

# canoe

## focus



February 2009  
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**Front cover photo:**  
**Derwent Water in the Lake District on New Year's day**  
**Photo:** David Leathborough  
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Comment by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

## Welcome to February's Canoe Focus

It may seem like a long time ago now, but I hope everyone had a lovely break over the festive period. Happy New Year to you all.

### Congratulations Dr Tim Brabants on your MBE

A huge congratulation goes to Dr Tim Brabants who received an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for his services to canoeing. The sprint racing Olympic Champion secured British canoeing's first Gold Olympic medal. He has over the years consistently delivered World and European Championship titles. In addition to his activities on the water, Tim has contributed so much to the sport at all levels.

That said, behind every great competitor is a great coach and Tim is no exception when it comes to this. Eric Farrell, is Tim's coach and has put up with him for 15 years (Tim's words not mine). To coach an athlete to an Olympic medal is a fantastic achievement. In Eric's case he has coached Tim to three medals including his Bronze medal in Sydney and he was the coach behind Ian Wynne's medal in Athens. Four Olympic medals – I can't actually think of words to describe that achievement. A legend, one of the most outstanding coaches of our time and all as a volunteer. Eric, it is a great privilege for the sport to be enjoying the fruits of your labour.

### AGM 7th March 2009

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 7th March 2009 at 2pm, at The Lake View Room, Eton College Rowing Centre, Dorney Lake, Windsor, SL4 6QP ([www.dorneylake.com](http://www.dorneylake.com)).

Enclosed in this issue of Canoe Focus is the following: calling notice, directions, proxy form, agenda and abridged accounts.

Apart from carrying out the approval of our annual report, accounts etc we will also be proposing that you enable us to increase the number of our Vice Presidents.

### Changing role for Vice Presidents

Traditionally, Vice Presidents of the BCU have, as of right of their role, been able to attend all board meetings. At the AGM it is proposed that this situation is changed so that we can recognise and honour the good services to canoeing of more people. An inevitable consequence of this proposal is that for capacity and procedural reasons it would not be possible for Vice Presidents to attend board meetings as of right.

### Legal advice helpline

We appreciate that the day to day pressures involved in running a club are increasing and we have therefore introduced a commercial legal advice service for affiliated clubs.

The service provides advice over the phone on all business matters such as employment disputes, prosecutions, data protection, contract disputes, bad debts, property problems and accidents as well as hundreds of other potential business problems (see top of page 10).

### Canoe Focus has been changing

We have been updating Canoe Focus over the last year or so and have received many compliments about the changes.

Canoeing is a multi-discipline sport and we aim to cover all aspects from recreational, white water to surf and to sprint. We very much welcome contributions from the canoeing community. Please send your articles/photographs and letters to [chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk](mailto:chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk)

Deadlines for 2009 Canoe Focus magazines:

April	9th March
June	11th May
August	7th July
October	7th September
December	9th November

### Australian Youth Olympic Festival

Congratulations to all our athletes who took part in the Australian Youth Olympic Festival, 14-18 January 2009. There were some excellent results (see page 64).

It was super to see Jessica Walker have the honour of carrying the Union flag at the opening ceremony. Congratulations!

### Apologies to Jessica Walker

In the December edition of Canoe Focus (p15) there were several pictures of the BCU Ball. One incorrectly stated that Louisa Sawers was presented with an award at the BCU Best of British Ball. It was in fact Jessica Walker. Our sincere apologies go to Jessica, British canoeing's youngest ever Olympian.

Tim Brabants



### Cotswold offers

Canoe England can receive a 15% discount on products at Cotswold Outdoor.

To take advantage quote code C2114 when purchasing.

Members can also receive a 20% discount during the following dates (remember to take your Canoe England membership card and quote the relevant code):

The 20% discount periods are as follows:

- Thur 26th – Sun 29th March  
Quote code: AF-BCU20-MT
- Thur 4th – Sun 7th June  
Quote code: AF-BCU20-J3
- Thur 6th – Sun 9th August  
Quote code: AF-BCU20-AA
- Thur 22th – Sun 25th October  
Quote code: AF-BCU20-OT

### 2009 Members Directory

Enclosed with this Canoe Focus is your 2009 Members Directory. Keep this to hand as it contains lots of useful information, for example; club and centre contacts and local river advisor contacts.

### And finally...

Congratulations to the man behind Canoe Focus. Peter Tranter has published/edited Canoe Focus for 17 years; this is his 100th edition, another fantastic achievement.

#### 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 honest to goodness dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. **Technical Information:** Contributions, preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to [chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk](mailto:chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk). All material is accepted in 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 9th MAR 2009.

Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the APRIL 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 endorse 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
February	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South East - Dagenham	March	29-Mar		Marathon Racing	Gailey - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K1
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 3 Central - Stratford Upon Avon		29-Mar		Marathon Racing	Macclesfield - Special Event
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 4 Central - Derby		29-Mar		Marathon Racing	Forth & Clyde - Canal Marathon (HQ) Auchinstarry
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 4 North - Stockport		29-Mar		Marathon Racing	Calder 1 - Hasler 09 - Yorkshire & Humberside - K2
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 South - York		April		Surf	Mundaka Spain - International
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Ladies - Leeds		4-Apr		Coach Update	Cumbria
	14-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Luton		4-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Wild Water Racing - Div B and Wavehopper - Spring Wessex Series 2
	14-Feb	15-Feb	Wild Water Racing	Nith - Div B - Inter-Service Championships		4-Apr		Coach Update	Hertfordshire
	15-Feb		Marathon Racing	Waterside A		4-Apr 5-Apr		Coach Update	Yorkshire - Aldward
	21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Open - Leeds		4-Apr 5-Apr		Sprint Racing	National Regatta - Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham
	21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Stockport		4-Apr 5-Apr		Surf	Kimmeridge Bay - England Surf Kayak Ranking Event
	21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 2 South - Coventry		4-Apr 5-Apr		Surf	Cayton Bay - North East Series 1 - Short Boat Open
	21-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 3 South - Bristol		4-Apr 5-Apr		Slalom	Matlock - Div 2 and 3
	21-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Bala Sprint - Div A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Championship 2		5-Apr		Marathon Racing	Spey Marathon - River Spey Aberlour
	22-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Leny/Teith - Open - Scottish Series 2		10-Apr 13-Apr		Marathon Racing	Devizes to Westminster
	22-Feb		Marathon Racing	Thameside 1		11-Apr		Slalom	Grandtully - Div 1 and 2
	22-Feb		Marathon Racing	Winter Time Trial - Linlithgow		11-Apr		Marathon Racing	Runcorn 10km - K2
	28-Feb		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Ladies - Coventry		12-Apr		Slalom	Grandtully - Pan Celtic
	28-Feb		Coach Update	North West Region - Cheshire		13-Apr		Slalom	Aberfeldy - Div 4
	28-Feb		Coach Update	Southern Region - Oxford		18-Apr		Slalom	GB Junior Selection - Grandtully
	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Grandtully - Sprint - Team Race - Div A and B		18-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Prudoe - Wavehopper
	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	National Prize Giving - Grandtully		18-Apr		Surf	Widemouth Handicap - Short Boat Open
	28-Feb		Wild Water Racing	Thistlebrig - Classic - Div A and B		18-Apr 19-Apr		Slalom	Grandtully - Premier
	1-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Grandtully - Classic - Div A and B		18-Apr 19-Apr		Slalom	Oughtibridge - Div 3 and 4
	1-Mar		Marathon Racing	Waterside B		19-Apr		Surf	Widemouth - Long Boat Open - Long and Short Juniors and Ladies
	1-Mar		Marathon Racing	Essex Winter Series - Race 6 - Leaside		19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Brigg - Hasler 09 - Yorkshire & Humberside - K1
	1-Mar		Marathon Racing	Weaver Descent		19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Chester 1 - Hasler 09 - North West - K1 - Assessment
	7-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South East - Dagenham		19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Maidstone Marathon - Hasler 09
	7-Mar		Coach Update	Bowl Water, Kent - South East		19-Apr		Marathon Racing	London & South East - K2
7-Mar		Marathon Racing	Runcorn 10km - K1	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Bedford - Hasler 09 - Eastern - K2		
7-Mar 8-Mar		Slalom	Shepperton - Div 1 and 2	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Ratho Marathon (HQ) - Union Canal		
8-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Taff - Div B - Welsh Series 1	25-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Bala - British Open Sprint - Div A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Ch 4		
8-Mar		Marathon Racing	Thameside 2	25-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Avon Sprint - Div B and Wavehopper - Midland Seires 2		
14-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Dove - Div B - Midland 1	25-Apr		Slalom	GB Junior Selection - Bala		
14-Mar		Coach Update	South East Region - Bowl	25-Apr		Slalom	Tryweryn - Premier		
14-Mar 15-Mar		Coach Update	Leicestershire & Rutland	25-Apr		Slalom	North Walls Short Course - Div 4		
15-Mar		Coach Update	Herefordshire	25-Apr		Marathon Racing	Glasgow to Edinburg - Canal Challenge		
15-Mar		Coach Update	London - Wimbledon Park	25-Apr 26-Apr		Surf	St Ives Bay - England Surf Kayak Ranking Event		
15-Mar		Slalom	Stone - Div 3 and 4	25-Apr 26-Apr		Slalom	Marple - Div 3 and 4		
15-Mar		Marathon Racing	Waterside C	26-Apr		Coach Update	Wessex - Weymouth		
15-Mar		Marathon Racing	Winter Time Trial - Linlithgow	26-Apr		Slalom	Tryweryn - Div 1		
19-Mar 22-Mar		Surf	Santa Cruz - California - International	26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Northwich Marathon - Hasler 09 - North West - K2		
21-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 3 South - Dagenham	26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Anker Valley - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K1		
21-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 3 Central - Stratford Upon Avon	26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Cam - Hasler 09 - Eastern - K1		
21-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 3 North - Stockport						
21-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 4 North - York						
21-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 2 North - Leeds						
21-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Washburn - Sprint Div B						
21-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Washburn - Classic - Div B - Youth Championships 3						
21-Mar		Slalom	Tryweryn - C Class International						
21-Mar		Slalom	Tryweryn - Premier						
22-Mar		Coach Update	Riverside Centre, Oxford - Southern						
22-Mar		Slalom	Tryweryn - Div 1						
22-Mar		Marathon Racing	Royal K1/K2						
28-Mar		Coach Update	Suffolk						
28-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 2 Ladies - Derby						
28-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 1 Open - Coventry						
28-Mar		Canoe Polo	Div 4 South West - Bristol						
28-Mar 29-Mar		Slalom	Sowerby Bridge - Div 2 and 3						
28-Mar 29-Mar		Slalom	Yalding Weir - Div 3 and 4						
28-Mar 29-Mar		Slalom	Hatfield Short Course - Div 4						
29-Mar		Wild Water Racing	Langham Farm - Div B and Wavehopper - Spring Wessex Series 1						
29-Mar		Marathon Racing	Waterside D						

Canoe polo : [www.canoe polo.org.uk](http://www.canoe polo.org.uk)  
 Canoe sailing: [www.intcanoe.org.uk](http://www.intcanoe.org.uk)  
 Sprint racing: Visit BCU, then 'Our Sport' and 'Sprint racing'  
 Freestyle: [www.ukfreestyle.com](http://www.ukfreestyle.com)  
 Marathon racing: [www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk)  
 Slalom: [www.canoeslalom.co.uk](http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk)  
 Surf: [www.bcusurf.org.uk](http://www.bcusurf.org.uk)  
 Wild water racing: [www.wildwater.org.uk](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk)





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\*Subject to water conditions

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**Patrick Winterton**  
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NOTTINGHAM  
**Paddlefest '09**  
28th – 29th March





## Canoe England members can receive 10% discount at selected canoe and kayak retailers!

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](http://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  
Brookbank Warwickshire, 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

Camel Canoe and Kayaks Ltd, Cornwall  
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](mailto:chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk) or call 0845 370 9500

# Members offers



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

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

26th March–29th March	Quote code	AF-BCU20-MT
4th June–7th June	Quote code	AF-BCU20-J3
6th August–9th August	Quote code	AF-BCU20-AA
22nd October–25th October	Quote code	AF-BCU20-OT

**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.

**5% discount** on **CONCEPT 2** rowers.

**10-15% discount** at **HALFORDS** (minimum spend required)

**CRAFT THERMAL TOPS** – This top has become a favourite for paddlers and we are pleased 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](http://www.bcushop.org.uk).



**Did you know you can also receive a discount at the Nene at Nene White Water Centre?**

**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.



**Note:** All offers are subject to terms and conditions. To find out about these and to learn how to take advantage of the discounts visit the 'Members Area' of the Canoe England website.

**BCU members get 20% off**  
at [www.lucozadeshop.com](http://www.lucozadeshop.com)

**BCU1**  
Discount code



## On the move

### Brookbank Warwickshire

As part of our commitment to providing the best range of canoe and kayak equipment in the area, Brookbank Warwickshire will be moving to new larger premises located only 15 minutes away from our present store. The move, which is part of Brookbank's programme of growth and development, will allow us to stock the largest range of canoes, kayaks and accessories in central and southern England.

The new 5,000 sq ft premises are located off the central motorway network (M6, M40) along with convenient public transport nearby. Maps to the new location can be found on our website and blog.

Keep up to date with the latest developments by joining our Facebook group (Brookbank Warwickshire) or checking out our blog <http://brookbankwarwickshire.blogspot.com> – check out the photos of the new unit.

Our opening hours will still be 09:30 until 17:30 Monday to Saturday and our phone number will still be 01926 640 573. The new address is: Brookbank Warwickshire, Unit 7, Budbrooke Industrial Estate, Budbrooke Road, Warwick, CV34 5XH.

### Totnes Kayaks

*"When the rain falls some stay indoors hibernating while others go kayaking." That's the way Tom Morris explains why he is moving Totnes Kayaks even in these challenging times.*

Having helped hundreds of people get out paddling during that time through free 'have a go sessions' and professionally run 'academy' classes they understand that customers don't want to just look at boats and kit, they want to try right away!

The shop has now found a new home directly on the River Dart, at Baltic Wharf where there is plenty of space both for the retail outlet and academy school, free parking and most importantly, direct river access. Anyone visiting the shop can be taken through the product ranges available and then given a chance to try the boats immediately under the guidance of qualified staff.

Tom says *"If you have always wanted to try kayaking or demo a particular boat come to Totnes Kayaks and we can help you get paddling. We can also improve your skills through our academy courses that range from 'discover kayaking' to BCU coach qualification courses. Call us for directions or visit us at our new website at [www.totneskayaks.co.uk](http://www.totneskayaks.co.uk)".*

- Both Brookbank Warwickshire and Totnes Kayaks give Canoe England members a 10% discount.



## Tyne Tour

**Tyne Green Country park, on the outskirts of Hexham, an historical market town, resembled a village of colourful tents of all shape and sizes for as far as you could see and beyond on the weekend of the 7-9th November! The weekend of the Tyne Tour attracts over 1,000 people to the biggest canoe event in the country, to paddle the North and South Tyne and other local rivers or just attend the ever-popular ceilidh (by Whapweasel), which again was sold out! Could this be the largest ceilidh in Europe?**

The weekend was a fantastic success, with members from at least 15 universities, clubs, schools and people just wanting a weekend's paddling fun! On the Saturday it was the Tyne Descent Race from Barrasford to Hexham with over 20 entries in various crafts charging down the river, through Warden Gorge, giving the

safety crew a laugh when a certain Canadian double went through!

Also running was the Wavehopper race from Warden to Hexham for the junior members aged 8-16 years, which was also a great success, with Hexham Canoe Club member Matthew Coulson, aged 14, getting the fastest time of the day. This followed a morning of training in the Wavehoppers led by Jennifer Hyslop and Gilly Mara along with a score of other coaches volunteering to help the youngsters improve.

The Hexham Tyne Tour is organised and run by Hexham Canoe Club with help from an army of volunteers from other clubs. The money raised from the weekend goes towards the BCU North East Region. This helps to develop the region's club coaches and volunteers by subsidising courses and travel to events.

For more information check [www.tynetour.co.uk](http://www.tynetour.co.uk) or to see whether your picture was taken.

More photos at: <http://tynetourphotos.com>

The Tyne Tour event was initially started back in 1990 when the Mike Jones Rally moved from Llangollen with a view to set up other tours around the country. The tour is worth over £20,000 to the North East region and brings in at least £100,000 to boost the local economy. So no wonder the event has the full backing of Tynedale District Council and North Country Leisure who manage sport and recreation in the region.

If you think that your region or club could organise a tour or event then your regional Paddlesport Development Officer and Canoe England would love to hear from you.

A huge thank you to everyone for the help and support over the weekend, thank you to the trade stands for the fantastic race prizes and thank you to the paddlers for making it a huge success. Hope to see you all at the 2009 event. ●

**LORRAINE MURRAY-  
GLENENNING, CHAIRMAN  
HEXHAM TYNE TOUR  
COMMITTEE**



## Sport England's 'Satisfaction with the Quality of Sporting Experience' survey (SQSE)

**In 2009 Ipsos MORI aim to contact over 900 paddlers to take part in an on line questionnaire. This is the first survey of its kind in the UK and the following tells you a bit more about it.**

**What** - Sport England has commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake the survey which aims to establish what is important to people when they take part in sport and how satisfied they are with the quality of their sporting experience. The survey will be repeated on an annual basis so that progress can be tracked.

**How** - In excess of 40 sports, including Canoeing, will be covered within the survey. If you are contacted and choose to participate you will be emailed a link to the online questionnaire, which will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. The survey will also include participants that have already been interviewed as part of the Active People survey, club paddlers and younger paddlers involved in competition.

Ipsos MORI are a leading market research company and guarantee your anonymity - no one is identified in the reporting of results and you will not be contacted for sales or marketing purposes as a result of completing the survey.

**When** - Ipsos MORI will be contacting sport participants early in February/March 2009.

**Why** - The results will help shape the future of our sport as they will support improved planning and investment decisions. We very much hope that you will take this opportunity to make sure your views are heard.

We urge anyone who is contacted to take part in the survey to help build a picture for canoeing and what is important to our paddlers. If you do take part, Ipsos MORI will send you an exclusive preview of the headline results, so you will be able to see what people really think about canoeing. Find out more about this study via Sport England's website: [www.sportengland.org/sport\\_satisfaction\\_survey.htm](http://www.sportengland.org/sport_satisfaction_survey.htm)

### Corrections

I would like to give my sincere apologies for a typo made in the 'Flying Squad Cleans Up' article published in December. The correct results of the British Home Internationals are as follows:

- 1) England
- 2) Jersey
- 3) Guernsey
- 4) The rest of the world team

Robyn Louise Pearcey

## NI slalom development squad

**The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) with assistance from Sport N.I have recently established a junior slalom development squad. The 22 young athletes aged between 12-18 were selected by a talent identification program. These young people are dedicated and motivated to develop their skills with the support of an Olympic class coach Han Bijnen and Ireland's top female slalom paddler Hanna Craig.**

This is a fantastic opportunity as Han coaches among others Ireland's Eoin Rheinisch who achieved fourth at the Beijing Olympics. Slalom canoeing has been under represented in Northern Ireland for a number of

years, so CANI were faced with developing this element of canoe sport from scratch. CANI were delighted when Ester Mathews from Green Star canoe club offered to assist by donating 20 kayaks which



has enabled the participants to have their own boats and develop their skills outside formal coaching sessions.

CANI are looking forward to attending competitions and competing against other youth squads in the coming years. For more information on the Northern Ireland junior slalom squad or other CANI activities can be found on [www.canio.org.uk](http://www.canio.org.uk)

**ASHLEY HUNTER  
COACHING DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICER, CANI**



## Legal advice helpline

We appreciate that the day to day pressures involved in running a club are increasing and we have therefore introduced a commercial legal advice service for affiliated clubs.

The service provides advice over the phone on all business matters such as employment disputes, prosecutions, data protection, contract disputes, bad debts, property problems and accidents as well as hundreds of other potential business problems.

Available 24 Hours a day, seven days a week, solicitors and other qualified legal experts specifically chosen for their ability to explain complex legal matters in everyday language will be on hand.

Information and membership cards will be with club secretaries by the end of February.

## Griff Rhys Jones visits Herts Canoe Club

Herts CC was recently contacted by the BBC about Griff Rhys Jones doing a documentary on rivers, following on from the recent series about mountains. A little bit surprised we agreed wondering why they had expressed interest in the small weirs of Hertford rather than some of the Thames weirs.

The River Lea was a hive of activity with passers by having a double take at Griff Rhys Jones as he walked along the river ready to start filming. Our brief was to take Griff safely down a weir. We had three weirs to choose from and after Griff and the crew scouted the river they decided that our new two-step weir was perfect for what they wanted. This weir has recently been rebuilt due to erosion, which would have lead to the eventual leakage of sewage. So taking canoeists into consideration where possible the Environmental Agency built the new two-step weir.

So Griff and his dog Cadbury, in open canoes, paddled along the old River Lea and down to the two-step weir. Andy Morley, one of our club coaches, was with Griff throughout coaching him down the river and giving him tips on how to paddle an open canoe and how to get down the weir, whilst Matt Taylor and I provided safety just in case Griff fell in. There was no need for us really as he came equipped with his own boat and appeared to be quite an experienced paddler. The documentary 'Rivers' is due to be shown sometime this year on BBC 1.

BY CLAIRE NEWMAN  
PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN JACKSON



# Taste of life as elite athletes

**Talented young canoeists from across the UK will get a unique insight into life at the top of their sport when they attend the National Talent Orientation Camp.**

They will be among 80 of the country's most hotly tipped young athletes representing six Olympic and Paralympic sports to spend four days at Loughborough University on a training camp designed to give them a taste of what it takes to be the best.

The National Talent Orientation Camp, a four-day training camp organised by the Youth Sport Trust ([www.youthsporttrust.org](http://www.youthsporttrust.org)), is for talented youngsters aged 14-18 who are aiming to be part of their sport's world class talent confirmation phase of the Olympic and Paralympic pathways.

It combines high-quality training sessions with workshops delivered by former Olympic and Paralympic athletes including sprinter Jason Gardener and sailor Joe Glanfield. The workshops focussed on talent

and ability; attitude and ambition; knowledge and understanding; education and lifestyle support.

The workshops will pose such questions as: "Can I perform when it counts?", and "Do I know what it takes to be the best?" and encourage the young athletes to learn about themselves, their sport and the systems in place to support them.

The camp, which also has strands for parents and teachers to learn ways in which they can support the young athletes along their sporting and educational careers, includes keynote speeches on education and lifestyle planning, advice on drugs-free sport, a higher education marketplace and the opportunity to quiz a panel of elite performers.

Organisers will even enlist the help of a British Army unit, based in Grantham, Lincolnshire, to put the youngsters through their paces during a series of command tasks designed to challenge their decision-making under pressure, get them to work effectively within

a team and help raise their confidence.

Seven out of ten (73%) of the British canoeing team at the 2008 World Junior Championships' attended a previous National Talent Orientation Camp.

More than 90 per cent of the young athletes who attended the 2008 National Talent Orientation Camp said they had a more positive attitude to their sport as a result, while nine out of ten had a more positive attitude towards training.

More information is available at [www.youthsporttrust.org](http://www.youthsporttrust.org).

**Canoeists attending the Youth Sport Trust's 2009 National Talent Orientation Camp**

James Webster  
Peter Wilkes  
Beth Stevens  
Emily Lewis  
Maria Middlehurst  
Alex Foster  
Kristyan Gaul

# National Family Week

It won't be hard to find things to do during the May half-term this year because 25-31st May 2009 is the UK's first ever National Family Week. Hundreds of fun events and activities for families will be happening up and down the country – in parks, leisure centres, community centres, at visitor attractions, shopping centres, schools and out in the countryside. The idea is to create a more family-orientated culture in the UK, by getting families of all shapes and sizes to spend more time together – because strong, happy families make strong, healthy communities.

National Family Week is supported by the Prime Minister and a host of important organisations and charities including Save the Children and the Women's Institute and by celebrities such as Rebecca Adlington, Sally Gunnell, Antony Worrall Thompson and Tanya Byron.

There are many ways in which families can get involved in National Family Week. For example, take part in the Family Week Picnic on Bank Holiday Monday 25th May,



which will be an attempt to break the world record for the largest simultaneous picnic; or enter the competition to think up a 'big family idea' to improve family life in the future. Take part in a Family Week sports day if you're feeling energetic or get stuck into the Family Week book challenge if you're not. There will be lots of prizes, discounts and free stuff given away.

The Saturday of National Family Week (30th May) is Family Week sports day – with sporting opportunities of every kind taking place to encourage kids and their parents and grandparents to get active, get healthy and get involved. It's a chance for clubs to

attract more family members both to take part in the sport or game and to help with refereeing, supporting, coaching, transport and fundraising.

The BCU is supporting National Family Week (which coincides with Go Paddling Week), as canoeing really is a sport that all the whole family can enjoy together. Canoe clubs can use this as an opportunity to attract new members by running family paddling days on Family Week sports day, with discounts off instruction, hire and membership for families. Get in touch with your local club for details. To find out more about National Family Week, visit the website at:

[www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk](http://www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk)



## Important – River Tay, Scotland, June 2009 Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC)

Please note the following which should have attention paid to it by any paddler planning a trip to Scotland in June this year.

SOAC allows for, under special circumstances, for an Exclusion Order to be made, under the Scottish Land Reform Act, to cover either land or water. Such an order would temporarily restrict access to members of the public. Other land examples are, for instance, with regard to society events such as weddings at stately homes.

The World Fly Fishing Championships are being held in Scotland, on the Lake of Menteith, Loch Awe, Loch Leven, Carron Reservoir, and the lower R. Tay, from Monday, June 8th to Wednesday, June 10th. The organisers might apply for such an order to exclude other water users from the Tay, which they are entitled to under the Act. However, at the time of going to press, they have not yet applied.

You are asked to keep an eye on the SCA website ([www.canoescotland.com](http://www.canoescotland.com)) for any news of such an order, but please also notice that heavy canoeing during this period on any or all the waters could be problematic. If coming to Scotland, maybe avoid the lower Tay during this period.



# Rewarding achievement

**Tynedale Council held their awards ceremony in December with special guest Matt Wells Olympic bronze medal winner in the double sculling presenting the awards.**

Canoeing did very well, in particular some members of Hexham Canoe Club. Hexham CC is one of Canoe England's Clubmark accredited Top Clubs and it was no surprise that it was a strong contender for the 'Club of the Year' award, receiving a certificate of merit as runner up to Tynedale Rugby Club.

But it was Sandra Hyslop who stole the show by winning the coveted 'Sports Woman of the Year' award for the second year running. Sandra, World White Water Racing Junior Champion is also ranked number two in the senior event and won gold in the Junior European Champion classic and sprint events in 2008.

The Tyne Tour is organised and managed by Hexham CC, attracting on average 1,200 canoeists and many more supporters to the region at the beginning of November each year. This tour is the largest organised tour in Europe and has been on the canoeing calendar for 18 years. This has a huge economic impact in Tynedale by bringing to the region over £100,000 to boost the local economy and tourist trade with repeat visits throughout the year.



Sandra Hyslop, Ray Hudspith and Matt Wells.

The tour generates over £20,000 income to the North East regional committee of the BCU. This money was used during 2008 to subsidise coach development and pay out travel bursaries to young athletes, purchased 12 slalom boats to support juniors in this Olympic discipline and floating canoe polo goals to encourage regional competition.

Bobby Timperley, Paddlesport Development Officer for the North East, received a certificate of merit for her nomination as 'Sports Personality of the Year'. Bobby contributes much to the running of the club in a voluntary capacity as a club coach.

Lorraine Murray-Glendenning was nominated for Coach of the Year and received a certificate of merit for the long hard hours she puts into the club as coach, vice chair, parent and the many other tasks she carries out in the club.

Chloe and Anna-Louise Glendenning were both awarded certificates of merit as Young Players of the Year, with Chloe also received a certificate for the Young Sport Leader Award, which her older sister won the previous year. Chloe will also benefit as a runner up by receiving £200 from the Stan Calvert Scholarship, which again Anna Louise won in 2007.

**RAY HUDSPITH, PDO (TEMPORARY), NE REGION**

## Big 5 Kayak Challenge latest

**The Big 5 Kayak challenge team have been training hard on the River Thames, the Great Ouse and two of the team trained over Christmas on the west coast of Ireland. The darker colder mornings have added to the challenge of getting up for a paddle at first light.**

Part of their training plan was to build up stamina for the estimated 33 hours and 183 miles of paddling on the Thames leg from Cricklade through to Tilbury in Essex on the tideway. The majority of the team are paddling lightweight K2 racing kayaks with three crews consisting of Dean Buckingham and Steve Carter; Geoff Tilford and Aaron

Buckingham and Aisling Ni Chuinn and Richard Harpham. Once the team get to Richmond Canoe Club the plan is to switch to sea kayaks for the tideway, for safety reasons as the waves on the tideway can be very choppy.

Dave Gordon and Dave Mcarthy will paddle the whole distance in sea kayaks. Our estimates are this will increase their paddling duration to nearer to 55-60 hours in a boat. The initial foray up to Cricklade back in November proved interesting with very high rain fall providing high flows but also significant obstacles with low branches, fallen trees and other debris. Another training session from Newbridge was also high flow conditions and even with six or seven portages that day they managed over 6.5 miles per hour.

Our initial training paddle on the tideway section of the Thames was carried out last year. The paddle was absolutely fantastic with the sights of central London – without doubt a much better way to see London and with the added benefit of a six foot wave under Tower Bridge and also some other standing waves on other bridges. It should be noted that the group that day consisted of all experienced paddlers including a number of coaches.

So by the time this article goes to print we will have endured the pain and satisfaction

of paddling the length of the Thames. A large amount of information including images and video are shown on our new website [www.big5kayakchallenge.com](http://www.big5kayakchallenge.com)

Part of our objectives besides wanting to paddle some of the most challenging expeditions is also to raise money for charities. Please visit our justgiving site [www.justgiving.com/davidgordon3](http://www.justgiving.com/davidgordon3). The team have also continued to raise the profile of the River Access Campaign in their media campaign.

### The schedule

**Thames leg** – 183 miles in 33 hours (fingers crossed) 7th February. Start at Cricklade at 07.00 on Saturday morning. Paddle in K2s as far as Richmond to the tideway, swap to sea kayaks – circa 24 hours after start. Paddle the tideway as far as Tilbury.

**Channel leg** – Date April 2009 TBC. We aim to cross close to Dover so it is circa 25 miles.

**Isle of Scilly leg** – May 2-3rd. Thirty miles across a shipping lane.

**June/July** – Inside passage from Vancouver Island to Juneau, Alaska – circa 1,000 miles in 30 days.



# Events



## Nottingham Paddlefest 28-29th March

A new and exciting paddlesport festival is set to give us all something to get involved in.

With the demise of the Outdoors Show as a paddlesport showcase and Canoexpo skipping a year, 2009 was set to be without a large-scale event to browse the latest gear and meet up with paddlers from around the country. The Nottingham Paddlefest promises to deliver all this and more.

The organising team of local paddlesport companies and paddlers are putting on a wealth of activities; from an exhibition of the latest equipment and course providers, to on water demonstrations, workshops, clinics and taster sessions plus film shows and talks.

These will all take place at the National Water Sports Centre, Holme Pierpoint and with the lake, river and newly refurbished white water course all in walking distance, there really will be something for everybody, from the seasoned expeditionary to the complete beginner looking for a new sport.

Demo boats will be available to try on the water from leading suppliers and speakers confirmed include Patrick Winterton, solo sea kayaker and film maker, Daz Clarkson author of 'Riding the Tears of Everest', Simon Everett, running a workshop on outfitting your sit-on-top for fishing and Derek Hairon providing on the water sit-on-top safety clinic.

Information is being added to the website daily, where you can find details of who is exhibiting, workshops and clinics, films shows and more.

[www.paddlefest.co.uk](http://www.paddlefest.co.uk) [info@paddlefest.co.uk](mailto:info@paddlefest.co.uk)

## Open Canoe-fest

20-22nd February  
Open Canoe-fest will be held in the picturesque area of Glasbury on Wye. The event will bring together open canoeists from all over the country to paddle some of South Wales' finest touring and white water rivers. The rivers that are on offer range from Grade 1 to 4 on the River Wye and Usk.

Once again accommodation will be provided at Woodlands OEC, which will be our base for the weekend. The centre boasts excellent quality accommodation with drying rooms and lounges. The cost for the whole weekend is £140, which includes full board accommodation and river guides. Camping and day passes will also be available.

Call Bear Creek Adventure on 0845 310 0280 or email [info@BearCreekAdventure.co.uk](mailto:info@BearCreekAdventure.co.uk)

## Ravenglass Seaquest

Saturday May 9th  
Ravenglass Beach at 11.00.

This is a three hour orienteering event in sea kayaks, canoes or any other suitable boat (singles, doubles, pairs, teams as you wish) in the beautiful and usually calm and protected estuaries of the Esk, Irt and Mite. It will be followed by prize giving in the local pub and a social paddle on Sunday.

Camping nearby and local attractions for non-paddlers. Children welcome if suitably supervised. £5 to BCU members, others £6, proceeds to Wasdale Mountain Rescue. More details (entries to) Annette Morris at [annette@potions.co.uk](mailto:annette@potions.co.uk)

## North West Paddling Weekend

20-21st June  
Anderton Centre, Horwich.  
Following on from the diverse range of sessions last year we will be running workshops in: Star Tests; Foundation Safety Training; UKCC Level 1 and Level 2 courses; sea kayaking; open canoeing; coach update and many other sessions on diverse paddlesport skills

In the evening there will be a BBQ and slide shows alongside accommodation so you can stay over and share a beer. Get the date in your diary and keep an eye on [www.bcu-nw.co.uk](http://www.bcu-nw.co.uk).

## The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show

27-29th March  
NEC, Birmingham. The 2009 event is outstanding value for money, showcasing four zones, with over 300 exhibitors and 25 different activities to try and do.

**The Outdoors Zone:** The centre piece of this zone will be the Trespass Air-Trail, an exhilarating high ropes course that finishes with an adrenaline-fuelled zip wire over the entire show.

**The Water Sports Zone:** The 72,000 litre indoor pool returns for 2009 giving canoe and kayak enthusiasts the opportunity to try out the latest kit in situ.

**The Adventure Sports Zone:** Bringing the wow factor to the NEC will be Britain's elite climbers, as they navigate an overhanging route 40 feet above the ground in the Ford SkyMasters competition, in association with Berghaus.

**The Craghoppers Adventure Travel Zone:** If you're planning a holiday, this is a one stop shop for all your travel needs, with overseas tour operators, activity providers, survival experts and bush craft demonstrations.

For further information on show features, opening times and to book tickets visit [OutdoorsShowExtra.co.uk](http://OutdoorsShowExtra.co.uk) or call 0844 415 4418.

## West Midlands touring programme

21-22nd Mar River Dove Tour  
Steve Ball  
[sdshball@aol.com](mailto:sdshball@aol.com)  
8-10th May Upper Severn Rally  
Drummond Outdoor  
[info@docanoe.com](mailto:info@docanoe.com)  
10th May Doggy Paddle  
RLS CC  
14th Jun Tourability  
Ackers Adventure  
[dave.bateman@ackers-adventure.co.uk](mailto:dave.bateman@ackers-adventure.co.uk)  
3-5th Jul Pershore Camp  
Weekend  
Wychaven Canoe Club  
[secretary@wkcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wkcc.org.uk)  
12th Jul Sutton Severn Tour  
Mike Nicholls  
[mike.nicholls@homecall.co.uk](mailto:mike.nicholls@homecall.co.uk)

## CanoeFest 2009

Are you just getting started and want to know how to keep your canoe going in a straight line? Do you want to spend a weekend exploring river channels by canoe; try sailing, poling or lining; take a first aid or rescue course; do your 3 Star?

If so, join the Open Canoe Association at its annual rally at Mepal Outdoor Centre, Chatteris in Cambridgeshire from 1-4th May.

More details: [www.opencanoe.info](http://www.opencanoe.info) or by contacting Chris Randall on 01933 623206 or [chris@opencanoe.info](mailto:chris@opencanoe.info).



## Doug Ammons lecture tour 'Extreme White Water'

Doug Ammons is one of America's most famous white water paddlers – known for his outrageous solo descents of Class V+ and VI runs and especially the Grand Canyon of the Stikine.

Doug is an award winning writer and photographer and this will be an unmissable evening that will entertain, thrill, inspire, and leave you mentally hung out to dry! Doug will be signing his latest books – 'Whitewater Philosophy' and 'Stikine' with all proceeds to Nepali charities. Please check [www.davemanby.com](http://www.davemanby.com) for up to date information.

March	Venue	Host/Organiser
Tues 3rd	Glasgow	Stirling Canoes <a href="http://www.standingwaves.co.uk">www.standingwaves.co.uk</a>
Wed 4th	Aberdeen	Aberdeen Kayak Club / GASPA <a href="http://www.aberdeenkayakclub.org.uk">www.aberdeenkayakclub.org.uk</a>
Thurs 5th	York	York Canoe Club <a href="http://www.yorkcanoeclub.co.uk">www.yorkcanoeclub.co.uk</a>
Fri 6th	Birmingham	Birmingham Canoe Club <a href="http://www.birminghamcanoeclub.co.uk">www.birminghamcanoeclub.co.uk</a>

Sat 7th	Nottingham	National Student Rodeo <a href="http://www.nationalstudentrodeo.org.uk">www.nationalstudentrodeo.org.uk</a>
Sun 8th	Stockton	Teesside University K.C. <a href="http://www.tees.ac.uk">www.tees.ac.uk</a>
Mon 9th	Keswick	Cumbria Canoeists <a href="http://www.cumbriacanoists.org.uk">www.cumbriacanoists.org.uk</a>
Tue 10th	Kendal	Cumbria Canoeists <a href="http://www.breweryarts.co.uk">www.breweryarts.co.uk</a>
Wed 11th	Liverpool	Liverpool University C.C. <a href="http://www.liverpoolkayaktalks.info">www.liverpoolkayaktalks.info</a>
Thurs 12th	Stockport	Brookbank Canoes <a href="http://www.brookbankcanoes.co.uk">www.brookbankcanoes.co.uk</a>
Fri 13th	North Wales	Plas y Brenin <a href="http://www.pyb.co.uk">www.pyb.co.uk</a>
Sat 14th	Llangollen	U.K. Rescue Symposium <a href="http://www.canoecontrol.com">www.canoecontrol.com</a>
Mon 16th	Leeds	Cotswold Camping <a href="http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com">www.cotswoldoutdoor.com</a>
Tue 17th	Appledore	Skern Lodge, Devon <a href="http://www.skernlodge.co.uk">www.skernlodge.co.uk</a>
Wed 18th	Bristol	University of West of England C.C. <a href="http://www.uwesu.net/canoe">www.uwesu.net/canoe</a>
Thur 19th	Reading	Marsport <a href="http://www.marsport.co.uk">www.marsport.co.uk</a>
Fri 20th	London	Imperial College C.C. <a href="http://www.union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/canoe">www.union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/canoe</a>



# Canoe Row, Enjoy...

Northern Ireland's largest river  
The River Bann



From the shores of Lough Neagh (the largest lake in the UK and the largest body of fresh water in the island of Ireland) the River Bann flows towards the Atlantic Ocean providing a full sixty kilometres of stunning unspoilt scenery...and fun.

If canoeing, rowing or sailing are your 'thing' then this is the place to be. The region is the perfect location for a vast range of water based recreation with all the facilities but none of the crush. There's space to breathe here and to rediscover the pleasure of getting close to nature as you enjoy your favourite sport. A carefully structured Canoe Trail takes the guesswork out of your holiday planning. Public facilities are excellent and our clubs are quick to welcome visitors. Bring your own gear or hire while you're here.

Discover the Bann for yourself and rediscover the joy of taking to the water in beautiful and uncongested surroundings. As you relax after your day, you'll also discover why the Bann Valley has such a high reputation for great, locally caught and produced foods. You may even be tempted to enjoy a night's craic in an authentic Irish pub.

**You'll be glad you came.**

Find out more about us on [www.riverbannireland.com](http://www.riverbannireland.com) including where to stay and play or visit [www.causewaycoastandglens.com](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.com)





## Changing lives

To go from being active and able-bodied to being disabled can be soul-destroying. For many, gaining meaningful access to sport and adventure opportunities is a greater challenge than the activity itself. Equal Adventure is committed to removing the barriers faced by disabled people wanting to participate fully in an active lifestyle. It does this by offering organisations and individuals a range of people-centred multi-disciplinary research, design development, training and information initiatives that have been carefully designed to overcome barriers.

Challenge Yukon 09 has been created by EB Adventures in support of Equal Adventure. The aim of the expedition is twofold; to raise funds for Equal Adventure's ground-breaking work and to create an experience open to all, regardless of disability. The 20 day expedition, in August, will travel by canoe along Canada's River Yukon, setting out from the city of Whitehorse and ending up in Dawson City.

Ed Bassett, co-founder of EB Adventures and veteran expedition leader, was especially pleased that Challenge Yukon was launched within the surroundings of the Royal Geographic Society. As a former soldier, Ed is enthusiastic about Challenge Yukon's potential to raise funds to enable greater and better technical support for injured soldiers, remarking, "For anybody, the trauma of sudden disability can be horrific. For someone who has lived a life based on being fit, adventurous, and ready-for-anything, to suddenly be placed in a situation where you believe you have no option but to sit on the sidelines can be heartbreaking."

EB Adventures are looking for 12 people, both able-bodied and disabled, to join Challenge Yukon. If you have felt held back by your disability in the past, now is the time to go for it. Full technical support and advice will be offered to ensure that each participant has the journey of a lifetime, regardless of disability. For further information email Kirsti Ryall PA, at EB Adventures on [kirstiryall@aol.com](mailto:kirstiryall@aol.com)

## Isle of Portland Canoe Club

After a year of fantastic paddles, ranging from Dorset to Cornwall, the IOPCC celebrated with an end of season party at The Vic pub in Dorchester. The evening was well attended with plenty of tales of waves, wildlife and rescues.

The IOPCC do a series of paddles throughout the year including surf trips, river paddles, races and sea paddling. The club has a close relationship with Weymouth Canoe Lifeguards and has access to the Osprey Leisure Centre on Portland for members to practice their paddle skills.

Attending the party was ex World Surf Champion Simon Hammond who runs Shoreline Pursuits in Bude who kindly donated prizes for the raffle.

Anyone who would like to join must be over 18 and have a minimum 1 Star in kayaking. Cost is £10 membership for BCU members or £13 for non-members. [www.freewebs.com/isleofportlandcanoeclub/index.htm](http://www.freewebs.com/isleofportlandcanoeclub/index.htm)

The IOPCC was awarded a Lottery Grant this year which helped set up the Jurassic Kids Club, which ranges in age from 10-16 years and teaches the kids in a variety of boats on the sea in and around Portland with access to an indoor pool for rolling courses. The youth section is run through the Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre. Contact WOEC on 01305 784927.

# Obituary – Alexis Gohar



**Alexis Gohar, who died on 21st November 2008, aged 45, was a treasured and much-loved member of Richmond Canoe Club who coached as he paddled – to the best of his ability at all times.**

A member of Richmond CC for over 30 years, Alexis – also known as Alex, never spent long away from the water. His paddlesport career included competing in marathon internationally for GB and winning the Devizes to Westminster Gluckstein Award for 'courage and fortitude', finishing in tenth position. An impressive feat for a gritty, determined paddler who was severely partially sighted.

Alexis Gohar was born on 20th June 1963, in Grove Park, close to the north shore of the River Thames in Chiswick. Alexis and his older brother Marcus, were introduced to kayaking and canoeing by their father Ramsay at an early age. In 1974 Alex joined Richmond CC, aged 11. Nine years later, he stunned the British canoeing world when he took third place in the International Round London Canoe Marathon. Following this performance he was selected for the GB team and went on to compete internationally at World Cup level. After gaining a degree in physical education from Borough Road College in West London, in 1985, Alex began a career in computer services at Brunel University.

As a senior paddler his biggest marathon success was when he made the marathon team in K2 with Doug Pemble for a Grand Prix in Poland in 1984. He also paddled for GB in Belgium, Sweden and Northern Ireland. In 1991 at the age of 28 he switched to canoe to compete in a marathon in India. Under the watchful eye of Richmond's resident coach Fiador Gurei he improved rapidly. The India trip was cancelled at the last minute, but he continued with Canadian canoeing. In 1992 he won the National Marathon Championships in C2 in a field that was unusually strong for a domestic canoe marathon event.

By the end of 1994 he was suffering from persistent tiredness and his eyesight was failing rapidly. The tumour on his pituitary gland was diagnosed and the subsequent operation left him blind in his left eye with severely limited field of vision in his right eye. His pituitary gland had been destroyed and he was obliged to take seven drugs each day, as well as further injections which were periodically administered by doctors. Unperturbed he was soon back in his boat and training twice a day, getting up before 05.00 to be off the water and in work by 08.00.

It was Alexis' sheer doggedness that earned him credibility and respect. From an early age the Gohar brother's father told them the word 'can't' did not exist in English. His slight size as a boy, simply encouraged him to develop tactical awareness – seeking out the fastest paddler and sticking on that wash to the end. Many a competitive paddler in the 1980s and 90s will be familiar with the sight of Alexis Gohar on their wash.

At Richmond, Alexis coached the senior group where he was found every weekend leading a bedraggled and exhausted trail of the club's better paddlers through their paces. Few returned from the 'Alex session' anything less than exhausted. Several others missed the opportunity for fearing they may not be able to keep up.

In recent years, Alexis joined the coaching team of the Juniors, adding quality and endless encouragement to push a keen and enthusiastic group to become competitive and focused, producing two national champions along the way. Amed with waterside results

and a weather forecast he could predict a crew's split and finish times to within five minutes!

Beyond the club he volunteered to introduce local schools to paddlesports as part of the club's Competitive Edge programme and was a volunteer at the Russell Elementary School near Ham.

With work at Brunel University relocating and commuting not a realistic possibility, Alexis took the major decision to resign – the upside being that he could be by the river all the time.

Few were surprised to hear that Alex decided to enter the 2007 Devizes Westminster Canoe Marathon. A phenomenal achievement of 76 portages and 125 miles, even more so for a man with a severe visual impairment. Even fewer were surprised that he finished in tenth place, leading the Richmond team to victory in the Senior Singles category.

By the end of August 2008 he could no longer paddle on the river, but persisted with paddling machine and running, even after major neurosurgery in October. However, following a second major operation in November he lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered.

Speaking at the ceremony to celebrate Alexis' life, Marcus summed up his younger brother's inspirational approach. "His attitude was never about the things he couldn't do but about what he could do. He saw his physical disadvantage not so much as a disability but as a challenge. He was always looking for a way to do what he wanted, and of course this was often canoeing. Even when he was told that the tumour was growing again, his attitude was, 'What the hell, I'm going paddling', and he did! In his final weeks when he really couldn't canoe, he shrugged his shoulders and said, 'Well, if I can't be a canoeist, I'll be a runner', and off he went up the road!"

And the last words to Marcus: "He raced a good race despite being lumbered with a damaged boat. He was beaten back, but then fought back through the field time and again, always with spirit and a smile until the end when he finally dropped off the wash."

Alexis Gohar's ashes were scattered onto the River Thames by his brother Marcus and father Ramsay outside Richmond Canoe Club.

**SEAN MARTIN AND  
PETER HUTCHINSON**



# CANOE SLALOM



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# Volunteers

## Volunteers required for Eastern Region

Sunday 15th February 2009, Living Sport, Cambridgeshire's county sports partnership, have made available their offices at Pidley to Canoe England for the purpose of holding a meeting to reform the Eastern Region Development Team (ERDT) and there is an open invitation to all paddlers and volunteers from across the six counties that make up the East Region to attend.

Some might say that we have managed in the east without an RDT for the last two years, why do we need one now? Paddlesport is in a healthy position across the region, with the affiliated clubs operating very good programmes and local events. Where the ERDT comes in is to help organise events and to support the clubs and the county associations with existing events and also to help promote new varied recreational and competitive events across the six counties. The Olympic slalom site is situated in our region and will provide lots of opportunities for many different events that the region could hold there.

As well as event management, the ERDT is there to assist the RCO and the LCOs with the coach updates and other mentoring days that they may wish to put on throughout the year. There are many specialist training courses offered by Sports Coach UK and Running Sports, that could be organised by the ERDT for paddlers and clubs, which are not always available from all of the county sports partnerships.

With an active committee in place, the region can gain control of its funds again and the new committee can authorise spending on projects, equipment and training for the benefit of all paddlers in the east.

The region has already launched its new website [www.paddlesporteast.org](http://www.paddlesporteast.org) offering information and advice to its visitors, giving an overview of what's going on throughout the region.

If you are interested in finding out more about the ERDT or would like to attend the Pidley meeting please contact Jeff Toser [jeff.toser@bcu.org.uk](mailto:jeff.toser@bcu.org.uk) or phone 07912 597986.

## Calling all young volunteers!

Canoe England have launched a new scheme which recognises the hours dedicated to volunteering in paddlesport. Young people new to volunteering can register their hours in the Canoe England logbook and gain recognition through the Paddlesport Rewards Scheme – as well as an impressive addition to their CV.

Young volunteers can log their hours and get them signed off by a mentor, or someone from their club, centre or an event, who can verify they have completed their hours. After achieving 10, 25 or 50 hours of volunteering, young people should send their logbook to the Volunteer Development Officer to gain their bronze, silver or gold award.

Any role which is undertaken free of charge within paddlesport can be counted towards your hours – whether in a club, centre, on a committee or at an event. This could include volunteering as a coach or official as well as anything which helps behind the scenes or at an event.

To register or to get more information about the scheme please contact Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer, by emailing [volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk). More information is available on [www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers).

### Reward your volunteers – new resource

A new template is now available to help reward your volunteers. The certificate has been designed to provide recognition to volunteers and is available to download from [www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers). Once downloaded, clubs can edit the certificate; reword it, replace the picture or even put their own logo on it to ensure it can be personal to each organisation. Certificates can be handed out at committee meetings or club presentations – it's worthwhile making sure your volunteers feel appreciated!

### Club volunteer coordinators – resource pack available

Clubs are reminded that a new resource for volunteer coordinators is now available. 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.

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

To make sure you receive your resource pack and support contact Julia Robertson: [volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk) or 0845 3709530.

### Club forums

Details for this year's club forums will be updated on the website soon. Keep your eye on [www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers) for more information!

### BCU Club of the Year Award 2009

Nominations have now closed for the BCU Club of the Year Awards. Winning clubs will be notified during this coming month with more information to be posted on the website. The top three clubs will receive Cotswold Vouchers up to the value of £150 and will be nominated for the Sports Club of the Year (SCOTY) Awards 2009.

### European Slalom Championships – Volunteer Programme

Like all major sporting events, the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships will be staffed mainly by volunteers. Volunteers involved will consist of those directly involved within the sport of canoe slalom and those with an interest in supporting canoeing, events or the community.

These championships will be one of our test events towards the preparation for London 2012. Events like the European Canoe Slalom Championships provide a major positive for the CV – so sign up to [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com) and gain some experience in May 2009!

For further information on how to get involved and for updates on the European Canoe Slalom Championships – Volunteer Development Programme log onto [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk) or contact Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer on [julia.robertson@bcu.org.uk](mailto:julia.robertson@bcu.org.uk) or telephone 0845 3709530.

**Qualifiers:**  
Cayton Bay (4/5th April), Tynemouth (2/3rd May), Pease Bay (6/7th June),  
top 16 men, 8 juniors and 4 women qualifiers progress to the finals. (ranking is based on best 2 results)

**Finals:**  
Druridge Bay  
5/6th September 2009 (England ranking event)  
Prizes: Clothing, Equipment & Cash Prizes

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### COLABOS

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# Volunteers



Olympic Champion Tim Brabants MBE led the presentation of awards last month to volunteers and coaches who were honoured in Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards 2008. Having been recently recognised in the New Year Honours list, Tim presented the awards at the English Coaching Conference in January at Holme Peirrepond, Nottingham.

Following the success of last year's awards programme, the Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards recognised some of the sports dedicated coaches and volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to paddlesport. Many of the volunteers who attended have provided an invaluable input which led to the success of the country's paddlers at the Olympics last year. It was only fitting that Tim himself made the presentation to his own coach, Eric Farrell, who contributed to his success in Beijing.

*"Canoeing has a fantastic network of volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to the sport."* says Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer for Canoe England. *"Their input, directly and indirectly, can help our countries paddlers to achieve their best whether this is as a club volunteer, official, or coach."*

## Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards

Here are the volunteers who received awards:

### Young Volunteer

**Graeme Haigh**  
Oakhanger Project, Cheshire



Graeme Haigh joined the Oakhanger Project in Cheshire three years ago and now helps to lead activities for young people with special needs. Graeme is now the junior leader within the project and has taken on this role with enthusiasm. He makes a valuable contribution to the development of the project and now sits on the management committee to represent the views of young people.

### Young Coach

**Anna-Louise Glendenning**  
Hexham Canoe Club



Having been involved as a volunteer for five years already, Anna-Louise has worked her way up the coaching levels and now coaches for Hexham CC. As well as coaching the younger members and introducing Paddlepower to local schools; Anna-Louise finds time to provide safety cover at events; help with the Tyne Tour, as well as complete over 300 hours of volunteering for the Step into Sport scheme.

### Paddlepower Coach

**Linda Turner – Dereham Canoe Group**



Lynda has been a coach for over 25 years to paddlers of all ages. Within Dereham Canoe Group, Lynda takes on numerous roles including chairperson, treasurer and head coach. Lynda played a major role in preventing the club from closing down a few years ago. As a coach, Lynda has been responsible for starting the paddling careers of many people through the use of Paddlepower as well as working with local scouts, guides and special needs groups. One parent wrote: *"She's the sort of person that makes things happen, keeps clubs working and makes life a better place. She's the sort of person that every club needs."*

### Female Volunteer Coach

**Pat Tarry – Itchen South District Canoe Centre**

Pat has coached for over 20 years starting her career as one of the original coaches of Itchen South District



Canoe Centre. Pat is keen to embrace new ideas and encourages newcomers into her ever-growing group of young people. Pat's enthusiasm is a fine example to all those around her and she is an asset to coaching in our sport.

### Male Volunteer Coach and Outstanding Contribution to Paddlesport

**Eric Farrell – Royal Canoe Club**



Balancing his day job as company director of his own business, Eric has guided a number of paddlers to Olympic glory over the years. In Athens alone, three of Eric's athletes gained selection with Ian Wynne winning bronze. Four years on and Eric is known more commonly as coach to Tim Brabants. The 16 year coach-athlete relationship has developed through three Olympic Games with the pair being successful in their plan for global domination – with Tim now being the reigning Olympic, World and European Champion for 1000m.

### Teacher (joint winner)

**Phillippa Sunderland – Ash Green School, Staffordshire**



Working part time at the Ash Green School, Staffordshire, Phillippa has worked with Trentham CC to ensure that there is a new group of Lightning paddlers filtering through. As a qualified coach, Phillippa helps to coach at the club and is a key player in the development of the club. In her school capacity, Phillippa ensures that the ever important link from school to club flourishes and works closely with the Head of PE to set up taster sessions.

### Teacher (joint winner)

**Doug Hardie – Thomlinson Junior School, Cumbria**



Doug can boast a string of accolades to his name including Level 4 sea kayak coach; Level 4 open canoe coach and Level 3 inland water coach. As headteacher, Doug has volunteered in paddlesport for 30 years and trains and mentors young people. Doug spends additional hours at



# Volunteers Awards 2008

weekends and holidays raising money for his registered charity which is dedicated to helping women in Uganda become financially independent and self-sufficient. Doug works hard to ensure a link from school paddlesport activities to the local club is available as his nomination states: *"Doug's level of commitment to his sport, young people and adults is unsurpassed. His positive impact at a local, regional and international level is exceptional."*

## Employed Coach (non BCU/CE)

### Mark Agnew – Mountain Water Experience, South Devon

Professionally, Mark runs coaching courses on flat water, white water and on the sea for Mountain Water Experience, South Devon. As a volunteer, Mark was previously LCO for South Devon and more recently gives his time to coaching and supporting local clubs. Over the past five years, Mark has run refresher sessions for club coaches and goes beyond his professional role to provide help and support of the highest standard to local clubs.

## BCU/Canoe England Employed Coach

### Mark Delaney – Nottingham

As a former world class athlete himself, Mark is now employed as Slalom Technical Canoe Coach within the BCU Olympic Programme. Mark has dedicated himself to the highly technical canoe class, developing and strengthening its depth. He embraces new technology and has been influential in the development of the video analysis software. Based in Nottingham, Mark has coached David Florence since 2003 culminating in an Olympic silver medal at Beijing last year for David. Mark is now recognised internationally as one of the leading canoe coaches for the sport of slalom canoeing.

## Access

### Colin Litten – Cumbria

Colin has been an asset to the development of Cumbria for many years. Having been involved in paddlesport as a volunteer for over 25 years, Colin has embraced his role as Regional Access Officer and is on hand to offer advice and support. His involvement in paddlesport doesn't end there – as LCO for South West Cumbria, Colin sets a fine example as a coach himself and as a 4 Star leader.

## Community Volunteer

### Pam and Norman Taylor – White Rose Canoe Club, Leeds

Pam and Norman are founder members of White Rose CC and have been described as the club's eyes and ears for the last 20 years. Both are Level 1 coaches and the



list of their roles within the club seems never ending. Pam looks after all the child protection issues, applies for funding, organises rotas, manages bookings and arranges all the catering. Norman represents the club at regional meetings, is chairman of the Washburn Committee, and looks after access issues in the region.

## Official (joint winner)

### Mike Carter – Viking Kayak Club



Mike started volunteering over 30 years ago and has held key positions in Viking KC as well as at a national level. Mike is the treasurer and a committee member for his club; as well as national bib officer, race organiser and compiler of the ranking list for K1 women national slalom. Few nominations received by Canoe England are from paddlers themselves therefore it is only fitting that international slalom C2 paddler Etienne Stott received this nomination. Etienne Stott's nomination sums up Mike's contribution to the sport: *"Mike is the classic volunteer; passionate, deeply involved and tirelessly caring about the sport and its participants."*

## Official (joint winner)

### Curly Barker – Essex



Curly has dedicated more than two decades to the sport as a volunteer in an impressive number of roles – Chairman of the BCU Canoe Polo; GB squads manager; ICF referee; GB refereeing course leader and assessor; member of the English management committee as well as numerous other committee roles. Curly has been at the forefront of refereeing in the UK for canoe polo for many years. As well as helping to set up and run the first Canoe Polo World Championships in 1994, Curly was acting GB squad's manager for the team who brought home two world titles at the 2008 World Championships.

## Outstanding Contribution

### Laurence Oliver – Lincoln Canoe Club

Laurence started canoeing in the 1950's when he was one of the founder members of Lincoln CC and has since become an increasingly influential member of the club. The three times former Olympian has taken on numerous roles at a national, regional and club level including being the junior sprint team manager – a post which he held for over 20 years. Laurence recently stepped down as a member of the sprint racing committee but can still be seen leading the way in Lincoln as chairman.

## Outstanding Contribution

### Alexis Gohar – Richmond Canoe Club



This award is a special award for Alexis Gohar who sadly died in November 2008. Alexis was an active member of Richmond CC for over 30 years, coaching for 15 of

those years. Alexis will be remembered by all for his infectious enthusiasm, energetic and endless encouragement coach and leader for the club. Alexis was involved in the Competitive Edge Programme – a scheme to introduce and encourage young people to remain in the sport after education. Alexis is an inspiration to us all and despite his visual impairment, he focused on what could be achieved rather than obstacles.

## Outstanding Contribution

### Trevor Wetherall – Richmond Canoe Club



Trevor has been involved in paddlesport for over 45 years. His boundless encouragement extends across all ages and groups at Richmond CC and beyond his capacity as the recently appointed local club coach for London. His input has helped re-energise the junior group and he has helped devise the Competitive Edge Programme with the local council to introduce local school children to competitive paddling. Trevor is at the club almost every day, supporting, encouraging, developing and empowering anyone who shows their care enough to make themselves a better paddler.

## Outstanding Contribution

### Janet and Doug Evans – Royal Canoe Club



Janet and Doug have been involved in Paddlesport for over 20 years at Royal CC. The list of roles, which this couple take on, appears to be never ending – from administration to membership secretary, Janet and Doug appear to have taken it on. Doug oversees the day-to-day management at the club and together, the two of them were involved heavily in overseeing the redevelopment project at the club.

## Outstanding Contribution

### Dennis Walls – Exeter Canoe Club



Dennis Walls has been involved with Exeter CC since the early days helping with the beginners; arranging tours and generally making the club tick. On top of this, he is the chair of the club and is the driving force behind Exeter's move towards working to achieve Clubmark; as well as encouraging a multi-disciplinary programme of events and a campaign of defence on the club premises. Despite suffering from illness recently, Dennis remains the inspiration behind the club and takes on an active role within the region. Dennis has also been the secretary for the South West regional committee for at least 20 years and represents the sport on local sporting committees.



# Competition – surfski

## Dubai Shamaal

### A different challenge!



By Ivan Lawler

Tim, Ivan and Ben.

The idea of a race in the sun with a significant amount of prize money with no pressure is quite a strong draw. That is exactly what was on offer at the third Dubai Shamaal.

**My introduction to surfski was by probably the best-known figure in the sport: Oscar Chalupsky. Not known for holding back on his opinions, he told me in no uncertain terms that I must do some surfski races. Oscar is not someone to refuse unless you are prepared to spend the next few hours defending your decision against a barrage of 'evidence' at full volume! It was simpler therefore just to agree to try the sport.**

My first event was in Cardiff Bay, the somewhat oddly named 'flat water' surfski race. As it turned out it was exactly what it said on the can and a 10k race on flat water in surfskis was not exactly the thrill I had been expecting. Two weeks later followed the open water race across the mouth of Swansea Bay. The guys down in Cardiff, Mike Childs from Childsplay Surf and Owen Phillips were good enough to take me out on the sea the day before the race. With a session on waves that looked massive from a ski (probably about six feet) and after a few swims and a lot of advice I was ready for the race the next day. I will leave the report of the race to Mike and Owen but the upshot was that having won, my prize was a free flight to the Dubai Shamaal. All I had to do was persuade the family that it was essential that I attend!

Ben Farrell had already expressed an interest in going out and Tim Brabants in his continuing whirl of fame and

invitations had been offered an all expenses paid trip out as part of the Shamaals impressive publicity drive.

The first four places from the Olympic 1000m final met the four world marathon champions and virtually all the big names in surfski. These names, though not household at the moment, certainly have the potential to be if the sport continues its growth with the massive amount of sponsorship and publicity it generates. Some, like Hank McGregor and Grant Van der Walt have come from a flat water background and already have world titles to their names. Others like Oscar Chalupski and Dean Gardiner are legends of the surfski world with enough stories and information to keep a novice like me glued to their conversation for hours, in the hope of picking up some tips.

#### Disney meets Las Vegas

So it was that Tim, Ben and myself ended up in the surreal environment that is Dubai, a kind of Disney meets Las Vegas where the only limit to your glitz and bad taste is the depth of your pocket!

Three days before the race started most of the competitors were already onsite, many professional surfski athletes and then a few tourists like ourselves. Our skis had already been reserved and labeled on the rack by the time we arrived, all we had to do was find our one in the bank of some 50-60 brand new boats stacked on the racks at the Club

Mina, the hub of the race. Someone had clearly not been shy of spending!

The skis themselves are not exactly a K1 in terms of setup: pedal steering instead of T Bar and the seating position is very low (which incidentally you are very grateful for once you get out in the rough!). The immediate impression you have is that the boats are enormous, uncomfortable and impossible to paddle without steering violently left and right as you drive with your legs. You soon realise your kayak skills are not immediately transferable! However, a few trips out to sea and shortening your paddles by a good 10cm and things begin to fall into place, the security of having a boat that will not sink if you capsize is very comforting a few miles offshore and the volume of the boats suddenly makes a lot more sense out in the rough.

#### Swallowing your pride

For three days I chose to go out with the beginners group taught by Oscar to learn the basics and believe me there is lots to learn. Probably the first thing to master is swallowing your pride! Paddling flat out and having people pass you like you are standing still takes a bit of getting used to. The basics are simple, as Dean Gardiner put it, "you just go downhill mate", and the trouble is finding downhill and seeing which of the confusion of waves is actually headed in your direction. These people just seem to be able to sort that out! Every now and then it comes right and the boat lifts and runs beautifully, faster than you can ever paddle and that is the concept you have to grasp, you cant paddle faster than the waves so you just have to catch as many as you can and miss as few as you can.

By race day we were feeling a lot more comfortable in our boats and a lot more confident of our knowledge. The boats were loaded and driven off to the start; the course was in theory supposed to be primarily downwind to the finish 25km away.

At boat control we were checked for life jackets and that all race sponsor stickers were applied to the boats, the effort that had gone into sponsorship was clearly huge and perhaps lessons could be learnt for some of the other disciplines that bemoan decreasing attendances.

#### Schoolboy error

Sadly the race started in the same confusion as any marathon race. There had been talk of the sprint guys winning the spot prize at the 2km mark but immediately you saw the reality as the surfski pros paddled away from all of us like we were beginners, five minutes into the race Tim and I were overtaken by the first lady and we just looked at each other and shook our heads, what a leveler! As the race went on the leaders were out of sight and eight miles out to sea you just focus on yourself and the waves. Sadly for me I forgot to focus on direction and made the schoolboy error of going way off course. Two hours later the finish loomed, in all that time I had successfully ridden about 10% of the waves that passed me and had a result that showed it! The good guys were miles ahead and quite simply missed less waves. All the big name sprinters with the exception of Kenny Wallace (who came from a surfski background) finished in the same area and all felt they had had a proper beating and education – yet we all (well maybe not Eric Larsen) promised to be back next year. Why? Because we had fun! The sport is fantastic fun where catching a wave correctly is the equivalent of hitting a perfect golf shot, even if you only do it once, you know it can be done and the addiction begins.

I am already planning my return next year and hoping to get into the prize money. All I need is education and practice and another beauty of the sport for us older guys is that the gains from learning the skills will easily surpass any gains from fitness or strength so there is plenty of scope for improvement.

Our thanks go to Epic kayaks for the loan of our equipment, to Oakley for supporting us all with their products and Childsplay Surfgear. If anyone is interested in looking into surfski you can look online at [www.surfski.info](http://www.surfski.info).

This sport clearly has a bright future. ●



# Ocean surfski racing

## A British perspective for 2009

By Owen Phillips

**There's been a bit of a global surge in surfski paddling of late, not only in the use of sit-on-tops for fishing and learning to paddle, but also for long distance ocean racing. This is a trend that has been enticing some of our top British kayak paddlers, as well as some regular paddlers, to give it a go. But what makes it different to kayak marathon racing? Well, the main difference, of course, is the venue. Downwind races usually go from point A to point B with the swell and wind, so paddlers are not just racing each other; they are working to catch swells that will push them along at exciting speeds, far above normal sprinting pace.**

Ski paddling in Britain is nothing new. Surf lifesaving clubs have been competing in 1000 metre sprint races out through the surf and back for over half a century. During the 70s, British ski paddlers from lifesaving circles traveled to far off venues to take on the most challenging races and opponents they could find but for the last ten years things have been a little quiet in the UK.

Not so in South Africa though. There, pioneers like Oscar Chalupski (11 times winner of the Molokai to Hawaii ski race) worked on re-designing their skis, making them lighter, longer and narrower than the 18kg, 19 foot by 19 inches restrictions of the surf lifesaving fraternity. The results are boats that can weigh as little as 8kg, are around 21 foot long and 17 inches across, which can be paddled almost as fast as a K1 on the flat or can reach speeds of around 30+ km/h when riding ocean swells.

There's always been a significant cross-over between the lifesaving and kayaking world, with many South African and Australian World and Olympic champions having started off racing in the surf. Britain has also had lifeguards paddling K1s in the winter to keep fit, with some of them doing quite well: Chris Barlow from Poppit Sands Lifesaving Club was a keen surfski competitor in the 80s who went on to

emigrate to California and competed for the USA in kayaks at the Barcelona Olympics. Glenn Eldridge cut his paddling teeth on skis and went on to paddle in the K4 team that still holds the fastest time for a British team. There have even been brave souls paddling very heavy double skis to complete the Devizes to Westminster Race.

One major turning point for participation in surfski racing worldwide is the opening up of the races to non-lifeguards and the inclusion of races with fantastic backdrops. In Wales this has been evident with the British Flat Water Championships, where competitors paddle past the Millennium Stadium in the centre of Cardiff. In Australia you can race from the Sydney Harbour Bridge to Manly Wharf on the other side of this beautiful estuary. In the US, their national champs start in San Francisco and paddlers go under the Golden Gate Bridge to the open ocean and back. Races in Australia so far this autumn have seen paddler participation double within a year from 100 to well over 200 competitors per race.

On the elite side a very significant development has occurred – serious prize money. Three years ago the Shamaal sports festival in Dubai agreed to sponsoring a ski race, alongside the Rugby 7s and other activities. This year the prize money more than doubled to over \$130,000. The result was a clash of the paddling world titans, the best of international surfski and kayak paddlers going head-to-head over 31km of ocean to see who was the best. The start list contained some serious contenders: Oscar Chalupski, Dawid Mocke, Hank Macgregor, Jeremy Cotter etc from the world of surfskis and the likes of Tim Brabants, Ivan Lawler, and Manuel Busto from the kayaking fraternity. Everyone who's anyone, it seemed, wanted to be involved in this piece of paddling history, but I'll leave the details for Ivan to tell (left).

So, if you fancy having a go in the UK, how do you go about it? One way would be to join your local surf lifesaving club, or alternatively you could contact the main ski supplier to the UK (Childsplay Surfgear) and ask for a test ride on a ski. Mike Childs who runs Childsplay has



Oscar Chalupski.

been ski paddling for many years and is very enthusiastic and keen to help the kayaker – come – ski paddler.

One other option would be to turn up to one of the races in 2009 to meet some of the guys and to check out the equipment. This year there will be races in South and West Wales, North Devon, North Cornwall, The South Coast and a few in France (where they take it very seriously!). If you get in touch with the organiser, an old ski (or new one if you're lucky) might be made available to you. A word of caution though, ocean ski paddling does mean just that, so all paddlers need a PFD and should also be able to swim well. Dates and info for some races can be found on the SLSAGB website.

In the autumn there will be a long-distance downwind race as a run-up to the 2009 Dubai Shamaal. Last year's race was won by Ivan Lawler, racing from Mumbles Head to Aberavon across Swansea Bay. It was a fantastic, sunny day, the swell was pumping and dolphins accompanied some of the racers – it makes a nice change to paddling and portaging normal kayak races! ●

The Dubai Shamaal 2007.



Above: Cardiff Bay British Flat Water Series 2008.

Below: a K2 at the same event.





# Competition – freestyle

## GBR freestyle team spotlight

### Jon Best

Age: 22

Years paddling: 10

#### Sponsors:

Square Rock, Jackson Kayak, Run and Jump Clothing, Ophion Paddles, Stohlquist Kit, Entropy Gear.

#### Best results:

Junior European Cup Champion 2004.  
British Champion 2006.  
GBR team six years.

#### Selection ranking/classification:

2nd K1 Men.

#### Favourite river:

The Nile, Uganda.

#### Favourite play spot:

Nile Special (on the Nile).

#### How did you get into freestyle?

I saw Chris Evans cart wheeling a Dagger Medieval. I asked him how he was doing it and where I could get started! Showing that the best advert for the sport is the people that do it!

#### What was your last big competition and how did you prepare for it?

The British Championships in Nottingham only a few months ago. I trained hard, kayaking whenever I could get on the water (almost everyday), eating well to give myself lots of energy and hitting the gym whenever I hadn't been on the water.

#### What position did you come?

I finished fifth, which just shows that no matter how much preparation you put in sometimes you just have a bad day or a bad ride. There's no point in getting worked up about it, just set your sights on your next big goal and work out how you can give yourself an even better chance of doing well.

#### If you could do one thing to improve freestyle what would it be?

I would include freestyle in the X-Games on a huge wave!

#### What advice do you have for upcoming paddlers?

*"Keep smiling and always look good whatever you're doing!"*

### Joe Bradley

Age: 16

Years paddling: 6

#### Sponsors:

Peak UK Equipment.

#### Best results:

Junior British Champion 2008.  
3rd Junior, European Championships 2008.  
1st Junior Spain Euro Cup 2007.  
3rd Junior Thun River Jam 2007.  
GBR team two years.

#### Selection ranking/classification:

3rd K1 Junior Men.

#### Favourite River:

The Gatineau, Canada.

#### Favourite Play spot:

Lachine Rapids, Montreal.

#### How did you get into freestyle?

I started swimming lessons and after finishing there was a kayaking clinic in the same area of the pool. This sparked my interest and when I visited Holme Pierrepont with my family it spurred me on to join Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club, which is where I passed my BCU 3 Star, and I've never looked back.

#### What was your last big competition and how did you prepare for it?

The British Championships. To prepare for the competition I trained on the water every other day allowing myself

to recover in between for three months before the event. The week before I concentrated on my diet as well and tried to eat mainly high energy foods and drink the guideline amount of water everyday to remain hydrated. All this ended up paying off when I ended the competition as the new Junior British Champion!

#### If you could do one thing to improve freestyle what would it be?

I think competitions are always better when there's a big crowd to spur you on and cheer. I think that a greater media spotlight, more sponsorship for events and more competitors all come hand in hand and would massively improve the sport.

#### What advice do you have for upcoming paddlers?

*"Get as much time in and around competitions as you can, they're great fun, you'll make plenty of friends and you may even become a champion!"*

### Alan Ward

Age: 21

Years paddling: 12

#### Sponsors:

Wave Sport, Robson Paddles, Palm Equipment, White Water Consultancy.

#### Best results:

Junior World Champion 2005-07.  
2nd British Championships 2008.  
8th European Championships 2008.  
GBR team six years.

#### Selection ranking/classification:

5th K1 Men.

#### Favourite River:

The Nile, Uganda.

#### Favourite Play spot:

The Moroccan coastline.

#### How did you get into freestyle?

I've been kayaking as long as I can remember, my dad got me into kayaking and freestyle when I was very young. He's been kayaking since he was about 10 years-old so it was a natural progression that I was encouraged to get on the water too!

#### What was your last big competition and how did you prepare for it?

The British Championships. Generally these days I try to eat healthily, I have cut out all McDonalds and try to cook all my meals from scratch, so when it comes to eating healthily before a competition there's no real change, and I also try to keep hydrated as much as possible. The months leading up to a competition I try to train everyday whether it is on the water or in the gym, sometimes both! Depending on how important the competition is, the earlier I will train and the more I will aim to peak my training on the day.

#### What position did you come?

I finished second, which is a good result in my books but when you're training this hard you are always aiming for first. Unfortunately this year an unlucky flush caught me out, but next year I'll train harder and be more prepared!

#### If you could do one thing to improve freestyle what would it be?

I would increase the publicity of the events. The more people that hear about competitions and spectate then the better exposure the sport will get and more people will try it out.

#### What advice do you have for upcoming paddlers?

*"Kayaking is a great sport, no matter how committed you get or well you do always remember to have fun and where your roots are."*

Jon Best



Joe Bradley



Alan Ward



The team. All photos: Ross Montandon



# Interview

## Freestyle Chairman Tim Ward

### How does it feel to be the new Chairman?

I feel a great weight of responsibility! At the AGM when I was elected there seemed to be the feeling that I was bringing a magic wand with me. Having stepped straight in as Chairman may seem a little presumptuous but there was an important job to be done and no one more experienced was willing to take it on. I do have a few ideas for growth but as I am on a steep learning curve at the moment I intend to tread softly to start with and concentrate on building on what is already in place. However I can see a lot of exciting developments coming over the horizon which should help to boost the sport to new levels of participation.

### What is your background in the sport?

Forty odd years ago (is it really that long?) I made my first kayak - a plywood single tourer, in woodwork at school. I owe a huge debt of thanks to Ron Croad, my woodwork teacher, who taught me the basics and sowed the seed of a life long passion for all aspects of the sport. I have competed in every discipline bar canoe sailing, am a Level 5 coach and have fulfilled various BCU roles including Local Coaching Officer, Access Advisor, Southern Region Vice Chairman, founded the Nomad Kayak Club where I am now Hon President and of Marlow CC where I spent 19 years on the committee, ten of those as Chairman.

Freestyle came along as a new experience in 2001 when my son Alan talked me into taking him to our first Peak Whitewater Challenge at HP where I won the first of many prizes that the two of us have picked up. He, of course, quickly leapt ahead of me in the skills department and was soon selected along with two Marlow club mates, Tim Trew and Piers Bucknell for the 2003 Worlds team. My proudest moment by far in the sport was in Australia 2005 when I heard the national anthem played for Alan when he became Junior World Champion. I can recommend it to any parent!

### What do you aim to achieve?

Freestyle seems to have plateaued a bit recently and the committee having gone through a drastic shortage of members during the year, due to unexpected retirements and a dreadful road accident, probably hasn't helped. This is a good place to sneak in a huge thank you to Terry Best who retired at the AGM having done an epic amount over the years and carried the flag through the last few months. The constitution bids us to provide for recreational freestyle as well as organising a national team. My feeling is that we need to do more to promote freestyle at club level as it is probably the only branch of the sport that has developed independently of club input. We are working on a Freestyle Star Award and Coaching Award Scheme which we hope to introduce during the coming year and a large task will be to encourage a support structure to promote it in the clubs. Watch this space!

Regarding our national team we have achieved some stunning results over recent years being consistently second only to the Americans. If float and squirt results are separated we have come first in successive World Championships. My big hope is that we can provide the atmosphere for our senior men to achieve their undoubted potential with consistent placings in the medals at world level.

People constantly ask me about inclusion in the Olympics especially as it's the hot topic of the moment. This is a huge debate with some very strong opinions on both sides, it seems that you either love it or hate it. I am not casting a personal opinion on this one but I am sure it will keep coming to the top of the melting pot.

Lastly, international freestyle whether recreational or competitive promotes fantastic bonds of friendship around the globe. I will be doing my best to strengthen it.

Interviewer: Alan Ward. Interviewee: Tim Ward



Tim in action.  
Photo by Nick Moore.

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# Competition – surf

## A Portrush British Open Classic!

### COUNTY ANTRIM, NORTHERN IRELAND

This year the Northern Ireland Surf Kayak Club hosted the British Open in Portrush, Co. Antrim. It proved to be an event to remember, with many of the world's top surf kayakers in attendance, quality and size of surf to match and top class facilities laid on by Coleraine Borough Council.

Saturday morning was an unknown prospect for all, with a new break to many of the travelling competitors and a scary forecast for the organisers with a huge swell and high winds predicted. Fortune favoured the brave and conditions were windy but with perfectly peeling 3-4 foot waves.

Men's HP made up the first 21 heats of the day and with the tide pushing, the wave size slowly increased. The pro judging team were extremely impressed by the high standard on show and witnessed a super clean barrel from Mark Taylor, a perfectly executed and landed air from Chris Hobson, some super floaters from Jonny Bingham alongside a host of other world class manoeuvres.

When time came for the men's IC, conditions had increased to 5-6 foot

Chris Hobson and Corin King.



Chris Hobson Men's HP Final.



Jonny Bingham Men's HP Final.



Jonny Bingham Men's IC Final.



Jonny Bingham Men's IC Final.

Steve Bowens Men's HP Final.



(nearly double overhead sets). Hard hits were the order of the day and a lot of skill was needed to avoid 'losing the tail' and even more nerve to 'thump that lip'.

The juniors finished off an exhilarating day with some fine surfing in big waves, proving that British surf kayaking has a really strong future.

After that it was hot showers (on site!) and all off for a fine feed at 55° North.

Sunday was slightly smaller with a lighter cross-shore breeze and it was also time to see the ladies and masters in action for the first time. There were some really hard fought battles to reach the last four and nobody had an easy ride. By 1300 all the qualifying had been done and it was a straight run of finals.

The crowds grew as the event continued and they were treated to some very high level, entertaining manoeuvres. Some great rivalries returned for the 20 minutes duration of a heat including Robyn Pearcey and Tamsin Green (Ladies HP), Tracey Sherrington and Chloe Hamilton (Ladies IC), Richard Hobson, Jock Young and Ian Sherrington (Masters), Philip Watson, Sam Davenport and Corin King (Juniors HP and IC) and Chris Hobson and Jonny Bingham (Men's HP and IC) to name just a few.

The event was finished with a short prize giving ceremony at the East

Strand Watersports centre with some super prizes from our very generous sponsors, Nookie Extreme Sports, Mega Surf Kayaks, Troggs Surf Shop, System X, Tisos, JK Knox, Coast & Creek, 55 North and Coleraine Borough Council.

A big thanks to all who travelled from England, Scotland and Wales for the event and here's looking forward to next year's competition in Wales. ●

**JONNY BINGHAM**  
**NI SURF KAYAK CLUB**



Juniors IC finalists.



Ladies IC finalists.



All the winners.

### Results:

#### Ladies IC

1st - Tracy Sherrington (Scotland)  
2nd - Chloe Hamilton (Northern Ireland)  
3rd - Tamsin Green (England)

#### Ladies HP

1st - Robyn Pearcey (England)  
2nd - Tamsin Green (England)  
3rd - Tracy Sherrington (Scotland)

#### Junior IC

1st - Corin King (Northern Ireland)  
2nd - Philip Watson (England)  
3rd - Andy Mc Clelland (Northern Ireland)

#### Junior HP

1st - Philip Watson (England)  
2nd - Sam Davenport (England)  
3rd - Corin King (Northern Ireland)

#### Masters IC

1st - Jock Young (Scotland)  
2nd - Richard Hobson (Northern Ireland)  
3rd - Ian Sherrington (Scotland)

#### Masters HP

1st - Richard Hobson (Northern Ireland)  
2nd - Jock Young (Scotland)  
3rd - Ian Sherrington (Scotland)

#### Open IC

1st - Chris Hobson (Northern Ireland)  
2nd - Jonny Bingham (Northern Ireland)  
3rd - Darren Bason (England)

#### Open HP

1st - Jonny Bingham (Northern Ireland)  
2nd - Chris Hobson (Northern Ireland)  
3rd - Corin King (Northern Ireland)





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Our new lineup now offers 3 sizes to choose from: 60, 70 and 80 gallon so we've got your weight range covered. And with the new fully adjustable F.A.T. 5.0 thigh brace system, even the tallest paddlers have a higher knee area. Inside and out, the new Diesel features even better river running and creeking capabilities than ever before. It's still your go anywhere, do anything boat—only a lot better.

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LENGTH	7' 4" • 223 cm	8' • 244 cm	8' 6" • 259 cm
WIDTH	24 1/2" • 64 cm	25" • 64 cm	25 3/4" • 66 cm



# Competition – marathon

## Devizes to Westminster Race

### Are you ready?

The last few days to prepare are coming up, have you got everything ready that you need and are all your preparations for the days of the race done?

Some questions to help you decide if everything has been done and you are ready for the big event.

**Have you got your race entry in?** Are you sure it has been done if you left it for your partner to do?

**Have you registered** a start time if you are starting outside of the normal hours?

**Are you familiar with the rules?** If you make an error you could end up with a time penalty or even disqualification. Make sure you know where you are allowed to support your crew, as there are many places you cannot go.

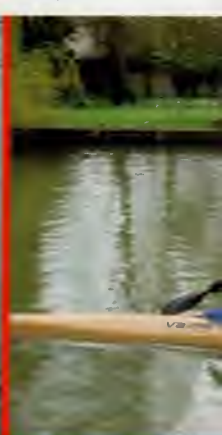
**Have you done enough** training and preparation before the race and is the target time you have set yourselves realistically based on your training

times? Remember it is essential you catch the tide right if you are going non-stop.

**Does everyone (crew and supporters) have sufficient familiarity with the course,** obstacles likely to be encountered on the course, the conditions and an awareness of the portage routes and restrictions? There are portages where the support crews are not allowed, is this understood and will the crew be able to cope until the next support point?

**Do you have all the equipment you need for the race?** This equipment has to serve two purposes: It ensures your well-being during the race and it means you conform to the rules regarding what you must carry in your boat during the race. This includes spare clothing, survival equipment and torches.

**Is there enough clothing** that is dry provided for kit changes in all the vehicles? There may be a need to change in a hurry, so every vehicle needs to have equipment ready.



## Going racing? How, why, where

Canoe Focus hits the doormat with a considerably heavier thump than it has done in the past. Focus raises debate not least from the extreme ends of the spectrum with some members saying there is nothing for them as it's all competition or recreation, but what about the recreational racer or the competitive recreationalist – the weekend warrior! Some of you may

have been interested enough to think this flat water racing thing looks cool but how do I do it and where does it take place?

Races are the challenge of testing yourself against your peers and a marathon race is where your competitors race from the start with you to see who is the fastest (but is also the best at reading the water,

conserving energy, planning ahead and sometimes working as a team).

The first thing you need is enthusiasm. I look on the races as a prearranged chance to visit different areas of the country, to spend time with other interested paddlers and a trip away with my mates, a bite of food at the end and if I am lucky a prize to reward me for my efforts. There are two

different sorts of races in the British marathon calendar: A races such as the Hasler Series, which follow a similar format to a divisional system where you can race in Division 9 in any boat over a four-mile course. They are organised so that the higher up the divisional system you go the more challenging the course becomes involving portages, longer distances and possibly weir shoots. The second

Training for the DW.



The start of a Hasler race.





**Has the feeding routine been rehearsed?** The method of feeding must have been practiced and each type of food or drink must have been tried under race or training conditions. No room for new foods to be tried at this stage of the proceedings.

**Has there been a rehearsal of the pre-race food and drink** that is going to be consumed the night before the start?

**Are there sufficient spares for the boats available?** Rudders, pumps or other fittings may malfunction or get damaged, a set of spares and tools is essential for bank repairs.

**Are there enough vehicles and personnel supporting?** Ideally a junior crew should have a crew with two vehicles and a non-stop crew have a crew with three vehicles. This way there is cover at more frequent opportunities and a chance for support crews to get their own refreshment and rest, particularly during the night.

**Is everyone familiar with the route?** The paddlers need to be familiar with the whole course, they can carry a map with portage diagrams taped to the deck of the boat. The supporters need OS maps of the route, have they read

the support crew information on the DW website [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk)? Don't assume that it is the same from year to year, read up on it and be familiar with this year's information. Remember also that a lot of support is late at night and much of it is close to people's houses. **Keep noise and disruption down to an absolute minimum.**

**Can the support crews communicate between each other easily?** Mobile phones are great, but coverage is not 100% along the whole of the race, there are areas where no signal is present! Radios are an option that could be used.

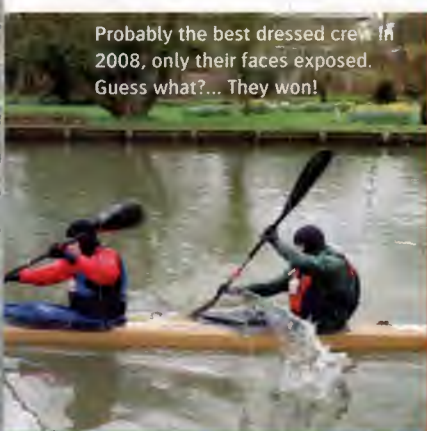
If the supporters are 'leapfrogging' down the course and arriving at alternate points, then a regular update on the crew's progress is essential, so everyone knows if they are up/down on schedule.

**Has the overnight accommodation** before race in Devizes and during race for the four day crews been organised?

See you at Easter in Devizes and good luck! ●

**JOHN HANDYSIDE  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COACH  
RACING, MARATHON AND WWR**

Probably the best dressed crew in 2008, only their faces exposed. Guess what?... They won!



type of race are the B races, which are the classic races and the format is individual to the race with some big races such as the Watersides with 400 entrants or the Bath to Bradford race where you race upstream including climbing up the weirs. Most B races are over longer distances and are entered by a wide range of people from fast tourers to extreme racers.

The final form of marathon racing is the Lightning Class for the under 10 and 12 year-olds. All racers in these classes have to race the Pyranha Lightning with competitors receiving a certificate. They race over a two-kilometre sheltered course and are a common sight at the Hasler events.

Race details are hosted on the marathon website so you know what kind of challenge you are taking on and planning your race through preparation, support, feeding and the race itself. The results for the Hasler races are listed and there is a document aimed at debutant racers on the domestic racing page of the site.

So what are you waiting for? Get out there and give it a go!

[www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk)

1948 - 2009

# 61st Anniversary of the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon 2009



10 - 13 April 2009



Easter Weekend

Starts at Devizes Wharf, ends at Westminster Bridge.

Are you looking for a real challenge?

Have you ever said you want to paddle Devizes Westminster at least once?

Have you ever talked about doing DW one more time?

Or perhaps you're a serial DWer?



The Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon is a phenomenal event, demanding stamina and commitment producing a real sense of personal achievement for everyone who participates. If it's your first time, enjoy the challenge, if you're an elite paddler, do your best. And if you're free over the Easter Weekend, come down and watch or help out by volunteering. Visit [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk) for details.

- 125-miles, 76 portages.
- Paddling through the night non-stop or over 4 days.
- Open to all (if you've trained) - international entries welcome



Regional Brewers of Devizes

For more information and an entry form, visit: [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk)



# Winter training

# Slalom

British canoe  
slalom team  
winter training

C2 training  
squad diary

## Sunday. Arrival:

The team assembles at the Old Grandtully Hotel, having left from Nottingham earlier that day. Everyone checks into their rooms, with their usual 'roomy' (this is normally a well established set-up because most team members have been on trips with each other before).

By Etienne Stott – C2 GB team member

**We all sit down to a team meal of pizza and apple crumble for dessert. Pizza is a bit of staple food when away on training camps, not as unhealthy as it is made out to be and found in almost every country on earth! After the meal, the coaching groups meet with their coach to plan and discuss the training ahead. Jurg Goetz, who is also the team's head coach, coaches the C2 GROUP. He outlines his proposals for the camp and discusses with the athletes the training plans, which will help them to achieve their training aims. All the crews have a different approach to their training but with good planning and communication in advance, everyone will be satisfied.**

## Monday

Waking up at 07.45 (normally we'd get up earlier, but it's too dark to train until 08.30) the paddlers drift into breakfast. A big favourite is 'Fruit and Fibre' or porridge and honey, the nutritionist would say that it has a good balance of

complex and simple carbohydrates for a prolonged energy release. After that people start getting changed (wearing as much as possible whilst still being able to move, as it is only just above freezing outside), getting their boats prepared and finding their paddles. We meet Jurg on the riverbank at 09.00 after warming up; where he tells us the gate pattern he has set. The first session of the week is half runs (where we do courses equivalent to half the length of a race course), to allow us to familiarise ourselves with the river. It also serves to get rid of the staleness that often develops after a day off as most team members take Sundays off training. Most crews do between eight and 12 'runs' on the course which takes about 90 minutes, not including a warm up of about ten minutes. Normally this session is timed by the coach and afterwards the crews have a look at the coach's clipboard to see who was running 'fast and clean' that morning. After the session, it's into the drying room with the gear (an absolutely vital

ingredient on a British winter training camp!) and then into the kitchen for refuelling. Owing to the small amount of daylight hours the next session will start at 14.30, which means lunch, and 'second breakfast' get rolled into one. This means some people are eating for quite a while! There is a bit of spare time but nothing much to get your teeth into before we go back out to get the course for the afternoon.

The afternoon session is 'progressive upstream technique', meaning that we will be practicing upstream gates by dividing the race course length up into smaller chunks and descending through the short courses set and then walking back up to do it again. The opposite of this is called 'recirculation' where you do the same chunk over and over again, before moving onto the next section. We practice upstream gates a lot, because the fastest paddlers are masters at maintaining their momentum around upstream gates and there is a lot of time to be gained by executing them efficiently. This makes it a crucial area in which to improve your speed. Again, the session takes about 90 minutes but this time the runs are recorded for later analysis. This provides Jurg with the chance to finely assess the techniques and the crews can correlate what they felt on the water to the stopwatch.

In the evening there is another team meal, this time cooked by some of the athletes and coaches. Nobody becomes ill and everyone seems to eat his or her portion, so it is declared a success! After that people go and play board games, read books or just chat. There isn't any television or internet, so there isn't any of the usual Facebook or Wikipedia action. A monster game of Monopoly gets underway. Understandably amongst such a competitive and motivated group the game is cut-throat and lasts over three nights!

## Tuesday

The first session of three on this day is progressive thirds set on a realistic race course. More often than not, some rapids/courses lend themselves to a certain breakdown of course length. The

difficulty/ease of getting in and out of your boat, the position of key water features and the gates available all influence this. As it happens, the Grandtully section is perfectly suited to thirds, so that's what we did!

In the afternoon Jurg wasn't coaching us, but he had arranged for the team physiotherapist Julie Pierce to video us, in between treatments. The team physio has a hard job, keeping all members of the team 'on the road'. This often means treating early in the morning before training, or later in the evening after training. Most of the time the athletes are injury free, but there are frequently 'niggles' that need to be kept on top of, lest they develop into an injury that leads to losing training time. After the training session, Julie gives Jurg the tape of the session for him to 'capture' onto a computer. He then uses software that allows the action to be played at variable speeds or in split screen format to allow direct comparisons. Whilst that is happening, we are all eating and trying to get a bit of a sit down, before we hop into the cars to drive to the gym, half an hour away in Perth.

Arriving in Perth, a bit of energy has returned, although not quite enough to get the session off the ground. By the time we've all warmed up our energy levels have returned to where they need to be and everyone is hitting it hard, knowing that the work will be going in the bank for next season. After the session we get home as fast as possible so we can have dinner and then sit down to do video review with Jurg. It has been a busy day, but we need to concentrate so that we can get the most out of the analysis and incorporate the lessons learned into future paddling.

## Wednesday

Recirculation practice is on the menu for Wednesday. The morning is focusing on upstream gates again; with the afternoon on reverse spin moves. In C2 class, most crews have to get out of their boats every half an hour or so to stretch their legs, but normally this time isn't wasted, it is used to discuss the

“ A monster game of Monopoly gets underway. Understandably amongst such a competitive and motivated group the game is cut-throat and lasts over three nights! ”





last 'set' of runs and prepare tactics for the next set of courses.

The spin recirculations in the afternoon are tricky courses not to get frustrated on. Dealing with this emotion is a central challenge of canoe slalom, because it is on the most difficult gates sequences that the most time can be gained. This means that coping with difficult sequences needs to be practiced frequently and professionally. Hopefully, persisting with this session will give the crews an advantage over their foreign competitors next season.

### Thursday

In the morning the whole team assembles to do 'full runs' – or a race length course. This sort of session is done throughout the year, to 'keep your eye in', as well as for its physiological benefits. After a thorough warm up the athletes set about tackling between six and 12 runs, dependent on their pacing and fitness levels.

In the afternoon we do progressives on the full run course. The aim here is to trim down the runs technically, pushing the limits a bit. With the gate pattern broken into smaller chunks, it is possible to attack the gates in a fresher physical state, as well as hopefully having learned a few tricks or spotted a few pointers from the morning's video analysis.

With 90 minutes break (sat in the minibus on the way) we arrive at the gym, feeling even less fresh than on Tuesday! As usual though, there is a good vibe and everyone cracks on. It's amazing how tiredness can disappear with the right atmosphere. Knowing that it is the second last session of the camp helps too though!

That evening most of the team watches a DVD together in the lounge. After that it's pretty much bag packing time followed by bed, as there is an earlier start so that everyone can get away.

### Friday

The final session of the camp is full runs again. The course is set and there is a last session surge to get as many runs in before time is called. Then the boats are packed and loaded, the bus is jammed with kit bags, the bunkhouse is tidied and cleaned, all the spare food is claimed and the team hits the road! Even though we have only been in Scotland for four and a half days there has been a lot of training, a fair bit of shivering and some serious Monopoly money earned and lost! ●

**ETIENNE STOTT**

“The spin recirculations in the afternoon are tricky courses not to get frustrated on. Dealing with this emotion is a central challenge of canoe slalom, because it is on the most difficult gates sequences that the most time can be gained. This means that coping with difficult sequences needs to be practiced frequently and professionally.”



The vital drying room, packed to the rafters.



Sitting down for dinner.



Surveying the course on a chilly and dark morning.



Video review using 'Dartfish' video analysis software.



Loading the van ready to roll back to Nottingham.



# Competition – rafting

## British White Water Championships

Llandysul Paddlers Centre – River Teifi, Wales



### Girls with Guns in the sprint.

Matt Blue was given the task of holding a large scale rafting event for all, giving people an insight into raft racing and selecting the team that will be representing the country at the World Championships to be held in Bosnia 2009. After months of preparations, overcoming event logistics, insurance problems and just how many teams would enter, Matt set off around the country to source the rafts to race in, under the instruction from Llandysul owner Gareth "if you organise it...they will come!"

And they did, 16 men's and four ladies teams came from universities in Scotland, outdoor centres in north Wales and fire stations in London. As the slalom course was being prepared on the Friday, teams were arriving for early practice, hot tips and coaching from GB team members. Most of the teams spent the evening sizing up the opposition in the local pub.

The cold, damp Welsh morning greeted the first of the events, which was the

### There's a raft in there somewhere.



time trial, a 750 metre lung busting effort to rank teams in the head-to-head battles. After a five second countdown, teams splashed into a rhythm and headed for the finish, for some this was the first time they had stepped into a raft, for others it had been the first time in 15 years! As the results were digested it was Raft Club and Girls with Guns that led the way.

The head-to-head event was a great spectacle as teams fought for the lead into the first corner and down through the gorge section to the finish. It was a knockout format with only the winners progressing. There was some really close racing. It is a true test of stamina with

the time in between heats spent carrying the boat back up to the start only to be told you're next to race! It was Raft Club and Girls with Guns on top again with the local Raft Chicks and The Beast and the Firestarters showing good fighting spirits making it through the rounds.

After lunch it was the time for the slalom, 12 super-sized gates spread cross the river, with some very tricky moves. The water level was high so the four up stream gates were causing some problems hung above micro eddies, well micro for a 15 foot raft with over half a ton of body weight in it! After an open practice to give some of the teams a chance to find out what slalom really was, the race was on, two runs, best one counts. Now, slalom in a raft is not easy, there's six people all wanting to go in different directions in a boat that skids and slips all over the river. There was some excellent first runs from the Buxton Birds and Richie P's boys and some very tired looking second runs after a long days racing. Girls with

Guns came back from a poor first run to storm the second and win with three touches. Raft Club cleaned up on the first run!

The 70s party and evening meal was laid on at a local pub, after the results of the day were announced every team went up to collect their prizes. Very early the next morning, teams were expected to be up and receive the briefing for the endurance. This course had been shortened due to the high water level and finished just short of a dangerous weir. The teams would set off in pods of four, racing the other people close to them on the leader board. The race would last around 25 minutes meaning teams that went out too hard would pay for it in the closing stages. With some good racing in pod one from the Young Guns, it was pod two that provided the photo finish as The Beast and the Firestarters passed Bracken on the line.

The overall winners were once again Raft Club and Girls with Guns who managed to clean sweep the weekend and will be representing GB in Bosnia at the World Championships. The Young Guns and Bracken claimed the other podium places in the mens and The Buxton Birds and The Raft Chicks the ladies. This was the biggest rafting event ever held in the UK, it was good to see so many teams either battling for the top spot or just coming to have fun and try and beat their friends. Watch out for more rafting events coming to waters near you, they are awesome fun with the main aim being for everyone to have fun. ●

### Young Guns racing into second place.



### Raft Club in the head-to-head.



The organisers would like to thank event sponsors Run and Jump Clothing, Alpkit, PeakUK, Reed, The Adam & Ruth Medal Company and Trophy Services, Llandysul Paddlers Centre, Magic for the brilliant photographs and all the local people that pitched in to help over the weekend. I think everyone would like to thank Matt Blue for organising such a wicked event. For more information on rafting and raft racing visit

[www.britishraftteam.co.uk](http://www.britishraftteam.co.uk)

TEXT: ADAM NORFOLK  
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# Young men, old

A small team of three English kayakers starting planning for this in January 2007. They wanted to explore a new country, understand a different way of life and push their abilities on the rivers. Chris Eastabrook was going to paddle a first descent in the east of Tibet.

We spent a few days in the capital of Tibet (Lhasa) to acclimatise to the tasteless, thin air and gather supplies for our journey into rural Tibet. This gave us a great opportunity to visit the popular tourist sites; the Potala Place – the once winter home of the Dalai Lama; the Jokhang – the religious centre of Tibet and of course the hundreds of ‘outdoor shops’ selling cheap replicas of your favourite brands!

Our expedition took us around a giant circle, reaching as far as the town of Bayi in the east and heading back to Lhasa along the Yarlung Valley, the start of the Brahmaputra and then out to the border with Nepal. Along the way we paddled many rivers, met a lot of interested and interesting local people and were questioned by many a police officer! Most nights were spent under the stars, camping at the foot of the next river, but the odd night we obtained a room (with help from our guide) and mingled with the villagers. It seems that most Tibetan villages have a pool table,

each with an eight year-old lad that will offer advice on your next ‘shot’ and a place to buy beer. This was a great combination and once at a bar or playing pool you become

the centre of attention, especially to Tibetan ladies who have never seen body hair on a man and screamed outrageously at the smallest touch of a hair!

I felt like I had a complete range of food on the trip. In Lhasa, a yak steak was the meal of champions, in towns a good Chinese could always be found and at camp our guide would cook most days and produce amazing traditional Tibetan food. He would also come out with some very interesting Tibetan food too – namely yak butter tea that just tastes like fat and tsampa, which is basically flour, more yak butter and water, all fun and games on expedition!

The white water kayaking community has only scratched the surface of this country’s potential, but what makes the place is the completely different culture Tibet has to offer. I can’t help but worry how long this will last though.

Our grateful thanks to Pyranha for a boat; Lord Rootes Fund at Warwick University for paying for it and a big no thanks to Gulf Air who charged me an extra £200 to put my boat on the plane on the way home.

For more information on the trip, rivers and more photos, visit [www.chriseastabrook.co.uk](http://www.chriseastabrook.co.uk)

**CHRIS EASTABROOK**

Stu being a tourist at the Yamdrok Tso.



Yamdrok Tso, one of four holy lakes in Tibet.





Pray flags on the river, often mean the river is narrowed and the river is about to get more interesting.



The first descent in a remote village means the 'locals' have not seen western folk, let alone western folk in strange plastic tubes!

The Potala Place in Lhasa at night.

Rich Brimfield on the class V gorge on the Kongpo.



# mountains

# A KAYAK ADVENTURE IN TIBET

## Mini-Tibetan river guide:

### Upper Kongpo

The River Kongpo runs along side the main road 200km east out of Lhasa. We started on one of the south tributaries; driving up the small road until we could go no further as men were blowing holes in the cliff. The run is a lovely continuous class III for the length of the tributary and then the river steps the game up! This section of the Kongpo provided us with class IV+ for the rest of the day.

### Biphu Chu

This was one of the marks on our map that Chris Jones said, "No idea what's up there but I reckon it's fun." The river is one of the tributaries to Great Yarlung. We drove up to find that the rain had brought the river to overflowing! I did not get a good night's sleep before starting this one, as the terror level in my mind was very high! A gradient drop of 270m in 14km! There were some very hard lines in the high water levels and the portaging was super hard! The stuff in-between was around class IV, V again and super fun!

### Baxian in the Nye Valley

Chris had tipped this to be the river of the trip. He had actually seen this one from the bottom but again knew nothing more than that - but it did look sweet. It did not disappoint, giving us three days of amazing white water, despite being 'asked' to leave the valley by local government officials after the second. This was our last river in Tibet, the most successful first descent and the biggest high to finish on. It was again a River Yarlung tributary, in the middle of nowhere but we could still buy beer to celebrate the achievement of the trip!

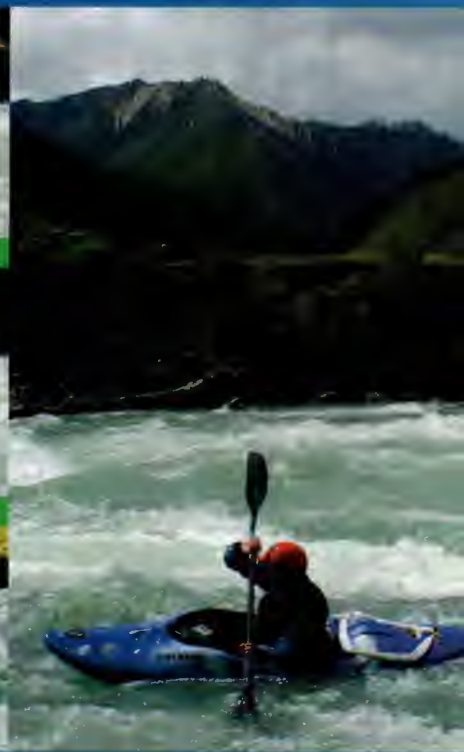
Stuart on the River Kongpo.



Stu bolds scouts the Biphu Chu.



Chris on the Baxian.





# Deliverance on the Wye

Rob West



On a beach in Cornwall the sun shone proudly as if it were summer; one of the few days in the recent months the weather was acting appropriately. My friend Charlie sat next to me and we discussed the possibility of a canoeing trip down the River Wye.

It was something I had wanted to do for a long time but had never got round to it, like the many other trips, journeys and expeditions that are sadly confined to my imagination. In fact Charlie had brought it up, in a roundabout way, through expressing a desire to canoe down a Canadian river, strangely inspired by the film *Deliverance*. Though I had not seen it, Charlie explained the plot in which a group of men share a canoeing experience down a North American river and basically get murdered en-route. I tried not to question his motivation for a canoeing trip as it left me a window to suggest the subsequent Wye journey, though it seemed to me like someone suggesting a backpacking trip round eastern Europe after watching *Hostel!*

Thus here we were, eating bacon baguettes with another old friend and my brother in the River Cafe, Glasbury, as we watched nigh on a hundred people launch into their own wilderness experience on the opposite bank. At this point I think we were all slightly disappointed as we witnessed the large crowd we would be sharing the river with, little did we know the meandering river and its densely populated banks left you feeling more isolated than some peaks in the neighbouring Black Mountains.

We had hired canoes, waterproof barrels, paddles, buoyancy aids and maps from the local activities centre who would also pick us and the canoes up at Preston the following day. The friendly staff had helped us every step of the way and had also been exceedingly patient as the car full of 'essentials' was slowly whittled down to the two barrels worth we could take.

## A rare treat

The river was exceedingly pleasant; wide, slow meanders and small, gentle rapids with each bank densely populated by trees. The sunshine that broke through the leaves and sparkled off the water was a rare treat and we took it as a sign to take our time and fully enjoy the river. Considering the number of people on the river there were blessedly few meetings as groups tended to respect each others' space and there was plenty of room between flotillas. As the day wore

on the number of meetings decreased and by Sunday they were virtually non-existent as we had the second section almost entirely to ourselves.

We stopped briefly at Hay-on-Wye to allow my brother to taste at some local cider, the Hereford ciders are justly renowned and so as not to let him feel left out we joined him for one or two. We got back on the river and the afternoon drifted slowly by, the sun warming the breeze and us from the river lulling us further down stream. A quick swim at a small get out freshened us for the final stretch of pristine forest paddling.

The picturesque location of our campsite was the ancient, wooden frame bridge a few hundred metres down from the Boat Inn. We were the only tent at the campsite, beautifully tucked away with minimal facilities but well kept. The food at the pub is very good, making it definitely worth a trip. The cider and the views also helped the meals go down. Mightily exhausted from the early start and the day's paddling we left the pub early ready for our final day.

## Feeling exhausted

We paddled hard after a shaky seal launch from the campsite. We found a much quieter river with fewer rapids but some idyllic spots and impressive architecture in the form of stately homes, churches and bridges. Being boys and big kids at heart, a long game of barging into each other with the canoes begun, naturally coming to an end in some mud flinging and splashing. Feeling exhausted, we settled back into a steady pace, everyone having perfected their various strokes and reading the river.

After the much anticipated Monnington Falls, which turned out to be more of a slight incline, we were pretty much home and dry. The second day had been much harder paddling than the first but quieter and more picturesque. By the time we saw the electric cables, the sign for our get out, we were pleased to rest and wait for the minibus. Sooner than we could have hoped, we were on the bus and heading back to the centre, shortly after we would part ways though we vowed to repeat the experience next year on a different river.



Charlie in the canoe.

The weekend was memorable for its stunning scenery, which at points left you feeling like you were paddling a tropical river in the rain forest. The myriad of birds we paused to watch all the way down, including kingfishers, heron, buzzards and more was ample reward for the hard work of paddling. The time spent with friends, enjoying Britain's wilderness and its summer was unforgettable and well recommended for anyone who has a spare day or two over the coming months whether the weather is fine or not. Thankfully, the experience was about as far from *Deliverance* as you could wish for. ●

**ROB WEST**



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# ABOVE THE ARCTIC

## THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS



It was a gloomy morning as we set off for Henningsvaer, a village known as 'the Venice of the Lofotens' and a climber's capital. Olly Sanders had taken Trys Burke and myself there earlier in the week, just before the sea kayak symposium, so I knew what to expect. Colourful wooden cabins nestled on small rocky islands and it also had a super café. Liz, Sonja and myself made good progress and tied the boats up with the use of a towline, located the café and enjoyed the warmth of an enclosed log fire. Who would think we were in August!

**Below left:** Roger and Sonja at first camp; **middle:** first cold day; **right:** jelly fish.



The southern islands and the northern coast are far more rugged, with steep cliffs, committing coastline and amazing beaches.



# ARCTIC CIRCLE

ISLANDS, NORWAY

by Roger Chandler



**Above:** Roger checking position.

**Left:** Eighth camp.

We soon discovered the island was experiencing the worst summer for 70 years, this explained the cold temperatures, which we were experiencing was not the norm! Four days after the symposium and it was still grey and cold, between 4-6°C, very different from what was expected for this time of year and I was now waiting for Sonja and Liz to arrive. Our plan was to attempt a circumnavigation of the five main islands that make up Lofoten, Austvagoy, Gimsoya, Vestvagoy, Flakstadoya and Moskenesoya. The Norwegians pride themselves on their camping laws. Anybody is allowed to camp anywhere out of sight of a house. However, my concern and focus was the southern tip of Moskenesoya and talk of a Maelstrom or what was known by Norwegians as the Moskstraumen. This was a significant tidal phenomenon.

### Maelstrom

The Maelstrom had inspired many authors, notably Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne, their respective 'A Descent into the Maelstrom' and 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea'. Both I was pleased to learn, portray it inaccurately as a single massive whirlpool and a little exaggerated although it didn't take much for my imagination to get the better of me, as I read an extract from Poe (1841).

*"Do you hear anything? Do you see any change in the water?" We had caught no glimpse of the sea until it had burst upon us from the summit. As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen term the chopping character of the ocean beneath us, was rapidly changing into a current which set to the eastward. Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed — to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea, as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into frenzied convulsion — heaving, boiling, hissing — gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with a rapidity which water*

*never elsewhere assumes except in precipitous descents...". Great!*

On meeting the girls, at Svolvær big smiles greeted me. I soon discovered, they had been lucky in jumping on one of the large tour ships, the Hurtigruten, which travel up and down the coastline of Norway, and this one had saunas and swimming pools — what a hardship. We loaded up a minibus and had a short drive to where the kayaks were and made a quick decision to pack the boats that night and leave early in the morning. I had planned to get to the north coast as quick as we could, due to a forecast of light winds. This meant that we would circumnavigate the Lofotens in a figure of eight, so that we would end up coming down the Raftunnsford channel, which was the north-east end of Austvagoy.

The next couple of days went extremely well, the sun came out; the sea state was fantastic with very light winds and that allowed us all to settle into our rhythms. We had decided to take one double kayak and a single and this set a good pace for the single kayak to work to and also allowed for a useful change in position. The southern islands and the northern coast are far more rugged, with steep cliffs, committing coastline and amazing beaches. I had been warned about a couple of the beaches along this part of coast where groups had landed and then been stranded by the winds and dumping surf.

This was our third night and the first where we had time to create a drift wood fire and really appreciate where we were. This for me was getting into the rhythm of the sea, each other and our expedition. Liz had also suggested when back in the UK, for each of us to bring a couple of gifts out to share with others. Well my pre-mixed gin and tonic travelled very well and went down even better.

On approaching the southern point of Moskenesoya, we met three other kayakers who were aiming to paddle around Moskenesoya. They told us about a small pastry and coffee shop in the first village of Å, which sounded great, but first we had the maelstrom to consider. We were ahead of our time, so we decided to stop and see if we could get a view of the maelstrom, hoping this might give us an indication whether we could attempt to eddy hop and climb up

**That night we made it to a small island, having come up between Gimsoya and Vestvagoy. This was important as we had made it through a tidal channel and were in easy striking distance of the north coast. As we were setting up camp, many gulls took to the air. Looking up we saw two large sea eagles and with a wingspan of around two metres, they were an amazing site and more like a couple of flying doors!**

There's no real easy way to get to the Lofoten islands, they are a long way from anywhere, roughly 125 miles above the Arctic Circle. A determined effort is certainly required, with two flights and then a four-hour boat cruise from Bodo to Svolvær. Due to the warm Gulf Stream, Lofoten has a much milder climate than other parts of the world at the same latitude, such as Alaska and Greenland. The coastal climate in Lofoten makes the winters mild and the summers relatively cool. January and February are the coldest months, with an average temperature of -1°C. July and August the warmest at 12°C.





A break on the north coast.

the tide race or whether we would need to wait for the tide to change. The view from the top was amazing and the sea on the other side was like a mirror. We decided to have lunch and then paddle around to see if we could slip around.

I could see a narrow channel which looked like it would go. Despite a quick flow against us, some short bursts of hard paddling and making the most of small eddies, we were through and on the southern coast. This for me was a significant part of the expedition; having completed the most exposed part of the north coast and rounded the maelstrom, successfully!

It never became dark with 24/7 daylight, which meant less stress about finding a camp or if we just wanted to push on further. After a couple of days I found I could also sleep OK, the only real disadvantage being if you camped near any sea birds that chattered all night.

The next morning saw us arrive at Å and our first contact with a village since Henningsvaer. Å is at the end of the road and is traditionally a fishing village, specialising in stockfish (dried fish). We found the bakers shop and bought some cinnamon buns and coffee, found a bench and soaked up the sun. We were conscious that we had a long day ahead of us, as this was a well-populated part of the coastline with no suitable camping spots, but sometimes its good to pause and get beneath the surface. We all split up and wandered about and then bought some more buns and sat for a little longer in the sun.

Once on the water there was still very little wind, so progress was excellent, and by mid morning we had made our way to Reine and another, although different café – a pattern was developing. This cafe had a balcony, for taking in the view and you could also make your own waffles, fantastic! We decided to make the most of this part of the expedition and

what we came across. After the earlier grey days of paddling hard we had covering a good distance, plus passing the Maelstrom successfully, we deserved it. This we also felt would really set us up for the second and final loop of our figure of eight course.

The next day we saw the tower and masts which marked Henningsvaer, this was fantastic and a real morale booster as we approached familiar ground, which is just as well as we were to experience one of the difficult pushes of the expedition. As we began to enter the entrance of the channel the winds picked up quite quickly. We had relaxed and not noticed the pattern on the water ahead and for the next three hours we made slow progress against

the wind. We decided to keep to the coastline and then cross at a point, which was narrower, before looking for a camp on an island we had passed earlier in the week. On landing we were very wet, tired cold and hungry, but were soon satisfied and off to bed.

The wind remained against us for most of the next day as we slowly moved up the channel, however, the current was also against us. We stopped and took shelter in a community café, which served plates of chips to die for and had tremendous views up and down the sound. We watch the surface of the water carefully and soon noticed changes that suggested that the current had changed, so we decided to press on. With the current behind us, we now had the wind against the tide resulting in bigger and steeper waves to deal with. As we moved on to the north coast, the winds began to drop and then it was clear.

It took us a further four days to paddle around Austvagoy. This was much more sheltered by the peninsula above and a much gentler coastline. Highlights from these last few days were:

- Arriving on a beach and deciding that we should ask permission to camp due to being in sight of

a house, to then be invited inside for coffee and cake;

- Having an encounter with a passenger cargo boat that appeared out of the mist;
- Travelling down Raftsundet sound, the main maritime course between Lofoten and Vesterålen, with wind and a strong current behind, was a real rush. It also showed that it had paid off to travel south down the narrow channel;
- Camping on a spit of land, near the end of the sound, with granite cliffs and peaks towering over us, going straight up from the sea and beginning to feel that we had it all in the bag;
- To arriving in busy Svolvær, tying up our kayaks and enjoying another mug of coffee, before paddling on to where we had began in Kabelvåg nine days and 400kms earlier.

I can fully understand why along with well-known tourist attractions such as Zanzibar and the Seychelles, the Lofoten Islands in northern Norway have been listed among the world's top 20 paradise islands. Get the weather right and the islands are truly remarkable. Thanks to Olly for the opportunity and to Liz Cowell for her company and the Green and Blacks chocolate! 🍫

**ROGER CHANDLER**

Second camp on the coast.







the canoe shop [www.desperate-measures.co.uk](http://www.desperate-measures.co.uk) tel: 0115 981 6815

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## What is the RAC campaign doing?

What are our aims as a body of canoeists, let alone all the other supporters we have?

For the ramblers to gain access to our natural land heritage took many decades and many ups and downs along the way. Even today pressure is being kept up to achieve the access we all want and deserve.

The mass trespass of Kinder Scout was a notable act of wilful trespass by ramblers. It was undertaken in the Peak District in 1932, to highlight weaknesses in English law of the time. The law denied walkers in England or Wales access to areas of open country and to public footpaths, which in previous ages (and today), formed public rights of way.

The trespass proceeded via William Clough to the plateau of Kinder Scout, where there were violent scuffles with gamekeepers. The ramblers were eventually able to reach their destination and meet with another group. Six ramblers were arrested and although trespass was not and still is not a criminal offence in any part of Britain, some would receive jail sentences of between two and six months for offences relating to violence against the keepers.

The mass trespass of Kinder Scout had a far-reaching impact. Eventually, changes in the law began to allow all members of the public access to public footpaths. This culminated in the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, which legislates a limited right to roam over scheduled access land.

Even today the pressure to open up more places and have less restrictive access, including in the marine environment (via the Marine Bill) is still very much part of what the Ramblers Association and others campaign for.

## So what about access to inland waters?

The world is a different place since the Ramblers started to increase the pressure at Kinder Scout. Now one part of the UK, Scotland, has an excellent example of what can be achieved by all parties in terms of opening up the countryside to all in the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 (SLRA). The Act supported by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code has led to greater tourism and a huge benefit to local and rural economies. The Act gives rights and responsibilities so that the natural environment is accessible and cared for by all.

The SLRA is a good exemplar of what can be put on the statute books to achieve access for all. Bearing this in mind and the great disparities for access within our own small island, Canoe England intends to continue its campaign for a statutory right of access to inland waters in England and will continue to investigate the legal position regarding the existence of historic rights of navigation. It is not only unjust and archaic that the access situation exists in the way that it does south of the Scottish border. In the 21st century when we are being encouraged by government to make a Change4life [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) – strap line is “eat well – move more – live longer”. The access situation it is simply not acceptable.

## A Blue Gym?

Do you remember the Green Gym? This concept was launched ten years ago and has successfully used conservation work to increase people's physical activity and promote good mental health and well being. The project has been evaluated by Oxford Brookes University and has shown increased fitness, better mental health and a strong retention rate of 70% participants after six months.

It has been suggested that a Blue Gym could be set up. This would mean that a national network of Blue Gym activities, which specifically promote the mental and physical health benefits of participation along a coastal and marine environment, would be developed and encouraged. However, the documents which have come out with the concept state that “the ocean coast and inland waterways offer a large health resource that has not been explored fully”. The documents also note that each year there are 180 million day visits to the 25,000 miles of canals, lakes and rivers in the UK, which from an access point of view is important to note, however clarity around the use of inland waters is not, in these early stages, very explicit.

Bearing this potential concept of a Blue Gym the campaign agrees with the benefits that regular contact with the natural environment results in benefits which include:

- reduction in stress;
- increased physical activity;
- stronger communities.

However, the campaign has continued to stress the need for clarity and certainty of access to our inland waters, as that alone would help participation rates in physical activities increase dramatically. Updates on this will be put on to the Canoe England website and in to Canoe Focus but the campaign will use this development as yet another lever for access to inland waters.

## So what is being done and how you can help

Pressure can be exerted in many ways including a ‘paddle to Westminster’ where canoeists took the issue about access direct to the heart of government. As well as pointing out the lack of clarity and certainty of access we are also promoting canoeing and showing all the benefits that come with the sport. As an active participation sport, regardless of whether it is undertaken recreationally or competitively, canoeing can have significant benefits for the economy, health, personal development and social well being. It can also provide the opportunity for participants to experience something different and in some cases step outside their comfort zone and achieve something they never thought possible.

A good example of what can be achieved in the case of disadvantage youngsters whose lives have been turned around is the Street Paddler initiative (see page 72).

## You can assist too

You can help promote what canoeing does in your local area using canoe clubs, youth groups, schools and benefit this or raise money for charity to help others. This will all go to show what can be and what could be achieved if certainty and clarity of access was in place.

Such as

- Putting pieces in to your local media radio/tv/newspaper and on your club's website informing everyone that canoeing is a great sport and whether you compete, paddle for fun it all

contributes to the individuals well being. It is the most popular watersport (BMF and RYA survey 2007) for the sixth year running (2.5 million went canoeing last year and it's set to increase in 2009). Canoeing can help meet the government's health agenda and with the new ‘Change4life’ initiative. Canoeing can assist with that locally by:

- Running an event to highlight the benefits of canoeing and what is does for the local community... get your local MP involved... local media etc.
- Promoting canoeing by running a ‘come and try canoeing session’ and get local dignitaries there... out in a canoe. Don't forget to take pictures.
- Running an event to highlight the lack of access to waterways... get your local MP involved... local media etc.
- Writing to your MP and keeping them updated on the access issue.
- Writing an article for your local newspaper about the access situation and giving examples of where locally and nationally you cannot go.
- Taking your local youth/scout/guide group out and then tell the papers how well it went and how much enjoyment was had by all and how this could be replicated all over England and Wales if there was more access.
- Writing a weekly/month/regular article for your local paper about what you/the canoe club etc get up to and slip the access issue in to the articles.

## How to lobby

You can contact your MP and arrange an appointment to see them either at their local office or at one of their surgeries near to your home or even at the Palace of Westminster. If you go to London your MP might be able to help you with a tour of the Palace of Westminster, which is extremely interesting. This information can be found from your local council or newspaper. The information could even be in your area's phone book. It is best to actually go and see them. We can help you with leaflets and posters if you would like to leave them some information, which you could then follow up with a letter (sent to their local constituency office) summarising the points you discussed. The address for your MP can also be found on the UK Parliament website.

Please go and see them at the appointed time and explain:

- What your personal paddling experiences have been.
- What you feel the problems and difficulties are in your local area.
- Why you feel canoeists should have equality of access to rivers.
- What equality of access would mean to the 2,000,000 people who go canoeing every year.
- What the economic benefits would be to your community (especially if you live in a rural area) if greater access was available because tourism etc would be boosted.
- Canoeing and other watersports are very much about participation. Providing greater access to the rivers will enable a healthier and fitter nation. Canoeists and other river users are the ‘eyes and ears of the water environment’ and can be relied upon to report pollution problems, assist injured wildlife and undertake river clean ups.
- Rivers are a superb natural classroom. Given greater access, schools can support the national curriculum without classroom learning and the possibilities for cross-curricular activities are almost endless.



# RIVERS ACCESS CAMPAIGN



## Politics!

The very mention of the word politics often turns one cold but we can influence and get involved to change things at all levels. As canoeists we can all play a vital part in the sea change in thinking at a local level which then impacts on the debate at a national level. It is possible to change things... We need to keep the pressure up!

Sometime in the next year or so there will be a General Election. You can influence what your current MP and potential candidates think by contacting them and showing that the canoeing has millions participating in it. It also meets the many health and participation goals which all of the political parties are espousing. But the lack of clarity and certainty of access hampers the development and participation in canoeing, let alone all the millions of others (swimmers, walkers, fishermen etc) who wish to benefit from our waterways and who also are affected by lack of access.

## Raising the profile leads to comments like this...

From Peter Bottomley's speech 3rd December 2008 - House of Commons. Peter Bottomley - Conservative MP for Worthing West

My final point relates to the marine and coastal access Bill. We established a basic right to roam through recent legislation but, because of a court decision perhaps a hundred years ago, we do not have a right to use rivers. We have a right to use inland waterways and canals, but I cannot take my canoe on some rivers without getting the agreement of every person with an interest in the land on either side of the bank from the beginning to the end of my journey. It is not an issue of how I gain access to the water, but of passing down the river. It is as if I could take my horse on to a bridleway only with the permission of the people who owned the land on either side of it. We would regard that as ludicrous, although my horse might disturb birds. We accept people using bridleways and footpaths, and we are likely to accept coastal access rights. We should therefore introduce the same rights to the use of rivers in England as exist in Scotland.

I went to Scotland with the BCU and the SCA and spoke about negotiating with landowners to obtain access to the water. Most canoeists are careful about spawning grounds in rivers and about anglers' interests. We could incorporate access rights in the Bill, and if there are anglers who think that that would lead to serious problems they should talk to Scottish anglers about their experiences. We need to get rid of that prohibition, which is relatively recent, and give people the rights that they should have.

Peter's comment has led to many letters, some from supporters of what he said and others who have tried to state the Scottish Land Reform Act (SLRA) is not working in Scotland. But we know otherwise and the SCA have kept us abreast of the misinformation which occasionally rears its head. Ironically the few letters against the SLRA have come from anglers. When visiting Scotland, Peter saw at first hand the positive relationships that exists between water users and as we canoed down the Tay we were given a cheerful wave from an angler on the land and from one in a boat! The campaign regularly receives emails and letters of support from anglers who want the rivers opened up for them too and not just a select few!



Peter Bottomley MP (middle).

## Canoe England's position statement

### Voluntary Access Arrangements

In England there is a lack of clarity and certainty for access to and along inland waters for canoeing.

Where public access to inland waters has not been recognised, Voluntary Access Arrangements (VAAs) are a means to gain access for canoeing. These arrangements exist on a few rivers and typically provide highly restricted and inadequate access.

Government research for canoe access to the Rivers Mersey and Waveney has produced principles and benchmark provisions for VAAs; forming the basis of government policy for access to inland waters to be achieved by the voluntary route.

For consistency, Canoe England believes the research outcomes should be adopted as the national standard for VAAs. The research has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve:

- 365 day access supported by an access code outlining responsibilities of all water users.
- Environmental protection as appropriate eg. setting a mutually agreed minimum river level.
- Respect of flora, fauna, other uses and users.
- Identified sites for launching and landing.
- Publicity and information dissemination.

Government policy is to make more provisions for public access to the outdoor environment. The research provides the evidence and foundation for wider access and public rights to inland waters. As an initial step Canoe England would seek to harmonise all existing and additional VAAs to the principles established on the Rivers Mersey, Waveney, Greta and Mole.

A VAA shall not invalidate or erode public rights should it be subsequently established such rights exist.

The statement fully takes into account:

- Research has revealed that prior to 1830, there was general acceptance the public had a historical right of access to inland waters. Legal opinions since have continued to diminish this position to create a lack of clarity and certainty for access to and along inland waters for canoeing.
- Canoe England and the government are aware that many attempts to negotiate VAAs have been unsuccessful.

Canoe England policy to continue:

- The campaign for a statutory right of access to inland waters in England.
- To investigate the existence of and seek the restoration of, historic rights of navigation.
- Making VAA information available to paddlers and advise that the decision whether or not to paddle a water, rests with the individual and not Canoe England.
- Advising paddlers to take fully into account the environmental conditions and paddle only when these are suitable.

Canoe England notes:

- The government's response to the omission of inland waters from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 by the commissioning of further research. This research produced VAAs on the Rivers Mersey and Waveney (2006) with a 365 day provision of access. The research has failed to produce VAAs on schemes for the Rivers Teme and Wear.
- The Ipsos MORI post implementation review of the Rivers Mersey and Waveney VAAs which found support for the arrangements was high, were generally well received; no disputes have been reported between river users, having more canoeists has actually enhanced the river experience for all, and businesses are beginning to take advantage of the schemes.
- Similar 365 day access arrangements have been negotiated by Canoe England and endorsed by the Environment Agency, for the River Greta (2005) in Cumbria and River Mole (2006) in Surrey.
- The provisions for public access to the English coastline in the Marine Bill.





# Exercise dam

As a keen kayaker and coach, I decided to head up an expedition to challenge all the team. Our aim was to promote endurance.  
By Chris Wood

This was to involve paddling from Fort William to Inverness through the canal and many lochs, some 100km in mid-December. This expedition was to be part of the training for a team of officer cadets from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

Future officers are expected to organise expeditions to demonstrate the principles of adventure training within the forces and these expeditions range from walking in Wales to diving in Egypt. This is in order that they can organise or run activities for their soldiers.

The kayaking expedition team for 'Exercise Damp Cadet' consisted of Tim, Jon, Thomas, Russ, Scouse and Alice and was overseen by coaches Stephen Doughty and myself. All the paddlers, apart from

Russ, were relative novices and the majority had started kayaking five months previously. This meant that the run-up training was to be intense in order to prepare everyone thoroughly. We conducted training once a week, including safety skills and rescues, and finally, after 12 weeks of training, we were ready to carry out the trip.

The direction of the expedition was governed by the prevailing wind, which in this area of Scotland runs west to east. This is about the only part of the trip that didn't change! Due to the length of the route legs, it was decided that each day we

should be on the water at 08.00 and finish before sunset (15.30ish). Of course, no plan survives contact with the enemy...

On the first day, number one team (Russ and I) left at 05.00 in order to pick up Stephen from Inverness.

Thanks to the roads in the highlands, we returned at 10.00 and went through the practice of getting used to the boats by running

through basic skills, first with empty boats, then loaded boats. After final checks on all the kit and a packing lesson later, we got onto the water for 14.00, six hours late!

"the whole group paddled in silence with only the sound of water running off paddles to disturb the stillness"



John Easton and Alice Sair



Tim Hughes



John Easton



# Top cadet

## Kayaking the Caledonian Canal

bravery and experience of working in a difficult climate, through completing a river trip on the Caledonian Canal, Scotland.

On the Caledonian Canal between Dores and Inverness



Luckily the only thing restricting our progress was light, and with clear nights ahead, it was agreed that we'd have our first night paddle on day one. We had set out clear procedures for night paddling in the training, and this meant that the paddling was carried on smoothly through the fading light.

In total we conducted three night paddles, which were rather eerie as the whole group paddled in silence with only the sound of water running off paddles to disturb the stillness. The clear nights highlighted the ridges and forest surrounding us and left crisp reflections on the water. The whole group really liked paddling at night, and it was one of the most peaceful places to be at 17.00 on a Monday evening!

Most mornings, we woke to ice on the inside of the tent from the condensation of our breath! There were amazing views across the water on both Loch Lochy and Loch Ness and on the evening of day two, as we

came in toward Fort Augustus (our finish for the day) the canal froze ahead of us. This meant breaking ice on the canal with our boats as we moved forwards. This was really exciting as this was a first for most of



The team at the finish, left to right: Russ Huber, John Easton, Chris Wood, Alice Salt, Thomas McEvoy, Jo Lawler and Tim Hughes.

Chris Wood.





Day one just before our first loch.



Modern art at Fort Augustus.

Below: Loch Ness at 0700.



Fort Augustus iced canal!



the team. Pushing through it was difficult in some places where it was very thick; one blade was broken due to the punting nature we had to adopt to move our boats. Temperatures varied all across the route, from +11 through to -17°C. This added to the challenge of the expedition but also made it stimulating and added to the natural beauty of the region.

The scenery along the route was like something from a fantasy novel. Though it was cold whilst camping, the early morning mists rising over the flat glassy waters made me realise what a good choice Scotland was. We saw very few people whilst on the water but got a warm hearty welcome from the local people when we arrived at our evening stop points.

**Loch Ness**

The landscapes that stretched along the sides of Loch Ness funnelled the wind, and with a large amount of reach, created waves, which helped us along. This was the best area of the route mainly due to the fantastic scenery but also due to the group taking part in the navigation, riding the waves and trying to get the most speed out of their boat. The group would fluctuate between moments of laughter and excitement to quiet contentment as they took in and appreciated their surroundings.

Finally, by day four, we had met our schedule. We were on the water at 08.00 and were at our daily target by 12.00. With the best part of the day left, and not concerned with night paddling, we pushed forward to the final destination of Inverness. This meant we had a full day left over to sample the local delights of Inverness and conduct some assessments for the kayak foundation course!

This expedition proved that it is possible to have an expedition that conforms to the adventure training mission: to develop, through authorised challenging pursuits and within an outdoor environment, leadership and the qualities necessary to enhance the performance of military personnel during peace and war. This expedition is also accessible for anybody, being cheap to run and organise.

We must say thank you very much to Lucy Kenworthy at British Waterways, Stephen Doughty, who volunteered a week of his time to come with us and also Dave Smith, from Sandhurst, who helped us to obtain stores for the expedition. Without these three people the expedition would not have been the success it was!

**CHRIS WOOD**

The state of our boats in the morning.

Alice on Loch Lochy.

Perfect twilight view heading to our first stop.



Breaks were spent on the water – this one involved a bit of posing too!



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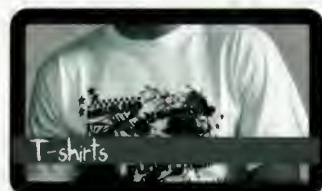


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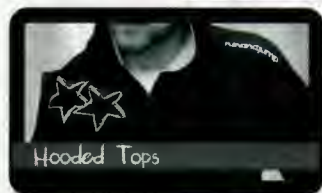
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## Access volunteers

Before I go any further, I would like to thank all the Canoe England access volunteers for the work they have carried out during 2008. I know that the work of an access adviser can be both demanding and unrewarding.

During 2008 the access and environment team has developed a set of access volunteer role descriptions and agreements. By defining the roles and responsibilities of access volunteers, Canoe England is seeking to prevent many of the often unreasonable demands that are placed on them and to enable the volunteer to feel confident in what they are saying and deal with awkward situations. I will be sending this paperwork out during 2009, if you have any queries when you receive it please get straight back to me.

As part of this process, during 2009 we will be running at least three update sessions for volunteers. At the moment the intention is to have one northern session, one central session and one southern, although given the distance between Kent and Cornwall, it may be more appropriate to hold two in the south. These events will be on a first come first served basis, so if you would like to take part, let your regional access adviser know and we can get you on the list.

Another very important element in how we engage with our access volunteers is communication. I am very aware that we can take it for granted that everyone has access to email and the internet, it may not work for you, so for starters I'd like all of you to let me know if this is the best means of contacting you. Email me if it is the best way of communicating with you, otherwise write and let me know.

Leading on from this, is what you need to know. As part of the role description and agreement work, we intend to create a set of documents containing policies, guidance notes, contact details etc, this information will be both electronic and paper. Again it would be good to have your feedback on what would be useful for you to have. So if you are a Local Coastal Adviser and want to know all about the Marine Bill and how it may or may not affect paddling, then tell us.

Finally, my aim by the end of 2009 is to have all of the access volunteers and staffers talking to each other, and aware of each other's roles responsibilities and from time to time their limitations. Ultimately and I hope this isn't just a pipe dream, I'd like to get all the access volunteers under one roof for the paddling chat to end all paddling chats. Next year maybe!

**ALL THE BEST. ANDY GREEN**  
**HEAD OF ACCESS AND ENVIRONMENT**

# River Thames users information

An update, comment and note on information available to users from the navigation authorities.

## Lechlade to Teddington

An Environment Agency navigation (EA), the EA now posts the river flow status displayed at locks by stream warning boards at [www.visitthames.co.uk/riverconditions](http://www.visitthames.co.uk/riverconditions). The information includes a likely forecast summary and explains the yellow and red boards system. There is also a link from the navigation pages of the EA website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

Updates will be made twice daily during changing river states, or more often if conditions dictate. Users can also sign up to receive emailed updates. The frequency for periods of stronger flows has noticeably increased and this service is welcomed.

## Teddington to the sea (the Tideway)

The Port of London Authority is responsible for navigation and issues a 'Recreational Users Guide', 'Rowing Code' and 'Notices to Mariners', all as posted on the PLA website [www.pla.co.uk](http://www.pla.co.uk).

The Recreational Users Guide provides general information on navigation, plus detail of security zones on the river, sound signals and passage through the Thames Barrier.

## The Rowing Code

Rowing activity can be intense between Teddington and Putney. Regular paddlers on this section of the river will be familiar with the local navigation rules that also apply to kayaks and canoes as vessels under oars. Notice to Mariners U15 of 2006 refers - [www.pla.co.uk/notice2mariners/index.cfm/flag/2/id/2656/site/navigation](http://www.pla.co.uk/notice2mariners/index.cfm/flag/2/id/2656/site/navigation).

Notices to Mariners give notification of river closures, operations, navigation changes and events. The listing of Permanent Notices should also be noted.

## Events

Andy Gray, Paddlesport Development Officer for London and South East is liaising with the RYA and ARA to produce a grouping notice of events for minimising organiser's costs. Please contact Andy in the first instance if your organisation has a Tideway event as it may need to be included. Andy can be contacted at: [andy.gray@bcu.org.uk](mailto:andy.gray@bcu.org.uk) or mobile 07894-396484

Canoe England is keen for all paddlers to be suitably equipped, able and familiar with this information before using the tidal Thames that is carrying increasing levels of commercial traffic. The tide varies in different places running up to six knots and conditions can be demanding especially in exposed reaches. Central London is particularly busy with fast passenger launch movements to require a sharp look out and an understanding of sound signals made by power driven vessels to indicate their intended actions to other vessels. The Local River Advisor for Putney to Erith is Westminster Boating Base email: [enquiries@wesboat.com](mailto:enquiries@wesboat.com)

## Salmon still under threat – Gyrodactylus Salaris



The BCU recognises the microscopic parasite *Gyrodactylus Salaris* still presents a serious threat to native salmon stocks though to date it has thankfully not been detected in the UK. The BCU have joined with other recreational water users including anglers to promote the simple preventative measures to help protect salmon stocks.

The parasite is less than half a millimetre in size and barely visible to the naked eye but can cause severe damage to salmon and often results in the death of affected fish. It is now widespread in Denmark Finland, Norway and Sweden and has also been found in France, Germany, Portugal and Spain. It is possible that even one parasite imported to a previously unaffected river could cause an epidemic in a very short time.

The main threat is from imported diseased fish and controls are now in place to minimise these risks. However, there is also a small risk that watersport enthusiasts returning from the above countries could inadvertently carry the parasite back to the UK.

The parasite can survive in wet or damp conditions for five to six days on equipment – keep nets, reels, boats and canoes plus associated items, ropes, spray decks, wetsuits, buoyancy aids, clothing and footwear etc. You can help prevent importing the *Gyrodactylus Salaris* parasite by either of the simple measures detailed.

### Measures

When equipment and associated items have been used in rivers from the listed European countries:

- Thoroughly dry equipment for at least 48 hours. (Drying in sunlight in temperatures above 20 degrees centigrade). Or
- Disinfect by immersing equipment in seawater or a salt solution (sodium chloride concentration of 3% or more) for a minimum of ten minutes can kill the parasite. All equipment should then be thoroughly rinsed in tap water. Marine vessels returning from abroad do not pose a risk as the parasite cannot survive in seawater but consideration should be given to tenders or other equipment used in rivers.

Further information can be found at:

Environment Agency website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/recreation](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/recreation)

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) website: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) website: [www.cefasci.gov.uk](http://www.cefasci.gov.uk)



## Environment Agency

Strategic planning for water related recreation for the South West of England

The South West plan is the first of two schemes piloted for DEFRA to provide a new strategic approach for providing water related sport and recreation on inland and coastal waters.

The scheme addresses a range of issues – meeting growing demand, participation, health and climate etc and is launched on 5th February 2009 at the Weymouth Sailing Centre, Portland. Guest speakers are Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Huw Arranca-Davies and David King, Director, Environment Agency (EA). The scheme is one of the recommendations from the University of Brighton research 'Water based sport and recreation: the facts 2001'.

Details of the plan and the also to be announced improvements for water recreation by the EA for England will be reported in the next issue of Canoe Focus and posted on the Canoe England website [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk)

Canoe England participated in the workshops and consultation process for the South West and East of England draft plans. Reports for both plans and the Canoe England response are posted at: [www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-/consultations](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-/consultations)

## Water Framework Directive

Draft River Basin Management Plans consultation

The water Framework Directive is the most significant legislation for water in 20 years. River Basin Management Plans set out measures of what needs to be done to protect and improve water in rivers, estuaries and other wetlands for catchments across England and Wales.

The EA released Draft River Basin Management Plans for each of the 11 river basin districts on 22nd December for a six month consultation period that runs until 22nd June. The EA is seeking views from all who have an interest in water – recreational users, industry, water consumers etc; whether these draft plans focus on the right areas, go far enough and how you can help achieve the targets.

To view draft plans, respond to the consultation and find out about a series of engagement meetings around the country in the next three or four months visit [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd) or contact the EA on 08780 506 506.

Canoe England is represented at Water Framework Directive working groups – the EA National Liaison Panel and DEFRA Stakeholders Forum. The Canoe England, Access and Environment Department would be pleased to hear any views on Draft River Basin Management Plans, email [access@bcu.org.uk](mailto:access@bcu.org.uk).

## Stop the spread of alien crayfish

The EA has issued information for all water users

### What are alien crayfish?

North American signal crayfish are the commonest of four species that have invaded our rivers. Signal crayfish have been farmed in Britain since the 1970s but are now widespread in the UK due to escapes and deliberate illegal introductions. The larger and more aggressive signal crayfish and the disease it carries, crayfish plague, are a threat to the native white-clawed crayfish. Some rivers are a refuge for the rare native white-clawed crayfish.



### How can you help?

Crayfish plague spores can be accidentally spread by damp equipment that has been in contact with water on different rivers or water bodies. Canoe England recommends equipment is washed in tap water and dried as the most straightforward preventative measure. Advice for an alternative iodine solution method is available from the EA. Canoe England has been advised the use of an iodine solution may cause a discolouration of plastics.

Information is available from: <http://environment-agency.resultspage.com/search?p=Q&ts=ev2&w=signal+crayfish> and [www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-/environment/alien-crayfish-and-crayfish-plague](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-/environment/alien-crayfish-and-crayfish-plague)

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## New!! On-line Shop!!



## The Medway – a gold standard of canoe trail



Showing the finger slot.



The downstream canoe landing



Anti-slip carborundum channel detail



The downstream landing at Sluice Weir.



A new completed landing alongside the road and the pub in Yalding.



The slipway at Allington Lock.



Dave Payne, the EA Medway boatman, showing the 1930s strip birch bark canoe that hangs in his office!

Regular readers of *Canoe Focus* will know that Canoe England is looking to help provide and publicise a nationwide network of canoe trails. These are waters to which paddlers have access to, along and from, with the minimum of hassle.

But, everyone has his or her own opinion of what a canoe trail should consist of. A recent visit to the River Medway in Kent confirmed that this is my 'gold standard'.

With access facilities to the waters edge every three miles or so, some with a small car park, plus, small areas of camp site land (with the minimum of facilities) every 12 to 15 miles or so, 'in river' structures such as weirs, low bridges, barrages, or mills that completely span the river should be capable of being either 'shot' or portaged around safely. To this list should be added: logical signage, maps of both the water and adjacent local facilities. Water level and other similar information are required to enable the paddler or potential paddler to make informed decisions. The Medway, thanks to the Environment Agency (EA) and its regional engineer, Philip Munson, is rapidly receiving all of the above.

The canoe trail facilities provided on the River Medway in Kent are between Tonbridge in the west to the sea lock at Allington in the east.

In December, Phil showed me both the access facilities that his team have already completed and some more that are currently under construction. Already over 80% of the facilities are complete.

At Allington Lock at the downstream end, there is a camp site with toilets and kitchen facilities. A vehicle park for mini buses and trailers and a launching slipway and staging ideal for open Canadians and other boats to gain access on to the water [www.allingtonlock.co.uk](http://www.allingtonlock.co.uk).

My trip started at the shortly to be improved Tonbridge Town Lock with its narrow and steep steps for the canoe access and portage. From there we went on to the completed Porters and East Locks and the difference was amazing with the canoe landings being just the right height from the water. Phil showed me his idea of spacing the second wooden board of the landing a little distance from the first so that a slot just wide enough for fingers to hold onto runs the full length of each landing. The landings were wide, nicely spaced with the steps not too difficult to negotiate. The non-powered craft put in and take out points were well spaced and more often than not either separate to or located on the back of the powered craft tie up points.

Each landing was marked with the new Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) sign for a canoe portage (a canoe with legs out of the bottom). Above all there was the minimum of railings.

Another little idea from Phil was to place the wooden boards parallel to the river at the get outs and then cross ways on the portage. This to maximise foot grip which in turn is further helped by the inclusion within each red angelim board of two carborundum grips.

At most of the locks, the take out, portage path and put in were all on the same side of the lock and therefore straightforward. However, at some locks due to their geography it is necessary to cross the lock gates as at Hampstead lock, Yalding. Here the upstream take out is on

the right and the lock gates then have to be crossed with your canoe to reach the put in downstream on the left. Where it is necessary to cross the lock gates with your canoe the EA are installing specially widened walkways to take a portaging canoe.

Other work to help paddlers has also been carried out. The canoe shoot at Sluice Weir (down the right hand side) has had its down stream toe modified to take longer canoes.

A keen eyed paddler/reader will notice that in some of my pictures there looks to be a larger than normal gap between the landing and the water level. This is because the river level has been lowered 18 inches in some pounds (reaches between the locks) to facilitate the on going work. When the work is complete the river level will be returned to its normal (higher) level.

Full marks and a well done to Phil and his team. The navigation is open now. Please go and use it. The Medway can be paddled both up and downstream and the new landings have been designed for use in either direction.

The EA is one of the two largest authorities in the country that manage our canals and navigable rivers. It is the managing authority for the Thames, Wye, Great Ouse, Nene, and the Medway amongst others. All these rivers require a licence from the EA for each craft to navigate. This EA licence is included within your CE/BCU basic and comprehensive membership and because of this, BCU members may navigate for free providing you display on your craft the sticker provided with your membership card. Though low key, the EA boatmen do patrol the river and will look for the sticker and will ask anyone paddling for evidence of BCU membership or will sell you a licence if you are paddling illegally. In fairness, the landings and facilities that I mention above cost an average of £40,000 each for the EA to provide so it is only fair that they get something back from users.

The EA have a number of Medway publications including a map printed on recycled waterproof paper, and these can be found at [www.medway.co.uk](http://www.medway.co.uk).

### LATEST NEWS: HOLME PIERRE

Chris Hawkesworth said. "The BCU is very pleased that the work has started and is progressing well. The upgrade will bring the white water course at Holme Pierrepont back to the frontline status with British canoeing that it deserves. Like all cutting edge schemes, they are fraught with difficulty, but back to the cutting edge it will become and at long last our British team will be able train for internationals, world championships and for the London Olympics in 2012 in the UK using a modern white water course. The Broxbourne Olympic course is at least 18 months from completion and our athletes need somewhere to train between now and then. I am always dissatisfied when I hear that British athletes have to train abroad due to out dated or substandard facilities here in the UK. This HPP white water course upgrade will go a long way towards mitigating this".



# Manvers Lake phase 1 completed

In the late autumn, phase 1 of the Manvers Lake Boat House project was completed and the keys handed over to Canoe England/BCU. Located at Wath-upon-Deerne, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, the boat house is part of the Manvers Lake Waterfront complex and stands alongside the 57 acre lake. The lake and the building are part of a 248 year lease negotiated by the BCU. Phase 1 has cost over £600,000 and has been funded with £106,000 by the BCU out of CCDP2 funding with the balance coming from local developer, Express Park.

It is hoped that phase 2, the internal fit out of the building will commence in the spring. The building will eventually house storage for over 400 canoes and kayaks, plus changing rooms, toilets, coach and disabled toilets and showers, first aid room, offices, kitchen and a large and small meeting room. The lake will have a 500m straight for flat water sprint, slalom gates and an outdoor polo pitch.

An 'on site' canoe club called the 'Manvers Waterfront Boat Club' has recently been formed and already has over 60 members, including anglers and sailors.

Chris Hawkesworth, of the BCU's Planning and Facilities Department said "The whole Manvers project is a bold step for both Canoe England and the Yorkshire region. We still have a long way to go, until the building is complete our canoeing offer at the complex will be limited. However, three Canoe England affiliated clubs, Greenstar, Sheffield and Maltby are already using the facility, the Manvers Waterfront Boat Club is recruiting new members every week and our co-operation with Rotherham Pike Anglers is also starting to bear fruit".

An announcement is expected shortly of a third round of CCDP funding. Interested clubs will find the details as soon as they are available on the Canoe England website.

**Pictured left to right:** Andrew Nettleton, Business Investment Manager of Rotherham Investment and Development Office, Chris Hawkesworth of Canoe England receiving the keys to the building from Stephen Holme of Express Park Development Co; Keith Orridge, Director of Express Park and Esther Mathews of Greenstar CC with club member Heath Dando.



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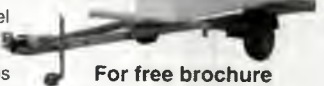


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# Wild Barradise

You land your kayak on a stunning beach on some distant island and set up camp for the night. You sit around a driftwood fire as night draws in. The call of seals and excited chatter of oyster catchers can be heard in the distance. There is no better way of seeing wildlife from the cockpit of a kayak, and no better time to see wildlife than early morning and late evening. Dave Tonkin explains why...

**After seeing a small plane land on a white sandy beach and always wanting to experience camping out of a sea kayak, I decided a trip to two islands in the Outer Hebrides was for me. The islands I had pinpointed were called Barra and Vatersay: one is the seat of the ancient royal clan, the other was home to a band of outlaws.**

## Getting around

The circular island of Barra can best be explored by simply driving round its 12 mile ring road. If you have arrived over the Sound of Barra from Eriskay, your starting point will be Northbay; if arriving from Oban you will disembark at Castlebay, in the south. The two villages are the island's poles, and there is roughly six miles between them, whether one takes the west road or the east road. Flights to the island land at Eoligarry, on the cockle strand beach – the only runway in the world to be washed daily by the tide. Vehicles are available from Barra car hire, and will be delivered complete with a map and guide to the island. Eoligarry is not far from Northbay and signposts will direct you to the ring road with little difficulty.

The causeway to Vatersay is at the south end of Barra, near Castlebay. The small isle measures three miles by three, and following the main road will take you further south to the islands only village, also called Vatersay.

I was met at the airport by one of the guides called Mark, who transported me back to the 'office', a very comfortable Lodge overlooking Castlebay Harbour. It appeared that I was the only one on the trip that had arrived by plane, the rest of the group were to arrive by ferry later in the day, this gave me the afternoon to read up and check out my surroundings!

The next day we were introduced to our guides for the week, Mark, Tom 'The Haggis' Pendrey, and the 'Boss' Chris Denhey.

Svenn and Melinda, Monica, David and Kate, Rosie and Andy were to be my fellow group members for the week.

After breakfast, which included a warming Scottish porridge we got kitted up and set off to Castlebay Harbour. The boats were off loaded and we were soon on the water. Mark and Tom soon evaluated everyone's paddling skills and we set off across the harbour towards Vatersay. The impressive Kisimul Castle, which sits on a small rock island in the harbour, is the first Barra landmark visible to any visitors approaching on

the Oban ferry, and is the only surviving medieval castle in the Western Isles. It is the seat of the Clan Macneil and it boasts an 18m tower plus a dungeon and a great hall. We continued past the castle towards a white sandy beach, our lunch spot, which we shared with a solitary otter.

The rest of the day was spent getting used to our boats and exploring the local coast. We eventually paddled back to the harbour, sorted all the kit out and went back to the lodge where we completed the day with an especially delicious fish pie.

Over the next few days we explored various parts of the Barra coast, we spent the evenings back at the lodge, as the weather was not suitable for overnight camping. The weather finally improved towards the end of the week, this enabled us to pack our sea kayaks for an overnight camp. We spent the night under the stars with the sound of seals calling in the distance.

The next morning we broke camp while Tom and Mark prepared a breakfast of fruit, bacon rolls and tea, everyone helped clear up before we set about loading sea kayaks for the next leg of the trip. The intention was to paddle around a headland, cross a rocky bay and head into a sheltered harbour where we would meet the mini bus and trailer which would transport us back to the lodge. However, while we were having breakfast, clearing up, loading and launching sea kayaks, the wind had picked up! Mark, after paddling some way across the bay to access the conditions, returned looking rather wind blown and advised us that we would be returning to our camp spot to discuss 'plan B'.

Plan B, as it turned out, was to unload and move the sea kayaks above the high tide mark, gather our personal belongings, repack with the group kit and walk, with our kit, to the nearest road! This took about an hour or so across wet boggy terrain until we got to a track where we waited for the mini bus to pick us up.

Later that evening Chris emerged into the lodge asking for 'volunteers' to go get the abandoned kayaks, Rosie and Andy were keen, while the rest of us decided to help prepare dinner!

The local knowledge of our guides, delicious local food and warm hospitality provided by Chris and his crew, complemented the paddling and hiking that we had all travelled here to enjoy. A group of diverse backgrounds, we shared quality time together in a truly beautiful location. ●

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Dave Tonkin.





at Castle.



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### Essential info

**Main town:** Barra

**Getting there: fly from Glasgow:**

The flight from Glasgow to Barra takes approximately one hour, it is the quickest route. Barra Airport is the only airport in the world with scheduled flights landing on a beach, so if you like flying then it is a great opportunity. The aircraft is a twin otter and the beach landing is lovely and smooth. On a clear day you will get magnificent views.

**Take a ferry from Oban:**

To get to Oban you can either catch a bus or train from Glasgow or drive.

From Oban you catch a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry to Barra. The ferry takes you up the Sound of Mull and across the Minch to Barra passing some other islands on the way. It is a relaxing journey and a great chance to unwind and breathe in the fresh air. You will pass local fishermen at work and be able to watch the birds and if you are lucky some of our marine life too. This journey takes approximately five hours.

If you are driving then please book the ferry to avoid disappointment. They are very busy in the summertime. For more information contact [www.calmac.co.uk](http://www.calmac.co.uk)

### Useful websites:

[www.isleofbarra.com](http://www.isleofbarra.com)

[www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk](http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk)

[www.visithebrides.com/tic](http://www.visithebrides.com/tic)





# Timmy's Paddle



Sgt Dennis Healey - kayaking

Forward - by WO2 (QMSI) Ash Clare RE  
 Exercise Timmy's Paddle was born of a desire by a handful of injured and disabled service men and women to go paddling. Unfortunately the current Joint Service Adventure training scheme was unsuitable for their needs and a bespoke expedition was designed.



Cpl 'Mac' McDougall REME.

Above: Capt Marty Hewitt Para Regiment and Staff Sgt Spence Whiteley REME.

**Its aims were to enable them to learn to paddle using adaptive techniques, compliment their physical and psychological rehabilitation, gain the same qualifications as their able bodied comrades whilst achieving the aims of adventure training and have a whole lot of fun along the way! Most of the expedition members required adaptations to either the equipment they were using, or the techniques they would master to paddle the kayaks and canoes due to their disability. But with some lateral thinking, our fair share of trial and error and a bagful of determination to succeed, every member of the team was able to realise their full potential. This is their story of how they did it...**

We began with an introduction to both the kayak and canoe including an embarking lesson, which Captain Martin Hewitt clearly didn't listen to. On placing the canoe onto the lake in what could be no more than 12 inches of water he, not so elegantly entered the canoe and tumbled straight out the opposite side! A manoeuvre he practiced throughout the expedition often taking others with him. Timmy! Meanwhile most students got to grips with this new activity impressively quickly despite their various injuries and by lunch had almost mastered the basics. Whilst the kayaking group showed off numerous paddle skills the open canoe group spent most of their time in the water. It could be argued this was as a result of WO2 Ash Clare's insistence of "mastering the balance". Despite his injuries SSgt Spence Whiteley not only stood up on every part of the canoe from seat to rim,

he managed to perform a handstand at the back of the boat, a challenge for most able-bodied canoeists!

Day two and both groups consolidated the skills from the previous day with relative ease and cracked on with more advanced techniques. Then Ash dropped a bombshell and showed the canoeists the 'J' stroke, which made paddling a whole new experience. Life was now much easier and paddling became twice as efficient. The kayakers by the afternoon were getting to grips with their chosen craft and a few of them could even pull off an Eskimo roll!

The next few days saw us on the moving water of the River Iller using a sheltered area to begin with for rescue practice. This involved lucky 'volunteers' jumping into the icy cold glacial water to await rescue. Safety lines were thrown, some were caught; however most missed their targets. Luckily, the team enjoy a good swim and ample rescue practice was had throughout the day, most notably whenever Sgt Stu Pearson mounted his kayak! Breaking in and out of eddys, rapids and waves followed. Surfing proved to be one of the highlights for everyone. Notably, a key aim of adventure training is utilising communication and teamwork. This proved difficult for Marty and Spence each time they approached an eddy and subsequently ended up in the water enjoying a swim. Instead of gathering their equipment and making use of the capsize drills learned in previous days, they happily floated away down river, bickering like two old ladies and blaming each other for their chilly predicament. Tpr Stevie Shine won the 'River Runner of the day' t-shirt being the only one to stay upright



Expedition leader WO2 (QMSI) Ash Clare RE.

all day but he did say in the diary 'surfing isn't as easy as Ash and Dennis make it look!'

Day five saw us back to the lake. Stu Pearson had a new a sit-on-top kayak to get used to – later known as 'the big blue beast'. The canoeists had some expeditionary skills to play with such as sailing a canoe. This seemed a good idea, as little effort was apparently needed to get down the lake. Simply rig up



A happy Elaine Radcliffe RAMC - expedition physio.



Exercise Timmys Paddle expedition members.



instructor.  
"They happily floated away down river, bickering like two old ladies and blaming each other for their chilly predicament"

Sgt Ian Harvey RAF.

Pte Lionel O'Connor Royal Anglian.



Tpr Stevie Shine 2 RTR.



The bank support and rescue team Cpls Chris Flynn and Steve Yates RLC doing their thing!

a sail, sit back and watch the world go by! Poling which is suspiciously like 'punting' was another skill to be mastered and once again proved a little more difficult than it looked. That afternoon the kayakers and the canoeists swapped craft. Marty and Mac jumped onto a tandem sit-on-top. The kayakers went through the same balance challenges enjoyed by the canoeist's days before. These finished with the

hardest of balance tests; a re-enactment of the famous scene in Titanic where Kate Winslet was stood on the bow of the ship – many got wet!

**Capsizing in six inches of shingle**

Sunday started with mixed blessings – it was raining hard! So we didn't have the beautiful sunshine of previous days but we did have a little water to fill up the rivers and the River Loisach was the name of the game. Both groups set off down the river but due to a lack of water still it was quite a technical run with tight turns and plenty of obstacles to test all abilities. The first major challenge came in the form of a Grade 3 rapid that was 'optional' for all involved. However Stu Pearsons 'option' was taken away from him when he saw the 'big blue beast' positioned in the eddy ready to 'take the line' for the run down. He subsequently ran the rapid like a professional but succeeded in capsizing in six inches of shingle.

After much deliberation no one wanted to be left behind so the gauntlet was down and all completed the rapid. The next technical section and Mr and Mrs Hewitt/Whitely took a tumble – but this one saw the river wrap the canoe hard around a rock. So Ash played the milk tray man, climbed out of the gorge, lassoed him to a lamp post then abseiled back in and went to their rescue! Further down the river and a few of the 'adrenaline junkies' decided to ride the surf like professionals. Lt Elaine Radcliffe RAMC, the expedition physio, showed Ian how it was done, followed by Pte Lionel 'lungs of a blue whale' O'Connor and then Spence in his canoe.

There was only slight panic when Martin, Steve and Ian capsized a canoe and soldiers and kit went downstream at a rapid rate of knots. Point to note – don't use an amputees 'only' leg to pull him into the bank!

The River Argen saw the group paddle its first 'wild' river through an unspoilt gorge. Due to the rain, the water was brown, murky and ominously obscuring any obstacle. The adrenaline was up and everyone was raring to meet the challenge of the unexpected. The first drop saw a split in the group, with the canoeists taking the easy route down, whilst the kayakers took on the challenge of the drop and stopper. Stu decided to ignore Ash's instruction and set off down the big drop in his 'sit on top', managing miraculously to stay upright and doing a lot to alleviate the fear of Stevie Shine, who was looking decidedly green waiting in the eddy for his turn!

The fast flowing turbulent river provided plentiful waves for the paddlers to hone their skills. Stu became king of the surf, riding the waves with ease on 'the big blue beast'. Marty as normal performed circus style balancing acts at the bow and consequently the rest of the canoeists practiced rescue drills, refining their aim with throw lines as he and his hapless partner swam.

For the seventh day in a row Stu, having completed the hardest part of the river - staying upright through the enormous standing waves crashing down on his deck and swamping him – managed to capsize in still water and get out wrapped up in a tree. Whilst he was busy shouting out Elaine managed to capsize her





LCpl 'Frenchie' LeGalloudec 4 Rifles.

kayak laughing at him and leave it trapped in a perfect position on a submerged tree for Sgt 'Dennis' Healey to conduct a kayak rescue lesson!

Day eight and it was up to the groups to plan and lead the day themselves. So by unanimous decision they went back to the Loisach. The start was textbook and all were due to meet the drivers, Steve and Chris, at the 'Waterfall of Death' for the portage. On arrival everyone wondered why the two mini buses were parked on the beach without any throw lines ready to deploy, only to be told they had bogged the fully laden buses and trailers in trying to turn around! An hour of digging and we were on our way again setting off down the 'Rapid of Realisation' with LCpl 'Frenchie' Legalloudec running it for the first time, only for him to get stuck on a rock at the top. A big well done to Frenchie for not popping his spraydeck and waiting for Ash to rescue him! Praise also goes to Stevie Shine for not popping his deck before Dennis retrieved him and for being under the water for a whole two seconds on a little play wave further down!

To finish the expedition on a high we went white water rafting on the River Inn, Austria, down a big volume, Grade 3 river especially for Timmys. Even though Lionel had pulled a muscle earlier in the week, he joined us on the raft and hoped for the best. The waves were a little bigger than most expected but with all the paddling the expedition has done, they were ready for it. It proved to be an awesome paddle with plenty of 'Pirates of the Caribbean' style boarding parties thrown in. Even Stu stayed onboard for the first time – all day! The only time he swam was at the end when someone pulled him in!

**Final thoughts – by Ash Clare**

So that's how we achieved eight adaptive paddlers for ten days on an alpine expedition! All the expedition members gained the Joint Service qualifications they went for and the parallel BCU qualifications too. Everyone has expressed a desire to continue paddling with two people already buying their own boats! The planning for Ex Timmy's paddle 2009 has already started and building on the success of this year, next year is sure to be even better... ●

**ASH CLARE**

Sgt Stu Pearson 3 Para on the River Argen.



# New gear

## Dimensions

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**Seats:** 2

**Rocker:** moderate

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When I last looked for a new car, I didn't buy a car that was going to be very fast on the motorway but wouldn't be able to carry a canoe. Nor did I buy a car that can carry lots of boats but couldn't do 70mph on the motorway. I compromised and bought a diesel estate. Since paddling the Prospector 15, I have been paddling the canoe in all sorts of environments and cannot find anything it can't do! I have had it on technical Grade 3, open water, big volume rivers, coached from it, coached paddlers in it, poled it and paddled tandem in it. It has taken it all in its stride without giving me any surprises.

Even though the Prospector is heavier than a Royalex boat, nobody has struggled paddling it yet. Once on the water the extra weight is hard to detect as it glides through the water. Beginners seem to enjoy the fact that it tracks really well, making it easy to paddle in a straight line, solo or tandem. The stability develops confidence quickly, to help students paddle the boat on the edge. More experienced paddlers can use this to release the stems to spin the boat easily. The hull carves into and out of eddies well and carries it momentum through eddy turns to help white water manoeuvres. The freeboard is not the deepest so can be quite a wet ride in white water but due to this, it doesn't get badly affected by the wind on open water.

It seems to me the Prospector is the diesel estate car of the canoe world. It can do everything competently without excelling in one area so much that makes it difficult to be paddled in many different environments. If you are looking for a canoe that will do everything you ask for it without any surprises, then this is a strong contender.

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# Remote runs in

# Scot

Like thousands of paddlers out there I have paddled all the usual places around Fort William and the Cairngorms for years but it was March 2008 that led me into exploration. We were on our usual Scotland trip and we found a new run on the southwest side of Loch Arkaig called the River Mallie. Having already asked the SCA and local people if it had been paddled, reports came back that a few local people had had a look at it but wasn't worth the effort as it looked only about Grade 2. However being pretty handy with an OS map I noticed that about 4km up it had a steep section according to the contours of the map, which suggested a gorge section and had a pretty good catchment similar to the River Loy in the previous valley.

So we trekked in and came across the gorge after 4km, this was an excellent section running at about Grade 4(5) and worth the paddle across the loch and the walk in. This got me thinking, so I brought a load of cheap OS maps from a well known auction website and started looking for other rivers further north and one month later I was back, not paddling but recceing remote areas that had potential for unrecorded runs.

It would be eight months later in November 2008 when I knew we would have more suitable levels that we was able to return for our little adventure. With a crew of four, myself (Andy Holt), Richard Bannister (Banzer), Rob Harris and Richard Brooks, we headed to our first area which was in the Oykel Valley about 12 miles west of Lairg. The three rivers we ran finishing close to the Oykel Bridge Hotel, were the Corriemulzie, Rappach Water and the River Einig.

Access to the estate wasn't a problem as there are good drivable tracks into the estate that lead to hunting/fishing lodges and having spoken to the estate manager in April he was quite happy to let paddlers access the land as long as it was out of the fishing/hunting season after October 31st.

The First run we did was the Corriemulzie which is a great twisting tight small drop river running at about Grade 3/4 with one or two drops that require inspection and finishing with a classy Grade 4 rapid through a twisting chicane. This run was only 3km long so we had plenty of time to continue down the River Einig at Grade 4(5). The Einig itself is being fed by Rappach Water and the Corriemulzie, I have no doubts that this river will become one of Scotland's classics as it has everything you want out of a river from tight gorge sections to big drops and ledge rapids; a truly magnificent run in spectacular surroundings.

The last river we did in this valley was the Rappach at Grade 4(4+), which is basically the upper Einig, which requires a walk in of about 3km but worth the effort if you are doing the other two. It starts off at about Grade 2 with a couple of falls/ledge rapids at Grade 3 then you enter the 700m gorge section which reminds me of the last gorge on the River Pattack but more continuous with bigger rapids, watch out for the big ramp/fall rapid half way down that tends to slam you into the wall if you get it wrong.

We finished off with doing the Tuiteam Burn (5+), which is in the guidebook and a great running river if that's your thing. Banzer went for the upper falls and made them look easy much to our relief but the rest of the burn is still great to test your boofing skills. All these rivers would make a great weekend trip if you have medium flows.

There is something magical about Scotland whether it's the wild scenery, remoteness or even the harshness of the environment that draws me back every year, I suppose being involved with the outdoors for over 20 years gives you a true passion for adventure and Scotland has it all says Andy Holt.



Banzer on the Tuiteam Burn.



ANDY HOLT

RICHARD BAN

Richard Bannister on the River Einig.



# the highlands of land

by Andy Holt

After three days we moved over to the Wester Ross area to explore another couple of potentials but after torrential rain the runs were too dangerous, so we would have to wait for another day. However our local man Banzer knew of a little unrecorded run which has had a couple of descents called the River Lair that runs into Loch Dughail on the Glen Carron A890 road. This little gem runs through a small gorge surrounded by rhododendrons and feels like an Asian jungle run. It has plenty of action with ramps and falls and is worth a visit if in the area.

There is still huge potential in Scotland and even though local people have explored a lot of runs there are still hidden little gems out there so if you know what you are looking for on the OS maps and don't mind a bit of graft, then who needs to travel halfway across the globe when we have such delights on our own doorstep.

A full description of all the runs are available from the SCA or [www.planetpaddler.com](http://www.planetpaddler.com) along with photos and I would like to thank Richard Brooks and Rob Harris for making this trip possible and a big thanks and respect to Richard Bannister (Banzer) for his local knowledge and passion for exploration.



Andy Holt and Richard Brooks on the River Einig.  
Rob and Richard Brooks on Rappach Water.



STER

HARD BROOKS

ROB HARRIS



Above: Richard Brookson on Rappach Water. Below: The walk in Rappach Water.





El Peru! When Peru gets mentioned most people think of the Incas and their lost city of Machu Picchu. However, Peru also boasts a host of canyons, in fact the two deepest canyons in the world are in Peru. Steve Brooks takes up the story...



John Blake on the first rapid on second day of white water.

# A COUNTRY OF

At 3296 metres deep and in some parts near vertical cliff walls, the Colca Canyon is most spectacular, it is also the second deepest coming just behind the Cotahuasi, which is located in the next valley north of the Colca. The name comes from the many holes in the canyon walls, used in Inca times as a place to store food or as a grave for important people. The Colca lies just 100km (as the condor flies) north of the Southern city of Arequipa. Just to get to Huambo (the nearest village of the Lunar Canyon section of the Colca) will take you over 4300 metres in a bus. Next will be a trek with burros (donkeys) for 12 km and a huge 1800m descent which can take up to eight hours. At Canco it is then 70km of remote pool drop rapids up to class VI. The beauty of the Colca is that it sits in a very unstable area (just look at the devastation caused by a huge earthquake this year in Pisco) so it is not uncommon to have a rock fall coming down while you are boating. Camps have to be carefully checked otherwise you could be waking up to a classic rock fall or even worse getting injured! It

has been known for groups to wear helmets when they sleep! As for groups, do not expect to see many people here, this is not your local park and play spot, in fact more people have climbed Everest than have been down the Colca Canyon! However, what makes the Colca different to most rivers of the world is that the first team to take on the Colca each year will be basically doing a first descent. My second time down the Colca gave us 5 new rapids than the previous year; again this is all down to the instability of the canyon.

## Day one

We had just arrived in Huambo, the end of a six-hour bus journey over the Altiplano. The sun was beating down on us as we unloaded our boats and equipment. We were in the plaza of Huambo, the local people looking at us with curiosity and a sense of nervousness. It was time to find our accommodation (a choice of two hostels), look for Ivan (our muleteer) and chill out for the rest of the day!

## Day two

We met up with Ivan and proceeded to get the kayaks and equipment strapped onto the donkeys. We were going to carry our own paddles, water and photo equipment. The rest was in the hands of Ivan!

The trek into the canyon now laid ahead, a six to eight hour descent on an ancient Inca path. The area of the Colca is high desert, the sun was out and with little rain in the region the track is notoriously dusty. The only chance of shade is the small bridge built over the Rio Huambo; this was also our lunch stop and the only chance to refill our water bottles. The only downside is that the Rio Huambo is a thermal river, so not only was the water warm but there was also an aftertaste of sulphur. With only two more hours to push we set off again towards our destination of Canco. We crossed scree fields where one slip would send you tumbling and sliding some 800m into the Rio Huambo below. We were finally at Canco, a small hacienda that consists of three families. Canco is totally self sufficient, the track to the river is lined with chilli





Ivan and our kit.



Locals of Cotca Valley.



Enjoying the ride from Canco to Huambo.



Nearly as deep as it gets!



Yep, the GPS does work.



Looking from Arequipa to Volcan Misti.



Volcan Ampato. On route to Huambo.



Cathedral Arequipa.

# CANYONS



A technical drop above a nasty sieve.



Church in Cabaconde, Cotca Valley.



trees and fields of Quinoa (an ancient staple used by the Incas and their descendants that is similar to wheat). The kids from Canco spend one week up in Huambo in the school and then a week back down with their families in Canco. That night we lay in our sleeping bags and watched the natural firework display on the canyons walls, caused by falling rocks over on river right.

**Day three**

Within 20 minutes of setting off we had past our first recognisable feature, the Rio Huambo falling into the Colca and were now at the confluence of the Rio Mamacocha. Not only does this river double the volume of the Colca but it is also the last place where we could walk out. From now on if there was a problem then the only exit is by the river!!

The river now started to warm up with class III's and IV's, next was a horizon line we eddied out river right to scout. We did not want to hang around too much, the line was fine. Enter in the middle, run a few waves then work a way through a couple of holes before sneaking left of a huge rock in the middle of the river. As we were getting close to our kayaks a huge "BOOM" came from the river, then another! After the initial shock we got up from our cover positions to see more rocks landing over the other side of the river. We got into our kayaks waited for what seemed forever to see or hear if anymore rocks were inbound. We looked at each other and headed straight for our line, no worries with the rapid but at the bottom John says "I am glad we eddied out river right!"

The canyon now started to close right up, it was getting hard to see what was coming around the corner, the rapids were now nothing under class IV, we were deep in the canyon and had a tricky rapid with a slot and a difficult set up before a three metre drop above a siphon as the finale, sounds easy except we had our boats laden with our expedition equipment. We were nailing our lines and it felt great to be "On your game!" As we came around the corner we were treated to the 'Ducha del Condor' (Shower of the Condor), what starts at the top of the canyon, as a strong waterfall turns into a misty shower halfway down. Condors can often be seen flying through the mist washing their feathers! During my second trip in the Colca we were having lunch here when a condor high above us decided that either curiosity or hunger got the better of him and he was finally swooping about three metres above our heads! We knew of a nest near the waterfall but today the condors were not around, we had the canyon to ourselves.

The afternoon left us now with the deepest part of the canyon and some class III and IV read and run rollercoaster rapids.

**Day four**

We were woke up a few times from falling rock but again it all had come from the opposite canyon wall. The plus side to be woke up is that you could fall backing asleep looking at the stars!

Canco village.



**Facts**

- Peru is roughly the size of Alaska.
- The city of Caral has pyramid remains dated to between 2000 and 2600 B.C. This means Caral may be the oldest city on Earth.
- Peru is home of the Nazca Lines, football field sized drawings built for unknown purposes. Most of the drawing weren't even discovered until viewed from the air.
- The Incan Empire was based in Peru, with the famous Machu Picchu in the Andes being the best known location.
- Spain ruled Peru for nearly three hundred years starting in the early 16th century.
- Peru was the last Spanish colony in S. America.
- Peru is now a constitutional republic.
- Lima is the capital of Peru.
- Beatriz Merino became Peru's first female Prime Minister in 2003.
- The climate varies from tropical in the east to dry desert in the west.
- Peru shares control of Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake, with Bolivia.
- A remote slope of Nevado Mismi, a 5,316 m peak, is the ultimate source of the Amazon River.



**John Blake and Steve Brooks would like to thank Peak UK and Robson Paddles.**

Next morning the river was straight at us with some tricky class IV's; we were also in the Chocolate Canyon where the layers of rock in the canyon walls had every possible shade of brown! The rapids started to get harder, which meant we were now in the Reparaz Canyon (a notorious part where most of the difficult white water was concentrated) and we were close to our first portage. This is a flat rock which blocks most of the river with only a sneak left, however miss your stroke and you are under some of the rock! The rock is a great place to get some photos and with a seal launch on the other side we were back on our way. We

John Blake on trek in to Canco.



were also at the last corner before the big portage. The previous times there have been eddies or a beach, now the water is somewhere in between. The portage, well it is a class VI of about 30m where all the water goes either into various siphons or into a vicious log jam that would leave you under the wood with the entire river pushing you further under and with absolutely no possibility of a rescue! This time the beach was there, it was October and the water was starting to rise and in a week or so will be getting even higher from the rains further up at the headwaters. It took us both an hour to push, pull, wade through various pools and finally drag our kayaks over and around the portage. It was getting close to lunch but we pushed onto our final camp. We passed through the deepest part of the canyon and continued to camp. This camp is by far the biggest in the Colca; the canyon opens out its near vertical walls to form a huge beach with plenty of firewood and a guaranteed good night's sleep without the chance of rocks falling on us! Tuna pasta was washed down with more tea (well we are English so what would you expect!), we had time to reflect on the previous few days. It would have been possible to finish the river today but that would have meant staying a night in Aplao and catching the bus to Arequipa the next day and for us there is nothing better than being on 'river time'!

**Day five**

Our final day in the Colca, we again negotiated a few class III and IVs, went through the Green Canyon and arrived at the final portage. Again an unrunnable top and middle section, however a flat rock was used to portage our boats around the upper and middle section but when this run ended we had a must run lower section, a great way to keep you on your game that is for sure. We were now in the Poles Canyon (named after the infamous Canoandes team that first descended the Colca in the early 80s) and it would not be too long before the canyon opened up. We were coming to the end of the Lunar Canyon section of the Colca, the smiles were on our faces, and we did not need to say a thing our faces just showed it all. A road now came by and we finally stopped by a hacienda. The local people were asking us questions about what the canyon was like, how difficult were the rapids and how many fresh water shrimps were there! That was where we were heading next on a mini bus to one of the best shrimp restaurants in Peru! With our bellies full we sat on a bus for three hours back to Arequipa where we just had to party the night away, though only because it was Saturday!!

Some kayakers get the feeling of being trapped in the Colca with walls constantly trying to close in and squeeze the water around rocks, siphons and logs to make the descent somewhat harder than a rapid that is in an open wide valley! For John and I, we had the feeling of solitude, peace and being alive. The Colca is certainly a river that will put a huge smile on your face and a humming in your heart to go back!

**STEVE BROOKS**

John and Ivan unloading burros at put-in Canco.





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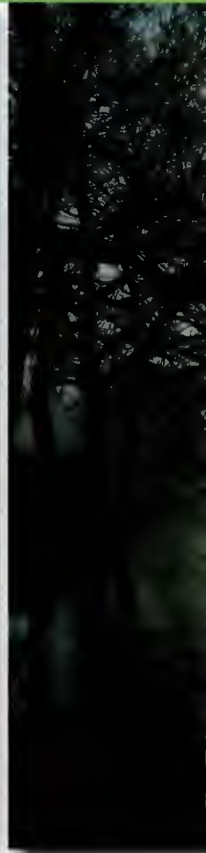




# BCU PHOTOGRAPH C



November adult winner:  
Martin Heywood – Cayton Bay near Scarborough



Adult selected photo:  
Adam Gilbert – Canada



Adult selected photo:  
Klaudia Galucka –  
Anglesey storm  
gathering

The winners for November and  
December (as voted by you)

**NOVEMBER ADULT WINNER**  
Martin Heywood

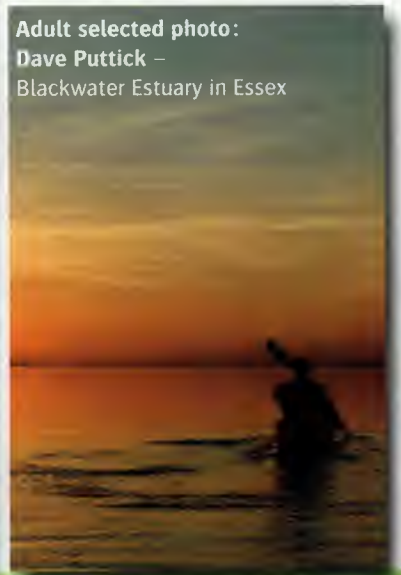
**NOVEMBER UNDER 18 WINNER**  
Emily Jane Clough

**DECEMBER ADULT WINNER**  
Jeff Handley

**DECEMBER UNDER 18 WINNER**  
No entries



Adult selected photo:  
Dave Puttick –  
Blackwater Estuary in Essex





# COMPETITION

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.



**December adult winner:**  
Jeff Handley – River Crake



**Adult selected photos:**  
left  
David Morton  
below  
Jane Wright



**December Under 18 winner:**  
Emily Jane Clough



# Competition

# Australian Youth Olympic Festival

The following kayakers and canoeists represented Team GB at the festival:

## Slalom

Thomas Brady, Rhys Davies, Claire Kimberley, Matthew Lister

## Flat water

Abigail Edmonds, Edward Rutherford, Jessica Walker

**The Festival grows from strength to strength. 1,172 athletes competed in 2003, 1,242 in 2005 and over 1,500 in 2007. Anticipated athletes competing in 2009 will be roughly 1,550 in 17 Olympic sports.**

The competition is based on the model of the hugely successful European Youth Olympic Festival; the Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) is a bi-annual multi-sport event for Olympic aspirants between the ages of 13 and 19. It is organised and hosted by the Australian Olympic Committee, and importantly has the patronage of the International Olympic Committee.

The BOA's reasons for encouraging participation in this Olympic Festival is because it's a key component within their strategy to discover future Olympic champions, provide them with a multi-sport environment reminiscent of an Olympic Games and promote the Olympic ideals of fair play, honesty, and pride in representing their country.

As such, the festival strives to provide a true Olympic experience to young competitors, and the opening ceremony incorporates the traditions of an Olympic Games with an athlete's parade, athletes and official's oath, lighting of the festival flame, and the raising of the Olympic flag.

## Team GB

The 2009 AYOF is the second time that GB has been invited after finishing the 2007 AYOF with a highly credible 14 gold, 20 silver and 14 bronze medals. Eight athletes from Team GB's 2007 delegation competed for at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Team GB, under the BOA's organisation, was comprised of 119 athletes and over 50 officials competing in 11 sports, incorporating 16 Olympic disciplines including flat water and slalom canoeing:

Jessica Walker, Beijing 2008 Olympian, took part in her first competition after an extensive period of time out of the water, "I haven't paddled for two months so when we came out here, the first sessions were really tough but it's good to get back into it."

Looking back on her Beijing experience she says, "An Olympic event does feel different from major canoeing championships, but I can't put my finger on why exactly. It's more exciting and meeting new people and seeing how they prepare for races is interesting. It was a really good experience and I am really pleased that I've got that under my belt. I didn't do as well as I hoped, which was quite hard to deal with, but you learn and I think it helps to have that experience at this age."

Jessica also commented that the event would definitely help to prepare for London 2012.

Both Jess and Abigail Edmonds are in agreement that seeing Tim Brabants win a flat water canoeing Olympic gold medal in Beijing was inspiring and made the accomplishment feel like a realistic ambition for themselves to aim for in 2012.

Our slalom athletes have been receiving advice and inspiration from two British Olympic silver medallists in the shape of Campbell Walsh and David Florence.

Campbell and David are at the Regatta Centre in Penrith, (scene of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games canoeing competition) to undergo two months of warm weather training. At the same time, Team GB's four strong group of junior slalom canoeists were putting the final touches to their preparations before competing in the festival.

Tom Brady, 17, said "Since we arrived in Sydney on 3rd January we have trained a lot on the white water, getting used to the course as well as gym based sessions. It



feels like the jet lag has passed. During the first few days the afternoon training sessions felt really tiring but now we're used to it."

Claire Kimberley, also 17 is the only female Team GB slalom paddler in Sydney, "It was really good getting away from our usual training base in Nottingham where it was really cold, I watched the performances in Beijing and thought it was really inspiring."

At 16 years-old, Matthew Lister from Leeds is the youngest member of the slalom canoeing squad. He says "I am looking forward to the opening ceremony and to experiencing all the Olympic elements of the festival."

Welshman Rhys Davies, 17, completes the line up, having qualified for AYOF via a top-ten placing at the recent European Junior Championships.

Athens 2004 Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh encouraged the junior

## The medallists

### Slalom

Team GB's Matthew Lister and Rhys Davies paddled their way to gold in the men's C2 event at the white water stadium in Penrith. The pair never looked like coming away with anything less than victory and ended up winning by a considerable margin, 15 seconds faster than the Australians in silver.

A proud Lister said, "It was amazing. We just pushed it through and kept it going. It wasn't as clean as it could have been, but it was quick. I am really pleased as this is my first international medal. Rhys and I are definitely looking towards London 2012 but first we've got the Junior European Championships next year."

Davies added, "It was great to see all the British supporters following us around the course. Our semi-final run was actually better than the final, but we did enough to secure victory."

In the K1 individual events Team GB's Claire Kimberley finished fourth and Tom Brady was fifth in the men's competition.

Matthew Lister and Rhys Davies.





al 14-18th January



Far left: Team GB.

Left: Some of the paddlers with Claudine their coach.

athletes to make the most of the experience, "Being part of a youth Olympic team and meeting athletes from other sports was something I never got the opportunity to do. It would have been a fantastic experience as during my first Olympics in Athens, aged 25, I had never experienced the multi-sport environment. It is different and it is exciting and very nice to be part of. They've got a fantastic opportunity to be here and do that."

Campbell and David were looking forward to cheering on the British athletes in their competition, "I will definitely be watching the guys in

action, it is great to be out here to be able to support out juniors. Hopefully they'll put in some good races and it'll be great to see. They seem to be paddling well out here. We've got some good guys including Tom Brady who medalled at the recent Junior World Championships."

All four of the young athletes agreed that participating in the 2009 AYOF is great preparation for London 2012 when they will be aiming to go one better than Walsh and Florence by claiming Team GB's first canoe slalom gold medal.

[www.olympics.org.uk/ayof09](http://www.olympics.org.uk/ayof09)

### Flat water

Ed Rutherford won a gold medal in a photo finish, in the men's K1 500m event, adding to the bronze medal he won yesterday in his more specialised 1000m event: "Today was an unexpected result as I am not really a sprint specialist. I got a good start and held my form through the race to finish strong at the end to pip the American on the line. This is only my first year as a senior and bodes well for my later performances in the summer."

Jess Walker won silver alongside Abigail Edmonds in the K2 500m and bronze in the K1 race over the same distance.

Jess Walker.



Abigail Edmonds.



Ed Rutherford.



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# Coaching

## Rapid Education – Key concepts in WW kayaking

### Timing

Over the past couple of issues, we've discovered that there are three key concepts behind white water kayaking – balance, accuracy and timing. Now, we'll take a look at the concept of timing, along with some other handy things to bear in mind. Are you sitting comfortably?

#### A question for you all to consider:

*"Where do NASA launch their shuttles from?"*

Cape Canaveral in Florida, right? Now, more importantly, consider why they launch them from there...

The answer is simple enough – NASA launch their shuttles from Cape Canaveral because they've worked out through geographical position that it's the best place to launch shuttles from successfully!

So what does this have to do with kayaking, I hear you ask. Well, the concept of timing on a river is very much like NASA launching rockets. Each move on the river has an ideal 'launch pad' that will give you the best chance of success. You need to imagine that you are NASA and search out that perfect spot, that Cape Canaveral.

It is important to realise that the launch pad will change depending on the speed and angle needed to get you to your

chosen destination. For example, if, when breaking in to the flow, you need to end up out in the middle of the river, you will need quite a bit of speed and a very narrow angle. Consequently, the launch pad will be a long way back in the eddy. Take a look at photos 1 and 2.

Something becomes apparent at this point – it's pretty easy to work out your launch pad while you are in an eddy, but pretty tricky in the flow. In an eddy, you have a luxury – time. How you use this time is vital...

*"You cannot save time, only spend it. Spending it wisely is another matter"*  
**Lao Tse**

You may have heard of the phrase 'Proper planning prevents poor performance'. This can be applied to white water kayaking. Plenty of people leave an eddy having not thought about what they are going to do next. They are pretty easy to spot, flailing their arms at the least and normally floating along next to their boat. You can avoid joining their ranks by taking the time in

an eddy to plan where you want to go, where your launch pad will be in the flow to get there and how you are going to leave your eddy and get to the launch pad in the flow. Taking a minute to plan will pay dividends, believe me!

#### Where we physically take our strokes:

If you were to ask someone how they do a 'textbook' break in or out, they'd probably say "sweep stroke to turn the boat, edge into the turn and hold the paddle to brace – a low brace turn". Let's have a think about this. Where do we learn how to do a low brace turn? On flat water. Flat water doesn't have any flow, so we use a sweep stroke to initiate a turn, right? So what turns the boat when you break into or out of the flow? That's right, the flow. If you don't believe me, go and try some break ins/outs with and without the sweep. Do you actually need it? I reckon that all the sweep stroke does is mess up your carefully planned speed and angle by changing it at the last minute.

Somewhere else where timing is critical is hitting diagonal flows. Have a look at the following sequence:

#### Punching a diagonal sequence

As the nose of the boat hits the diagonal, the boater takes a power stroke and applies body tension to counter the flow, allowing them to hit their target.

Once you've set your speed and angle, maintain it!

#### Mental fortitude on the river...

White water kayaking is an adventure sport, strangely enough. We place ourselves in a hazardous environment, which creates pressures we have to deal with. There is a real gap in the coaching available in the UK when it comes to learning how to deal with the pressure and fear created by being on the river. It seems that anyone can tell you how to move your boat around, but few can tell you how to remain focused on the task. Here are some things to bear in mind:



**Photo 1:** Back of eddy launch pad. Now look at where the move finishes: **Photo 2:** Right out in flow.







White water kayaking is an adventure sport, strangely enough. We place ourselves in a hazardous environment, which creates pressures we have to deal with.



### Visualisation

If you are looking at a drop or rapid that you feel is near the limit of your ability, it can be really easy to look at it and get freaked out by the noise and seemingly meaningless mess of water. No worries, that's what the past few articles have been about! Take time to work out where you want to end up and how you are going to get there, bearing in mind balance, accuracy and timing and what the water is doing. If you decide that you really can't get to your destination, don't run it. If your mates give you stick, find someone else to go boating with!

Making a plan on the bank is the easy part. Remaining focused on the line is where many people come unstuck. There are a few Jedi mind tricks that you can use to help:

#### Visualisation

This is the subtle art of picturing what you are going to do before you do it. You can practice it pretty much anywhere. Next time you are at your desk, shut your eyes and use your mind's eye to see your favourite rapid. Picture yourself running down it. Well done, you have just visualised a rapid! Take this to the river. Look at the rapid and plan your route. Now turn away, shut your eyes and visualise your run down the rapid. People see themselves on their run in two ways; from above and behind, like a computer driving game, or from their eye view. Try each and see which you prefer.

What's the point of all this? Well, visualisation helps you remember complex lines and gives you a cheeky preview run of the rapid. It takes practice but really pays dividends.

#### Focus

Right, try this experiment for me. I want you to stand in the corner for five minutes and you're not allowed to think

about Polar Bears. Whatever you do, don't think about Polar Bears!

So what did you think about? Polar Bears? You need to work on your focus! When running rivers, we need to control both our visual and mental focus. We need to be able to concentrate on looking at and thinking about our line. This is particularly important on complex lines, with many hazards. If we start to worry about ending up off line, we will, mainly because we were not able to focus totally on where we wanted to be and go.

So how can we practice our focus? Well, working on our visual focus is easy. You need a pencil and a television. Sit in your favourite arm chair, switch the television on and watch for a bit. Then hold the pencil at arm's length in front of your face. Switch your focus from the television to the pencil. After a minute, switch back. You get the idea...

Improving our mental focus can be done in a similar way, alternating our total concentration between two disparate subjects. Abstract, but it works.

Now all of this is all well and good in the living room, but once you bring fear into the equation, it can become tricky. Controlling that fear is important. Here's a trick I use on occasion:

Before your run, sit quietly in the eddy, and think only of breathing. While you do this, shut your eyes, breathe in and visualise your lungs inflating until they can take no more. Hold for a few seconds then breathe out and visualise your lungs emptying totally. Repeat this three times. It's a yogic exercise, designed to relax the body and clear the mind, enabling focus on the task.

All of these concepts are very useful but the most important thing on the river is confidence. You have to really

believe that you can make the line that you have planned. If you don't believe, you won't make it. Once you have committed to running a line, focus only on the positive outcome! If you walk back to your boat thinking 'what if...' and then go for it, you will get nailed!

So that's pretty much all I want to say at the moment. I think it's important to remember that you are the pilot of your boat – it's up to you to make it go where you want. In order to do that more effectively, you need to appreciate what the river is doing and to think about what you are going to do before you do it, in terms of balance, accuracy and timing. Hopefully, these articles will have got you thinking in terms of moving the boat, rather than using proscribed strokes. ●

Anyway, have a think, try and build the stuff I've talked about into your boating and I'll be back next year with more stuff for you to think about. In the meantime, remember, it's supposed to be fun!

Take it easy,

Tom Parker –  
Coaching and Guiding





## SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN

The BCU and Canoe England are committed to providing a safe environment for all young people to enjoy paddlesport. As part of this we recognise the support that volunteers, coaches, clubs and centres will need to implement this locally – both in terms of guidance and training. In 2008 we provided specific training for over 100 club welfare officers through the NSPCC Time to Listen Workshop. We will be running more courses in 2009 to help both club and event welfare officers – all dates will be circulated early in the spring and posted on our website. We also aim to have an online basic awareness course available this spring.

We have been busy updating and reviewing some of the guidance documents based on feedback from you and advice from the Child Protection in Sport Unit to help us achieve the Advanced Standard for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. Here is a quick summary of what is available. All documents can be downloaded from [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk) and are included in the club welfare officer pack handed out at the Time to Listen Workshops. If you are unable to access the documents please contact [development@bcu.org.uk](mailto:development@bcu.org.uk) or call 0845 370 9520 to request a hard copy to be sent to you.

**Paddlesafe events pack** – the guidelines are based on the 'Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport' and outline what you need to consider when running an event that includes young people. An important aspect of this is for the event organiser to appoint an Event Welfare Officer (EWO) and the pack includes a role description for an EWO and a summary of the event organiser safeguarding responsibilities.

**Paddlesafe trips away** – a revised version of the BCU 'Safe Trips Away Guidance' sheet.

**Protecting children and young people with disabilities** – the BCU and Canoe England recognise the additional vulnerability of some children. We have therefore produced additional guidance for individuals who work with children with disabilities.

**Paddlesafe card** – a young person's guide to child protection. This card is an abbreviated version of the A5 sheet we have printed in Canoe Focus and send out in junior member packs. It has important contact numbers and advice. We will be sending cards out to club welfare officers to handout to your junior members in February.

**Physical contact and young people** – some coaches have expressed concerns about what is acceptable with respect to contact with young people. These guidance notes aim to clarify the position of the BCU in relation to this issue and provide guidance to all those involved in working with young people in sport. Alongside this we have updated the guidance document for 'Working with Children with Challenging Behaviour' to provide additional guidance for paddlesport activities.

## Important contact numbers

**Canoe England 24 hour child protection contact:**

email: [childprotection@bcu.org.uk](mailto: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

## Canoe 2012

### Background

Paddlesport is 'more than just medals' – the Canoe England Paddlesport Participation Programme is committed to maximising an increase in paddlesport's participation at local and community levels. The unique opportunity that has been provided by London winning the Olympic and Paralympics Games represents a fantastic opportunity to develop participation in paddlesport in the build up to, during and following the games.

### Aim

Canoe 2012 is a Canoe England initiative designed to develop and widen the pathway into the Olympic disciplines of paddlesport. Canoe 2012 is an initiative that will be reaching out to club/centres and paddlers from across the community. The initiative will focus on women and girls, canoe classes, crew boats and paddlers with a disability.

### Objectives

- Raise the profile of the Olympic disciplines of paddlesport across the wider paddling community.
- Establish a series of regional flat water events across England.
- Pilot a county based flat water events programme.
- Establish entry level local/regional slalom based events in all English regions.
- Develop the paddler/volunteer pathway.
- Attract and develop more slalom and flatwater coaches, volunteers and officials.
- Seek funding for entry level flat water and slalom equipment.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with key partners.

## Go Paddling Programme and National Go Paddling Week Information for clubs and centres

### What does the programme involve?

The aim of the programme is 'to help and inspire people to go paddling' and this will be achieved by your club/centre providing a positive and welcoming paddling experience within a managed

environment. Each club/centre will be encouraged to provide both a taster event at a time which suits your club/centre. All Canoe England are asking, is for your club/centre to run a follow up a session as soon as possible after the Go Paddling Day.

### What support do we get from Canoe England?

As part of this programme, Canoe England would like to support your club/centre in a number of ways.

- Through signposting email and phone enquiries from the head office to your club/centre.
- Furthermore, your event will be promoted through the website and in Canoe Focus.
- Finally, to assist in reducing any additional work for you, a template for a welcome pack will be sent to you to assist you in providing a pack of information to participants and therefore promoting membership at your club.

### How does your club/centre benefit?

- Support from Canoe England for your club to manage and prepare for the potential rise in interest in paddlesport.
- Potential and new members.
- Income - Canoe England will launch a commission scheme for clubs that send us completed membership forms from new members. Welcome pack templates.
- Promotion of your club/centre through the website and local press.
- Signposting to your club/centre when Canoe England receives enquiries on how to get involved.

## National Go Paddling week 23-31st May

Let's get as many people paddling as possible during the National Go Paddling week. Events big or small, for beginners to accomplished paddlers now that really is something for everyone!

### How do we get involved?

To get involved, please contact Kimberley Walsh, Development and Participation Team Support Officer at Canoe England. Tel: 0845 370 9520 [kimberley.walsh@bcu.org.uk](mailto:kimberley.walsh@bcu.org.uk)

## Welcome to our new section on Women and Girls in Paddlesport

Women and Girls in Paddlesport



The Canoe England development team are committed to increasing the number of females participating in paddlesport as well as encouraging those already taking part to stay in the sport. The project formally known as 'Girl Power' has been reignited into action with the scope broadened to include all women not just the young. Currently in the early stages of the project, we plan to use this section of Canoe Focus to bring you information and news on Women and Girls in Paddlesport.

We would like you to get involved! If you are interested in helping, have any women and girls articles or any good photos that you would be happy for us to use please email [womenandgirls@bcu.org.uk](mailto:womenandgirls@bcu.org.uk) or Tel: 0845 370 9520.

Did you know it is International Women's Day on 8th March? This would be a great day for your club to put on a Women and Girls in Paddlesport Day and we would love to hear about it! We will be officially launching the Canoe England Women and Girls in Paddlesport project on this date.

Congratulations to Nette Carder from Birmingham Canoe Club who has successfully been awarded funding from 'Awards 4 All' to start a women's development programme at Birmingham CC.



## TEAM NORTH

### Durham to Finchale Boxing Day race



Keith Wickham presenting the winners prize to his son Ollie

120 starters lined up for the race, which caters for many categories of wild water racing boats, slalom, playboats, open canoe and doubles. This number of competitors is a tribute to Durham KC and their promotion of the event after taking it over from

Sunderland CC who have run the event since 1962.

Keith Wickham has been involved with this event for a long time and has sponsored the event through Gate 7 Ltd, an Automotive Component Manufacturer.

The event was Keith's 47th consecutive race and is very proud of that fact, having won nine times but not since 1972. The main race trophy is the Alec Wickham Memorial trophy and previous illustrious winners have included Dave Taylor, Ian and Alan Tordoff, Russ Smith, Peter Kieron. This year's winner was Keith's son Oliver, winning for the third time. Mike Mason came second and 2006 winner Grant Anderson third. Keith still managed a glorious seventh place – not bad for a person of his seniority.

The senior men's slalom boat class was fought out between Darren Cresser, Nicky Cresser and Simon Jackson in that order. Sandra Hyslop gave a fine performance worthy of her status to win the ladies.

The first Under 18 to finish was Andrew Martin. The first GP kayak was paddled by Martin Garrett and the first GP Under 18 male was James Lackey. The winning Under 18 female in a GP kayak was Durham's Rosie Johnson. The GP Under 13 category was won by Kris Wilkinson, representing the boys, and Bethan Kelly for the girls and Durham KC. The prize for first Canadian was the Head to the Hills Team.

Hopefully the Conex Canoe Race will see similar numbers entering when it is held on the May 4th, again using the same stretch of water from Durham to Finchale. For more information on this event go to: [www.conexcanoerace.co.uk](http://www.conexcanoerace.co.uk)

Armed with a new flask and the additional Christmas weight I arrived at the Durham Bowling Alley car park for the annual Boxing Day race between Durham and Finchale Abbey. The river was a decent level; the skies were blue(ish) and the entrants seemed keen to get on the water! The competitors were graced with a tail wind which would speed their descent of the course and also freeze the toes off the finish marshals on the bridge at Finchale!

Once registered, the 'serious' guys began changing into their fitted cags whilst all the more casual paddlers got out there extra layers of thermals to prevent themselves freezing! One of the racing guys even opted to wear nothing but boxers on his lower half, presumably to save weight... These racing types, what can you say!

After a few hiccups on the start line, the racers were off, watched by the paddlers in general purpose kayaks, playboats, canoes, creek boats and even a duo or two, who were due to start five minutes later. Once the second wave of paddlers were off the entire river was awash with boats!

The course is a four-mile stretch of Grade II water, which twists through the Wear Valley through woods and fields to the impressive Finchale Abbey, where the soup tent awaited the cold paddlers! The soup tent was run by volunteers from Durham Kayak Club providing free refreshments for all race entrants.

All the competitors and helpers had a great day alike. A big thank you to all the paddlers who turned up making this annual event such a success, the volunteers from Durham Kayak Club who gave up their Boxing Day to help, and finally to Keith Wickham of Gate 7 for supplying prizes and good cheer!

**DURHAM KAYAK CLUB**

### Wake-up call

A ground-breaking new project has been launched by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority with help from Sport England's community investment fund that could boost the number of under-25s who take up canoeing.

Called Go Dales!, it is aimed at young people living in the national park and from the Keighley, Bradford, Craven and Richmond areas. It arranges taster sessions for them and then introduces them to local clubs and organisations so they can pursue their new-found sport.

Go Dales! Project Officer Kath Needham said: "We want to open their eyes to the different landscapes of national parks and to a sport they might not have tried otherwise."

Kath is also hoping the project will locally, help to reverse the national trend of clubs having an older membership. "By staging taster sessions for groups of young people, we hope to break down the barriers to baring a go and ultimately to increase the number of under-25s joining clubs."

Anyone wanting more information can contact Kath at [godales@yorkshiredales.org.uk](mailto:godales@yorkshiredales.org.uk) or by phoning 0300 456 0030 and mentioning Go Dales!



### English open canoe symposium

The symposium is part of the national series of canoe symposiums and this, the third, was the biggest event so far. With nearly 200 hundred participants and over 40 coaches attending to go paddle their canoes.

Some of the highlights of the weekend were where firm favourite Harry Rock evangelising to all about the joys of standing while canoeing, Colin Broadway brought his fleet of Coracles (by Monday Coracle Poling had been developed), whilst Mark from Europe introduced the concept of dancing canoes in his freestyle workshops. Ray Goodwin enthralled all with his slide show of the Blood Vein River on the Saturday night followed by a canoe related pub quiz. Alongside the sessions and slide shows we had Brookbank, Aiguille and Desperate Measures selling kit and sharing advice.

A huge thank you has to be given to Tom Sibbald of [www.canoeoaching.co.uk](http://www.canoeoaching.co.uk) for his vision and management of the English symposium, the organising team, all the coaches that gave their time for free, the shops and trade guys who sponsored many of the events. A special thank you has to go to Richard Bennet of Outdoor Active who sponsored the weekend. The next symposium is planned for 19-20th September based at Glenmore Lodge.

### Canoe slalom camp

The camp, hosted by the University of Teesside, saw 20 slalom paddlers travel to the Tees Valley. The camp took a holistic approach incorporating several disciplines of sports science and slalom skills coaching and aimed to place talented and determined paddlers into a performance environment.

The camp opened with an inspirational presentation from the Athens Olympic silver Medallist Campbell Walsh on performance profiling and goal setting. The paddlers then undertook a land based physiological profiling session after which they were taken into the university's state of the art environmental chamber.

An experienced and specialised coaching team led white water and flat water coaching sessions, including Campbell Walsh, Russ Smith, Wendy Morris, Darren Cresser and Ray Hudspith. Video footage was taken of the sessions, with analysis given in the university's data analysis lab by the coaches and paddlers the next morning. Further physiological testing was performed on the water with an additional, practical, strength and conditioning session later that day. Nutrition and sports psychology sessions were also delivered to the clients, in the presence of their parents to encourage and maximise any follow up. Each paddler was given a bag of take away bits and bobs, including a memory stick containing their testing results, video clips and information on anti-doping.

The commitment and enthusiasm of all the paddlers was really impressive, given the cold temperatures and high winds, this really made the camp. The use of student volunteers to help the coaching and academic staff was a bonus. They provided a vital and fundamental level of professionalism, without which the analysis of all testing and video clips would not have been processed so quickly.

Overall the feedback was very positive. One of the most pleasing aspects of the weekend was the engagement of the clients and their parents. The weekend was designed to work the clients hard, testing their desire to perform and mental toughness, whilst maintaining a level of enjoyment. Everyone kept going to the end and launched themselves into each session whole heartedly. Parents also took an avid interest in the information being provided to them.





## TEAM CENTRAL



## Not your typical chair

When most people are asked to describe their image of a club chairperson, a typical answer is likely to be: "Older guy, mid-fifties onwards, does not paddle much anymore." However, if you ask the same question to the members of Wensum Ospreys Canoe Club, they are more likely to say: "An active, bubbly blond lady, who can generally be found on any club night or trip by the sound of her laughter."

Natalie Adcock has been a member of Wensum Ospreys CC for over six years with her children. The supportive mother discovered that she had a natural flair for the sport becoming one of the club's more active paddlers and recently passing her new 2 Star generic award. Enjoying club trips regularly, Natalie recently joined the club on a trip to Tryweryn where she swam only once – her well known giggling could still be heard even when soaked from her trip down the river without her kayak!

As many parents find, Natalie's role as a paddler expanded to recently become the first female club captain and has taken the reigns of a flourishing club in the north west of Norfolk. Driving the club forward is high on Natalie's agenda with the aim to steer the club to achieving their Clubmark accreditation.

The bubbly chairwoman firmly believes that the club should remain welcoming and child friendly to attract new members and for existing members the word fun springs to mind! Natalie successfully leads the way in club committee meetings but always with a laugh and a giggle. Certainly, at a recent meeting the local fishing club were also meeting in the next room but stated they wished they were in the same one as the Natalie – it sounded a lot more fun!

For the future, Natalie's personal aim is to take the BCU/UKCC Level 1 course to become a club coach, and to gain the 3 Star White Water award. For the sport, her goal is to try and inspire more women and girls to take up paddling.

As Natalie has realised: not only does the sport offer an excellent and cheap way of keeping slim and fit; it also offers a great social networking opportunity. For clubs around the country, Natalie may well have ended the typical image of a club chairman.

## Stepping into the future



Typically the winter months with the shorter days and colder weather can make it very difficult to keep the younger paddlers. However, at Nottingham Kayak Club this is not the situation. If anything the junior population is possibly the largest it has been in years with youngsters ranging from five to 17 enjoying the delights of paddlesport.

So what is it they are doing? The junior development has not happened overnight, but had a definite growth over the summer of 2008. The club saw an increase in the amount of families and by involving both the parents and their children in club sessions, saw the increase in

commitment of the juniors. As the winter drew in, after school sessions were tried where their focus was placed on developing the skills of forward paddling. Initially these sessions were split into two weeks indoors followed by one week outdoor to put everything into perspective, then eventually they became all indoor. These sessions were designed to support the main junior club session at a weekend where they could get out on the water as per their normal winter programme.

The indoor sessions follow the simple rule to have fun and to provide a safe enjoyable learning atmosphere. Newly qualified Level 1 coaches Julie Littlewood and Kath Nadal help run the session where ribbon, broomsticks and paddle machines are used to demonstrate the different parts of the forward paddling technique.

The overall effect is that the juniors now feel a real sense of belonging and can't wait for the sessions each week (and nor can some of the coaches) and more importantly cannot wait until they can get on the water in the spring. The juniors are excited and energised by what they could do in paddlesport and consequently this enthusiasm is cascading through the club. Thanks to Mick Nadal, Mark Hoile and Caroline Jones for all their help and input in these sessions.

GILLY MARA

## Percy the unsinkable sit-on-top

The story begins with a beautiful blue unsinkable sit-on-top kayak that goes by the name of Percy. It was a sunny September morning and the perfect weather for a day trip along a quiet section of the upper Ardeche in the south of France. The aim of the day was to practice our kayaking skills, as we were all new paddlers preparing to take our 2 Star Assessment. I was still a very nervous paddler so when we chose which boats to put on the trailer I decided that I would like to take sit-on-top Percy.

We arrived at our drop off point and headed down to the beach to start the descent. The water was bubbling along and the sun still shining as our group, which consisted of closed cockpit kayakers and me on Percy headed downstream. The morning started well and I was able to catch a tan whilst sitting on the top deck!

As we approached the first rapid it became apparent that choosing a sit-on-top was definitely a smart move. Halfway down one of the closed cockpits tipped his paddler out before the day had hardly begun. Once the rescue was complete we were on our way again.

We arrived at a small, secluded, beach on the bank of the Ardeche and decided that after a busy morning of paddling it was time to stop for lunch. I had safely

carried my lunch, plus a few other people's lunch on the back deck (people that had chosen the closed cockpit kayakers, did not have space to carry their own lunch because they are just too small!).

We found a sandy spot under the shade of a tree at the top of the beach and pulled the sit-on-top up out of the water by the grab ends and when turned upside down the strong hull made the perfect picnic bench!

In the afternoon I did have an accident by choosing a bad line when approaching a rather gnarly rapid! The white angry water was bouncing me across the rocks when all of a sudden I crashed straight into a large rock lurking under the surface. Although disaster had stuck everything was fine and the sit-on-top just floated merrily to the bank where I held onto its sides until we made it to a shallow safe eddy. Because of the excellent buoyancy of the sit-on-top it was easy for me to reach across the hull and put my fingers into the moulded handles next to the seat. I flipped the boat over and hopped straight back on! I didn't even need any help.

The second accident of the day happened upon us mid-afternoon. A closed cockpit kayaker was surfing on a wave, when suddenly its stern was sucked under into a hole flipping upside and trapping the paddler under the water. Seconds felt like hours as we watched waiting for the paddler to pop his deck. I waited in the eddy while one of the other kayakers rushed to help. The paddler at last freed himself from the closed cockpit but alas all was not well. The paddler, whilst under the grip of the rapid, bashed his shoulder on a rock and in his struggle to escape dislocated his shoulder!

I stepped forward and offered my services to carry the injured paddler to safety. The sit-on-top's stability and reliability made it the perfect boat for the task at hand. A line was attached to the grab end and we carried the injured paddler to a safe point in the gorge.

On returning to our paddle centre in the Ardeche we unloaded the trailer and put Percy in a neat stack with the other sit-on-tops. Percy made my day on the river fun safe and enjoyable.

BETH CROOKES. PHOTO: PHIL HADLEY





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## TEAM SOUTH



Street Paddler has just completed its pilot scheme in Exeter, the initial idea came from CATS (Community Action Through Sport) who approached Canoe England with the idea of taking disruptive young people and through the medium of paddlesport bring about a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Haven Banks Outdoor Education Centre working in conjunction with the local police and youth services promoted two 'have a go' sessions. From these a group of eight young people were selected to attend a full eight week course in paddlesport. The sessions ran on a Friday evening which the police had identified as a period when there was an increase in anti-social behaviour.

Despite the time of year, cold evenings and the lack of daylight all but one of the young people completed the full course. This success was in no small part due to the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication of the two coaches Liam Kirkham and Nicola Yalland.

Overall the initiative has been very successful in breaking down barriers with local young people and has helped to divert them at key times when they may have become involved in anti-social behaviour.



## Street Paddler

Sgt Egan said: "Schemes like this are sometimes difficult to get started, but this one has really taken off. We've steered kids onto a path that they otherwise would never have come across, and that's really positive, both for their own development and the community as a whole."

The young people experienced paddling both kayaks and canoes and undertook some first aid training, the undoubted highlight for the

paddlers was the white water when shooting some of the weirs on the River Exe.

Andy Davey from Canoe England said: "I was very happy to draw together the partners and help with the running of this project. Having worked with disruptive young people in a challenging environment in the past both short and long term and observed the improvement in behaviour, team skills and self-esteem, I know the benefits this can bring. Unfortunately at the end of most schemes there is little or no follow up or further encouragement to maintain this improvement."

"Street Paddler, being over an extended period, has allowed the coaches to build a rapport with the young paddlers so as well as developing their personal skills, gaining paddling awards. The young people have the opportunity to continue beyond the initial eight weeks of the project with either Haven Banks Outdoor Education Centre and or Exeter Canoe Club. This should make a real difference to the individuals and make the whole project more sustainable."

For further information contact Clair Roberts Email [cats-bude@btconnect.com](mailto:cats-bude@btconnect.com)



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# Clubs and regional news



## YORCIE NEWS: [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk)

### Happy new year! Let's kick straight off with a whole raft of training and coaching opportunities.

Following on from the success of the 2008 paddlesport weekend, the regional coaching committee announced, with the support of Aldwark Scout Activity Centre, the dates April 4-5th! The weekend is offering a vast range of courses and paddling opportunities; first aid, paddlesport skill training, sea kayaking (on the river), open canoe touring, specialist open canoe and a coach update forum.

The coach update forum is for those of you who are either a BCU Level 1 or Level 2 coach as one of the afternoon sessions will show you the way to transfer to the new UKCC scheme. In addition, we have a BCU Level 1 and 2 course concluding over the weekend. These will have already started on March 21st as each is a four day course. For those registered with a club, funding will be available based upon a small commitment from you towards your club once you have attended the course.

Prices for the courses etc include accommodation to the first 50 bookings although tent space is also available on the field, breakfast (7:45-8:15am), lunch and hot drinks throughout the day. For those interested we are also having a BBQ on the Saturday night. There will also be the usual quiz and paddling videos together with a regional supplier of paddlesport equipment on site! We will also have Lara, Nigel, Scott and Gareth from BCU Headquarters available to answer any questions. Email for a booking form to [coaching.events@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:coaching.events@yorcie.org.uk) or anybody from your regional coaching team.

For anyone in need of a Level 3 Kayak Coach Assessment (old style) based at Ambleside in Cumbria, a course is being run on March 6-8th by West Yorkshire Scouts Coaching Centre. Details are available from Paul Cartwright on 07745 399493 or [water@wyscouts.org.uk](mailto:water@wyscouts.org.uk)

In the next few weeks, your club or group will be notified of how the RCT (Regional Coaching Team) lead by RCO John Lucas will be consulting with you on how it plans to de-centralise coaching, with consultation meetings throughout the four LCO regions. The focus being on:

- Introducing the LCO and RCO for the area.
- What is happening with the current UKCC award scheme (keynote talk).
- Introduction of the District Coaching organiser/ Club's Coaching Contact posts – volunteers.
- Centre LCO/Volunteer Sector LCO posts – what do they do?
- What do you want from the local coaching team e.g. courses, help with funding, mentoring.
- How you would like the coaching monies spent which have been accumulated over the last couple of years?

We will circulate these meetings via the regions LCOs and from Janet at [secretary.coaching@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:secretary.coaching@yorcie.org.uk) and on our website. So please register to guarantee you get to know the dates.

### "Who is the LCO in my area"?

Check out [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk) click on 'coaching' and then 'in your area' to find out your nominated coaching team for the Yorkshire region or email RCO John Lucas [rco@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:rco@yorcie.org.uk) for the information.

Next on the cards, the coaching team are organising a number of reduced rate 'Leadership and white water safety and rescue courses' for members in the region wishing to help run trips for their clubs. If you are interested in attending one of these courses, please email John as he is pulling a list together of dates and interested parties.

We'll leave the last word on coaching to John. "The first six months as RCO have passed very quickly and what a baptism of fire

it seems to have been representing you at all levels. With the help of all the other nominated representatives we are making some progress. The last couple of months have seen the regional coaching team organising events for this year both in terms of more Coach Update and more local based coaching meetings, in order to reduce the amount of travelling you have to do to attend one of these events. You might be interested to know that the northern based RCOs are looking at a 'Coaches Weekend' whereby we will dedicate the whole weekend to helping coaches progress in the direction they wish to pursue – more on this in future Yorcie news".

### Riverwise River Holme tree risk

Further to the last edition, our LAA for the R. Holme Mike Robson [mike.robson23@ntlworld.com](mailto:mike.robson23@ntlworld.com) is pleased to report that the EA have done a great job and that the trees referred to near the start at Brookholes have been removed. However, don't assume that means it will still be clear. Access info can be sent to and requested at [access@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:access@yorcie.org.uk)

**Note.** Mike Robson is also the region's lead for the Yorkshire Sea Kayakers (Salt n' Shakes). [ysk@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:ysk@yorcie.org.uk)

### River Washburn

The full list of all the release dates is available on [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk) or by emailing Esther at [washburn@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:washburn@yorcie.org.uk)

If you want to know more about what's happening, where to find the information or how to have your club represented, where and when the RDT hold your meetings, then your first point of call is The Regional Secretary, Jonathon Dakeyne [secretary@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:secretary@yorcie.org.uk)

I am particularly in need of help from some paddlers to assist with the fantastic development opportunities we have on the R. Aire at Ferry Fryston, Castleford. Which could lead to another Manvers type facility, with a new club. Alternatively an existing club may seize the potential.

Thank you. Dick [RDTchair@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:RDTchair@yorcie.org.uk)



## 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 0808 800 5000**



# The Adventures of Hotel

It was fairly late at night in deepest darkest Wales and pencilling lines across the admiralty chart I was starting to get nervous about our lack of preparation. It was all too clear staring at the map that this was a longer crossing than I had ever tried before and it had been ages since I'd tried plotting a course says Helena Robinson.

We were attempting to paddle to Lundy from Ilfracombe, about 18 nautical miles to meet up with a bunch of climbers who would take the ferry. Much plotting later I calculated a plausible bearing and the weather forecast looked amazing which lifted my spirits. Dan seemed to have blind faith in my navigational abilities and was all set to follow me. After miles of winding Devonshire roads later we arrived at Lee Bay our selected starting point where we'd planned bivviing on the sand next to our kayaks. However, Lee Bay was not quite as we'd imagined it. There wasn't any sand to start with, just a concrete walkway jutting out through deep rotting seaweed and

no sea as far as we could make out in the dark. After a thorough exploration down the walkway by head torch we concluded that the sea was there and hopefully would be more accessible in the morning, but we'd have to camp in a car park over the road and get up super early to pack our boats.

It was a really warm night and I didn't sleep very well. Images of over falls kept popping up in my mind and I had to reassure myself that there wouldn't be any tomorrow as the conditions and tides were perfect. What if we missed the island? If we ended up in south Wales, Bude or back in Ilfracombe it would be acutely embarrassing and potentially destroy any sea kayaking

credibility I possessed. At last the alarm sounded, signalling we had two hours to get the boats all packed up and ready to go.

We paddled out and along the coast the water was incredibly calm and looked oily in the murky grey mist. As soon as we had started my worries melted away and for the first time I felt this was going to work. We needed to paddle to Mort Point hugging the coast and then set off on my bearing. We had neglected to phone the coast guard before we set off as we were in such a rush to leave that Dan had buried his phone (with the number) somewhere in his boat and so before leaving Mort Point I text my mum in the hope she could look it up. We switched on the VHF but it continually crackled loudly so we switched it off again. Without further ado we set off on my bearing into the mist.

*"How poor is the visibility do you reckon?"* asked Dan.

*"Err... about 5 miles."* I had no idea, but it wasn't good and there definitely wasn't any sign of an island where we were heading.

We had been going a little while and I felt we were paddling at a good speed, the mainland was melting into the mist and we passed a bobber and could see the tide storming leftwards, which gave me confidence in aiming far upstream of the island. My mum had come up with the coastguard's number and I decided

The finish





# Romeo

to notify him, as we were apparently meant to, although not having ever notified a coastguard previously, had some unfounded fear that he would tell us to get back to the mainland at once for being such punters.

Coastguard: "Hello Swansea Coastguard."

Helena: "Hello, we are two kayakers paddling from Lee Bay to Lundy this morning."

Coastguard: "Do you have a VHF?"

Helena: "Yes" (although it was switched off and we weren't sure it actually worked).

Coastguard: "Right, what's your call sign?"

Helena: "Errr" after recalling a brief conversation with someone on a camping trip three years ago, "Hotel Romeo."

Coastguard: "Do you have flares?" Helena: "Yes".

Coastguard: "Do you have life saving apparatus?"

Helena: "Errr. Yes." (If some Elastoplasts, a towline and banana bread count, but what did he want us to have, a defibrillator?)

He took our details and wished us luck and I felt that I'd just passed some kind of telephone sea



The start

safety exam and had to explain why we were team 'Hotel Romeo' to an amused Dan, (it's my initials in the phonetic alphabet obviously).

### Just one instruction to follow

Time went on and we could now not see land in either direction, we were in limbo and entirely committed to following the bearing, I was relaxed, there were no more choices or calculations to be made, just one instruction to follow. The water was so still anything that broke the surface was immediately obvious. The stumpy dark fins of porpoises and thinner curvier fins of common dolphins popped up in front and alongside us several times, so frequently that it stopped being a novelty. Fulmars glided by getting a closer look and

keeping us company and gannets scanned the water for fish from high above.

'I've seen Lundy about 20 times now' commented Dan and it was easy to imagine you could see phantom islands in the mist. Eventually a dark shape appeared – could it be? But our 'island' was moving and making engine noises, it looked like we would be crossing paths. Better switch on the VHF, maybe I'll get a chance to use my call sign, I hope not, it looked a very big boat. The very big boat passed some way in front of us but we decided to leave the crackling VHF on for the moment and a little while later we were awarded with an announcement.

"Calling all vessels, calling all vessels this is Swansea Coastguard this is Swansea coastguard. Due to industrial action there will be no weather or safety announcements today. Out."

Luckily we didn't need any weather or safety announcements and eventually a large faint shadow grew clearer and clearer until we were certain that this was it. We changed our heading to aim for the south tip as there was now nearly no tide flowing and we pulled into the harbour in blistering sunshine after nearly five hours on the water. Feeling like sea kayaking legends we lay our stuff on the warm pebbles to dry, scoffed cereal bars and looked forward to a week of rock climbing on granite... ●

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To obtain an application pack, please call Grangewaters on 01708 855228/856422 between 9am-4pm Monday to Friday (answer phone available outside these hours). E-mail [grangewaters@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:grangewaters@thurrock.gov.uk) [www.thurrock.gov.uk/grangewaters](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/grangewaters)

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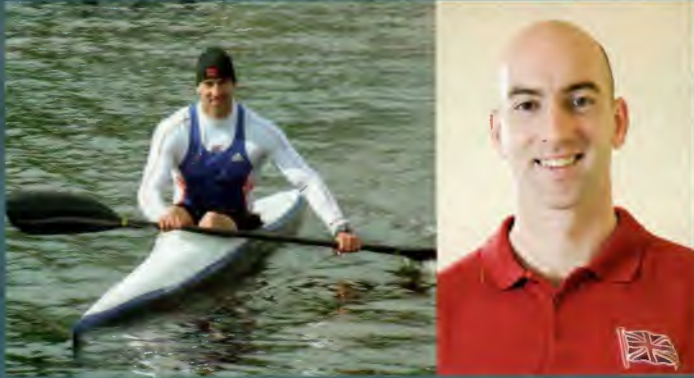
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# Interview – Ian Wynne

## What makes a great athlete?



Olympic bronze medalist MK1 500m  
Athens 2004; European silver medalist  
MK1 500m 2004

**It was a cold winter's day in England when I met Ian Wynne. Not an overly tall man, I knew instantly who he was when he entered the room. Although wrapped up in a large fleece with a 'beanie hat' covering his bald head, like many great athletes he undoubtedly had 'presence' – that almost indefinable quality that attaches itself to those who are masters of their sport or art.**

Immediately affable, he is a quietly spoken man and after initial conversations about plans for the Christmas period and the state of British canoeing, it was clear that behind the tone, lies a steeliness of resolve, a passion for the sport and a focus about his kayaking performances which would touch anyone who takes the time to listen... I was keen.

Moving onto the subject of the recent Beijing Olympic Games we cheered the gold medal success of Britain's Tim Brabants. I then asked Ian, who performed at the highest level and won an Olympic bronze medal in 2004 under adverse conditions, what he thought makes a great athlete.

"While talent and natural ability for a sport will get you so far, to fulfil your true potential there are a number of additional factors which allow you to enhance your ability to perform to your highest level.

To race well it is essential to not only train hard but to train smart, adopt a positive lifestyle and a strong mental attitude which will support the extreme demands you place on your body daily" said Wynne.

"Strong mental attitude is a phrase that crops up time and again and, intrigued to identify exactly what he meant, I encouraged Ian to delve further into this area.

Your mental attitude, lifestyle and training will dictate whether you can sit on the start line and feel confident that you have prepared completely. This was how I felt when I raced in Athens in 2004. The day before the final I felt confident I could challenge for gold. Then during the evening I severed the ligaments around my ankle joint as I stepped off the shuttle bus in the athletes' village. The injury caused me to re-evaluate why I was there and what I was chasing. I thought at that point any realistic chance of winning a medal of any colour had simply disappeared."

Wynne shifted visibly in his chair, the memory of the pain still clearly gurgling in his mind. He continued: "Hobbling down to my boat the next morning for the final, leaning on my crutches, my focus became simply to fulfil my potential in that situation and facing that adversity. After a sleepless night and no warm up I just paddled to the start line trying to blank out the fact I was at the Olympics. My only thoughts were to look at the finish line, 500m away and give 100% with every stroke. These thoughts freed me from everything else so I could focus on delivering my very best performance. I remember I had an indifferent start; I almost 'limped' out of the starting gate. This was because I had to compensate my stroke to cope with the stabbing pain shooting up my right leg from my ankle every time I drove into the foot rest. At half way I was 2.5 seconds behind the leader in about sixth place and at that point my whole body began to screech in

pain. It was at this moment I knew it was going to be ok – I had been here before, in this zone where your body screams at you to stop. This was the moment I overcame the distraction of the ankle. I had the mentality to drive on through, to find that extra effort. I had developed it over those long hard hours in training, this ability to push myself to the limits of where it hurts and well beyond."

So professional was that performance, no one other than the immediate GB coaching and medical team knew Wynne was injured. He proudly stepped onto the Podium to collect his Olympic bronze. No crutches, no drama. An unsuspecting world with no inkling of what had just happened, watched him receive his medal with graciousness. This is just one example of the 'supercharged mentality' that is consistently displayed by winners.

Focus is a characteristic that Wynne has exhibited in abundance throughout his kayaking career. His cupboard did not boast any Junior World Championship medals but self-belief in what he could achieve if he was able to put his focus on his sport, when the time was right, was always there. Choosing to complete his university qualification aged 18-22; he kept racing and competing domestically. Once all of the educational work was out of the way, he then turned his gaze to the sport he loves.

"After University was finished, I started training more often in the senior men's group which was based in Teddington. I had some great training partners; Tim (Brabants), Paul Darby Dowman and Ross Sabberton were all part of that group. I enjoyed being part of the team boats and was part of the K4 crew that contended Olympic qualification in Milan in 2000. It was a big disappointment for me that the K4 didn't qualify but this was balanced by the fact that I had won the 'B' final in K1 500m and so qualified my first ever Olympic place. Sydney in 2000 was frustrating in that I just missed making the final but I came home feeling really inspired about finding that extra winning margin and I became even more determined to work harder and achieve my personal goal of an Olympic medal."

I asked Ian what changes he made to achieve this.

"Athletic training, racing and preparation does not happen in isolation to the rest of your life, everything is integrated. When training, I was placing huge demands upon my body in the search for improvement. To support this and make sure that every session I did was as productive and effective as it could be, I examined my daily lifestyle. By doing this I ensured that I was getting the right amount of sleep every night (vital for physical regeneration), my diet was balanced and specific to me to optimise my recovery and physical regeneration. I also took great care to plan my week to ensure a balance between my sport, family, social and work/ education and of course, getting my training right was a massive factor."

Training right for Wynne meant training smart. Smartness is something that doesn't come in a fancy coloured pack where 'one size fits all'. It's a very specific thing individual for each person and training specifically to meet Ian's requirements was very important for him.

"With my coach I examined my strengths and weaknesses in each area and worked out where I needed to focus my time and energy to make the gains I needed. This was always balanced to help me avoid injury and illness – the nemesis of an elite athlete. We then planned carefully the training I was going to do for the next cycle, completed the training, feeding back to the coach all of the time, how each session went and we would then review what progress had been made. This cycle worked well in terms of continually developing and improving. That was being SMART, along with ensuring that I worked the best I possibly could in each session. That brought with it the confidence that I could deliver a performance when it mattered."

Athens was evidence to the fact that Ian got it right – along with the many other medals now proudly tucked away in his home. It's evidence that he had the mind and body of a medal winning Olympian.

Attitude, smart training and lifestyle all key factors in his success and factors now which he is instilling into the young British kayakers – factors that they can influence if they choose to – smart advice if they aim to follow in his footsteps, onto the Olympic podium. ●

ANNE FERGUSON



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