking weirs that appeared even nastier in the high water and seemed to loom up at us suddenly around tight right hand bends (Dave who was leading, said that he felt like a sacrificial lemming.) After an awesome day of paddling we egressed at the Cross Foxes pub at Overton and treated ourselves to a much deserved pint!

Day 4. Overton Bridge - Farndon

This was the longest day on the water. After leaving the field which had been home for the last four

nights and driving back to Overton Bridge, Team Kendo set off knowing that we had a tough paddle ahead of us – the map in the guidebook showed the Dee meandering its way up a flood plain. This meant that despite the river being really high still, all the speed was taken out the flow by the large bends. Not to worry, at least we weren't paddling white water boats. Oh, we were. Doh!

We made good time, covering the first half of the river in 90 minutes and stopping for lunch feeling smug about how well we were doing. After lunch we started on the bendy bit. We were expecting a slog but hadn't realised how demoralising it would be to be paddling for over an hour and still be about 200 yards away from a farmhouse we had already passed going the other way! Still, banter and looking at the varied birdlife that inhabits this area got us to the ancient stone bridge in Farndon eventually. Dave's Aunt Wendy, who gave us some welcome hot food and shelter, met us here.

Day 5. Farndon – Chester

After a proper night's sleep, in proper beds, we headed back to Farndon to finish our journey. We had mixed feelings, looking forward to finishing but worrying how difficult the paddle might be, as accumulative fatigue was taking its toll and we weren't really up for anywhere near as many bends as the previous day! Luckily we needn't have worried as the section flew by: first through riverside dwellings and then through the rather posh looking Eton Hall estate.



Duncan's 'Banquet Burger'.



Flooded Bench, River Dee.



In Memory of Roger.



Not long after this, we entered civilisation, in the shape of Chester; where we had lots of tourist boats and rowing clubs to avoid. We reached the area above Chester Weir sometime in the afternoon and after a quick inspection shot the salmon steps and marked the end of our paddle with a group photo. We had finally finished an awesome five days of varied scenery and difficulty in paddling and so the only thing we could do was celebrate with a curry and some beer. Result! ●

Our paddle was a great success and already surpassed the fundraising target. Please visit www.sussexcanoe.com for donations towards white water safety and rescue courses, or donate directly to the air ambulance www.walesairambulance.com/index.php?p=donations

We would like to thank the following, without whom our paddle wouldn't have been possible; Simon Fisher, Chris Sloan, Gareth Lee, Wendy and Derek Bell and Sussex University Students Union. Thanks also to Black Ken, Blue Ken and Yellow Ken; the three Kendo-teers!

Town Falls



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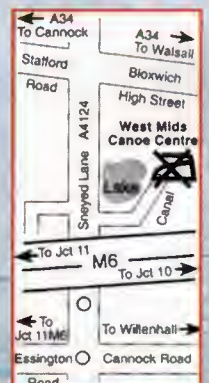


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Coaching

Rapid Education – Key concepts in WW kayaking

The need for speed. Oh, and angle...

Last month, we discovered that there are three important factors in white water kayaking – Balance, Accuracy and Timing (commonly referred to as B.A.T) and looked at balance in depth. This month, we'll be focusing on the idea of accuracy...

An important thing to remember about white water kayaking is that the kayak is a form of transport – a way of getting from A to B. A good thing to remember in all forms of kayaking is that if you point your boat towards your target and paddle, eventually you'll get there! Where your target is will determine where you point (the angle of your boat). How quickly you paddle and the speed of the flow will determine how quick you get there. So basically, accuracy covers two elements – speed and angle. Let's have a look at angle:

Try this experiment – find an eddy with a well-defined eddy line. Paddle in a big circle from the eddy into the flow and back into the eddy again. Now repeat this exercise but imagine a giant clock face. 12 o'clock is upstream and so on. Vary the time you point the boat at each time you enter and leave the eddy. Have a think about how the time you point at affects where you end up in the flow or the eddy...

Have you got it yet? Good – basically, the more across the flow you point, the sharper the turn and the closer you end up to the eddy line.

Sequence one: Wide angle break in

The less you point across the flow, the wider the turn and the further you end up from the eddy line. Now check out the next sequence.

Sequence two: Narrow angle break in

As you can see, the angles of the boat as you enter or leave the eddy affects where you end up. This is handy to know, since where we need to end up varies. So, if we understand how our angle can affect this, we have a greater level of control over our destiny! Let's quickly have a look at speed.

Try the same experiment as above, but select one angle for entering and leaving the flow. This time, vary how fast you are paddling when you enter and leave the current and think about

how the turn varies. You should find that the faster you paddle, the wider the turn and the further into the flow or eddy you travel. If you go slowly, the turn is sharper.

We've looked at the idea of speed and angle in the context of breaking into and out of the flow but understanding speed and angle on all the moves you make on the river is vital. Each destination has an ideal speed and angle combination to get you there.

More about speed

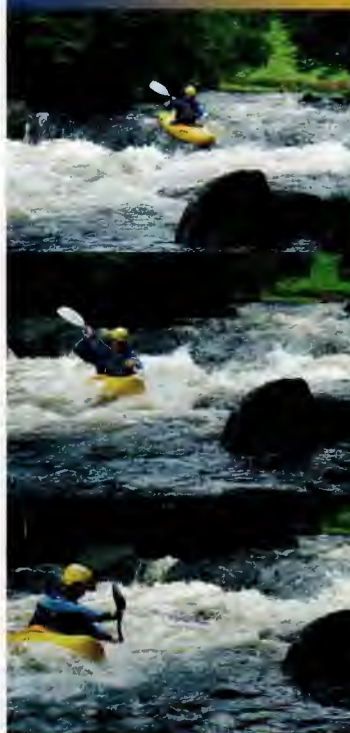
Rivers move, strangely enough. When we are in the flow, we move with them. However, if we are just sat in the flow, we have no speed, since we are travelling at the same speed as the water. We can generate downstream speed by paddling with the flow (appearing to speed up). We can generate upstream speed by paddling against the flow (appearing to slow down).

You see lots of people on the river always paddling as fast as they can, generating a huge amount of

Sequence 3: No lateral momentum



Sequence 4: Lateral momentum



Sequence 1: Wide angle break-in



Sequence 2: Narrow angle break-in

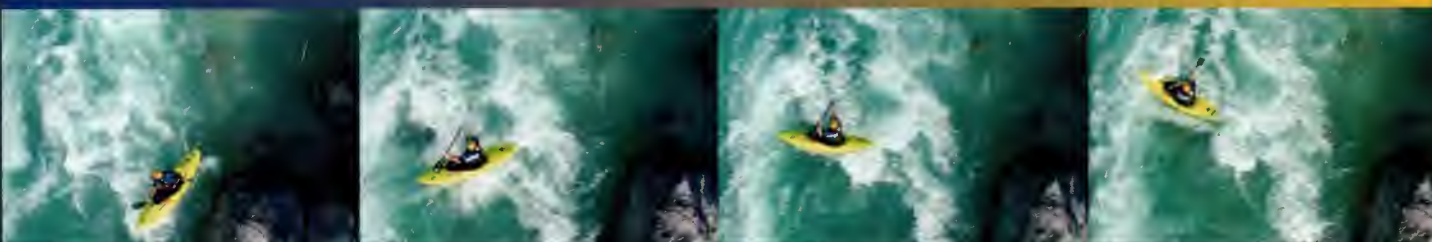


Photo 1: Vertical paddle stroke



You see lots of people on the river always paddling as fast as they can, generating a huge amount of downstream speed. There is no need for this! Think about it – the water is carrying us along, why do we need to always be moving faster than it?



Photo 2: Horizontal paddle stroke

Photo 3: Boater making boof eddy



downstream speed. There is no need for this! Think about it – the water is carrying us along, why do we need to always be moving faster than it? We don't – it's a big waste of energy. Only generate downstream speed when you need to. It saves energy and gives you more time to work out what on earth is going on.

Probably the most important type of speed is lateral speed – movement across the river. Have a look at these two sequences.

Sequence 3: No lateral momentum

In sequence three, the paddler has tried to turn at the last minute and charge into the eddy. But speed takes time to build. He has not given himself enough time and misses the eddy.

Sequence 4: Lateral momentum

The fourth sequence shows the paddler has planned ahead and started his move on the opposite side of the river to the eddy, giving himself plenty of time to build speed to hit the eddy. The idea of movement across the river is not only important for making targets; it's about avoiding hazards too!

The first paddler did not get enough speed across the river to avoid the hazard and got a shoeing for his efforts. The second paddler thought about things a bit more and avoided the trouble. We can gain lateral momentum by paddling or by accessing a chunk of water going in the appropriate direction – this links back to the whole idea of using the river's energy where possible.

Speed and angle on the move

Have a look at photos one and two above. Which do you reckon would be good for generating speed and which would be good for changing angle?

Vertical strokes = speed

Horizontal strokes = turning.

The two need to be distinct. If your stroke is a mix of the two, it will be a bit ineffective. Now, you have a luxury when you are in an eddy – time. Things happen quickly in the flow. Therefore, it's worth taking the time to plan your next couple of moves. Check photo three above: boater making boof eddy

Here, the boater knew his target, worked out where he needed to be to

get the correct speed and angle to hit the target, then worked out what speed and angle he needed when leaving the eddy to get to where he would go for his target. Basically, if you plan ahead and think about the speed and angle you need, you're far more likely to succeed.

Reading the river

I know we've already looked at reading the river but it's important to bring this point in. Remember to take into account the effect that any water features, particularly waves and stoppers that are on the line to your target will have on your speed and angle. Check out sequence five. Both boaters are aiming for the eddy on the left.

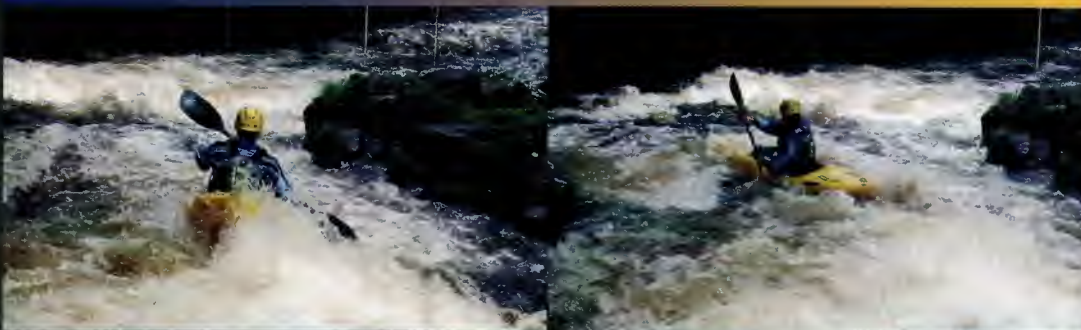
The first boater hadn't anticipated the effect the diagonal wave would have on his boat. This meant he lost his chosen line and missed his target. The second boater, however, had anticipated the effect the diagonal would have on his boat and planned his speed and angle accordingly. The lesson? Think ahead and use the power of the water! ●

To recap:

An understanding of speed and angle is vital to successful white kayaking. Since there is no one set way of doing things, understanding the effects of speed and angle is really important in order to reach our targets. Take the time to think about the speed and angle you need for the move and you will reap the benefits. Right, go have an experiment with your accuracy. Next time we'll be looking at timing and commitment. Play safe...

Tom Parker –
Coaching and Guiding

Sequence 5





Christmas competition 2008

The winner of this year's Christmas card competition goes to Nathan Hammond (age 12) from Meridian Canoe Club. We think you will agree this is an excellent design and we're sure it will put a smile on the face of everyone who receives it. Well done Nathan!

Paddlepower news

Merry Christmas and a happy new Paddlepower year to clubs, groups, centres and coaches.



Paddlepower ordering and new prices – Paddlepower packs

Paddlepower prices have recently undergone a review. As a result we have developed a revised pricing structure to support our desire to streamline the ordering process with the aim of ensuring the resources are available to purchase from our E shop.

Paddlepower Start certificates and all levels of progress cards will now only be available to purchase in packs. Start certificates will be available in packs of ten and progress cards in packs of five. For large orders of 50 or more packs or further information on the Paddlepower awards please contact Kimberley Walsh 03000119501

paddlepower@bcu.org.uk

Safeguarding and protecting children

Important contact numbers

Canoe England 24 hour child protection contact:

email: childprotection@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 0777 570 7364

(For use by individuals wishing to report incidents outside of office hours)

BCU Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Harassment Lead Officer:

Mike Devlin: 0845 370 9514

Canoe England Child Protection Support Officer:

Nigel Timmins: 017684 80084

(For BCU individuals who have received an allegation against them with respect to child protection and require support).

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

Tel: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour).

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111

Tyne Tour Wavehopper '08



The Tyne Tour event held on the South Tyne from Warden Bridge again was a great success – the sun shone, there was enough water in the river, plentiful supply of race boats, the competitors turned up in plenty of time but most importantly there was an astounding response from local paddlers wishing to help out. The organiser had a glut of instructors and safety boaters to coach paddlers in forward paddling, balance and manoeuvring the Whoppers around the Tyne Green before tackling the Grade 2 stretches of the Lower South Tyne from Warden Bridge.

Jennifer Hyslop and Gilly Mara took the lead by getting all of the competitors fully warmed up before taking to the water for the skills session. After lunch two trailers full of boats trundled up to the start with car loads of competitors and safety boaters following on.

Some 20 minutes later all the competitors were away and all that was left to do was collect the finish times and work out the results.

This was one of the easiest events I have ever had to organise and it was all down to the helpers and volunteers that made the event run so smoothly. Thank you everyone! And a big thank you to the trade stands that attended the Tyne Tour event and donated additional prizes to the medals and certificates that all competitors received.

**RAY HUDSPITH NORTH EAST PADDLESPO
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (TEMPORARY)**

What is the Wavehopper Series?

This is a fun series of events held around the country, run by the BCU Wild Water Racing Committee. The objective is to go as fast as you can downstream over a short course. The races are either over two short runs or one slightly longer run with age categories for Under 10, 12, 14 and 16 (1st January each year).

Paddlers new to the sport do not have to use a Wavehopper but as balance and skills improve they will have an advantage by paddling one of these four metre fast kayaks. Paddlers should be at least of 2 Star or Paddlepower Discover standard.



TEAM NORTH

To kayak or not to kayak

This is the question many teachers are asking as experts encourage us to use outdoor provision more and more, but is it safe and where do we start?

At Brimrod CP school we have been embracing outdoor learning and adventurous activities for the last three years. With some very careful planning and sensible risk assessment, we now have a programme we are very proud of.

Our outdoor provision starts in our Early Years Unit and our nursery children can often be seen making mud pies and building shelters in their playground.

In Year two and three, our children attend Forest School. This is an opportunity for the children to spend a full day each week for six weeks in the local woodland, learning new skills and developing their self esteem and confidence.

This year our adventurous activities program begins in Year four. We have been able to purchase our own kayaks and equipment and the children will attend six sessions of kayaking in a pool, learning how to paddle in a clean and warm environment.

Year five will follow a programme of teambuilding activities, climbing and kayaking along with children from our neighbouring school – Marland Hill.

Together the children form positive relationships as they work closely to achieve their goals and we see all the children develop respect for themselves and for others as they learn new skills and push the boundaries of their comfort zone.

The Year six children will extend their paddling skills further in September before they travel to Grasmere

Chester Youth Games

On October 11th, Cheshire Sport held their annual youth games at Macclesfield Leisure Centre. For the first time canoeing was along as a demonstration sport in the swimming pool. This was also the first time Macclesfield Leisure centre had allowed kayaks into their pool.

The team from Macclesfield CC turned up in force to help with the kayaks and also coach the afternoon sessions.

Forty young people from Cheshire came along and tried kayaking throughout the afternoon for an hour each, all going away with a huge smile on their faces.

We even had a Lightning in the pool. Once the rudder was set it could go round and round the pool not hitting the sides! Flat water winter training for those that don't like the cold!

A huge thanks to the team from Macclesfield CC who helped make the afternoon happen.

TEAM CENTRAL

A thriving developing club



Newark Canoe Club are a thriving developing club based at Thurlby Lake just a few miles from Lincoln. The club is called after a Nottinghamshire town but its operational base is in Lincolnshire which may seem to give it an identity crisis! Many of the club's members are from the Newark area but

also attract from Lincoln, the home of Lincoln Canoe Club. However, the clubs do seem to complement each other; the former with a recreational bent and the latter leaning much more towards competition. Both clubs are working towards accreditation by meeting the criteria necessary to be awarded Clubmark. They are very active in their preferred spheres, have forward thinking and dedicated club volunteers and reach out into the wider community in general and paddlesport specifically.

I had the pleasure of a recent visit to Newark in my role as East Midlands Paddlesport Development Officer on the occasion of their last lake based paddling session for the winter, their Annual General Meeting and a celebration of their 'Awards 4 All' grant. Thurlby lake is a lovely tranquil setting and I was not surprised to see evidence of regular barbecues and picnics, no doubt held on warm sunny Sunday afternoon and evenings – although they might have been struggling this last summer! However the sun does shine on the righteous they say and for the time of year it was dry and calm although not as warm as it might have been. This did not deter any Newark paddlers. There was plenty of paddlesport activity on the lake in a wide range of craft as members seemed to reflect on the summer weeks and months and make the most of their final organised session at the lake until next season.

Towards the end of the paddling session the members gathered together at the lake edge whilst their chairman, Rodger Davis, took a few photos as a record of the new boats, paddles and other equipment just brought into use and securely stored in a new container, as a direct result of a successful 'Awards 4 All' grant. This grant has been a major boost to their stock and will help the club develop significantly further next season as it continues to promote Paddlesport through an extensive programme of activity, to families, friends and anybody who wants to have a go, using canoe and kayaks and other key resources such as Paddlepower. The drive towards accreditation is helping the club focus on management, organisational and coaching tasks to achieve the Sport England/Canoe England kitemark and become a key paddlesport facilitator in the East Midlands.

To finish the day off, the club held its Annual General Meeting Mediterranean style! Outdoors in the fresh air! The air was turning a little fresh, with a gentle breeze and increased cloud cover but the club persevered with many members present, worked their way through a typical AGM agenda and set themselves up for the next year. Great to see such enthusiastic and supportive volunteers and despite limited facilities provide a great service and excellent opportunities to local paddlers people.

JEFF TOSER, EAST REGION PADDLESPORE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Youth Hostel for a week filled with fun and challenging activities including hill walking and climbing. They also study nature and participate in environmental and sustainability activities.

Head teacher Mrs Hartley said, "Adventurous sports has been part of the curriculum for the



past three years. We have seen a huge development in the young peoples confidence, self esteem, development and zest for the environment. It has developed their interest in learning about the environment... I would recommend it to anybody who works with young people.

"At Brimrod we are dedicated to extending outdoor provision for our children. The benefits are huge and have seen to be life changing."



TEAM CENTRAL



Gold for Bedfordshire club



On October 28th, winter made an early appearance, with freezing temperatures and a good covering of snow in Bedfordshire, but it did not affect the smiles on the faces of the members of Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club, as Sue Hornby, the Canoe England Director of Development presented them with their Top Club Gold and Clubmark certificates. The reason for their smiles was the fact that they had just become the first club in the country to be accredited to the Top Club Gold standard.

Here are some quotes from Steve Tingay, LBCC Chairman, and Ruth Jones, who between them compiled the evidence for the accreditation folder:

Steve "When it came time to renew our Clubmark and TPC and TCC accreditations, we were faced with a slight change in the scheme. A more simplified structure of Top Club and Top Club Gold was presented to us with slightly different requirements and a tightened administration.

Top Club Gold allows us to be recognised for all the hard work that goes on at the club, and allows us to reach out in many ways to receive additional support. One of the biggest ways that this helps us is with the links to the local schools. Whilst there is currently a big push from government to partner with local sports clubs, having this accreditation is almost a pre-requisite to forging these links, allowing schools to recommend our club and to work with us on courses that we run for them. Also when a potential new canoeist starts looking around for a club to join, having the highest national governing body accreditation and accreditation from Sport England provides a reassuring and comfortable route for people to follow."

Ruth adds "Top Club Gold has also helped us see where different volunteers are required for our club, to keep it running, and the variety of roles they perform, so that it is not just the very important coaches that are recognised within the clubs structure"

Steve "To find out we were the first club in the UK to achieve the Top Club Gold Accreditation was absolutely brilliant! It gives us a really good boost going into our winter training program and ensures we stay aligned with one of our long term key club objectives. What's next? Well we have some very big challenges ahead of us in the coming months to years; coach recruitment and education, new paddler development and top of the list is the redevelopment of our clubhouse. We hope that Top Club Gold will open doors to support us with all of these areas and more."

The one thing that Steve and Ruth liked to emphasise is that the whole club pulled together – not just a few individuals to achieve Top Club Gold. This has created greater ownership and pride in what Leighton Buzzard CC has achieved, and will add the fuel to drive the club forward to a greater and better future.

Opening of the new Hartham Weir



The opening of the new 'two-step' or Hartham Weir was a big occasion for Herts Canoe Club. The new weir is carved from granite and should be there for centuries, which is fantastic for new paddlers who want to play in a safe feature. The Environment Agency has done a good job.

As the morning mist of the 25th October, rose off a very cold river Lea, it was great to see many very enthusiastic Herts CC paddlers lined up ready for the grand opening of the new weir. First to break the ribbon was going to be Alex, a youth member of the club. Mark Prisk, MP for Hertford, had a referees whistle and after a short speech he gave the signal. Alex was good to go. Watched by Jeff Toser, East Region Paddlesport Development Officer from Canoe England, the Environment Agency and a bank full of spectators, Alex dug in with his paddle and styled it through the green ribbon! Hartham Weir or the 'new two-step' was officially open.

When Alex and the youth members who first passed through that green ribbon see themselves in photos it will stir up emotions that they can anchor to forever... canoeing can inspire in many different ways!

Special thanks to the paddlers who braved the cold and the Environment Agency for its collaboration and insight.

DARREN FERGUS, CHAIRMAN, HERTS CANOE CLUB

TEAM SOUTH

Building a competitive edge

Richmond Canoe Club, under the guidance of head coach Trevor Wetherall and a team of volunteers are working with local schools to increase participation in watersports, build a competitive edge for local youngsters and build the clubs' ranks of competing juniors.

Wetherall has worked with four local schools to look for potential talent. A dozen year 8 youngsters from each of four schools – Grey Court in Ham, Hampton Community College, Waldegrave School for Girls and Orleans Park School, had six hours of coaching over four weeks covering the basics including safety, river use, spending time in singles, doubles and bell boats. The whole programme culminates in a mini-regatta between the schools.

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames's Sports Development Unit has developed competitive Edge. It does what it says – seeks to develop a competitive edge both in sport and also as a life skill.

For Trevor, it's a good deal for everyone. "We get a chance to introduce people to an Olympic sport with a taster of canoeing," he says. From last year's intake, nine have joined the club, and seven are actively racing. His enthusiasm flows over, "it's great to see novice, nervous children relax and enjoy themselves and learning a new skill."

It's a good team working on a good programme that seems to be working. Trevor Wetherall, along with club Commodore Sean Martin

coached the Richmond Kayaking Squad to victory in the 2008 London Youth Games.

Getting the local community paddling
At Chichester Canoe Club they work very closely with the local primary school to promote their youth section. This encourages participation in paddlesport from children throughout the local community.

With support of a PESCL grant they run canoeing activities for all of year 4 and 5 as part of their outdoor education days based on the canal. On these days the whole class take part in canoeing, field studies, art and a human impact/land use project. This is a great way of integrating paddlesport into school activity.

Canoeing has proved to be very popular with the children and has appealed to all levels of confidence. The emphasis on the activities has been on playing games and exploring the canal environment. The club have set up a kayak orienteering course (based on the Star orienteering principle) which has proved very

popular and uses skills such as mapwork and teamwork. Canoe polo, Cross Stream Challenge and simple journeys have also been a great success.

Once children have experienced the taster school days they can join the Thursday after school club which runs from May to October. This year they are running Paddlepower Start on the school days and continuing with this scheme at the club with Paddlepower Passport.

Recently accredited with Clubmark and Top Community Club, the youth membership has risen to 45 children. A core group of parents have become involved with helping at sessions and are now working towards becoming Level 1 coaches. The club run parent's canoe polo activities on Monday evenings to promote an interest in paddlesport, which have proved to be very popular.

The club are lucky to have a canal in our local area and happy to see children and adults out there making use of it and enjoying what the local environment has to offer.



Chichester polo session



'Work hard, play harder'

'Work Hard, Play Harder' is the name of a new youth freestyle project which is now open to all junior paddlers in Surrey... and to any adults who are willing to lend a hand! It was set up in March 2008 by two 16 year-old members of Tandridge Canoe Club, Joe Davies and Tom Webb.

Tom says, "Joe and I loved freestyle and started saving hard for our boats. We wanted to learn more, but there was only one freestyle paddler in our club - and he wasn't often around". Joe adds, "We heard that young people could apply to the Youth Opportunities Fund for projects to help other young people, so in February we stayed up late to fill out a form for a grant to develop freestyle at Tandridge. We needed to get some coaches trained and the club needed the right kit for other people to use."

They were lucky enough to be awarded a large proportion of the funds they applied for. Their Project has led to the formation of a new section of Tandridge Club called 'Blades Freestyle'. The funds came through in March and since then club adults and juniors have been going through an intensive programme with Kayakojacko to learn new freestyle skills. The club has bought four freestyle boats in a range of designs and sizes and the freestylers are keen to start sharing their new skills with other young paddlers. Tom and Joe are now inviting Surrey paddlers to become members of the Blades Freestyle team.

From September 2008, they will be training at the Thames Weirs of Chertsey, Shepperton and Hurley on Wednesday/Thursday evenings and on Saturdays or Sundays. Blades Freestyle currently has eight members, some of whom have taken part in two freestyle competitions this year.

For details on Blades Freestyle, please contact Joe or Phil Davies on 01883 722964 or email thedavieses@gmail.com. www.tandridgecanoe.co.uk



A new departure for Meridian CC

Last September Meridian Canoe Club was asked for something totally different. A local school (Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College) had two disabled pupils who were keen to do a Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver expedition but were not capable of doing it on foot.

They wanted to know if we could assist them with a water-based expedition. As part of our Club Mark registration we were keen to develop stronger links with local schools so we agreed to take on the project. After some discussion we discovered that we would need a full training programme following the 1 and 2 Star syllabus, plus some moving water experience, a three day two night practice expedition followed by an assessment, all of which had to dovetail into crowded school and pupils' timetables. There were six other pupils who volunteered to accompany the two disabled girls.

We began the training sessions in with our club pool sessions coming

outside once basic skills and under water work had been mastered. Coaching disabled paddlers does require coaches to develop new skills to ensure that these pupils are kept at the same level as the others. The highlight of the training programme was trip on the tidal Thames from Westminster Boating Base downstream to The Ahoy Centre at Deptford, both places having excellent facilities for disabled paddlers and managers who very supportive of our efforts.

Finding suitable venues for the group was not easy. We needed water that did not have too many portages or awkward get on/off's, ready access for transportation with wheelchairs and support staff just in case, plus campsites in the vicinity that had at least some vestige of disabled facilities. With help and advice from Sue Hornby at Canoe England and Ian and Dawn Scott at the DoE's Severn and Wye panel, we eventually settled on the River Wey around Guildford for the practice and the River Wye from Hereford to Monmouth for the assessed.

The practice expedition was made so much easier by the great help generously given by Wey Kayak Club who kindly let us use their superb facilities for changing, and gave us much helpful advice, especially Peter Morley. The weather was awful and the first day clashed with the local river festival so we had to change our plans and be flexible. Midway through a long second day we had to

deal with a minor revolt as pupils became overtired in the wet and windy conditions on the long haul upstream from Weybridge to Guildford.

The assessed expedition was nearly called off when the previous weekend the River Wye was in flood and not available to paddlers of the group's experience, however after a lot of help via the Community pages of the UK Rivers Guidebook website we were informed it was going to high and flowing fast, but hopefully not too bad. Our initial inspection confirmed this and the fast current helped the group make the daily mileages more easily. We used the campsite at Luckshall, which has excellent disabled facilities, and Welsh Bicknor, which is less well adapted, but more than compensates with its wonderful setting and very helpful warden. We even managed to paddle the Symmonds Yat rapids after the site consulting engineer became very supportive of our group. At the end we were warmly welcomed by Monmouth Rowing Club, who also allowed us to use their disabled facilities and provided us with a splendid tea in their riverside HQ. The pupils all passed and we were warmly thanked by parents and the school.

As a club we learned a lot from the experience and whilst pursuing Club Mark registration, we have had to complete a lot of risk assessments recently, but this took it to a whole new level.

Paddlesport kids
On Sunday 14 September in what might be considered a tribute to Jerome K Jerome and his Three Men in a Boat, only slightly more in number, the paddlesport kids and their entourage set out to explore the sights and sounds of the River Medway between east Peckham and Yalding.

At 09.30 on Branbridges Industrial Estate an enthusiastic group of children, their parents and others mustered to commence the paddle along the Medway. Support vessels included Minnehaha and Hiawatha in an open canoe together with some of the Rainbow family in another open canoe with Mark scouting ahead for any possible hazards and Jim bringing up the rear and keeping an eye on any stragglers. Others were strategically placed offering support and encouragement as required.

At Yalding there was time for a look at what was going on in the weir followed by a bank side picnic lunch. It was then time for the return journey, which saw one of the parents undertaking a seal launch which also acted as the unofficial launch of the Bewl Canoe Club sub-aqua section!

The return journey went almost as quickly as the outbound leg - though it has to be said that muscles were clearly starting to ache and thanks must go to those who took on passengers in their open canoes and towing one or two of the more weary.

As the parent of two of the paddlers, I returned home with two very happy and satisfied if slightly tired children - who certainly slept very well and nearly emptied the fridge such was their appetite- as indeed I did myself!

MIKE KENNY



Basingstoke and Deane Canoe Club receives ClubMark certificate

On 8th November Mr James Arbuthnot (MP for NE Hampshire) presented Sport England ClubMark and Canoe England Top Community Club certificates to Basingstoke and Deane Canoe Club. The presentation was made at Colt Hill Wharf on the Basingstoke Canal, where the club has recently been granted planning permission to build a clubhouse.



Mr Arbuthnot congratulated the club on their achievement of ClubMark and then enthusiastically participated in a short Canadian trip along the canal. Peter Mansell received the award on behalf of the club. The club runs an introductory programme for children every year based on the highly effective Canoe England Paddlepower programme.

The club has met on the Basingstoke Canal at Colt Hill since it was formed in 1987. In 1994 a half acre small holding between the canal and the public car park at Colt Hill came up for sale and the club was able to purchase it a year later. Interest in a clubhouse took shape in autumn 2005 and the prospect of significant funding from the Sport England Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) was a real incentive. But at a more practical level two factors were crucial: firstly that Canoe England had a framework agreement with S&P Architects at a price that was just about achievable; secondly a mixture of grants and loans from Hampshire Playing Fields Association, the Four Lanes Trust and from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Planning permission was granted in June 2008.

The prospect of the clubhouse at Colt Hill is great news for the club and for other paddlers in North Hampshire, where the Basingstoke Canal is the only waterway where access is permitted. Facilities will include changing rooms, showers and WCs. For the club's enthusiastic team of coaches a boat store will mean more time using their skills on the water and less on the logistics of arranging transportation of canoes and kayaks to the canal.

www.badpaddlers.org

PETER MANSELL

Youths gain grant

Lowestoft and District Canoe Club (LDCC) have been awarded a grant of £6,000 for eight new open canoes and training of three of their youths to become instructors. The grant was procured by a team of youth members, from the Youth Opportunities Fund, operated by Suffolk County Council. Working without adult assistance they had to put together a case to demonstrate how the project would benefit young people in the area and present this to a panel of judges. Steve Connolly and Scott Cooper presented the case and the grant was awarded on 3rd November.

The youth team comprised of: Steve Connolly (16); Scott Cooper (16); Chris Booth (17); Sally Collyer (13); William Hopkins (13) and Tom Hopkins (14) LDCC has approximately 125 members, of which half are juniors. We undertake training on Tuesday evenings throughout the summer on Oulton Broad, and Monday evenings in a pool over winter. The



Above: (left to right) William, Tom and Steve in the pool last Monday after hearing of the award.

children achieve BCU accredited qualifications in kayaking and open canoeing, but most of all have lots of fun. They go on white water trips, kayak surfing, river touring and do various club activities and games. The new open canoes will help kids get their qualifications without having to use large adult sized canoes.

KEITH MILLER, CHAIRMAN, LDCC

YORCIE NEWS: www.yorcie.org.uk

The YORCIE ACM took place on the 28th October at Osset Cricket Club. Unfortunately, no one came forward to help the existing committee and we now have three unfilled posts. Disappointing, as we have a good working model and now would have been an easy time to dip your toes in the water. The problem is that there are a lot of areas that the regional team has not yet addressed and I was looking for some extra help, leaving 'experienced' team members to get stuck into new issues.

So if you were at the meeting and were a bit shy, please get in touch with me. Similarly if you were one of the 1960 regional members who couldn't make the meeting, now is your second chance.

Big thanks go to retiring vice chair and polo rep Keith Saunders for four fully committed years to the RDT. Keith will still feature as he has agreed to carry on as acting secretary and see the Manvers Steering committee through the rocks.

The regional secretary is still Jonathon Dakeyne at jdakeyne@aol.com and the regional treasurer is still Debbie.McDonald@somfy.com thank you. We do pay volunteer expenses, so we do not expect volunteers to be out of pocket.

Thanks also to Chris Hawkesworth who stays on as our members independent rep and without whom we would struggle to achieve what we do and to Gareth, who has featured in everything we do.

Final ACM thanks go to all the speakers to Mike and John for this year's sea kayaks and open canoe slides and to Pete Dawson and West Yorkshire CC for providing another superb supper for us all.

We are short of reps for actual clubs. Out of 44 in Yorkshire only seven made their presence known to us in

the year. If you think Bradford and Bingley, Manvers, Green Star, White Rose, Malton, Halifax and Leeds are doing well then perhaps you'll see the reason why.

Riverwise

Take care if you paddle the River Holm this winter and inspect the weir soon after the start above Brockholes. If you started at the swimming pool at Holmfirth then this is the second weir that bends left. A very large tree has come down in the floods and made this an enforced portage. Full details are on the website. Please report any river hazards to access@yorcie.org.uk where they can be directed to the appropriate access advisor or the Environment Agency as necessary.

Coach news, from our new Yorkshire RCO, John Lucas

"A few months into my new role as RCO and I'm starting to acknowledge the level of responsibility I have in representing the coaches of Yorkshire. My first slice of realisation hit home whilst attending my first English Coaching Management Committee (ECMC) meeting in September – a whole new world of being involved in taking decisions that will affect the paddlesport coaching community across the UK for years to come.

The second slice of realisation hit home with emails from paddlesport coaches looking for help and guidance as to what to do next or who to turn to. Mentoring and directing other coaches is something I've done over the years as a coach but suddenly my inbox is constantly full with requests for help.

So here's the sanity check: this is a volunteers role and I'm only in post for a minimum of three years, after that it's time for me to consider either standing for a second term or

stepping aside to let someone else have a go. Three years is not long!

Whilst trying to absorb the reality of my role as RCO, both on a regional and national level, the region's volunteer coaching team has been working on a programme to see us through the next 12/18 months. In addition, our team is looking at possible funding opportunities to help with the costs for those willing to commit to a number of voluntary coaching hours, either to help with transferring coaching awards from the old scheme to the new or subsidising the cost of new coaching courses.

The programme will address those immediate needs; coach updates, Level 1 and 2 coach training courses, transfers for current level one and two coaches to the new schemes, weekends for coaches, personal development courses and other events. Check www.yorcie.org.uk

If you haven't already, register on the site and subscribe to email updates!"

Diary date for coaches

The date for the annual Aldwark Coachfest is April 3rd, 4th and 5th.

And finally – Manvers.

By the time you read this the first general meeting will have created a Manvers Management committee who will look after the lease and site in a general sense and have modelled themselves on the very successful Washburn Committee. This will leave the day to day activities to a second level of the actual lake users. What a magnificent achievement this is. Well done to all concerned. Contact manvers@yorcie.co.uk for full details.

As you can see, I'm still here and need your help even more. The next RDT meeting is January 12th in Leeds at 18.30.

Happy Christmas. Dick

dickconstable@canoists.co.uk

Club Focus

Clevedon Canoe Club

The story so far...

Clevedon has a marine lake, a man-made structure that fills with the highest tides from the Severn Estuary and until recently, used to empty through the leaks in the sea wall. The lake was extremely popular up until the 1970s but fell into a state of disrepair. A group of volunteers formed the Marine Lake Enthusiasts Society, MARLENS, in 2005 with the aim of bringing the lake back to life, under the leadership of Arthur Knott and Joe Norman.

Arthur and MARLENS persuaded the local councils into restoring the lake, but what were really needed were people to use it!

In the paddling world, Clevedon is notable for being the home of Palm Equipment, the Dagger Europe factory and Palm's Technical Director, Bob Slee, partnered with MARLENS to run paddling sessions for local schools. This was extremely successful and of course, where there are children there are parents and before long the bug had bitten a group of them.

Initially the group just ran have-a-go sessions on the lake for anybody mad enough but soon it became clear that some structure was required and in late October 2006, Clevedon Canoe Club was inaugurated.

We had stumbled into a previously untapped resource and our rise was meteoric. It appeared that the town was full of people, with kayaks and canoes hidden in the garage, who just wanted an excuse to paddle or have-a-go.

As a group, many of us were new to canoeing, new to committees, new to much of what we had to do, in fact. We really did start from absolute scratch.

We won our first club boat, a Dagger Dynamo, just by attending the AGM of the BCU South West in December of that year and, soon afterwards, we managed to establish a firm financial footing with a £500 grant from the Olympus Keymed Group and £200 from Business Link West. From there a grant from our local town council enabled us to buy two more boats. This was followed by a substantial

At the time of writing, we have over 280 members with around 30% having achieved BCU 1 Star Level, Paddlepower or above.

grant of £2,000 from the Yanley and North Somerset Environmental Company, YANSEC and the local Landfill Tax Trustees added another six children's boats.

We were extremely pleased to be awarded the full Awards For All (A4A) grant of £10,000 in April 2008, some of which has gone towards the creation of a training fleet and the training of coaches. We have, up until recently, been completely reliant on one senior coach, Mike Perrott and five 'old' Level 1 coaches. The training programme now means that we currently have 12 Level 1 coaches with plans and A4A funding, to enhance our coaching team further.

The key, we have found, is to identify your project and cost it properly, identify a source of grant funding, ensure you meet all the criteria and be ready to justify it.

Our first year as a club was really spent just getting to grips with everything we needed to do to just be a club. In our second year we have concentrated far more on the training side. So, at the time of writing, we have over 280 members with around 30% having achieved BCU 1 Star Level, Paddlepower or above and are now one of the largest clubs in the south west. We have built a fantastic club fleet of our own, including the

original community fleet of eight boats that we manage and maintain for MARLENS. We share storage space with Clevedon Sailing Club in the community boat store, again donated by MARLENS with assistance from YANSEC and North Somerset District Council.

There are naturally different enthusiasms amongst members but the most popular disciplines seem to be boiling down to white water, surf and sea kayaking just about anywhere from the Isle of Wight to Pembrokeshire. We have yet to worry the worlds of polo or slalom but there are a small number of enthusiastic open canoeists and two of our youth members, Sam and Tom Barnes, now compete in freestyle competition. Tom was the winner of the Arthur Knott Youth Award, which was first presented in November 2007. Another one of our youth members, Martin Stanfield, has recently taken his BCU 3 Star Sea Kayak award.

We have come a long way and achieved much more than we thought



we were capable of but there is still have much to do.

We owe much of our existence to MARLENS, Bob Slee and in particular to the vision of Arthur Knott. Arthur died in November 2007 but not before he made an indelible mark on Clevedon and, for us, Clevedon Canoe Club. ●

**TO ARTHUR KNOTT
PHOTOS: MARK DYER**



We owe much of our existence to MARLENS, Bob Slee and in particular to the vision of Arthur Knott. Arthur died in November 2007, but not before he made an indelible mark on Clevedon and, for us, Clevedon Canoe Club.

Completing the double

Opening of new clubhouse

On a glorious, warm Indian summer day in September, members of Chelmsford Canoe Club were out in force for the celebratory opening of their new clubhouse, replacing the small building that had stood on the same site since 1968.

Leased from Chelmsford Borough Council the site is in a prime position in Chelmsford town centre. Club members persisted with planning and design over many years, overcoming numerous obstacles, before building actually commenced.

Joining members at the official opening were the Mayor of Chelmsford Councillor Tom Willis, Council Leader Councillor Roy Whitehead and Chelmsford MP Simon Burns. Also joining in was an original member, Ray Hatherley, with many others who have been involved since 1946.

The new building has been named after the late John Marriage who started the club. He served as Commodore and Chairman of the club committee until the late 1990s. The new facilities now available at Chelmsford will continue to attract membership enabling the club to maintain its current success.



Putting something back

The first Saturday in August saw some 30 members and friends of Peterhead Canoe Club meet at club HQ, the Jolly Roger, located at the Peterhead Lido. The event celebrates the first anniversary of the opening of the new club premises. The annual pilgrimage was to combine a 'beach clean' culminating with a barbecue.

Adults and juniors systematically trawled the beach picking up every conceivable piece of litter. The effort bears testimony to kayaker's commitment to protect the environment and the members desire to "put something back into the system".

After the hard work of the day the barbecue was fired up, boats were taken to the water and kayaks were paddled. Members and passing visitors alike were encouraged onto the water, some to work on existing skills, others to experience their first encounter with the sport and carried on into the early evening. www.peterheadcanoeclub.com

Peterhead CC's Thomas, Naomi and Isla.



The youngsters of Duddon Canoe Club have won two national competitions in wild water racing.



In October they travelled to the Nene White Water Centre at Northampton for the Perception Wavehopper Challenge finals.

After some hard paddling and a few spills they came out on top winning the finals. This also gave them victory in the series that has run over the past year on rivers around the country. Individual rankings include six first, three second and a third place.

So the next challenge was the British Youth Club Championship held at The Burrs in Bury on the 16th November. The best young paddlers from around the country

would be there. The event consisted of two 800m sprints down Grade 2 rapids for each competitor to give individual times, the six best results going to the team score. The prize giving was a long affair but at last the result we were waiting for, Duddon Canoe

Club were the new wild water racing youth champions.

Over the year, 16 youngsters from eight to 17 years-old have joined in the thrills and spills of wild water racing with the club. Thanks go to race organisers and helpers for making it a successful season.

The only disappointing aspect of wild water racing for us is that so few clubs enter and many enter only one local race. Some events we go to we represent well over half of the youth participants.

So if you have the chance, try attending a couple of events and see how the youngsters love it.

www.wildwater.org.uk.



Top: Lewis Bird in the under 14s.

Middle: some of the Wavehopper wizards from Nene.

Bottom: the team at the Burrs



Stone slalom won by club member

Over 130 paddlers competed at a Stone Canoe Slalom competition in October making it one of the biggest entry level competitions of the year.

Stafford and Stone Canoe Club (SSCC) member, Kendall Chew from Nantwich was the fastest competitor of the day, winning the Division 3 men's kayak competition. Although a paddler for many years, Kendall only took up canoe slalom this year after his daughter started competing. Eleven club juniors took part in the Division four competition, many entering their first competition. William Pemberton from Trentham Canoe Club was the highest placed local paddler, coming second.

In the K1W competition, three Walton Priory Middle School pupils, Tiffany Gumm, Chloe Ellerton and Elinor Griffiths all finished mid-field in Division 4 at their first race.

Many of the higher division club paddlers took the opportunity to race in Canadian boats, either C1s or C2s. Adam Moorcroft and Steph Crowley won the Division 2/3 C2 competition with the sixth fastest time of the whole event. Marc Bowers and Carl Sunderland came second.

This was the last race of the season until racing starts again in February. Community Sports Coach, Ruth Holdway, says: "There was a great turnout for the event and it was good to see so many club



Dick Mantle, treasurer, presenting a prize to Kendall Chew

members competing for the first time. This is probably one of the most important races that they will do, paving their way for a successful future in the sport." She adds:

"Since the Olympics, there has been a great interest in canoeing at the club with an extra beginner's course being put on to cater for the demand, which filled up instantly."

Over half term there will be a three-session introductory Paddlepower course run at the club.

www.staffordandstonecc.co.uk

BCU Club of the Year **AWARDS 2009**

Sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor

Nominations close on

MONDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2009 – nomination forms are now available on the website:

www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers or from volunteers@bcu.org.uk.

Please ensure your club has read and fully understood the requirements for BCU Club of the Year Awards before submitting your application.



Nominations are now open to all BCU affiliated clubs for the prestigious title of BCU Club of the Year. The

winning club will be honoured as BCU Club of the Year 2009 and will receive £150 in Cotswold Outdoors. Two additional clubs will win £100 worth of vouchers to spend at Cotswold Outdoors.

- 1 Does your club provide opportunities for everyone to experience high quality activities at all levels of paddlesport or recreation?
- 2 Does your club demonstrate a commitment to the development of participants as well as coaches and volunteers?
- 3 Does your club take an innovative approach to the promotion of the club?

PADDLESAFE

A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO CHILD PROTECTION



YOU HAVE RIGHTS, SPORT SHOULD BE FUN

You should feel safe and enjoy your sport. You can't do this if you feel unhappy from someone bullying or abusing you.

My Club Welfare Officer is:

Their contact number is:

TO KEEP SAFE ALWAYS

- Tell someone you can trust so they can help you
- Avoid being alone or with just one other person
- Trust your instincts about the people you meet
- Avoid going to other peoples' homes by yourself
- Travel with a friend, avoid travelling in someone else's car by yourself
- Carry a mobile phone, phone card or some spare change

If you are being bullied or abused
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMETHING IS WRONG?

Something is wrong if someone

- Constantly teases you, shouts at you or calls you names, threatens, hits, kicks or punches you
- Touches you or does anything in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Makes suggestive remarks or tries to pressure you into sexual activity
- Damages or steals your belongings
- Does anything that makes you feel lonely, worried, unsafe, hurt or embarrassed

If this is happening to you, try to:

- Be firm and tell the person to stop- make a lot of noise to attract attention
- Get away from the situation quickly, go to a public place to find help or call the police so they can help
- Keep a record of the date, time & place, what happened, how you felt and the name of anyone who may have seen what happened

Call the 24 hour free helplines: Childline or NSPCC
(Keep trying if you can't get through straight away)

DO NOT IGNORE WHAT IS HAPPENING ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST

If any of the above happens to you, do not wait for it to happen again act immediately call the
24hr Free Helplines Childline 0800 1111 NSPCC 0800 800 5000

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You will ensure lake crafts are maintained in good order, equipment is stored correctly and safety checks are performed. Previous experience in a similar role is not required, but you must have good customer service skills as you will also help guests to prepare for their chosen activity. First aid certificate desirable.

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All outdoor instructor posts include quality rent free accommodation, staff uniform and training opportunities.

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For an application pack contact: **Customer Services, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY**

Tel.: (01856) 873535 or email: customerservices@orkney.gov.uk

For an informal discussion about this role, please contact Richard Croft or Ron Bulmer on (01856) 873535 ext. 2443 or email: richard.croft@orkney.gov.uk

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Closing date for applications Jan 5th 2009
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Interview date: 14th January 2009

For more details and an application pack contact Ian Thorpe on 01751

417112 or ian@peatrigg.co.uk

Also check out our website

www.peatrigg.co.uk





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Old Thorne Road, Hatfield, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN7 6EQ. Tel: 01302 841572
www.doncaster.gov.uk/hatfieldwaterpark Email: hatfield.waterpark@doncaster.gov.uk

Activity Leaders

Activity Leader

£8.57 - £9.55 per hour, Pay Award and Pay Grading Review pending, 37 hpw

Ref: REC1061

Assistant Activity Leaders (4 Posts)

£7.35 - £7.71 per hour, Pay Award and Pay Grading Review pending, 24 hpw

Ref: REC1062

Hatfield Water Park Outdoor Activity Centre is looking for the following Seasonal Staff to deliver exciting and educationally valid activities for Schools, Youth Groups and Individuals.

We are looking for experienced and enthusiastic staff with coaching qualifications in Kayaking, Canoeing, Windsurfing and Sailing as well as SPA training. Additional NGB's would be an advantage and training will be available in obtaining further outdoor qualifications.

Doncaster Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check.

Please note accommodation is not included within these posts, for further details contact Stuart Wearing on 01302 841572.

Interviews will take place on the 5th March 2009, if you have not heard from us by this date, please assume you have not been short-listed for interview for the post. Many thanks for your interest in this vacancy.

Application forms are available from Pay and Employment Direct on 01302 862610. Alternatively you can apply online, view further information, job descriptions and person specifications at www.jobsdoncaster.co.uk

Closing date for all posts: 20th February 2009.

www.jobsdoncaster.co.uk for more vacancies within this organisation



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Interview – Ivan Lawler

SIX TIMES WORLD MARATHON CHAMPION



Ivan Lawler has to date, been our most successful marathon paddler. He is also an ex-Olympian and won many other international medals including a UNESCO fair play award.

When did you start paddling?

I have been in and around canoes since first sitting in one as early as three or four, not that I remember that. Probably watching the World Championships in 1979 in Duisburg really inspired me to take canoeing as my main sport.

When did you win your first race?

The first prize I remember was from the Wey Kayak Club Hare and Hound winter series, I guess I was about 11.

Why flat water racing?

Simply because that was what I was exposed to. I wouldn't have known there were other disciplines until much later on. If I had my time again I think I would still gravitate to flat water as it is head to head racing that motivates me.

What has been your best race to date and why?

Two races stand out for me, coming second in the 10km at the Worlds in 1989 with Grayson Bourne was one. There were plenty of crews in the race stronger than us but we did everything right on the day, no mistakes or bad decisions. The second race was the last ever 10km at World Championship level in Copenhagen in 1993. I had always wanted to race K1 10km and this turned out to be my only opportunity. As it was the last one, pretty much anybody who was anybody was in it and just the speed and buzz of the race with that quality of field it was simply the best race I ever competed in. After the race several people who I have a lot of respect for commented on how well they thought I had done which meant a lot to me. I was gutted to come fourth at the time but looking back on it weeks later I could see that it was one of my best ever.

Are you naturally competitive?

I love to compete; it is the mixture of excitement and fear that never leaves you. If you are not I don't think you can survive in sport.

Which club is your base and how long have you been there?

I am based at Elmbridge Canoe Club in Weybridge and have been there since its conception at my parent's house on the Thames at Staines in 1981. Since then the club has moved on significantly, now boasting about 30 World Championship and three Olympic medals from its members.

Your father and mother are both heavily involved in the sport still and your uncle is an ex Olympian. How much have they inspired you?

My dad was my coach throughout and his drive and input certainly got me through the early days. Without parental support and encouragement I don't think it is possible to succeed in a sport as small as ours. My uncle Peter and his achievements were always something that inspired me, souvenirs from Mexico '68 were my prize possessions from a very early age.

In 1990 at the 2nd World Championships in Copenhagen Denmark you were awarded the Fair Play award from Unesco. You came 2nd at this event and on the portage the K2 in front of yours had a problem with their rudder and you stopped out and repaired it on the water. This meant that they were able to go on and win the race. How do you think we can teach/encourage fair play amongst our paddlers?

I think education is probably the most important aspect of fair play. Far too often I hear comments from people who should know better about pushing people into trees or turning people, the myth is that this is how races are won and lost. At top level the races are very civilised for no other reason than self preservation. As soon as you get into any sort of contact with another paddler it is both of you who will suffer. The big difference between good and bad

marathon paddlers is the good ones know when confrontation is futile and when it is necessary.

Your favourite canoeing moment?

There are too many to choose from, I think the most excited I ever got watching a race was in 1981 when Alan Williams and his crew won the first ever medal for GB in the K4 10km. I was in the commentary car feeding information to the commentator but we had to stop about 250m from the finish. I deserted my post and ran the last 250m with them shouting all the way. Watching Tim Brabants win the 1000m this year was also a very special moment.

At the first ever Marathon World Championship which were held at Holme Pierrepont in 1988 you won a Silver medal with Graham Burns in a K2. In those days there were 24 nations at the event and some 20 years later the number of nations attending has not significantly increased. How do think the ICF (International Canoe Federation) can encourage more nations to attend?

There are only two ways and neither is imminent. The first would be to allow marathon racing into the Olympics which has long been discussed but the political will is not there. The second is to introduce big sponsorship and money prizes. I think the loss of the 10km which provided the overlap between sprint and marathon has been very bad for the sport, both in terms of race education and in dividing sprint and marathon totally. Probably the simplest and cheapest way initially would be to hold the two World championships on the same weekend at the same venue. This would save transport costs for a lot of the smaller/poorer teams.

What does the sport of canoeing give to children?

Through sport you learn a lot about yourself and what you are capable of, it exposes your weaknesses and strengths both of which can be beneficial. I have seen the most unlikely looking beginners flourish and succeed in canoeing, one of which was Tim Brabants.

You were also World Champion in 10km racing. Removed from the international racing calendar would you like to see it revived?

The main reason for reviving them is that they were a great spectator event, talking to the old-timers who were there. The 200m, 500m and 1000m have so much overlap physiologically and in the athletes that are successful. I think if we had maybe 200m, 1000m and 10km the athletes would be forced to specialise more and the racing would become more interesting.

Would marathon canoeing and or 10km be a good sport for the Olympics?

With good camera work and informed commentary they would certainly be a success, you only have to look at how well viewed the 'open water swim' was this year to see that the public enjoy the longer events. If I had to choose one the 10km would be the favourite for me as all the action is compressed into a more spectator friendly timescale.

What have been the toughest moments and how do you keep yourself motivated?

I guess most of the tough moments have been due to injury or illness. Motivation is not something that you have much control over, while you have it nothing really sways you from your goal then one day it disappears and nothing will ever make you work that hard again. For all the talk you hear of motivational techniques. I think they are mostly rubbish. If you have it, don't waste it!

You now have two young children of your own. When the time comes would you encourage them to become canoeists?

I think it is quite tough to bring your kids into a sport where you are well known, not only does it pressurise them from the start but they also get exposed to all your old baggage. I will definitely take them out in canoes but it is entirely down to them whether they take it on as a sport.

What has inspired you to keep on paddling?

I coach on the water at Elmbridge which has been quite an education for me. As for my own training, I only manage about twice a week on average, if I can find some inspiration for an event then I increase that a bit. This year I was very privileged and grateful to be asked to race the Marathon Nationals by Ben Farrell who is clearly out of my league. It was fun to use this as a short term inspiration and I managed a solid five week period of daily training. In general though I guess I just can't let go of my competitive instinct and there is nothing I enjoy more than racing with the hope of upsetting one or two people! I think I will always enjoy getting out on the water even when I am too old or tired to race.

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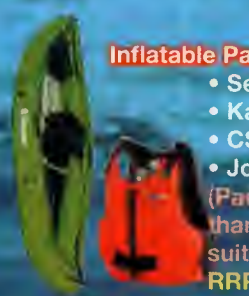
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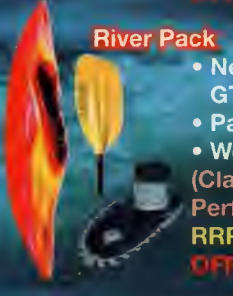
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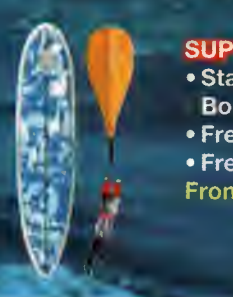
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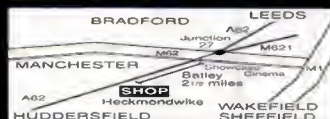


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