

canoe

focus



2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships



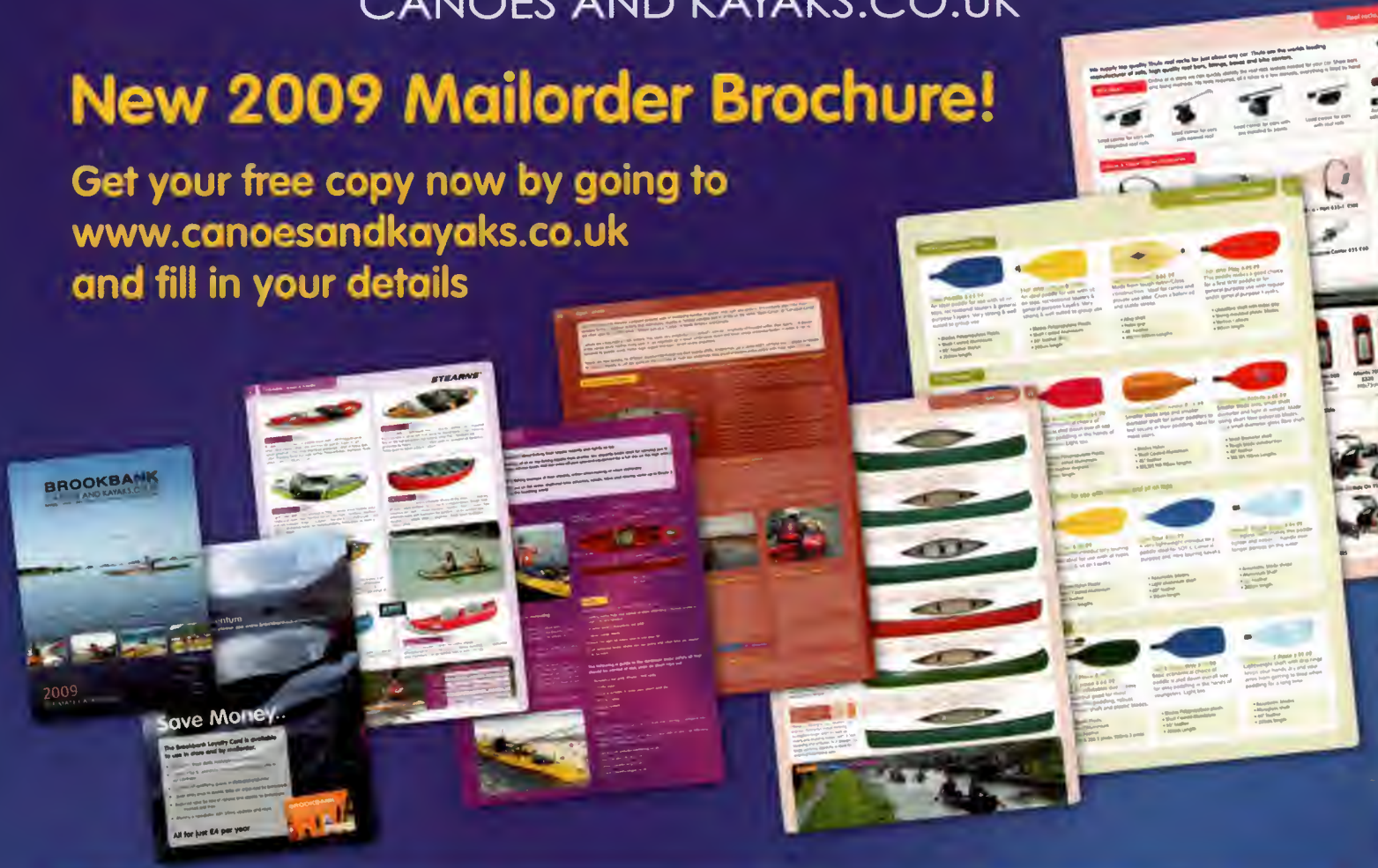
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Holme Pierrepont Nottingham White Water Course Good News!

Good news, the Holme Pierrepont white water course is back up and running after three months of refurbishment work. We hope you all enjoy the new challenges and excitement the changes provide.



Congratulations to Dr Tim Brabants (left) who picked up his MBE from Buckingham Palace last month.

Enjoy the lighter evenings and the more pleasant and longer days of spring whilst paddling.

PAUL OWEN

Welcome to April's Canoe Focus

The Easter weekend sees many canoeists taking part in the annual Devizes to Westminster canoe race. Good luck to all those taking part, whether it's for a charity or for the personal challenge.

The DW record has stood for 30 years now (15 hours 34 minutes) and while a few crews have come close to the time, it has not been broken! This year the crew who set the record have got back into their original partnership of Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish (see page 12).

European Slalom Championships Nottingham 28-31st May

Looking forward to next month, the European Slalom Championships take place in Nottingham on the 28-31st May. This event will provide a great opportunity to see GBs' athletes compete on home water, including the defending European Champion Campbell Walsh and Olympic Silver medallist David Florence (subject to selection). There is information on page 34 about the event, how you can get involved in the road shows, how you can volunteer,

as well as how to purchase tickets. The BBC is broadcasting live coverage on the Saturday and Sunday and the event will be a real showcase for our sport. We look forward to seeing you there.

Contractor announced for 2012 canoe slalom venue

Plans for a world-class White Water Canoe Centre for the London 2012 Games and a major sporting and leisure attraction in legacy have moved a step closer as the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) announced the construction contract for the venue in Broxbourne has been awarded to Morrison Construction.

The announcement of securing a contractor sees the development of a first class white water course, becoming a reality. The permanent, white water facility will provide canoeists and other users an exceptional experience beyond London 2012. Our GB canoe slalom team are certainly eager to get on the course as soon as possible. We will keep you up date on the progress (see page 11).

Thank you to Palm Equipment

Thank you to Palm equipment who supported the Sport England Fellowship Scheme, providing kit to Peter Bottomley MP. Their support really helped with taking Peter out on the water to show why canoeing is so popular in England and also how the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 has been successfully implemented in Scotland (see page 53).

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Competition

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
April	10-Apr	13-Apr	Marathon Racing	Devizes to Westminster
	11-Apr		Slalom	Grandtully - Div 1 and 2
	11-Apr		Marathon Racing	Runcorn 10km - K2
	12-Apr		Slalom	Grandtully - Pan Celtic
	13-Apr		Slalom	Aberfeldy - Div 4
	18-Apr		Slalom	GB Junior Selection - Grandtully
	18-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Prudoe - Wavehopper
	18-Apr		Surf	Widemouth Handicap - Short Boat Open
	18-Apr	19-Apr	Slalom	Grandtully - Premier
	18-Apr	19-Apr	Slalom	Oughtibridge - Div 3 and 4
	19-Apr		Surf	Widemouth - Long Boat Open - Juniors & Ladies
	19-Apr		Freestyle	Youth Series - Llangollen
	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Brigg - Hasler - Yorks & Humberside - K1
	19-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Carlisle - Wavehopper
	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Chester 1 - Hasler - N. West - K1 - Assessment
	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Maidstone Marathon - Hasler - London & S. East - K2
	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Bedford - Hasler - Eastern - K2
	19-Apr		Marathon Racing	Ratho Marathon (HQ) - Union Canal
	25-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Bala - British Open Sprint - Div A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Ch 4
	25-Apr		Wild Water Racing	Avon Sprint - Div B and Wavehopper - Midland Seires 2
	25-Apr		Slalom	GB Junior Selection - Bala
	25-Apr		Slalom	Tryweryn - Premier
	25-Apr		Slalom	North Walls Short Course - Div 4
	25-Apr		Marathon Racing	Glasgow to Edinburg - Canal Challenge
	25-Apr	26-Apr	Surf	St Ives Bay - England Ranking Event
25-Apr	26-Apr	Slalom	Marple - Div 3 and 4	
25-Apr	26-Apr	Canoe Sailing	Llandegfedd	
26-Apr		Coach Update	Wessex - Weymouth	
26-Apr		Slalom	Tryweryn - Div 1	
26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Northwich Marathon - Hasler - N. West - K2	
26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Anker Valley - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K1	
26-Apr		Marathon Racing	Cam - Hasler 09 - Eastern - K1	
2-May		Wild Water Racing	Derwent Dash - Div B and Wavehopper - Midland Series 3	
2-May		Wild Water Racing	Grandtully Sprint - Div A and B	
2-May		Marathon Racing	Worcester - K2 - Assessment	
2-May	3-May	Surf	Teignmouth - N. East Series 2 - Short Boat Open	
2-May	3-May	Slalom	GB Selection - Holme Pierrepont	
2-May	3-May	Slalom	Bala Mill - Div 2 and 3	
2-May	4-May	Wild Water Racing	Tour D'Ecosse	
3-May		Wild Water Racing	Awe - Div A and B - Tough Championship 5	
3-May		Slalom	Yair Pool Short Course	
3-May		Marathon Racing	Worcester - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K2	
3-May	4-May	Slalom	River Loddon - Div 3 and 4	
4-May		Club Event	Conex Canoe Race	
4-May		Wild Water Racing	Tay - Mass Start	
8-May	10-May	Sprint Racing	World Cup 1 - Racice, CZE	
9-May		Wild Water Racing	Nene 1 - Wavehopper - South East Series 1	
10-May		Wild Water Racing	TBN - Div B and Wavehopper - Spring Wessex Series 3	
9-May		Coach Update	West Midlands - Upton Warren	
9-May	10-May	Surf	Cornish Open - Red River - England Surf Kayak Ranking Event	
9-May	10-May	Sprint Racing	National Regatta - Holme Pierrepont	
9-May	10-May	Slalom	Cardington - Div 2, 3 and 4	
9-May	10-May	Slalom	Seaton Park - Div 3 and 4	
10-May		Coach Update	Cambridgeshire - Gratham Water	
10-May		Marathon Racing	Waveney - Hasler 09 - Eastern - K1	
13-May		Marathon Racing	Linlithgow Loch Summer Series 10km	
16-May		Coach Update	South Yorkshire - Manvers	
16-May		Wild Water Racing	Wagon Lane - Div B and Wavehopper - N. East Series 1	
16-May	17-May	Slalom	Orton Mere - Div 3 and 4	
16-May	17-May	Surf	Cornish Open - Reserve Date	
16-May	17-May	Slalom	Wagon Lane - Div 3 and 4	
17-May		Slalom	Fairmilee Tair Pool Short Course - Div 4	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Basingstoke Canal - Hasler - Southern - K1	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Mid Weaver - Hasler 09 - North West - K1	
17-May		Marathon Racing	1066 at Tonbridge - Hasler - London & S. East - K1	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Royal Leamington Spa - Hasler - Midlands - K1	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Tamar Circuit - Hasler - S. West - K2	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Norwich Broadlands Marathon - Hasler - Eastern - K2	
17-May		Marathon Racing	Grand - Dunk Marathon - (HQ) River Tay - Grandtully to Dunkeld	
19-May		Marathon Racing	Strathclyde Park 10km	
21-May		Marathon Racing	Forth & Clyde 10km - Dullatur	
22-May	24-May	Sprint Racing	World Cup 2 - Poznan, POL	
23-May		Wild Water Racing	Trent - Div A, B and Wavehopper - Youth Championship 6	

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
May	23-May		Marathon Racing	Reading Circuit - K1 - Assessment
	23-May		Marathon Racing	Loch Lubnaig Marathon - (HQ) Strathyre Weston
	23-May	24-May	Canoe Sailing	Weston
	23-May	24-May	Slalom	Fairmilee - Div 2 and 3
	23-May	24-May	Slalom	Stone - Div 3 and 4
	24-May		Wild Water Racing	Trent - Div B and Wavehopper - Midland Series 5
	24-May		Marathon Racing	Loch Lubnaig 10km K1 Championship
	24-May		Wild Water Racing	Danson Lake - Wavehopper - S. East Series 2
	24-May		Marathon Racing	Reading Circuit - Hasler - Southern - K1
	28-May	31-May	Slalom	European Champs - Holme Pierrepont
	30-May		Marathon Racing	Windsor Vets
	30-May		Marathon Racing	Nottingham - K2 - Assessment
	30-May		Sprint Racing	Linlithgow KR Regatta
	31-May		Marathon Racing	Fal - Hasler 09 - South West - K1
	31-May		Coach Update	North East Region
	31-May		Marathon Racing	Leukaemia Marathon - (HQ) Loch tay to Grandtully
	31-May		Marathon Racing	Nottingham - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K2
	5-Jun		Marathon Racing	Runcorn - Lightning Special Event
	5-Jun	7-Jun	Sprint Racing	World Cup 3 - Szeged, HUN
	6-Jun		Slalom	Holme Pierrepont - Pan Celtic - English Champs
	6-Jun		Coach Update	Southern Region - Isle of Wight
	6-Jun	7-Jun	Sprint Racing	National Regatta - Holme Pierrepont
	6-Jun	7-Jun	Surf	Pease Bay - N. East Series 3 - Short Boat Open
	6-Jun	7-Jun	Slalom	Sowerby Bridge - Div 3 and 4
	7-Jun		Slalom	Holme Pierrepont - Div 1 and 2
7-Jun		Marathon Racing	Bristol - Hasler 09 - South West - K2	
13-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Lea - Div B and Wavehopper - S. East Series 3	
13-Jun		Slalom	Fairmilee - British U14 & 16 and Veteran Champs	
13-Jun	14-Jun	Slalom	Fairmilee - Div 2 and 3	
13-Jun	14-Jun	Marathon Racing	World Cup - Copenhagen, DEN	
14-Jun		Slalom	Fairmilee - Div 4	
14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Burton - Hasler - Midlands - K2	
14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Macclesfield - Hasler - North West - K2	
14-Jun		Coach Update	Yorkshire - Humber	
14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Lower Exe and Estuary - Hasler - S. West - K1	
14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Leighton Buzzard - Hasler - East - K1	
14-Jun		Freestyle	Youth Series - Nene	
14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal - Hasler 09 - London & S. East - K1	
14-Jun		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Canoe Club Regatta	
17-Jun		Marathon Racing	Linlithgow Loch Summer Series 10km	

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

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

Have we missed any?

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

Email Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk

Club events

We are aware that there are hundreds of club based events that take place throughout the year. Unfortunately we will be unable to list them all here, however we are very keen to publicise them on the BCU website.

Email Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk

Websites:

Canoe polo : www.canoepolo.org.uk

Canoe sailing: www.intcanoe.org.uk

Sprint racing: Visit BCU, then 'Our Sport' and 'Sprint racing'

Freestyle: www.ukfreestyle.com

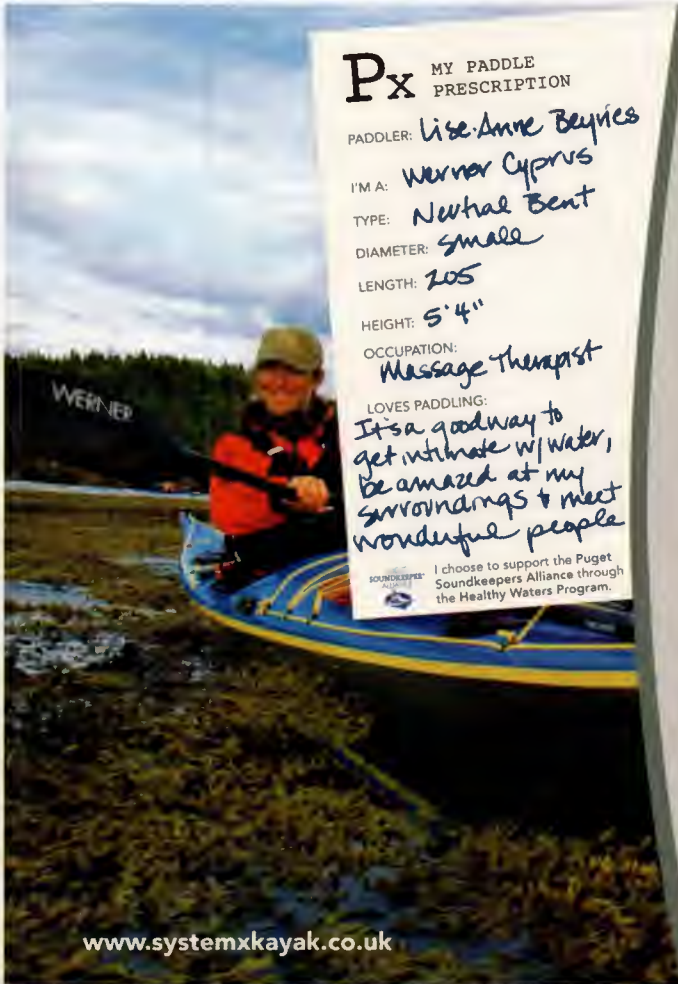
Marathon racing: www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk

Slalom: www.canoeslalom.co.uk

Surf: www.bcusurf.org.uk

Wild water racing: www.wildwater.org.uk

May



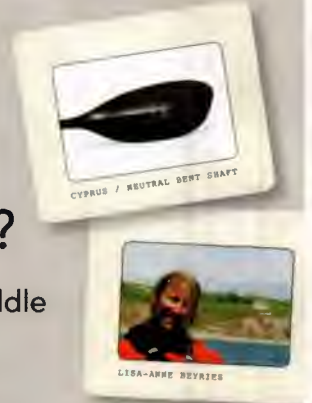
Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION
 PADDLER: *Lise Anne Beyries*
 I'M A: *Werner Cyprus*
 TYPE: *Neutral Bent*
 DIAMETER: *Small*
 LENGTH: *205*
 HEIGHT: *5'4"*
 OCCUPATION: *Massage Therapist*
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Dear BCU

I have just studied the long awaited details in CoDe regarding transferring your coaching qualifications to the new UKCC scheme. Whilst I was expecting some form of additional training to be involved (CPD modules, or some other buzz word), I am dismayed to see that you are expecting all current qualified BCU Level 2 coaches, to not only pay a registration fee but also undergo assessment for the new UKCC Level 2.

These coaches form the backbone of centre and voluntary club coaching, have already completed training and assessment and many will have years of experience in coaching under their belt. Does the BCU see this as a way to clear out the 'old wood' or just to alienate more coaches? You clearly state that the transfer is optional, but obviously the reasons to change over are quite valid and it is surely in the BCU's best interest to get as many coaches as possible converted. The BCU may have received financial support to change over their systems at NGB level and whilst some funding is reaching the volunteers who provide the support at grassroots level, they still have to fork out a third of course fees, registration fees, transport and personal time to change to a system that was forced on them and will provide them at L2 with negligible difference in remit.

Having seen the content of the new UKCC Level 3 involving a mammoth eight days of training, excluding the pre-requisites, I can't wait to see what value the BCU places on their existing Level 3 coaches for their transition to shiny new UKCC ones. Who knows (and when will we know) what demeaning plans there are for the Level 4 and 5 coaches?

This changeover has been unwanted by many, drawn out, over complicated and far from galvanising the 'union' members, is heading for a strike. Could the BCU please climb down off its UKCC horse and start talking to its members, especially the coaches that deliver the programme. It is time to support your coaches and find a simple way to provide free or inexpensive training to get them to the required new standard, not charge exorbitant registration fees and then the indignity of a re-assessment.

Surely the One Day Transfer training course could include a dynamic assessment of the course content for the qualified candidates. Successful completion would mean instant transfer to UKCC. However, the trainer could have the authority to direct that a candidate that doesn't meet the standards either attends another training session or remain at BCU Level 2.

KISS – (Keep It Simple Stupid) is the training acronym used on most courses I have attended – it is about time the BCU took its own advice.

**PHIL ATKINSON
CHAIRMAN – PHOENIX CC
BCU LEVEL 3 COACH**

Canoe England objecting to all hydro power applications

Concerning hydro electric turbines at weirs as reported in Facilities, October 2008 Canoe Focus on page 38.

I hope other canoeists felt as uncomfortable reading this as I did; "It is Canoe England policy to object to all hydro power applications!"

Are we objecting to wind power too? What about wave power, that might effect our surfing! I presume coal fired power stations are alright because they will not stop us going boating – I think not.

I understand the point that unless the word 'object' is used then our voice will not be heard. But surely we have got a better way of making our voice heard than being as narrow minded as to 'object to all hydro power applications'. This is the sort of NIMBYISM that we decry in others – such as groups who object to all forms of canoeing.

What sort of green credentials do we have if we seem not to be willing to discuss sensible ways of using renewable energy sources. The reality is that the need to reduce our carbon emissions will mean that we all have to make changes to our lifestyles.

JOHN WEINSTOCK

Whilst I agree with John, the point is that there is such a short time between us at the BCU office finding out about proposed hydro power schemes and the closure date of the public consultation process that that we have to 'object' as soon as we hear simply to get ourselves on the list for further consultation.

'Objecting' is a quasi legal planning term that does not necessarily mean that an 'objector' is against what is proposed.

'Objections' can always be withdrawn before committee decision, but, if you don't 'object' you do not get heard. This applies to all local authority planning processes.

Any 'objection' then becomes part of the local authority planning decision committee procedure, that also includes the Environment Agency's flood consent and water abstraction licence decision.

It gives us at the BCU office time to evaluate each scheme and to either

sustain or withdraw our 'objection' before the local authority's final decision on planning grounds for or against the hydro scheme being made.

Many weirs are of little interest to paddlers and we would support a hydro power scheme at these, but several of our best English sites, for example: Hurley, Boulton, Colwick (HPP) and Linton either all have been and are still under threat from hydro now.

At Beeston Weir, (located on the Trent upstream of HPP) we supported this hydro power installation.

**CHRIS HAWKESWORTH
FACILITIES MANAGER**

Rescue articles

Just a note to add some information to the canoe and kayak rescue articles that appeared in the October and December issues. I think they were slightly flawed, in that they were not 100% correct or best practice.

The canoe rescuer should get the person in the boat first as they are the most important part, not the canoe. Some canoes cannot be lifted as described as if lifted as a 'T' they form a low pressure in the hull and cannot be lifted from the water. It is best to get the person into your boat first, if they are tired you can use their swamped canoe for them to climb into first before getting into yours. They are then out of the water as in the water they are losing 26% more body heat to the water, they are also glad to be rescued and they can help with the rescue. The canoe to be rescued can be brought alongside the boat, the seat with the water broken before rolling an end onto the rescuers boat. There is no lifting involved and it works every time.

With the kayak rescue the person in the water should have the bow of the rescue boat over their shoulder, in some of the pictures it is directly in front of their face, in a slight chop they might lose some teeth. The paddles should also be used as a support across both boats to help with the rigidity of the raft.

Small changes I know but if you are going to publish in an esteemed magazine like Canoe Focus it should be totally correct.

DAVE HALSALL

Kayak Focus

I am in receipt of Canoe Focus, however, I really think you should change the title of the magazine to Kayak Focus.

Face facts, the magazine is not the least bit interested in canoeing, it is, kayaks, kayaks, kayaks, all the time. No mention, no articles for real canoeists dedicated to the art. The December front cover depicts a stern faced kayaker, the action man syndrome. Look at me, am I not the greatest? Articles on marathons, slalom, white water, youth freestyle series, recovering a capsized Kayak – all kayaks, kayaks, kayaks. Your obsession with kayaks is inexcusable.

No, I won't continue. Open your eyes, look for yourself. Count the kayaks, then count the open canoes in the magazine. I would imagine your argument would be that this is what the reader wants to read about – kayaks. Not so, certainly not for me and many people like me. There was a canoe symposium at Windermere in November. Yes, we camped and there was not a kayak to be seen thank the gods. A great weekend, one canoe did get stuck in a tree.

I would imagine your lack of attendance, lack of interest in the symposium at Windermere was due to the fact that there were no kayaks. The article on the Devises to Westminster Marathon is a good example of the different sport between kayak and canoeing. A true canoeist would not want a support team, a true canoeist is self-sufficient and carries everything with him. A true canoeist takes an interest in what is around him, he reads the river, he gets to know it well, he respects the wildlife. Not so the kayakers. One test of the difference between a kayaker and a true canoeist is to ask them who Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin is? Look to your paddle.

Bring out another magazine and call it 'Canoe Focus', bring out another magazine and call it 'Kayak Focus' but don't call 'Kayak Focus', 'Canoe Focus'.

GEOFF WEBB

The word canoeing is the generic word which describes our diverse sport so we have taken the word canoe to show all aspects of the sport and recreation.

The magazine's content is driven by the members and the articles simply reflect what is submitted to Canoe Focus by those members.

On a final note – I simply cannot agree with your views on kayakers and wildlife, being both a kayaker and canoeist and knowing many of each.

PETER TRANTER, EDITOR



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Joel Watersports, Worcester
Canoe Kayak Trader, Warwick
Brookbank Warwickshire, Warwick
West Midland Canoe Centre, Walsall

YORKSHIRE

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Wipeout, Sheffield
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Reeds Of Cambridge, Cambridge

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Marsport Ltd, Reading
Riverside Central, Oxford
Woodmill, Southampton

NORTH WEST

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SOUTH WEST

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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@bcu.org.uk or call 0845 370 9500

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

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 be able to offer this at a special rate of only £16.49 + p&p. These short sleeved black tops are available in men's and women's sizes. To purchase visit www.bcushop.org.uk.



Did you know that the Tryweryn is now free for members and you can also receive a discount at the 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.

Gaybo competition



Dave Atkins (left) from Perception Kayaks hands over a Carolina 14 to Julian Hellings who won the Gaybo competition featured in the December 2008 issue. They are outside his local Perception dealer, Performance Kayaks in Western-Super-Mare.

BCU members get 20% off
at www.lucozadeshop.com

BCU1
Discount code




Closure of a stretch of the River Tay between Burnmouth and Luncarty

8-10th June during the World Fly Fishing Championships.

Under the Scottish access legislation, event organisers can apply to the local authority to close a section of river at certain times for certain activities e.g. a large fishing competition. There has to be a special reason why the river would need to be closed. Due to the high profile nature of the World Fly Fishing Championships, their organiser has applied to Perth and Kinross Council for a Section 11 Exemption Order on a river. This has now been granted and is a legally-enforceable restriction. This means that paddlers must obey the Order.

The SCA has been heavily involved in the discussions surrounding the planned closure from the start – representing paddlers' interests and



The exact stretch of the Lower Tay is from Burnmouth (Stanley) down to Benchil, above Luncarty and the closure will take place:

- Monday June 8th 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
- Tuesday June 9th 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.
- Wednesday June 10th 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

successfully negotiating down both the number of days and hours that the stretch of the Tay will be closed.

The SCA is using every available route to publicise the forthcoming closure – to reach all paddlers including non-members. Signs will be placed at standard access points down the river to explain the situation. Stewards working at

the championships will not allow paddlers to get on the river at Burnmouth. Anyone arriving at Burnmouth from upstream will need to leave the river at this point. They will be offered a transfer service to beyond the fishing stretch which will be provided by the organisers - but this could take some time.

As there is so much daylight in June, an option is to wait until after the fishing has taken place and then continue down the river. Initially the organisers proposed shutting the river for whole days but the SCA has managed to get the closure reduced to just the time required for the actual competition. Due to the small car park at Burnmouth it is likely to be congested even in the evenings when the river is open again.

The use of the Exemption Order in Scotland is likely to remain extremely rare and be reserved for special events such as this angling competition.

Contractor announced for 2012 slalom venue

Plans for a world-class white water canoe centre for the London 2012 Games moved a step closer as the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) announced the construction contract for the venue in Broxbourne have been awarded to Morrison Construction.

With construction work set to start in June, the ODA has also now started a series of health and safety workshops in local schools to teach children about safety around construction sites.

The centre in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire will host the canoe slalom events during the Olympic Games. The venue is due for completion ahead of 2012 and will deliver an early legacy of community use and training facilities for all abilities before the Games. After the Games, the venue will be developed to become a sporting and leisure facility for canoeing and white water rafting, as well as a major competition venue for elite events. The centre will be owned, funded and managed by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, which is part of the River Lee Country Park.

Paul Owen, BCU Chief Executive, said: "The announcement of securing a contractor sees the development of a first class white water course, becoming a reality. The permanent, white water facility will provide canoeists and other users an exceptional experience beyond London 2012. Our GB canoe slalom team are certainly eager to get on the course as soon as possible. The course will also provide a lasting and positive impact on the regional economy."

Below: Illustration showing how Broxbourne will look.



Dagger test centre

The Family Adventure Store have been accredited as a Dagger test centre. To book a test contact the Family Adventure Store on 01225 768630 or info@familyadventurestore.co.uk

New child protection initiative

The BCU has revealed plans to increase efforts to proactively safeguard children involved in canoeing with the launch of an online child protection course.

The BCU acknowledges that getting people together, even for a few hours can be very difficult. As a result the BCU has been looking for a solution to train through distance learning that is inexpensive and accessible.

To that end, an online child protection and best practice training package has been developed to meet these needs. The course provides an interactive and intuitive learning experience for its applicants through reading materials, questions and answers, instant feedback, video and audio clips and step-by-step instructions.

The course has been designed specifically for the BCU and is supported and introduced by Dr Tim Brabants MBE who re-enforces the courses learning outcomes. The course is available directly via www.bcu.org.uk.

Below: Dr Tim Brabants MBE



Directory updates

Cumbria Chair

adventure@water-park.freeserve.co.uk is obsolete. Please use chair@cumbriacanoeists.org.uk in future editions. Roger Ward, Chair of Cumbria Canoeists.

Welsh Approved Centres

Welsh clubs on page 146. Email address bob-collette.isfryn@talktalk.net has changed to robert@robertspooner.orangehome.co.uk. Our address is Isfryn, Pentrellyn, Llanilar, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. SY23 4NS. Tel 01974 241526.

LRA for the Lune

Patricia Green email should be patricia.green@btinternet.com

Contracted Course Providers

The following were omitted in error:

Northern – Joseph Allen, Wearmouth, 20 Carnoustie Drive, South Shields, Tyne & Wear NE34 8BN. Tel: 0191 4967371 Email: aw2_1999@yahoo.co.uk

South West – Chris Wilson, Duchy College, Stoke Climsland, Callington PL17 8PB Email: chris.wilson@duchy.ac.uk w: www.duchy.ac.uk

Changes to Rivers Information pages

Dane and Weaver – David J. Moore phone number should be 01606 48917

Darwen – Brian Woodhouse, phone number should be 01254 201730

Dee (England Only) North West – omitted in error contact Dan Jones, Dept of Interdisciplinary Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, Crewe Green Road, Cheshire CW1 5DU. Tel: 01244 346085 Email: D.W.Jones@mmu.ac.uk
Calder, Philip Dean, email should be philipdean1@btinternet.com

Paddles stolen from Lucy Wainwright

A set of Lucy Wainwright's favourite paddles have gone missing, presumed stolen on 4th March from the National Watersports Centre, Nottingham. The paddles are made of a carbon composite construction and are black in colour. They are also unique in that they are constructed as a 'one piece' paddle, with no seam/join where the blade meets the paddle shaft. If anyone has any information please contact Wendy Blackman, GB Canoeing, Tel: 0115 9822094 ext 4.



Above: Lucy Wainwright

English Channel crossing

Youngsters Christian (13) and Wesley Hosie (19) will attempt to cross the English Channel between 23-30th of May depending on conditions to raise funds for children with leukaemia. The of 25 mile trip crosses the world's busiest shipping lane, whilst the strong tidal currents will also pose a big danger.

Launching from Shakespeare's Beach near Dover and finishing at Calais, the boys will paddle a distance of at least 25 miles.

They have on water support in the form of Mike Oram from Channelswimming.com.

With support from P+H kayaks, the boys will be paddling a Scorpio 170 and a Scorpio LV whilst being kept warm in wetsuits and thermals from Alder. AS Watersports have helped them put with all the rest of their kit and kayaks for the team to train with.

www.channelcrossing.net.

Dave Higson

Dave died of heart attack on 2nd January. Dave contracted polio when only six months old, which meant that he walked with the aid of a caliper, his bionics and used crutches to get down to the river.

With what would have been a handicap to many, Dave took to canoeing when he was 13 and ranked with the best. He consistently ranked in the top 20 slalomists, a remarkable achievement for one who had this as his only form of exercise. Later he became a fearsome polo player whose great strength made him fastest to the ball. Meanwhile he paddled some of the worlds great rivers including first descents. These are just a few of them:

Asia: Coruh (first descent), Sun Kosi, Tamur, Karnali, Marsyandi, Seti, Trisuli.

Africa: Morocco trip.

North America: Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

South America: Colca Canyon.

PETE KING

Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race

10-13th April 2009

The DW as it is 'affectionately' known in the world of canoeing, is a 125-mile ultra-marathon from Devizes in Wiltshire to Westminster Bridge in London. The event is open to all levels of paddler, from relative beginner to elite racer. It is raced non-stop by senior doubles crews and over four days by all other classes. The event takes place over the Easter weekend.

The DW record has stood for 30 years (15 hours, 34 minutes and 12 seconds), which is a long time for a record to be held.

This year the crew who set the record and the crew who came second have got back into their original partnerships of Brian Greenham (now 59) and Tim Cornish (record holders) along with Ollie Harding and Ian White to compete again. The two pairs were out and about competing on Waterside C in March. Only a few minutes separated them at the finish. This time Ollie and Ian won the pairings race but Brian and Tim did have to stop and repair their seats a couple of times. Tim had only flown in from South Africa (where he now lives) for a mere 24 hours just to do the race!

Many well known people have competed in the DW. One is Lord Paddy Ashdown who took part when he was in the Royal Marines finishing in a time of 26 hours. He says of the race (affectionately) that he knows of only one other who has had a more challenging Easter than him and that was Jesus Christ!

Others of note include the famous explorer Ranulph Fiennes who has taken part three times and has an average time of 27.4 hours.

This year Olympic rower James Cracknell is taking part in the race as part of his personal challenges.

Note the four day event starts on Friday 10th April but the straight through race which the above crews mentioned will take part in, starts on Saturday, 11th April.

www.dwrace.org.uk



Left: The finish of DW at Westminster Bridge.

Surf-Lines demo day

Sunday 26th April

Surf-Lines, along with many of the leading canoe and kayak manufacturers, are hosting a free demo day at the Surf-Lines Paddlesports shop in Llanberis, Snowdonia.

Manufacturers will include Dagger, Liquid Logic, Valley, Ocean Kayak, Native Watercraft and Old Town. There will also be plenty of expert advice from our knowledgeable staff and the chance to meet the guys that actually make these fantastic boats. Contact www.surf-lines.co.uk for further information

YORCIE www.yorcie.org.uk

CLUBS: Using the listed information from the new 2009 Members Directory, I have now emailed all 30 clubs, in an attempt to set up a regional clubs circulation list. Amongst other things, this will be used to circulate information which would miss a copy date in this column. If your club didn't get an email from me dated 15th Feb 2009, then please email me at RDTchair@yorcie.org.uk so I can make the changes. If your club didn't get listed then again please email me to be added.

Throughout the helpers and clubs listings in the Members Directory, you will see the use of a generic email address e.g. something ???@yorcie.org.uk. The bit preceding the @ can be yours. The idea is that each year, clubs change their secretaries, treasurers etc and that change has to be communicated to all those that you or your club deals with. With the @yorcie.org.uk system all you do is give us the private email address you want to receive the @yorcie emails and we do the rest. If you want to have this facility please email rco.yorkshire@yorcie.org.uk

The River Washburn, run by the region, is an excellent facility offering a full calendar of open cruises, slaloms, freestyle and wild water racing. Although we expect all events to take place, there is always the possibility of cancellation. Confirmation will be given 14 days before for a discipline event, ten days for a weekend cruise and seven days for evening cruises. Contact the YORCIE info line 0845 833 8654, this will state whether a release has been confirmed by Yorkshire Water, also check www.yorcie.org.uk If you got a very early copy of the 2009 dates, please note there is an additional evening cruise on 22nd July.

DATES: All clubs are invited to bring their members to Roundhay Park in Leeds on Sunday 10th May where PDO Gareth and WRCC will be running another 'Fun-paddle-Fest'. Further information is available at mail@whiterosecc.org.uk. On 30th May White Rose invite the public and paddlers to Roundhay Park to take part in the National Families Day. On May 24th Manvers are having a general 'Come and try it' and on Aug 2nd a 'Race day'. Details available at manvers@yorcie.org.uk and Gareth@bcu.org.uk

COACHING: RCO John Lucas (rco.yorkshire@bcu.org.uk) and Coaching Secretary Janet Cartwright (secretary.coaching@yorcie.org.uk) along with the four LCOs have now held local coaching meetings in all four counties of north, south, east and west Yorkshire. If you didn't get to know about these then it's because Janet couldn't contact you. So please let us have your contact details. We really need you as an individual to 'opt-in' and contact us to ensure old email addresses can be deleted.

DICK CONSTABLE RDTchair@yorcie.org.uk

Hilary Thomas 1958-2009

Hilary and her son Mark joined Banbury & District Canoe Club in 1998. She encouraged and supported Mark as he progressed up the divisions, eventually paddling for GB youth team. Hilary was always very proud of Mark's achievements and she was also really pleased that he qualified as a polo referee.

Hilary's organisational skills were soon jumped on by the club and she became treasurer and later the marathon representative. She took it on herself to build up the marathon team of paddlers by creating new pairings of members in K2 boats. It certainly worked, when in September 2006 Banbury & District Canoe Club took part in their first Hasler final for many years. Since 2006, we have been to the next two Hasler finals, finishing in the top six each time. Hilary also gained her coaching qualification and often helped coach the beginners at the club.

Hilary and I occasionally paddled with other partners, but formed our first partnership paddle in January 2004. She always went in the front of the boat and quickly took control. We were very serious with our paddling and very determined to do as well as we could, but we also had lots of fun and laughter and built up friendships with paddlers from other clubs.

It was at Thames Valley in June 2005 that we had to retire, as Hilary's shoulder was hurting. Four weeks later, we were given the devastating news that Hilary had Multiple Myeloma – a form of cancer that is incurable but that you can hold at bay for a few years. Hilary met the disease head on – becoming an expert in her condition – attending meetings, working with Myeloma UK and also involving the club in her fundraising efforts.

In August 2005, Hilary decided that she should stand down as marathon rep after starting her chemotherapy, which was very debilitating.

As her illness relentlessly progressed, Hilary was able to set and achieve targets that initially seemed impossible. If she got to the line, the goal posts moved as a new challenge appeared. In between two exhausting treatments, Hilary decided to race at the Reading Circuit event in June 2007, which she chose to do in K1 on her own. She decided to go for sponsorship for this event and was thrilled to raise £850 – it was a great achievement and there wasn't a dry eye between us at the finishing line!

Early in 2008, Hilary decided to celebrate her 50th birthday in style by organising a grand charity ball in Oxford on 11th October. The event was a huge success and she brought her family, friends and colleagues together to celebrate with her. Sadly, it was just a fortnight after the ball that Hilary felt the Myeloma had returned again and soon afterwards Hilary made weekly trips to the local Katherine House hospice. Hilary managed to come home for Christmas, which gave the club members a chance to see her and catch up with all the news at a very special party on Christmas Eve.

Unfortunately, several weeks later, Hilary deteriorated and sadly passed away on January 24th. At her funeral, the crematorium was overflowing with friends and colleagues whose lives she had touched with her courage and determination. Her family and I have received so many, wonderful tributes to Hilary from canoeing friends and acquaintances from all over the country and several from abroad. She was a very special lady.

JULIE WOOD, BANBURY & DISTRICT CC

Alfred Leonard Frank Buttle DSM MBE 'Sandy' 1920-2009 President of Canoe Wales



Above: Sandy paddling summer 2008.

Sandy, together with his late wife Moira, herself a great supporter of Welsh paddlesport, dedicated most of his adult life to youth work. He was founder and leader of the Pembroke Youth Club including the 'Pembrokeshire Paddlers', District Commissioner in the Scouting movement where he formed the St. John's Marine Division

Sandy was one of the founding members of the Welsh Canoeing Association and in 1975 became chairman and was elected as the organisation's first president in the mid-1990s.

Sandy's knowledge of the tides and currents and the wildlife around the Pembrokeshire coast was as amazing as the contents of his infamous kit bag. This he used to empty out at the start of courses and inevitably there was always something new in it. His leadership on the sea, his sheer strength and paddling ability, the care he took of his group, his inventiveness in setting up scenarios for people to problem solve, were all second to none. Sandy had a wonderful personality and a deep seated sense of humour.



Sandy and Moira were an inspiration to a legion of Pembroke Dock youngsters from all sorts of backgrounds. Without their influence the lives of many people in Pembroke Dock would be very different. Sandy was instrumental in introducing huge numbers of youngsters to outdoor experiences of all kinds.

He organised the building of boats both in canvas and fibreglass and often bought them out of his own pocket. Boats would suddenly appear that Sandy had done a deal over. Members will tell you how Sandy negotiated with retailers to get deals for their own boats and even paying the difference if they were short of the asking price.

He was keen that members tried lots of different types of canoe sport and took members to slaloms, polo competitions, boat shows and canoe exhibitions as well as on the sea, surfing and river trips. He was also heavily involved in lifesaving using the old rescue canoes at places like Atlantic College, not to mention the St John's Ambulance rescue boat.

Sandy was still turning up on our weekly club sessions both on the Daugleddau during the summer and indoors in winter until just before Christmas. His ability to give accurate technical advice was second to none. I quote here Charlie, one of our youngest members. "Sandy was a great person and even though I didn't know him for long he made a lasting impression on me and was a great inspiration. He was always smiling and jolly and giving me tips for my canoeing, even though he was 88 and I am 13 we talked as if we were the same age and enjoyed doing the same sport which is quite amazing. I will always remember Sandy and I will miss him greatly."

**ROB JOHN
PEMBROKESHIRE PADDLERS**

Sandy was responsible for achieving representation and demonstration events for canoeing at the Royal Welsh Show. For countless years Sandy acted as Access Officer for the Welsh Canoeing Association, he was active in promoting the Welsh polo tournament.

In March 2007 Sandy was awarded the BCU's Medal of Honour for Lifetime Achievement. As another recognition the buildings at the National White Water Centre for Wales, Canolfan Tryweryn, were named after him. Sadly Sandy was not aware that he was about to be further honoured with the vice presidency of the BCU.

Sandy was a unique and wonderful person with a giant heart who possessed profound wisdom and character. He lived life to the full, a truly great man whose life enriched so many others.

Sandy, although you are no longer with us what you gave to us in life will be with us forever.

**ALAN BAKER
CROESYCEILIOG CANOE CLUB
VICE CHAIR CANOE WALES**

Left: Hilary with her son Mark.

Big 5 Kayak Challenge battles arctic weather conditions



Six members of the Big 5 kayak team braved some of the worst winter conditions that the UK has seen for many decades to paddle 184 miles from Cricklade in Wiltshire to near the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, near Dartford. The team ages ranged from 14-year-old Aaron Buckingham, already a potential slalom star of the future and Division 1 K1 paddler to 56-year-old Geoff Tilford, a former GB sprint paddler. Richard Harpham, joint team leader commented "For most of Thursday we were undecided whether to postpone to better conditions with our main concerns being the safety of our support crews. In the end after studying plenty of weather reports we decided to go for it. I am so proud that all six completed the length of the Thames despite paddling over 18 hours a day for three days and battling blizzards, night temperatures of minus six degrees and difficult river conditions.

"As they say the pain lasted for hours but the memories of our kayaking expedition will undoubtedly remain with us all for a lifetime. We are all clear that this was about two key objectives: safely paddling the length of the Thames in a challenging way and of course raising money and awareness for the Muscular Help Foundation and their work."

The Big 5 challenges

1. To the Isle of Wight, round it and back – **Completed**
2. The length of Thames, non stop – **Completed**
3. The English Channel, dodging Ferries – **Due April**
4. To the Scilly Isles from Cornwall – **Due May**
5. Vancouver Island to Alaska – 1000 miles – **Due June**

The Big 5 Kayak Challenge also raises awareness for The River Access Campaign (www.riversaccess.org), campaigning for rights of access to English Rivers.

Support us and sponsor our nominated charity: www.big5kayakchallenge.com

Back for 2009



Youth Freestyle is back for 2009 kicking off on the 19th April at Llangollen. It then moves to the Nene on 14th June, to Boutlers on 11th July, followed by the Washburn on 6th September and finishes with a final at Nottingham on 13th September. Due to course updates there will be no Teeside event this year.

The series is a number of one-day events aimed at progressing white water paddlers. It is open to any 18 and under paddlers with a fairly reliable white water roll who want to improve their freestyle or white water paddling or who want to take part in a fun freestyle competition. It doesn't matter if you have no previous experience of competition or if you're on the GB team – the competition caters for all levels of paddler.

The 2008 series attracted over 100 entrants to the Nottingham event and due to these increasing numbers we need to bring the format of the event into line. Each day will now consist of paddling workshops followed by a fun freestyle competition and where sites (and time) allow a river race.

For information on the series and entering visit www.youthfreestyle.co.uk. The series is supported by: UKFreestyle, Palm/Dagger, Square Rock/Jackson Kayaks, K3, BCU North East region, Kayakojacko and Desperate Measures.

Mersey Memory Paddle Sunday 7th June



The River Mersey Canoe Trail was opened in 2006 with 18 miles of unrestricted canoe touring through a green corridor of south Manchester from Stockport to Carrington. What could I do to introduce it to the wider canoeing public? Organise a tour, perhaps a charity tour, like the Doggy Paddle.

I decided to see if the Alzheimers Society were interested and my idea was received enthusiastically by Lead Branch Development Manager Sue Clarke. We agreed that the Society would do the land jobs on the day and Macclesfield Canoe Club the water borne tasks. We decided to name the tour the Mersey Memory Paddle. June was selected for a relaxing paddle in sunny weather and the Mersey keeps a good depth in most summers.

So what are we offering? Quite a lot if our plans all work out, so I am describing it as a luxury tour.

- Toilets and refreshments at the start at Stockport.
- Coach to bring shuttle drivers back to the start before the tour, sponsored by the EA.
- Safe portage steps at each of the four weirs.
- Drink sales at one picnic spot.

- A riverside pub.
- Refreshments, toilets and changing facilities at the end provided by Carrington Parish Council.

The surplus from your entry fees will go to the charity, or you could collect sponsorship. If you want more information look for details on www.alzheimers.org.uk.

For a guide to the trail visit: http://resource.brookbankcanoes.co.uk/advice_articles/mersey_canoe_trail.pdf

Left: The K2 paddlers are Ned Price and Andrew Millett of MADCC. Photo: Stockport MBC.

CHRIS CLEAVER

Danger: collapsed weir

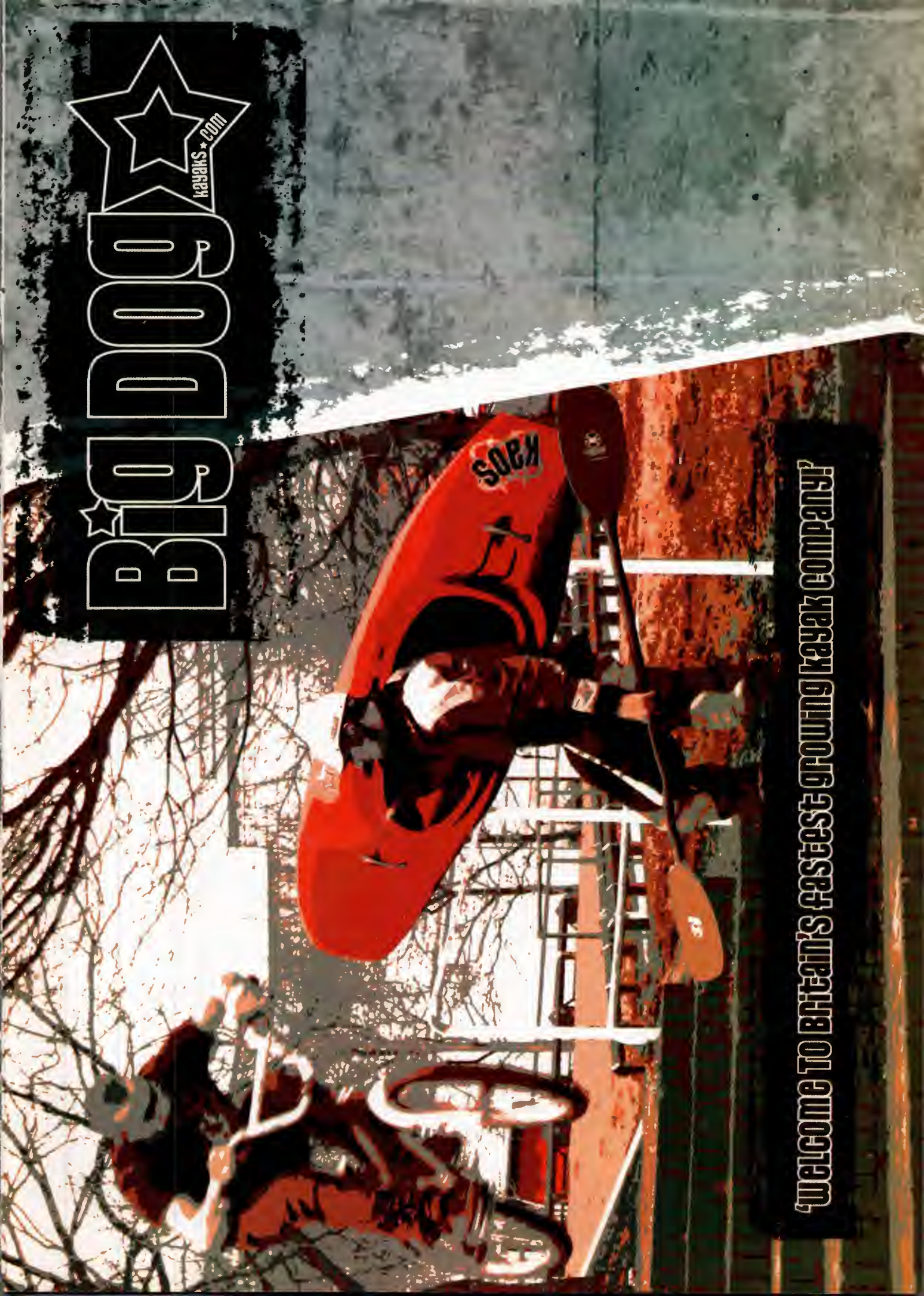
Chadkirk Weir on the River Goyt between Marple and Stockport has partially collapsed leaving a large gap in the centre. Please do not be tempted to shoot the gap as there are a number of stakes that may trap paddlers. The weir should be inspected and portaged if necessary.

PHOTO BY MARK BUTLAND



BIG DOGS

kayaks.com



WELCOME TO BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING KAYAK COMPANY!

Sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor.

BCU and Canoe England are proud to announce the winning clubs for this year's prestigious title of BCU Club of the Year 2009.

Runner up:

Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club



The club provides opportunities for young people, adults and families to enjoy paddlesport on the local canal. Their multi-discipline approach provides a welcoming environment for a

club who encourage everyone to get involved – regardless of age and ability. The club have developed links with the local council, scouts and guide groups to promote and develop the sport within the area and provides valuable sessions to young offenders and are keen to work closely with Aldershot based charity KC21 in order to support disadvantaged children.

Volunteers work hard to maintain the success of the club at local and national level. The club ensure volunteers recognise they are valued within through their annual 'thank you' supper. As organisers of the annual Hasler Marathon, the club, balance the welcoming family orientated club with the professional organisation of a national event.

Runner up:

Trentham Canoe Club



Based in a parkland near Stoke on Trent, the club provides a welcoming environment with a buzzing

atmosphere. The club encourage everyone to take part and try from children and adults to parents and grandparents, of all abilities. Club coaches work tirelessly to provide introductory and specialised coaching to schools; youth and scout groups as well as to special schools and asylum seekers.

Volunteers and coaches worked as a team to raise funds and seek grants for the new clubhouse and their efforts did not go unnoticed. Coaches and volunteers are supported well within the club structure with recognition as well as subsidised courses to develop their qualifications and skills.

This relatively small and new club have achieved outstanding results and provide a positive paddlesport experience for everyone regardless of age or ability.



BCU Club of the Year Awards 2009

Winners: Viking Kayak Club

Bedford based Viking Kayak Club was founded in 1961 with a heritage of flat water racing and slalom. Their involvement in the local community up to national level ensures this club have plenty to offer in a number of disciplines regardless of recreational or competitive aspirations.

Club spirit is high with a clear emphasis on club events – treasure hunts, race nights and indoor slalom. Following a review on membership a few years ago, the club set up links with schools; provided taster sessions and introduced a family membership fee. Their numerous strategies were rewarded with an increase in membership from 75 to 270 over two years.

Within the community, the club are clearly at the forefront in Bedford and were involved in the development of the 'Paddle Bedford' network scheme. Their work with local councils, sports clubs and river users ensures a direct pathway for paddlesport is available from schools to the club for both participants and volunteers. With



Above: Viking paddlers

the well-deserved accolade of 'Spirit of the Festival' at the Bedford River Festival, the club ensured paddlesport took centre stage with their taster sessions, demonstrations and illuminated night paddle.

Nationally, the club are renowned for their slalom paddlers including international Etienne Stott; Division 1 champion Jake Silvester (16) and British Veteran Champion Peter Parker. Viking Kayak Club, however, are keen to ensure they excel at all levels and provide

opportunities for everyone. As well as club sessions, coaches provide sessions to under-privileged children and the club are developing their provision for disabled paddling – the club have a disabled paddling co-ordinator and are co-designing a new racing boat for disabled paddlers.

Presentations will be made to all three clubs later this year. All three clubs received Cotswold Vouchers and have been nominated for the CCPR's (Central Council of Physical Recreation) Sports Club of the Year (SCOTY) Awards 2009 with the chance to win up to £6,000.

Below: Basingstoke paddlers



Below: Trentham paddlers



APRIL OFFERS

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(Great performance)
£19.95



Yak Volt Cag
£125



Level 6 Mack Cag
~~RRP £179~~
offer £125



Yak Pursuit Cag
£179

BUOYANCY AIDS



Yak Kallista Legacy Buoyancy Aid
~~RRP £149.95~~
£44.95



Astral Green Jacket
£149.95



CSR Buoyancy Aid
From **£20.50**



Palm Kaikoura
£119.95

HELMETS



Predator Side Cut
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Sweet Strutter
£139



Jobe Hustler
£29.95

River Pack

- Pyranha Karnalli
- Palm Classic Deck
- Werner Rio

~~RRP £802.95~~
OFFER £700



Sit On Pack

- Perception Scooter Beach
- Yak Kallista Legacy PFD
- Carlisle 2PC Paddle

~~RRP £398~~
OFFER £350



Inflatable Pack

- Sterns Backcountry
- DayTripper Paddle x 2
- Pump

~~RRP £405~~
OFFER £350



ACCESSORIES



IR Union Suit
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C-tug Trolley
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Palm Granite Shoe
£35.95



Nookie Extreme Dry Trousers
£129.95



Petal Screw gate Carabineer
£13.00



Jackson Happy Feet
£39.95



Peak Head Case
£15.00



Nookie Amara Glove
£14.99



Palm Sidewinder Dry suit
£399
(new model)



Palm Element Dry Suit
£399
(new model)



Yak Titan Drysuit
£349.95



Typhoon Multisport Dry Suit
£375

Please call for Centre quotes
All Major Brands Stocked



pyranha



RobinHood Watersports

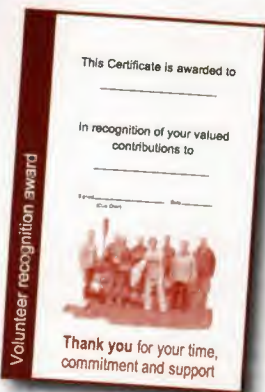
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'Certificate of Thanks' template

The new 'Certificate of Thanks' is available online and designed for you to edit – reword the document, change the picture or add your own logo to ensure it is personal to your organisation. Certificates show your appreciation of volunteers and can be handed out at committee meetings or club presentations – remember, make sure your volunteers feel appreciated!



Visit: www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers

Club forums

Following the success of last year's club forums, new dates have now been announced for 2009. Canoe England staff will travel across the country to meet clubs and volunteers to provide information, updates and listen to your ideas.

Feedback from last year's club forums showed that volunteers valued the opportunity to meet Canoe England support staff, as it provided support and information on the resources available to clubs and volunteers.

Dates for 2009 are:

TEAM NORTH

Yorkshire Saturday 24th October venue tbc
Book by 14th Wednesday October

North West Sunday 25th October, venue tbc
Book by Wednesday 14th October

TEAM CENTRAL

East & West Midlands Saturday 17th October, Burton CC
Book by Tuesday 6th October

East Saturday 14th November, venue tbc
Book by Tuesday 3rd November

TEAM SOUTH

London & South East Sunday 17th May, Eyot Henley
Book by Wednesday 6th May

South West Sunday 21st June, Exeter CC
Book by Wednesday 10th June

If you would like more information on any of the topics on this page, visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers or contact Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer julia.robertson@bcu.org.uk

Youth action

Members of the Youth Action Network (YAN) met Tim Brabants MBE in January as a reward for their hard work and contribution to the group. The group of young volunteers were invited to the English Coach Conference to meet for the first time and were rewarded with the opportunity to meet the Olympic Champion.

Tim Parker, one member from Hampshire, explains more about the group: "The Youth Action Network is a newly created panel of young people whose primary aim is to represent the voices of young people throughout England.

"YAN consists of young people who are regularly volunteering having completed either the Cadet

Leader Award, BCU Lifeguard, 4 and 5 Star awards or any BCU Coaching Award. So far YAN have provided feedback on a variety of topics including the BCU website and the Cadet Leader Award. During these early times we have also focused on developing a 'Terms of Reference' for the group, and deciding how the group will operate most efficiently.

"YAN aim to raise their profile within the paddling communities, to review resources, advertising, delivery of the Cadet Leader Award and to consider new ways of encouraging, rewarding and developing young volunteers."

BY TIM PARKER



Left to right:

Tim Parker, Tim Brabants, Abbie Chambers and Sam Hargreaves.

Paddlesport Rewards Scheme

The new Paddlesport Rewards Scheme recognises the hours dedicated to volunteering in paddlesport. Many volunteers have already signed up to the scheme and are logging their hours of volunteering to receive recognition after 10, 25 or 50 hours.

What counts as an hour of volunteering?

For Canoe England, a volunteer is defined as any person who gives their time to the sport in any role whether in a club, centre, committee or at an event. This could include as a coach, official, committee member, trustee, parent helper and anyone else who gives their time free of charge – even if it is making the tea, driving the minibus, washing the kit or repairing equipment.

Volunteer coordinator pack

Clubs, centres and committees 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 for your club, centre or committee.

European Canoe Slalom Championships volunteer programme

Like all major events, volunteers will mainly staff the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships. 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 – so sign up to www.london2012.com and gain some experience starting in May 2009!

Voice of young people

Are you a young person who is part of your club committee? Are you part of a youth committee? Would you like to be part of your committee to represent the views of young people? Do you have any ideas or issues, which you would like to be heard? If so, Canoe England would like to hear from you – get in touch with Julia Robertson, see details in the box to the left.



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Kate Bradley



I started working for the BCU in October 1989 after previously working for the health service for ten years and prior to this I was employed as a police officer in Nottingham.

I am now the longest serving paid administrator working under the umbrella of customer services dealing with membership.

Initially the BCU was based at Mapperley Hall in Nottingham at this time there were approximately ten members of staff and membership applications were three months behind.

I had to work hard and take work home most evenings to try to get membership in some sort of order, this involved getting my family to help.

After working at Mapperley Hall for a short time we moved to our purpose built offices at John Dudderidge House with excellent views of the Trent. If I had the opportunity I would move back tomorrow as I miss the direct contact with the sport, seeing the paddlers training and competing.

In those days we only had one computer for membership and coaching combined. I had the database for four days and coaching had it for the remaining days.

I have very fond memories of attending the International Canoe Exhibition held annually at Crystal Palace.

When I was very much younger I attended an Outward Bound course and participated in canoeing and climbing. Although I did enjoy canoeing, I didn't keep that interest, I did however climb for a number of years and I do still swim.

I still really enjoy my job and the contact with the membership. I still strive to help and assist members to the best of my ability and I give, I hope, a good service.

My main interests out of work are cooking entertaining, travel, reading and visiting my 20-month old granddaughter Ellie.

Behind the scenes...

There is an excellent team of people who support the work of both the BCU and Canoe England at the Bingham office.

This hard working team are mainly unknown to members but many of you may well have spoken to them or received mail from them at some time so we thought we would unlock the mystery and show who they are and that they are very much an extremely important part of our organisation.

James Hinves



James, aged 35, is Canoe England Team South Senior Development Officer (SDO) based in Southampton. James's current role as SDO gives him a view on where the PDO and employed coaches spend their time and support, developing the Schools Competition Framework and supporting the Rocket K4 are two key areas of work at the moment. He helps RCOs and LCOs to put on the coaching system, to support the marathon committee and to develop their program.

What makes you really enjoy your role?

Supporting the clubs and seeing their progress.

How long have you worked for Canoe England?

Four years.

Before you came to work for Canoe England had you ever been a volunteer in canoeing?

I have worked within Southampton Canoe Club since the early '90s, helping with coaching and even before that I worked with the Scouts as a volunteer getting them on the water.

Do you still volunteer?

Yes - I coach both adults and juniors at the club when I am available. I act as Southampton Clubs Grants officer helping the club develop as part of the committee I also support one of Southampton fastest paddlers as a sounding board and checklist to help them develop.

When did you learn to canoe and what was your first boat?

I learnt to paddle when I started to work at Woodmill and my first boat was a stitch and glue Ottersports tourer that my uncle made as a school project.

How did you get interested in the sport?

I have had a fantastic amount of inspirational people around me that formed my paddling, Chris Blakey and Jon Marchant started me off, Phil Quill gave me the tools of my trade together with John Smith gave me my coaching and the love of the sport. Steve Rance and Rick Kent showed me a level to aspire to and now I have fantastic paddlers around me such as my two bosses Howard Blackman and Sue Hornby.

You have been spotted racing.

What is it about racing that you enjoy so much?

Racing for me is a social activity, and makes two aspects of my paddling easy, I can fit a training session into 90 minutes, but in addition to that my friends all race. Now I am over 35 and a Veteran, racing can really commence.

What other aspects of canoeing do you enjoy?

I have done many forms of paddling, paddling in Spate Miners Bridge near Betwsy, and running the loop on the Dart are two of the trips that stick out in my mind, however, rounding the tip of Cap Frehel in Brittany in waves that you could fit a Nordkapp on the face of was quite exciting!

How did you first become involved in canoeing?

My first experience was a 2 Star course with the Scouts for six evenings in Southampton. I then attended Bicton College in Devon to train and an outdoor instructor.

What else do you do in your life other than canoeing?

Actually not a lot, I try to make sure I paddle at least once a week but preferably three or four times, maybe an event at the weekend. With being at home with my wife (who also paddles) and three boys and a bit of coaching at the club this does not leave much time for anything else.

What is a typical workday like?

So far this week I have visited two clubs, run an evening coach update on the Isle of Wight, been part of the regional operations group for Skills Active, met the water sports officers from Sport Hampshire, written two pieces for Canoe Focus, added to the Schools Competition Framework document and replied to over 100 emails, all ready for Thursday and Friday, to prepare for the coach update on Saturday.

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National Go Paddling week

23rd- 31st May 2009

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 a taster event at a time which suits you. If you already provide taster sessions we are not asking you to put on more, just that you let us know so we can help you promote them. If you do not already run taster sessions maybe it is something your club/centre could look into doing.

What support do we get from Canoe England?

As part of this programme, Canoe England would like to support you in a number of ways

- Through signposting email and phone enquiries from head office to your club/centre.
- Furthermore, your event will be promoted through the website and in Canoe Focus.

How does your club/centre benefit?

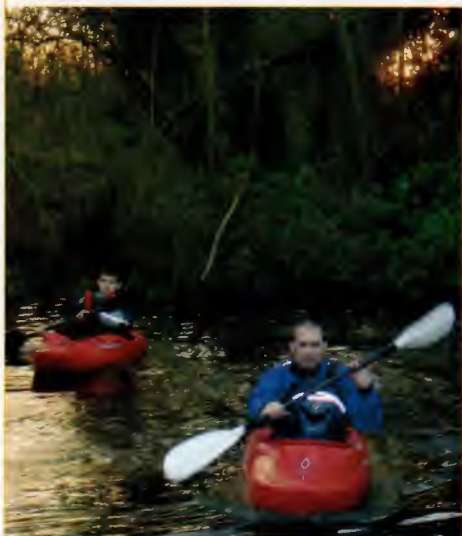
- Support from Canoe England for your club/centre to manage and prepare for the potential rise in interest in paddlesport.
- Potential and new members.
- Income – Canoe England will launch a commission scheme for clubs that send us completed membership forms from new members.
- Welcome pack templates.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

How do we get involved?

To register contact Kimberley Walsh at Canoe England, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham, NG13 8AP

Email: Kimberley.walsh@bcu.org.uk

Tel: 0845 370 9520



Paddlepower news

Paddlepower's colourful and youth centred approach aims to:

- Encourage more young people to come into and stay in the sport.
- Provide progression and reward achievement in a wide range of topics.
- Show them all aspects of the sport – both competitive and adventurous.
- Provide signposts into clubs where their skills and development can be nurtured.
- Provide a flexible structure for delivery according to venue/situation.



The scheme comprises of five awards to support a young paddler's introduction and progress in paddlesport.

Paddlepower Start

An entry level award suitable for taster sessions or as part of a series of sessions.

Paddlepower Passport

Four progressive levels based on 24 topics which can be grouped into Safety Awareness, Paddling Skills, Varied Experiences, and Supporting Knowledge. The award is equivalent to 1 Star.

Paddlepower Discover

This follows on from Passport with a further four levels to take the young paddler to equivalent of 2 Star standard.

Paddlepower Explore

Three different levels take the paddler on an extensive journey exploring the great variety of paddlesport, with topics focused on participation in events and journeys in the competitive and non-competitive disciplines.

Paddlepower Excel

Three levels to test the paddler on all elements of paddlesport including being responsible for self and others, participation in journeys, coaching sessions, training, events/competitions in a variety of disciplines, background knowledge of the sport, access, rules, environmental, nutrition and goal setting.

How does it work?

At Paddlepower Start there is a certificate which is awarded by the coach. This also has space for an organisation to add their contact details to signpost the paddler to future courses.

For each award after Start there is a colourful six page progress card for the young paddler to record their progress and to encourage them to move to the next stage. On completion of the award the youth sends the progress card to their home nation to receive a certificate.

Who can deliver the awards?

A Level 1 coach can deliver Paddlepower Start, after that a Level 2 coach is required. For Explore and Excel, a Level 2 coach can deliver with support from a discipline specific coach.

How is Paddlepower different from the Star Awards?

Paddlepower has been designed around the needs of young people – fun, colourful and with easily identifiable progression mapped to the Long Term Paddler Development framework. The BCU recommend Paddlepower as most suitable for young people aged 14 or under and the Star Awards for most paddlers aged over 16.

How do I get started?

All Paddlepower resources are now available to purchase from the BCU Eshop www.bcu.org.uk

Paddlepower Start certificates are available to buy in packs of ten and Paddlepower progress cards in packs of five. If you wish to be invoiced or would like to order more than 50 packs please complete an order form and post it to Canoe England, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham, NG13 8AP.



Paddlepower amazing fact!

There are three governing bodies of sport that are using the concept behind Paddlepower to develop their own youth performance awards. The three sports are water skiing, ten pin bowling and angling – yes angling. It just goes to show how far Paddlepower can reach!

Canoe 2012 Something for everyone

Background

Paddlesport is 'more than just medals' – the Canoe England Paddlesport Participation Programme is committed to maximising an increase in paddlesport 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.

What will it look like?

Raising the profile of the Olympic disciplines of paddlesport across the wider paddling community by establishing a series of regional flat water and slalom based events in across England. We plan to support events across the all the English regions. We hope to attract and develop more slalom and flat water coaches, volunteers and officials by offering an event which is designed to help and inspire.

We anticipate that these event we attract somewhere in the region of 30 participates per event. The events will support many different venues from swimming pools to open water. The ethos behind Canoe 2012 is flexibility and support above all welcoming. Event guidelines will be in place to help and inspire more paddlesport opportunities

If you already have an event planned that could fit the scope of a Canoe 2012 event or you would like to know how you could participate in a Canoe 2012 event near you please contact a member of the participation team.



North West paddling weekend

The weekend of the 20-21st June is the date for the annual North West paddling weekend at the Anderton Centre, Horwich. We have plans for demo fleets, a bring and buy kit sale plus great sessions for all abilities of paddlers and coaches. It is a chance to come along and meet other local paddlers to develop your skills, refresh or learn new top tips from other coaches. This weekend can also count as a coach update.

Costs for North West club paddlers are £50 for the weekend including bed and breakfast and entry to the slides and evening social or £30 a day. These prices are for North West club paddlers; non-club paddlers will cost more. Details on www.bcu.org.uk.



Club Coach and Leader Symposium

Team North is trying something new this year. We are organising a symposium for club coaches and leaders in the Northern region. The aim of the symposium is to run sessions for club coaches and leaders to help develop their personal skills and develop practical coaching or leadership tips from some of the top coaches in the region.

The catered weekend is based at a bunkhouse in the Tee's Valley. With sessions planned to run for inland kayak, open canoe, sea kayak and slalom coaches. All sessions are planned to run within the locality. One pre-requisite is that you will need to be an active coach or leader in your club. Contact your RCO for more information.

Bobby Timperley retires as PDO North East

Bobby joined the Youth Programme back in 2001 as Paddlesport Development Officer for the North East and has worked tirelessly serving the region extremely well. Perhaps Bobby's lasting legacy is discovering Sandra Hyslop whom she helped and inspired into wild water racing and progressed into becoming wild water racing Junior World Champion. Bobby has been a true asset to Canoe England and will be missed greatly. In recent years Bobby has faced significant personal challenges, we have all admired her courage and bravery during these difficult times. We all wish Bobby all the very best for the future.

Ray Hudspith has now moved into the role of Paddlesport Development Officer North East. His contact details are ray.hudspith@bcu.org.uk. Tel: 07715 993535.

Regional contacts

TEAM NORTH

SDO NORTHERN

Nigel Timmins

Email: nigel.timmins@bcu.org.uk

Tel: 01768 480 084

Mobile: 07740 820113

PDO NORTH EAST

Ray Hudspith

(Temporary cover for Bobby Timperley)

Email: ray.hudspith@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 07715 993535

PDO NORTH WEST/YORKS

Gareth Field

Email: gareth.field@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 07738 185885

TEAM CENTRAL

SDO CENTRAL/

PDO EAST MIDLANDS

Stuart Briggs

Email: stuart.briggs@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 07718 982091

PDO WEST MIDLANDS

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PDO EASTERN

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Tel: 0238 031 9812

Mobile: 07834 583369

PDO LONDON and SOUTH EAST

Andy Gray

Email: andy.gray@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 07894 396484

PDO SOUTH WEST

Andy Davey

Email: andy.davey@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 07912 466264

Paddling with your peers

Canoeing has changed so much over a relatively short period of time. From the early basic performance awards to Paddlepower, the ever-changing design of boats through to the very fashion conscious outfits. There is one thing that has not changed, since I started paddling back in 1973 – the sheer joy of paddling with like-minded people from different walks of life coming together to share ideas, thoughts, skills, coaching tips and constructive views about the BCU and what it should and could do for the ordinary paddler!

On many occasions over the last couple of years I have had the good fortune to go paddling with many clubs from within and outside of the Eastern region but the best part about these ventures were that all these clubs joined together. Small groups of paddlers from each club making contact and arranging a weekend, be it touring, competition or testing for Star Awards. Everyone was making a new friend, whilst learning and understanding more about the sport of canoeing, and gaining a sense of achievement.

And of course qualifications varied from Star Award holders to Level 3 and 4 coaches. Within a group like this you cannot fail to learn more about the art of paddling. Surely this must be the way forward to achieving greater success in the sport we hold so dear to our hearts. I know over the years I have met many paddlers and stayed in contact with them but seldom have I had the opportunity to join together with so many clubs and be with so many wonderful adventurous people.

A way forward? Yes. A way to greater achievement? Yes. A way to an understanding of good organisation and leadership? Yes. A better and safer way to enjoy paddling? Yes. A positive way to improve your BCU? Yes. Do try it if you haven't already done so.

Good and safe paddling to you all and I hope I shall meet many of you, especially those in the Eastern Region, at various events throughout the year.

CHRIS DAVIES
RCO EASTERN REGION

MaD canoeists return

When the local community and St Peters High School got together recently, they decided to bring back the canoe club that had been dormant for the last 20 years. With help from a Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) grant from the Burnham on Crouch town council and with some of the equipment left over from the previous era of the club, the Maldon and Dengie Canoeists became the latest paddlesport club in Essex.

The original club was the brain child of Keith Scrivener and was formed by Scouts from all over the Dengie Peninsula and Maldon, back in the early 80s to not only provide safe training and trips, but to run at the time the largest race in this country, second only to the Devizes to Westminster race, that put the largest amount of paddlers on the water in a day, in the form of a relay race on the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal. Keith is still involved, helping another generation into paddlesport.

Bushra Abu-Helil, aged 15 from St Peters, who is one of the driving forces behind the reformation of the club and who put in a lot of work applying for the YOF, best describes where the next generation of MAD Canoeists are heading. "The purpose of the canoe club is to involve everybody in the community. We are currently based at Maldon's Blackwater Centre's pool, which offers a safe environment for people from a very early age through to adults who are young at heart, whilst creating co-operation and respect and learning from each other.

"The club is a great way to make friends and develops independence, as well as social and leadership skills. The nearest canoe club has been Chelmsford, which is 25 miles away and has a six-month waiting list. We live in a very rural isolated area so having a club within this location allows people to get together and share the same passion for the sport."

To join the MAD Canoeists contact Clive Marfleet clive.marfleet@tiscali.co.uk or 07795 508839



Above: Maldon and Dengie Canoeists at Maldon's Blackwater Centre's pool.

Birmingham CC achieves Clubmark



The award was presented to them at their recent AGM. The club is in a really strong position at the moment with a record 133 paid up members. Club Chairman, Dave Hughes, commented that working towards Clubmark had been a valuable exercise and had helped the club to develop. Committee member Nette Carder has secured a grant for over £7000 to help paddling and coaching development for women and girls within the club. The club organise a huge amounts of trips, ranging from easy paddles suitable for families, to advanced white water in the UK and abroad.

Check: www.birminghamcanoeclub.co.uk.

Left: PDO Phil Hadley congratulates Dave Hughes and Nette Carder.

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Skills Active National Skills Academy

Skills Active is in the process of creating a National Skills Academy that will assist in the training of paddlesport staff and volunteers. The first meeting of what will hopefully evolve into the sub group for the National Skills Academy in the South East region took place in February. The group received presentations on what a sector skills council (Skills Active) is and its role, the work that is already being done in the North West and what the plans are in the South East.

Paddlesport was well represented at this meeting with both myself as Team South SDO and Phil Quill from Calshot Activities Centre also sitting on the overall Regional Operations Group.

The National Skills Academy will have a web based front end to enable paddlers to access the support on offer.

Over the next two years in the South East and Southern regions, through the work that Skills Active have already done, Canoe England will be able to distribute seventy £200 bursaries to coaches completing their Level 2 Award.

For information visit www.sportactivensa.co.uk. For information on the Bursaries please contact your RCO or PDO

JAMES HINVES, SDO SOUTH

A Royal gym

Fourteen new pieces of equipment provided by Matrix Fitness Systems have been specifically chosen to improve the performance of the Royal Canoe Club's athletes.

Janet Evans, secretary at the club, said: "The new gym has made a real difference to our members. Before the new building and equipment you very rarely saw anyone working out in there, apart from on club nights; now there is always someone training. We are really grateful to all our sponsors for their help and hard work." Matrix also sponsor Olympic canoeist Tim Brabants.

Sport England funded the development, with contributions from the BCU and from the Amateur Rowing Association. Around 400 dragon boaters, canoeists, kayakers and skiffers use the Royal Canoe Club — thought to be the oldest canoe association in the world.



Above: The new equipment at the Royal Canoe Club gym.

Strength to strength

River Dart coach update

It's not often we have to turn people away from a Canoe England coach update. The variety of workshops, the fantastic location, with its white and placid water, the top level coaches running the workshops all led to the day becoming fully booked with a couple of weeks to go.

The day started with the two new LCOs Andy Wright and Gary Peverill from South Devon College giving a brief outline of their work and the day's programme. Andy Davey gave an update on the coaching scheme and the excellent progress that is being made. Mark Agnew of Mountain Water Experience was presented with Canoe England's volunteer award for services to paddlesport for his support of local clubs and Dennis Wall (who was unable to attend) from Exeter Canoe Club received a round of applause for his volunteer award for life long service to paddlesport.

It was then time for the fun bit. There were indoor workshops, coaching and learning styles. However, most people had opted



Above: coaching on the River Dart. **Photo:** Jemma Lane

for the outdoors with the River Dart beckoning and plenty of water and a host of exciting things going on, advanced white water skills on Grade 3-4 water, freestyle coaching, right through to canoe traditional skills. Everyone got a lot from the day and had a good time, however, we strive for perfection and we have some fantastic ideas for the next time.

I am sure you will join me in giving a big thank you to everyone who gave up their Sunday; to Andy and Gary for organising the event, all the coaches who ran the workshops. Our sponsors AS Water

Sports for the demo boats, Camel Canoe and Kayaks for providing the prizes for the feedback draw and South Devon College for the boats and mini buses and not forgetting the fantastic core of paddlesport coaches.

We are looking at making the Dart Update a two-day event so keep the weekend of the 30-31st January 2010 clear. If you missed this update then there is still the chance to get to Weymouth on Sunday 26th April.

For developments go to www.bcusw.org and register for our free email information service.

Thames Grand Prix Awards night

A fantastic turn out on the wintery night of 18th February saw many paddlers missing their middle week training session just to attend. The awards, kindly hosted by Royal Canoe Club, were for the overall series winners in the sprint events at Elmbridge, Royal, Richmond and Wey, which are the four races that make up the series.

Congratulations to those who won a prize and everyone who put up such great competition. A special mention must be made of the club champions - Elmbridge Canoe Club. GB Canoeing flat water racer Paul Wycherley, kindly took time out from his busy training schedule gave out the prizes. His attendance was most welcomed by the younger paddlers who only a few years ago saw him competing in the same Thames Grand Prix series.

Finally an apology, I foolishly overlooked our dedicated canoeists on the night and didn't hand out their medals. So perhaps a special mention to Matt Duck, Joe Seaman and Andy Bohnam, will in some way go to redress the situation.

ANDY GRAY, PDO LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Rocket orders rocket

The first Rocket Junior K4 was demonstrated a year ago and since then 23 K4 boats have been built, 16 of the 23 boats were ordered by Canoe England.

Seeing a new development project take off in this way in the first year is proof of the strength of vision of the project team (Richard Ward, Ollie Harding, George Oliver and Howard Blackman). Howard says "These boats are fantastic and to see the clubs adopt them in these numbers within a year is amazing."

The Rocket is designed to introduce crew boat paddling to a younger age group, acting as an introduction to touring and racing from a stable platform allowing the paddlers to concentrate on skill development in line with Long Term Athlete Development. Trevor Wetherall, Head Coach from Richmond Canoe Club enthused "Boat stability and the team concept have help Richmond to develop our junior paddlers to work together. Richmond canoe club has two Rockets and the stability that they offer allow us to develop the paddler's skills and allow the paddlers to have great fun!"

Canoe FOCUS

The official magazine
of the British Canoe Union

18 Market Place, Bingham
Nottingham NG13 8AP
Tel: 0845 370 9500
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Fax: 0845 370 9501
E-mail: info@bcu.org.uk
www.bcu.org.uk
ISBN 0953-010X

President

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Annual Subscription Rates

UK inland: £21.00

Overseas: £24.50

Free to BCU members

For subscription, please contact the BCU on the above contacts

Publisher

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David Florence

C1 Men – Beijing Olympic Slalom Silver medalist.

Photo: David Leathborough

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YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE CANOE FOCUS HAPPEN

The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. **Technical Information:** Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to chloe.nelson@bcu.org.uk. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and it's 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 **7th MAY 2009**.

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Women and Girls in Paddlesport



Has your club considered running a women and girl's development day or women and girls only sessions?

The summer season is a great time of year to introduce newcomers to our sport. Research has shown that many women and girls prefer the social aspect of sport, taking part in fun based group activities with their friends rather than more competitive activities. If you are thinking of running a women and girl's session/day it would be a good idea to start planning and advertising it soon so people can book the date in their busy diaries. If it seems too daunting attracting new people to come along, why not get your current female club members to each bring a few friends and before you know it you will have a large group of women and girls all up for some paddling fun! Funding can often be sought from local authorities and county sport partnerships to help support such events.

Access Across Staffordshire

Burton Canoe Club has recently been awarded £500 from Access Across Staffordshire to implement and subsidise a 'Women & Girl's Introduction to Paddlesport' course through spring/summer 2009. The planned programme will consist of three indoor pool sessions, three river sessions and two local river journeys and will provide the opportunity for participants to achieve BCU personal performance awards.

Does your club already run women only sessions?

Are you or do you know of a female coach that helps and inspires more women and girls to go paddling? Has your club recently received funding to develop women and girls in paddlesport? Please tell us about it and help inspire and motivate others. Please send any articles or good news stories to womenandgirls@bcu.org.uk



Enhancing women's participation and development in paddlesport

Birmingham Canoe Club was established over 50 years ago and a third of our members are women paddlers. This is less than a 50:50 ratio, but still better than the national average in terms of women in paddlesport.



Above: Just finished the Grade 3 stretch on the Alwen.

We're really lucky to have some great women coaches who are keen to encourage women and girls to progress – and some great women, who'd like to be better paddlers. Thus the idea of 'girly paddling' was born and we set up some pilot women only coaching events.

We've run two coaching weekends so far – one in September and one in January. Both have been for women paddlers only, with a high coach to student ratio, designed to build skills and confidence in a supportive environment. Sarah and Ce are inspirational coaches and participants are women of all ages, predominantly those who are happy on Grade II water, but want to be more confident on moving Grade III water.

Women only environment

A women only environment is different from paddling with men. It's hard to describe exactly what the difference is but as our coach Sarah observed, "It's interesting to watch the girls working together as a group. Ce and I both noticed they automatically gave each other support and encouragement. All the girls were having a go at things they would not normally try in a mixed group. Perhaps there is just less pressure to perform in an all-girl group?"

Our first trip in September featured the Tryweryn, where we gained the confidence to run the upper Tryweryn and the Graveyard for the first time. The second

weekend was in January where, as Sarah says, "the emphasis was on mini coaching sessions as we moved down the river, working on a variety of skills from reverse ferry gliding to angle of entry into different types of eddies".

Ce suggested a game of 'eddy leapfrog' down the river, which was not only very entertaining, but developed our eddy control and river leadership skills in a non-threatening way.

Sarah said, "One of most fun things of the day for Ce and I was running Cobden's Falls. We were also joined by another paddling group (all guys) who had just spent 30 minutes setting up safety so they could run the far left chicken shoot. Both groups were suitably impressed with our cross and descent over the usual ledge."

It was bitterly cold, but the sun was shining and we decided to run the Alwen. Ce had paddled this stretch before and informed everyone it was a nice Grade II/III with one portage.

Group pulled together

What a lovely, bubbly river with plenty of features to work on. Even in the cold we stopped and played, improving the skills practiced on the Saturday. Nat managed a superb high brace in anger on the grade III section, whilst the rest of the group cheered her on. The group pulled together on the harder section, helping each other with portages and rescues, retiring for a well earned cup of tea back at the Dee for a debrief at the end of the day.

Our second weekend was a chance to develop our skills, make new friends and paddle some new rivers with like-minded women. The male paddlers from Birmingham Canoe Club did cope well without us that weekend, flying past the Goat early on Sunday morning to paddle the Conway and Ogwen, whilst we were enjoying a leisurely breakfast.

participation and esport



Far left: After the swim.

Left: Sarah on Cobden's Falls.

We finished the trip on a high and a real sense of achievement in the group. New skills had been learned and put into play and a good time was had by all.

Women-only programme

We were so pleased with the success of our first coaching weekend that Birmingham Canoe Club has put together a women-only programme of coaching and development, designed to build skills and confidence in a supportive environment and encourage more women to develop as coaches and paddlers. We are absolutely delighted that our bid for equipment and coaching to Awards for All was successful and we have been awarded £7,732 for our programme, Enhancing Women's Participation and Development in Paddlesport.

We will be running our programme throughout 2009.

**NETTE CARDER AND SARAH CLIFT,
BIRMINGHAM CANOE CLUB**

www.birminghamcanooclub.co.uk

“It's great paddling with other girls – it gives me confidence”

“We all have different strengths and weaknesses and appreciate them”

“Everyone is really supportive”

“It's nice not to be seen as the weakest one all the time”

“We get to play without people pushing on to the next thing all the time – girls tend not to hog waves”



Far left: Getting to the Lugwy.

Left: Jo and Nette.

BCU Leadership Awards

The BCU have 4 Star Leadership Awards for canoe, white water, sea, and surf. A 4 Star Leader has the all-round ability to lead other 'competent' paddlers on sections of sheltered and moderate water. The awards were developed and launched in 2007 by the leading experts within each of the disciplines and aim to provide a qualification for those who wish to lead others either professionally, within a club, or as the informal leader of a group of friends.



Above: Surf.

Remit:

The qualification is not designed for skills coaching and is not deemed suitable for introducing beginners to the sport. All 4 Star Leaders are expected to be able to judge environmental conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about journey choice. Leaders are responsible for ensuring they have third party liability insurance in place (this is a benefit of Home Nation Association Membership), knowledge of child protection guidelines where appropriate and maintain evidence of currency.

Below: White water.



The BCU recommend that:

The 4 Star Whitewater Leader is the appropriate qualification to lead up to Grade 2(3) white water kayak trips and kayak trips on open water (no more than 500m from the shore, and with winds below Force 4) at a ratio of 1:4.

The 4 Star Open Canoe Leader is the appropriate qualification to lead up to Grade 2 white water canoe trips and canoe trips on open water (no more than 500m from the shore, and with winds below force 4) at a ratio of 1:4 when in solo boats and 1:6 paddlers when in double canoes.

The 4 Star Sea Leader is the appropriate qualification to lead a group along a stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with easy landing and, not involving fast tidal streams, tidal races, overfalls, or onshore winds above Force 4 (Force 2 if offshore). It also includes the upper reaches of some estuaries, and launching and landing through moderate surf (see below). At a ratio of 1:4.

The 4 Star Surf Leader is the appropriate qualification to manage a group of kayak surfers on selected beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groynes) and with small to moderate waves – one metre maximum (as per the surfer's measurement). At a ratio of 1:6.

Using 4 Star to extend a coaching qualification remit: some deployers (i.e. clubs or centres) may deem it appropriate to extend the remit of a Level 1 or 2 Coach, where the 4 Star Leadership Award is also held. This decision will be based upon the risk assessment, local operating procedures, the session objectives and nature of the group.

Training and prerequisites:

Prior to attending an assessment, candidates are required to:

- Gain a first aid award (minimum of eight hours training, including CPR).
- Hold the relevant BCU 3 Star Award (or 'old' 4 Star).
- Gather evidence of relevant paddling and leading experience.
- Complete at least two days formal training (with a registered 4 Star Assessor) that develop the personal and leadership skills required for the award.
- Complete the required safety training (with the exception of surf).
- Be 16 years of age, or older.

What does the assessment look like?

In most cases the assessment is two days long and assesses personal performance, leadership and safety and rescue skills. When being assessed leading, the assessor will usually ask candidates to demonstrate their leadership skills by leading the other assessment candidates, although sometimes 'real' groups may be used. Every effort is made to ensure that assessments are run in conditions that represent the top end of the award remit and in many instances will need to be re-scheduled if the conditions are not right. Candidates are required to provide personal and group equipment appropriate for the remit of the award, and the assessment environment.

Below: Sea.



Further information on Leadership Awards:

The full syllabi and trainer/assessor guidance notes are available to download on the home association website, along with the other BCU Star Awards.

Course dates:

Please contact your home nation association for course dates and information:

Canoe England:

www.canoe-england.co.uk

Scottish Canoe Association:

www.canoescotland.com

Canoe Wales:

www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk

Canoe Association of Northern Ireland:

www.cani.org.uk

National centres:

The national centres also offer a range of 4 Star Training and Assessment courses across the disciplines:

Plas y Brenin (North Wales):

www.pyb.co.uk

Plas Menai (North Wales):

www.plasmenai.co.uk

Glenmore Lodge (Scotland):

www.glenmorelodge.org.uk

Tollymore (Northern Ireland):

www.tollymore.com

Below: Canoe.



Canoe England coach conference success



Canoe England held their first national coach conference over the weekend of 17-18th January at the National Watersports Centre, Holme Pierrepont. Over 70 coaches attended each day, from a wide range of the competition and recreational disciplines and from all over the country.

Above: Maximising the benefits of using an Ergo.

The conference started on Saturday with a short introduction from Lara Tipper the English Coaching Manager, who talked about the successful year we have just had within the sport and what an exciting future we look set for. Tim Brabants MBE came to speak to the delegates about his experiences before, during, and after the Olympic Games. Craig Handford then spoke about the importance of coaches better understanding themselves in order to provide higher quality coaching.

A range of workshops were on offer including some of the new BCU Foundation Supporting Modules: Coaching the Mind, Fitness for Paddlesport Coaches, Performance Planning, Coaching Young Paddlers and an Introduction to Coaching Racing. The feedback from these was particularly positive, with everyone excited about the content and happy to leave with his or her certificates!

Ian Wynne, Gareth Field and Len Hartley all ran sessions for coaches to better understand the dynamics of effective forward paddling and James Hives ran a workshop for coaches to help them maximise the benefits of using an Ergo.

On Saturday evening Tim Brabants led the presentation of awards to England's most deserved volunteers and coaches. This recognises the outstanding contributions made to paddlesport. Eighteen awards were presented in all, with the following specifically coaching related:

Young Volunteer

Graeme Haigh, Oakhanger Project

Young Coach

Anna-Louise Glendenning, Hexham Canoe Club

Paddlepower Coach

Linda Turner, Dereham Canoe Group

Female Volunteer Coach

Pat Tarry, Itchen South District Canoe Centre

Male Volunteer Coach

Eric Farrell, Royal Canoe Club

Teachers

Phillippa Sunderland, Ash Green School

Doug Hardie, Thomlinson Junior School

Employed Coach

Mark Agnew, Mountain Water Experience (non BCU/CE)

Mark Delaney, BCU World Class Performance (BCU Staff)

After dinner Mike Devlin, the BCU Director of Coaching, gave a general Interest talk on his sea kayaking exploration around the Falklands and South Georgia. Everyone enjoyed the stunning photographs and tales of adventure!

The event also provided coaches the opportunity to meet the ever-growing team of staff involved with coaching within Canoe England. With the success of the conference, both in terms of the opportunities for coaches to further develop their knowledge base, and to network with a range of coaches from all disciplines, and across all levels - it looks like we will be putting the event on again next year!

Presentations from some of the workshops are being posted on

www.canoe-england.org.uk/coaching/

LARA TIPPER, ENGLISH COACHING MANAGER

Croatia by sea

I run the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award at Shrewsbury School, where last April, I came up with the idea to get a group to complete part of the award with a sea kayak expedition. After more research I decided that the venue would be Croatia. Relatively cheap, not very tidal and as low risk as it could be for a group of young students still in sixth form education.

Feature by: Jo Billington. It's been a long journey for this group of intrepid travellers, from training in the pool and the coast of Anglesey to finally venturing around the coast of Dubrovnik.

Main picture right: A spot of snorkelling on route. The team consisted of Nick Waugh the Gapper, Tom Clowes, Orin Bovil, Jack Raffan and Jack Wilson from Shrewsbury School in Shropshire. The daily temperature was about 30 degrees, the water was emerald green and the swell was almost non-existent. The team assembled at Manchester airport where we met with Patrick, the team's assessor and safety cover, himself a very experienced sea boater. The fifth member – Nick David, was to meet us in Dubrovnik following his own travels around Europe.

Once in Dubrovnik, the team went shopping for provisions. The old town was beautiful and interesting. The bright terracotta roof tiles showed evidence of the damage suffered during the Balkans war during the 1990s. We all took time to walk the city walls, before loading up with bags of camping food. That evening the team departed Dubrovnik by ferry to the expedition start on the island of Lopud.

On Lopud, we were met by our hosts and were welcomed with a supper outside on the sea front. Adria Adventure is a small family company that normally run guided trips for people on holiday, so this was something quite different. A few things got lost in translation, but on the whole the venture worked out pretty well. Day One was a day for acclimatising... new boats, new maps and a new hazard (spiny black sea urchins). Patrick got the team to demonstrate their skills in performing rescues and gave them scenarios to deal with such as rescuing an injured paddler. The refresher package took the team around the complete island, with a lunch break on a small beach.

Day one

The boys were keen, eager and had boats packed ready to go in double quick time. Equipped with radios, maps, camping equipment, food and first aid kits, they fled the nest to embark on the first Sea Kayaking Gold Assessment the school had done. Pat, Nick David and myself followed stealthily behind the group to ensure the feeling of independence was maintained. The day went well. When the sun became too hot, the



boys stopped for a quick snorkel and gathered flora statistics for their project work. The route took the boys to the outside of the island of Kolocep and then back to the main island to a small village called Zaton. Wild camping is not allowed anywhere in Croatia because of the risk of heath fires. The ground was like tinder and very rocky so not ideal. All the campsites are dotted along the mainland coast from Split to Dubrovnik and were all immaculate with first class facilities. The first night was a peaceful one, camped beneath the olive trees with all the equipment left drying in the warm air.

Day two of the expedition took the team around the inside of the island of Kolocep. The coastline of each island was pretty similar. Razor sharp light grey rock with numerous blue caverns and few beaches. The wildlife consisted of various breeds of gecko with few sea birds, which was a surprise. That evening, the team had to return to the mainland for their second campsite in Tresteno. It was another beautiful evening despite the rumbling thunder over the mountains during the afternoon.

Very beautiful

On day three the team paddled north along the mainland coast and then across to Sipan. The coastline remained rocky with more sea urchins and geckos. Despite this the coast was very beautiful and



“the blue caverns were numerous, providing ample opportunity to snorkel and take photos of fish”

kayak



Above: The team.



Above: Old Dubrovnik town – heavily bombed in the Balkan war.



Above: A group meeting with Pat the coach keeping a watchful eye.



Above: Enjoying the last formal breakfast before the camping phase.



the emerald waters continued to enchant. The campsite at Slano had a small beach, perfect for the team to practice rolling their kayaks as the sun went down.

The final day of the expedition was upon them. This time the team paddled the outside of the island of Sipan to the finish point at Sudurad, a small fishing town on the south east end of the island. The waters were a little choppier on this day, generally caused by the large cruise ships. On this stretch the blue caverns were more numerous, providing ample opportunity to snorkel and take more photos of fish.

The day ended on the beach in Sudurad. Here, the team and staff reunited fully and the days' adventures were recounted. The expedition finished with debriefs from Pat and more pizza on the quayside.

The trip didn't finish there however. The flights were not booked for another day and surprisingly the team wanted to get back onto the water. They had seen more bays with snorkelling potential and wanted to investigate.

The trip was a thoroughly enjoyable adventure. The skills required to sea kayak in Croatia are very different from an expedition in the mountains of Britain but no less challenging. This trip proves that sea kayaking can be open to all.

Top tips for expedition planning in Croatia

- Sea urchins are everywhere in on the coast of Croatia – always wear jelly water shoes!
- The medical cover is excellent. The hospital in Dubrovnik will see you in five minutes and issue a prescription in about the same amount of time. The pharmacies are open late and very much like the ones in France.
- Camping shops are scarce, but the big supermarket in Dubrovnik will have some supplies. Buy your camping stove and gas there as Croatian camping gas is unusual and will not fit UK stoves.
- The campsites all have good cafes on site for buying excellent Italian Coffee (to get the supervisors up and about in the morning).
- The local treatment for sea urchin stings is to cover the effected area in olive oil! Available from small market stalls outside each campsite.

CANOE SLALOM



2009 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

National Water Sports Centre 28-31 MAY 2009



For further information visit www.bcu.org.uk or email euroslalom09@bcu.org.uk



Competition



Provisional Race Schedule

This is subject to Host Broadcaster/ECA scheduling and agreement so for updates visit www.bcu.org.uk and follow the tab marked 09 Slalom Europeans.

Saturday 23rd May

Nations Training Slots – Allocated Time Slots
Accreditation – Upon Request

Sunday 24th May

Nations Training Slots – Allocated Time Slots
Accreditation – Upon Request
Unofficial Team Managers Meeting

Monday 25th May

Nations Training Slots – Allocated Time Slots
Accreditation
Equipment – Self-Checking

Tuesday 26th May

Nations Training Slots – Allocated Time Slots
Accreditation
Equipment – Self-Checking
Team Managers Meeting Wednesday

Wednesday 27th May 2009

Nations Training Slots – Allocated Time Slots
Accreditation
Official Equipment Checking
Demonstration Runs
Opening Ceremony – National Water Sports Centre
Team Managers/VIP Reception

Thursday 28th May

Officials Meeting
Individual Qualification
(Provisional C1 Men and K1 Men)
10:00 to 12:20 – 1st Runs
13:30 to 15:40 – 2nd Runs
Team Qualification (Provisional C1 Men and K1 Men)
16:30 to 17:45 – 1 run

Friday 29th May

Officials Meeting
Individual Qualification
(Provisional C2 Men and K1 Women)
11:00 to 12:20 – 1st Runs
14:00 to 15:20 – 2nd Runs
Team Qualification
(Provisional C2 Men and K1 Women)
16:30 to 17:15 – 1 run
Demonstration Runs

Saturday 30th May

Officials Meeting
Individual Semi-Finals and Finals
(Provisional C1 Men and K1 Men)
Televised Programmes
10:00 to 12:00 – Semi-Finals
13:00 to 14:30 – Finals and Medal Ceremonies
Team Final (All Classes)
16:00 to 18:10 – Finals and Medal Ceremonies

Sunday 31st May

Officials Meeting
Individual Semi-Finals and Finals
(Provisional C2 Men and K1 Women)
Televised Programmes
11:00 to 13:00 – Semi-Finals
14:00 to 15:30 – Finals and Medal Ceremonies
Closing Ceremony



Programme of activities

Canoe England in partnership with the East Midland's Sports Development Officers is currently planning a programme of activities to develop canoeing in conjunction with the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships. These events will take place nationally and within the East Midlands area.

The canoeing activities will include:

- National Go Paddling Week – 23rd to 31st May 2008.
- Go Paddling session.
- Cross Stream challenges.
- Paddlepower/Paddlesport awards.
- Canoe 2012 activities.
- Canoe/Kayak Ergo Challenges/Championships.
- Coaching clinics/courses.
- Canoe slalom coaching modules.
- ICF officials education and examination – ICF JL/IJSL.
- Canoeing road shows.

For further information and updates on the Sports Development programme, please contact:

Stuart Briggs – Senior Development Officer – Team Central, Canoe England, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8AP. Tel: 07718 982091. More information and email addresses are available on www.bcu.org.uk.

Road shows

A number of canoeing road shows will be held throughout Nottinghamshire, to promote the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships.

Newark – Market Square

Saturday 2nd May.

Beeston – Beeston Square

Saturday 9th May.

Nottingham – Market Square

Sunday 17th May.

West Bridgford – Central Avenue

Saturday 23rd May.

Win free tickets to the European Canoe Slalom Championships on the canoe/kayak Ergo by testing your time against Britain's top athletes!



2009 European Canoe Slalom C

Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, 28th - 31st May

The athletes

There is a great air of excitement in Nottingham, which we can all have a slice of. The dynamic and truly exciting sport of canoe slalom is bringing the European Canoe Slalom Championships to Holme Pierrepont!

Remember the excitement of slalom at the Olympic Games; well many of the European stars who starred in Beijing will also be competing at the National Water Sports Centre on the newly refurbished white water course.

Europe can claim the strongest slalom teams throughout the world and it is anticipated that over 600 athletes and team support personnel from 30 or more countries across Europe will be competing.

European Canoe Slalom Medallists at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

K1 Men

Gold: Alexander Grimm, Germany
Silver: Fabien Lefevre, France

K1 Women

Gold: Elena Kaliska, Slovakia
Bronze: Violetta Oblinger-Peters, Austria

C1 Men

Gold: Michal Martikan, Slovakia
Silver: David Florence, Great Britain

C2 Men

Gold: Pavol Hochschorner/
Peter Hochschorner,
Slovakia
Silver: Jaroslav Volf/
Ondrej Stepanek, Czech Rep.
Bronze: Mikhail Kuznetsov/
Dmitry Larionov, Russia

- Subject to selection

As team entries and names are confirmed these details will be posted on the BCU website www.bcu.org.uk.

A number of countries have already confirmed that they will be competing at the championships and are preparing training camps at the National Water Sports Centre during April and May.



Above: David Florence – C1 Men – Beijing Olympic Silver medallist and 2008 National Champion.

Great Britain – GBR

The 2009 Great Britain canoe slalom team selection will take place at the National Water Sports Centre, Nottinghamshire, during the weekend 2-3rd May.

Athletes to look out for:

- **David Florence**
C1 Men – Beijing Olympic Silver medalist, 2008 National Champion and World Cup medallist.
- **Campbell Walsh**
K1 Men – European Champion and Athens Silver medalist.
- **Fiona Pennie**
K1 Women – Beijing Olympian and Silver medallist World Championships.
- **Lizzie Neave**
K1 Women
2008 National Champion.
- **Richard Hounslow**
K1 Men
2008 National Champion.
- **Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott**
C2 Men
2008 National Champion.

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This whole event could not possibly take place without sponsors and supporters. The Official Funding Partners and Supporters for the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships are:

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The course has recently undergone an upgrade. The facilities are now Olympic training standard. The £700,000 project was designed to help give Britain's canoeists an opportunity to train there in the build-up to the London 2012 Olympics. Come along and see this spectacular event. It's not just about the competition itself, as a bigger programme of events and activities are planned, for you join in with.

hampionships



Above: Campbell Walsh – K1 Men – 2008 European Champion and Athens Silver medallist.



Above: Fiona Pennie – K1 Women – Beijing Olympian and Silver medallist World Championships.



Above: Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott – C2 Men – 2008 National Champion.

European Canoe Slalom Championships – Tickets

Tickets are now available to purchase –
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What is available and when

Thursday 28th and Friday 29th May – Qualification

- Admission – Free of charge.
- Car park – £2.00 per car, per day.
- Car parking fee refunded against Finals Day ticket purchase.

Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May – Semi Finals and Finals

- Admission – See prices below.
- Car park – Free of charge.

Advance Purchase – Available up to 17th May 2009

	Adult	Concessions	Children	Family
2 Day Finals Pass	£7.00	£5.00	£3.00	£17.00
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1 Day Finals Ticket	£4.00	£3.00	£2.00	£10.00
BCU members	£3.00	£2.00	£1.00	

On the Gate Prices

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Concession = Disabled badge holders, over 60s and students.

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Post: European Canoe Slalom – Tickets, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8AP



California dre

Imagine kayaking in a place where the water is turquoise and so clear you can see hundreds of tropical fish beneath you and if you are lucky a blue whale – the largest living creature on the planet.



Photo by David Ashplant

Story by: David Ashplant. This is the reality of kayaking in Baja California, the narrow 800 mile Mexican peninsula south of the much better known American California, with the Pacific ocean on the west side of the peninsula and the Sea of Cortez on the east side. It is estimated a third of the world's whale and dolphin populations live, or at least spend the winter months, in the Sea of Cortez.

Photographs by: Gary Luhm except where marked.

I was lucky enough to join a trip run by Sea Kayak Adventures of Idaho, a company specialising in kayak trips to Baja and though I have been kayaking rivers for over two years now with Stour Valley Canoe Club in Blandford, Dorset, this was my first sea kayak expedition, so what would it be like?

The group met up in Loreto, a small authentic Mexican town of a few thousand and in Spanish colonial times the capital of the whole of California until ravaged by hurricane and earthquake. I was the only English person with 12 Americans and three guides but I needn't have worried, as they were all so very welcoming. The following morning we were taken down the coast by van to the put in at the tiny port of Puerto Escondido (literally hidden port which it certainly is, hidden behind a hill and not visible when you are out at sea). From the 1500s English buccaneers would frequently attack Spanish galleons sailing down the Baja coast on their return from the Philippines laden with treasure and there are many Mexican families in Loreto called Davies, Green and Cunningham descended from English sailors who jumped ship there.

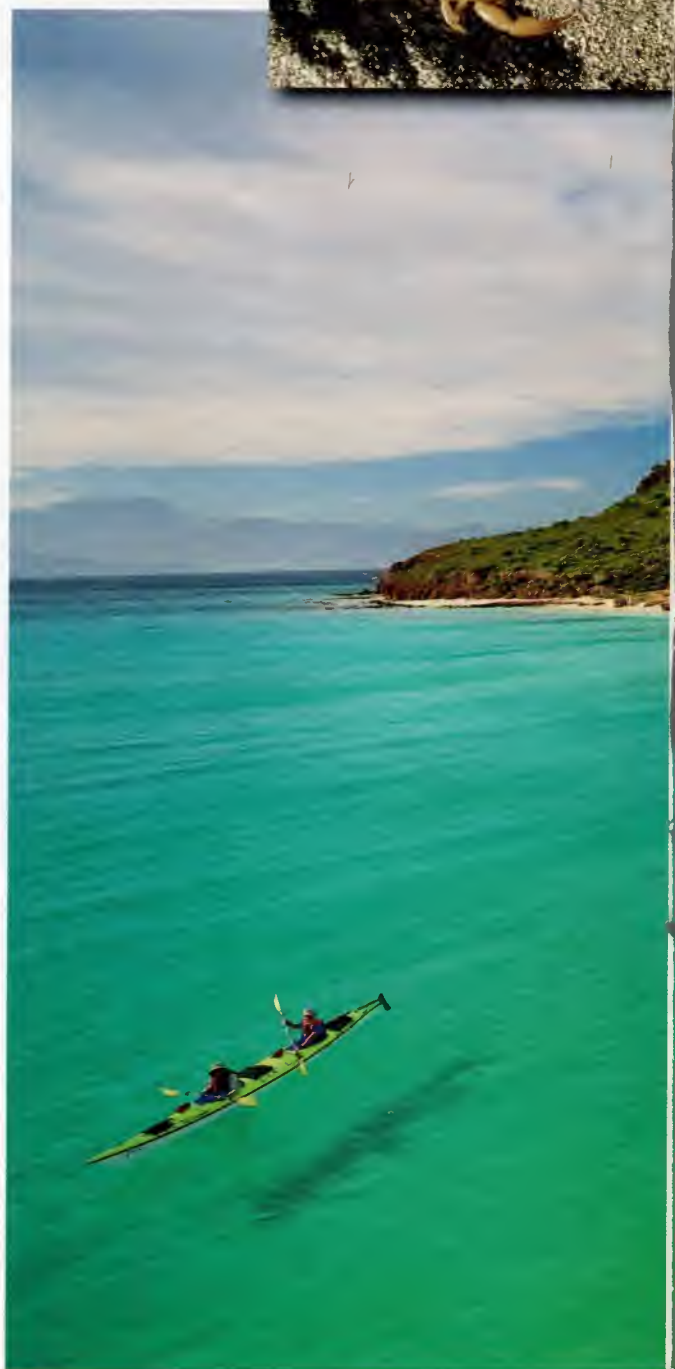
After a short briefing we launched ourselves onto the sea of Cortez watched by pelicans resting on a rusting structure some way from the shore. Our fibreglass kayaks, all with rudders, were a mixture of singles and doubles.

Huge protected marine park

We kayaked the few miles across to the northern end of Isla Danzante for lunch. Wherever we landed we were met by hundreds of bright yellow butterflies, which made for a colourful sight as they hovered around our fibreglass kayaks. The whole area is a huge protected marine park with absolutely no development making for a truly spectacular and untouched wilderness paradise. Whatever you take in you must take out which included the contents of our porta potty – no digging of holes is allowed!

Danzante is an island of rocky peaks and numerous coves and following recent rare rainfall was very green looking more like an island in the South Pacific than typical Baja with the desert landscape in bloom in pinks, blues, reds and yellows. After lunch we continued down the west side of the island to our camping spot. Quite a swell had developed and we had fun riding the waves and also spotted our first dolphins of the trip as they jumped up beside us.

At dawn the following morning we hiked a path to a saddle between two peaks to watch the sunrise as it turned the cliffs to gold in the



aming



Photographs by:
Gary Luhm.



early morning light. Shortly after putting in the sea in front of us looked as though it was boiling: we could see what appeared to be lots of pointed fins heading our way creating a bit of a 'Jaws' moment. It turned out not to be sharks but a school of hundreds of mobula rays, their 'wing' tips looking like pointed fins. We watched first with some trepidation and then in awe as they passed by us thumping the sides and bottoms of our kayaks.

After rounding the island's southern end we snorkelled in a cove on the east before making the few miles crossing to Isla Carmen, at 20 miles long a much larger island. Our campsite for the next few nights was a white beach with a view across turquoise sea back to the jagged mountain peaks on the mainland, which looked as though they were out of some fantasy film. The Sierra Giganta (giant mountains) plunge into the sea and make sea travel the only practical way to explore the coast in this part of the world.

The tents supplied had tieback fronts and roofs leaving only a fly mesh in place so you could watch the stars at night. Due to lack of light pollution the night sky is astounding with frequent shooting stars adding to the wonder of the place.

This is scorpion country: Baja reputedly has more of them per square mile than anywhere else on earth, so you need to take care to keep your tent zipped at all times. At our very first campsite one scuttled under my kayak as we arrived on the beach. You should never lift a stone or branch from underneath as that is where they will hide in the heat of the day. Mark, one of our team, was bitten putting away his tent and suffered a few days of discomfort with a swollen, numb finger but lived to tell the tale!

Our guides were extremely knowledgeable about life at sea and on land. We learned how the apparently harsh desert environment contains much you can use if you know what to look for, from the pitahaya fruit on a cactus to the healing properties of the aloe vera

plant – sheer relief on sunburn or mosquito bites and distillation of tequila from the agave cactus! There were more cacti than a spaghetti western. Care had to be taken on our

walks to avoid the vicious spines of the smaller cholla cactus. Bird life included circling turkey vultures, pelicans diving for fish, the large and graceful frigatebird and hummingbirds around flowering cactus. One morning a flock of hundreds of cormorants flew past as we ate breakfast on the beach.

The stingray shuffle

Sea life was abundant too. Vladi, one of our guides, was able to catch fish with his hands to show us before returning them to the sea. We all learned the stingray shuffle – kicking up the sand as you enter the sea so that any stingrays resting there will move away rather than surprise them and risk being stung. Terry taught us on the geological history – at just 25 million years old, the Sea of Cortez is apparently the world's youngest sea!

El norte, a strong wind from the north that originates in the Sonoran Desert at the top end of the Sea of Cortez, began blowing mid week and at 20 plus knots and blowing off shore restricting the kayaking we could do. We were happy to kayak hugging the coastline and snorkel where the seabed dropped suddenly away from the shallows to the deep channels where whales migrate. The quantity, variety and colours of the fish were unbelievable – some in shoals of hundreds if not thousands. We saw angel fish, parrot fish, puffer fish, scorpion fish, stingrays and moray eels to name but a few.

It was pure escapism, a Robinson Crusoe type experience but with the luxury of happy hour cocktails and some great food cooked by our multi-talented guides, which had been transported with our drinking water on a panga. There was no radio or mobile phone coverage!

On our return we stopped at Honeymoon Cove on Danzante, a bay that more than lived up to its name, and Punta Coyote on the mainland for a last spellbinding snorkel.

Having done my first sea kayak expedition I'm hungry for more. There may not be quite the adrenaline rush of white water but the chance to reach places others can't and get so close to nature is an inspiring experience. I hope to return and soon – maybe next time to do the 200-mile trip down the deserted coast from Loreto to La Paz. They say Baja draws you back. Having been there I can see why and I can't speak highly enough of Sea Kayak Adventures and their guides.

“Due to lack of light pollution the night sky is astounding with frequent shooting stars adding to the wonder of the place”



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River deep, m

Embark on a leisurely canoe trip through the Mittelland, on Switzerland's mightiest river, and enjoy an attractive and varied landscape from a seldom-seen angle.

A water-borne journey through the countryside, gliding past wooded banks, gently rolling meadows and picturesque villages, enjoying all the flora and fauna, is one of the best ways of enjoying nature. Head for Switzerland, and you will find 250km of idyllic rivers and picturesque lakes just waiting to be explored.

The softly softly approach is certainly not something you might expect from a country which has by tradition accommodated hard-core trekkers, mountain bikers and adrenalin junkies. However,

Words and pictures:
Michael Cowton.

Right:
The landscapes are charming and varied.



Mountain high

great strides have been made of late to make summertime in Switzerland more accessible to the public and the recent launch of SwitzerlandMobility can only enhance the cause.

This unique network incorporates itineraries for canoeists, hikers, cyclists, mountain bikers and inline skaters, with around 20,000km of routes in all. Marking the way for the five activities are over 100,000 signposts, with a different colour for each pursuit – turquoise has been selected for canoeing. Also included is a

comprehensive range of facilities and services, with 1,100 establishments offering a range of accommodation from hotel rooms equipped with every comfort, to beds of straw on farms.

Switzerland is an amazing destination for active, environmentally friendly leisure pursuits and without doubt SwitzerlandMobility makes the most of the country's finest tourist assets: the unique beauty and variety of its natural landscapes, the quality of the accommodation and the superb public transport network.



Above: Introduction from the Wasserland guides.

Inflatable canoe safaris

Development and operation of the product is the responsibility of the SwitzerlandMobility group, which brings together all of the Swiss tourism regions as well as various private organisations. Check out the canoe section of SwitzerlandMobility and you will come across the Aare, a slow-flowing river between Büren and Koblenz, wending its way through some charming and varied landscapes in the Mittelland region. Inflatable canoe safaris take place in groups and are led by an experienced canoeist. One advantage of this type of journey is that those who have never been in a canoe before can take part, making the experience well suited to the whole family. A good knowledge of swimming is, however, essential. Each day, between four and five hours are spent on the river, leaving sufficient time for relaxation, riverside picnics and excursions at the various destinations.

The Aare is the longest river in Switzerland, and the one that carries the greatest volume of water. Despite the Mittelland's densely populated areas, you will soon discover an amazing amount of peace and seclusion. The river was already an important route in much earlier times, and the backbone of Switzerland's development. Numerous towns and villages were built along the river and are still worth seeing today. After the decline of boat travel, the Aare was eventually used to produce power in the service of industrial development and eventually became a sequence of storage reservoirs. A leisurely current makes canoeing a pleasure and although the river is mostly channelled, a forgiving Mother Nature has laid her thick green coat over the traces of human activity.

A full journey along the Aare covers a total of 120km and is completed in eight stages. Switzerland's waters are divided into categories from I (calm water) to VI. SwitzerlandMobility uses the categories I-II for independent tours and categories II-IV for guided tours. All specified boat launch and exit points have been arranged in consultation with the authorities and may be used without restriction. Being divided into one-day sections means they are ideal for easy stage destinations and as a rule are easily reached by public transport.

Büren an der Aare

The sleepy country town of Büren an der Aare is where we met with fellow paddlers and our tour guides from the outfitter Wasserland, who instructed us on the inflation of boats and provided us with equipment, including wetsuits and lifejackets, before we took to the water. We were heading for Solothurn, 18km away. Gliding on

“ The network has a comprehensive range of facilities and services, with 1,100 establishments offering a range of accommodation from hotel rooms equipped with every comfort, to beds of straw on farms. ”



“ Solothurn is regarded as the finest Baroque town in Switzerland, where Italian grandeur is combined with French charm and German practicality ”



Above: All the routes are clearly signposted.

calm waters at the south foot of the Jura, this is one of the most charming and unspoilt stretches of river as it wends its way through the landscape of Witi. We lunched at the restaurant Grüner Aff in Altreu, famous for its stork colony, before continuing our journey to the baroque 'open-air museum' of Solothurn. The entry into the town is impressive, with its stunning cathedral visible from far and wide. Graded as 'easy', this stretch of river was the perfect introduction to paddling to several in the party who had never been in a canoe before.

Solothurn is regarded as the finest Baroque town in Switzerland, where Italian grandeur is combined with French charm and German practicality. The so-called 'ambassador's town' is at the southern end of the Jura, about 30km east of Biel/Bienne, with the River Aare running through its very heart.

From the 16th to 18th centuries, this Catholic town was the residence of the French king's ambassador. Fine Baroque and Renaissance buildings, such as the noble Palais Besenval, and magnificent religious buildings meet the visitor at every turn. The

Below: The splendid facade of St Urs Cathedral, Solothurn.



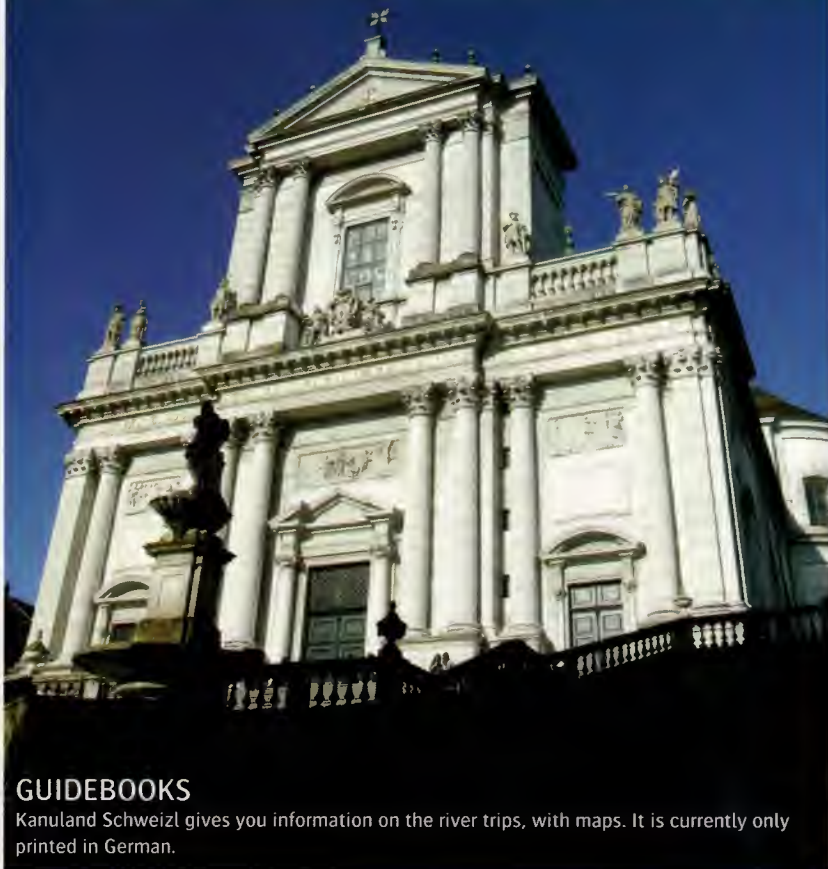
Top: Approaching Solothurn, a magnificent Baroque town.

Above: Showing how it should be done.

CONTACTS

SwitzerlandMobility www.schweizmobil.ch.

For more information on Switzerland visit www.myswitzerland.com or telephone the Switzerland Travel Centre on 00800 100 200 30, or email sales@stc.co.uk. Swiss operates daily flights from London Heathrow, London City, Birmingham and Manchester to Zurich, and from London City to Geneva and Basel. For reservations, call 0845 601 0956 or visit www.swiss.com/uk. Swiss travel passes can be purchased from the Switzerland Travel Centre.



Old Town has eleven churches and chapels, and the same number of fountains and towers. Truly magnificent is the St Urs Cathedral, with a façade donated by Louis XIV, and an Italian-style staircase in front. Made of pale Solothurn marble, it is the most important early classical building in Switzerland.

Between the historic monuments, the patrician buildings and the sturdy fortifications, the traffic-free Old Town is a pleasant place to wander, with lots of small shops and inns. On warm summer evenings, there is nothing more pleasant than sitting in the garden restaurants and bars by the river.

Aarwangen

The next morning we once again launched the inflatables. Our journey took us 21km to the charming old town of Aarwangen, with its historic town centre located directly on the river. After enjoying a leisurely picnic stop on the riverbank, we continued our journey past grassy banks before sighting an old covered wooden bridge stretching across the river. Aarwangen grew from a fortified toll crossing the Aare, in a region where there were few realistic crossing places. The first bridge was built in the early years of the 13th century, and by the 16th century this had developed into a covered wooden bridge and customs post, defended by a castle. We disembarked by the bridge, helped deflate and load the canoes into the Wasserland vehicle and enjoyed a cooling beer by the river with our guides before catching the train back to Solothurn for a final night in the town.

The supporting body of SwitzerlandMobility is the SwitzerlandMobility Foundation. Its objective is the co-ordination and promotion of non-motorised traffic, in particular for leisure and tourism. Check out canoeing on the Aare, and you will see that they have got it bang to rights.

GUIDEBOOKS

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Dave on the calm near France.



Helen of the support crew.



Folkestone Harbour Wissam

The idea to paddle across the English Channel in our open canoes evolved in 2007 after we ferried our canoes to the Isles of Scilly and paddled between the Islands. On the last leg we paddled to St. Agnes riding big Atlantic swells and were impressed at how well the loaded canoes handled!

Story by:
David Truzzi-Franconi.

Photographs:
Heather Patrick and
Helen Milssom.

In 2008 we paddled the Norwegian Fjords and had to put in a 16-mile paddle with no 'get-outs' in squally conditions in order to avoid a weather front! We propelled our canoes onward eventually pitching out at 04.00 hours. One of our team remarked another few miles and we would have paddled across the channel!

On our return we duly paid a large deposit to Andy King of the Channel Crossing Association and had a window assigned to us of 5-9th October 2008 to make our attempt. Our Canoes were registered with the Marine and Coastguard Agency and assigned SSR numbers and names – so 'Tarka' 'The Office' and 'Samphire' came into being in order to conform to the French authorities rulings – boats without them are liable to confiscation!

Training began in earnest, each week would find us riding the swells of Cobbold's Point in Felixstowe. To get used to sea conditions we played in the overfalls at the mouth of the Deben and paddled with the shipping en route to Felixstowe and Harwich. We were sound in body if not in mind!

Preparations were made: we purchased stocks of 'food'-jelly babies (high in sugar and glucose), cereal bars flapjacks and isotonic sports drinks.

It was also decided that as one of our group named Simon is a nurse with EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospices) we would pay our own expenses and collect donations for EACH.

“We watched a procession of huge hulls loom out of the mist as we crossed the five-mile wide eastbound shipping lane. Always accompanied by the drone of the hydrofoil our heads rotating in unison trying to locate its direction”

Reg and Ron Brickell of the trawler 'Viking Princess' were committed to escort a swimmer on our first day but were prepared to extend our window to include the weekend. We decided to stay in Folkestone and the waiting began, turning out early to find the flags fluttering stiffly – Reg radioed one of his colleagues fishing in the channel and confirmed that conditions were bad.

The bad conditions continued until Friday when Reg said that Saturday looked good, but Sunday looked even better, with light winds, a little mist and later sunshine. We decided to go on Sunday 12th October.

This had the added advantage that Helen (a sports physio) and one of the crew on the support boat could now make the trip. Heather, the other member of the support crew (our first aider and photographer) kindly on loan from EDF Energy as part of their helping hands scheme, did just that and gave the three of us a shoulder and back massage!

Some serious 'carb loading' ensued at the noodle bar and we were ready! As the incoming tide lifted the Viking Princess off its berth, we took our high strength ibuprofen and paddled over to meet her. Into the hazy dawn sunshine and through the stone arms of the inner harbour we slid at 07.48 hours and we were finally off! A pattern soon developed, stopping for five minutes every two hours, Heather taking photos and Helen liaising with the skipper, giving us bulletins with the distance covered over the ground and average speeds.

Varne Shallows

Some curious yachtsmen circled us taking photographs before heading back, whilst we continued across the four-mile wide westbound shipping lane. After crossing this we could make out a wall of standing water indicating the presence of the Varne Shallows. The water snatched at our canoes as we cut across, taking on some water but otherwise we emerging unscathed!

Simon had planned some 'diversions' to lighten our spirits and help pass the time. Channel Bingo, a Halloween party and marrying Steve and Helen! All sadly dropped in order to keep up our pace and prove our 'seriousness' to our pilot who was concerned that we had slowed up, a point not borne out by subsequent examination of our GPS log and track but it was enough to make us re-double our efforts covering the last nine miles in two hours and 45 minutes non-stop!

In the meantime we watched a procession of huge hulls loom out of the mist in front and later behind us as we crossed the five-mile wide eastbound shipping lane. Always accompanied by the drone of the hydrofoil our heads rotating in unison trying to locate its direction! We encountered little wildlife except when nearing the

West bound shipping lane.



Cap Gris Nez.



ur to nt Beach



French coast as two skuas mobbed a gull trying to get it to disgorge its last meal!

The last section of our trip was wonderful, paddling through the metallic sheen the sun had laid on the water as the cliffs of the Cap Gris Nez and the Opal coast grew ever closer. The Viking Princess anchored a mile offshore to avoid the shoals as we surfed towards Wissant Beach, finally slowing to a halt on the shore and unable to stand up. it was 17.15 hours and we had been kneeling for over nine hours!

A group of curious locals walking their dogs came over to meet us and were persuaded to take a group photograph of us propping each other up! We managed to fold our legs back under the

kneeling thwarts and fought our way back through the surf and headed back to the support boat. Our canoes were hoisted on board and stowed on deck whilst we took turns trying to climb the boarding ladder!

Celebratory mugs of tea followed by Champagne as we roared back through the night in a maze of lights; in two hours and 30 minutes we were back in Folkestone Harbour! The girls headed for home whilst we loaded the canoes and changed. Kebabs and a Chinese were hastily consumed and away up the M20 and A12 to our homes in East Anglia.

We raised nearly £2,500 for EACH, which was equally satisfying. If you wish to contribute please type: [www.justgiving.com /open canoechannelcrossing](http://www.justgiving.com/open/canoechannelcrossing) into your address bar. Many thanks.

Team:
Simon King.
Steve Seinet-Martin.
David Truzzi-Franconi.

Support boat:
Heather Patrick, first aid/photography.
Helen Milssom, physio/liasing/additional photography.
Reg and Ron Brickell of the Viking Princess.
Pilot and crew with the Channel Crossing Association.

Scenic splendour

Story and photographs by:
Cathy Chedal.



Right:
Oban from the air.

We looked out of the window of the small plane at the azure blue ocean dotted with craggy green islands ringed with cliffs and sandy beaches. As we slowly drifted down we saw a small group of sea kayakers ferry gliding across a friendly tide race and glimpse four or five porpoises surfacing for a moment.

We could have taken the bus or train from Glasgow or Edinburgh and enjoyed the stunning Highland scenery straight out of Harry Potter but instead we took the 20-minute seaplane flight from the centre of Glasgow for convenience.

We rented a couple of sea kayaks from Sea Kayak Oban in the harbour and were at an idyllic deserted wild camping spot within the hour. Even the most laid back sea kayaker could reach the islands of Seil, Luing, Scarba, Jura, the Garvellachs, Lunga, Insh, Easdale, Lismore, Mull, Shuna and Shona. We also chatted to other kayakers using trolleys to take their kayaks onto one of the many ferries that left the harbour, where you can reach Tiree, Coll, Colonsay, Jura, Islay, Barra and the rest of the Outer Hebrides.



Above:
Approaching Oban.



Above right:
Camping on Lismore.

The seaplane dipped lower until the spray from the floats splashed the cabin windows and we descended into a bay surrounded by wooded hillsides. A small town emerged from the trees to clutter the water's edge where the harbour was dotted with small brightly coloured tourist and fishing boats and a few yachts. A small passenger ferry plies back and forth across the sound from the island of Kerrera, which offers shelter from the prevailing south westerlies.

Glen Etive

On day two we paddled north east for an hour to the small village of Connel on the main road into Oban. We had lunch on the rocky shore where Loch Etive rushes to meet the sea from the granite waterfalls in Glen Etive past Ben Starav, Ben Trilleachan and Ben Cruachan. This meeting spot provides one of the best roadside tide races on the planet, the Falls of Lora. Even on small tides there is something for everyone in a sea kayak, on spring tides it provides a playground extraordinaire – enough to get the beard and belly of the most hardened sea kayaker shaking and if that wasn't enough there is an excellent pub and restaurant (Falls of Lora) right there.

We have now made numerous visits to Oban through all the seasons of the year and even when the weather gets rough, the local guides never lose a day on the water because there is always plenty of shelter. In the winter and spring when the cold easterlies hammer Aberdeen and Newcastle, the west coast basks in shelter and sunshine. When the prevailing winds pound the west facing cliffs and beaches there is still shelter in abundance in the inner sounds and sea lochs with their castles and waterfalls.

In recent years many good restaurants and accommodations have opened up along with coffee shops and galleries to provide plenty of comfort. Inevitably there will be new roads and marinas but on one of those numerous long summer evenings there is just the snorting of the seals, the splash of an otter and the sound of your paddle through the water – paradise!

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A weekend fo

The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland's annual Paddlefest travelled to scenic Gartan Lough in Donegal this year. The outdoor education centre sits on a lake surrounded by the Donegal hills and is ideally situated for all kinds of paddlesport.

Feature by: Wilson Harte, CANI chairman.

The river which flows out from the lake provides a nice Grade 2/3 run with plenty of scope for setting up slalom courses and a short drive brings you to world class surf on Donegal's famous north west coast.

More than a 100 paddlers made the journey to begin the weekend's activities with a water-based night orienteering exercise on the Friday evening. Despite the fact it was windy and wet with no moon, lots of paddlers seemed happy enough to brave the darkness and all of them returned having found at least some of the control points. Though one or two did wonder if it had been a plot to ensure there were extra portions at breakfast time for those who didn't take part.

Later on BCU coaching director Mike Devlin proved he occasionally gets a chance to go paddling when he gave a talk on his trips to the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. His masterclass on penguin surfing gave locals lots of useful tips – expect some novel techniques at the world championships in Portugal this summer.

By Saturday morning the wind, which buffeted the centre all night, had died down to a comparatively gentle gale. It didn't stop any of the myriad activities on the lake – though it did make for a wet end to at least one canoe sailing trip.

New disciplines, boats and skills

This year the CANI coaches tried to introduce as much variety as possible into the day's paddling and were running many workshops in 90-minute sessions. As everything was concentrated around the centre it gave paddlers the opportunity to try new disciplines, boats and skills.

Open boaters were trying to hit the gates in slalom boats; others were playing polo, while seasoned kayakers were seen practising poling skills. In all there were sessions available in more than 12 different aspects of paddlesport.

Virtually all of Northern Ireland's top coaches give their time to come to Paddlefest every year. In addition, there were guest sessions being run by the chairperson of the UK Coaching Committee, Dave Rossetter and by Dave Carroll, one of Ireland's best-known professional boaters. A team from Chichester University came over to deliver the new BCU CPD modules, which attracted a lot of

interest from local coaches.

Dave Carroll provided the entertainment on Saturday evening with an account of a trip – and eventual walk out from – the Zanskar River



Above: Greg Millar (sitting down) and Keith Fitzsimmons (standing).
Right: Guest coach Dave Carroll reckons it's his paddle!

in Tibet. Apparently the water levels rose 70 feet above normal and they found some parts of the river a little more difficult than anticipated, though it didn't seem to dent his sense of humour about the whole experience.

By Sunday the wind had died away leaving conditions near perfect for river, lake, surf and sea trips. Once again coaches encouraged everyone to try something different. That's the beauty of Paddlefest – there are coaches with experience of every discipline with enough boats and equipment gathered together to make sure every paddler goes home having learned something new.

It happens thanks to providers like Tollymore Mountain Centre and the continuing financial support of SportNI. It's made even better by the support of retailers – this year Desperate Measures and I-Canoe – who set up shop and provide loads of demo boats for people to try all weekend.

Then there are those who give prizes for the raffle. This year some of the money raised will go to help an injured kayaker from Donegal. Thanks finally to the staff at Gartan Lough OEC who sorted out the problems and kept things on track.



“There are coaches with experience of every discipline with enough boats and equipment gathered together to make sure every paddler goes home having learned something new”

r all paddlers



Left:
Slalom coaching by Olympic coach Han Bijnen.



Far left:
A new discipline is born.

Left:
Forward paddle.



Left:
"There are more eddies further around you know."



Far left:
A successful canoe sailing session.

Left:
A 'come and try it session'.

Implementing Scottish success in Wales

Scottish Land Reform Act gets an airing in front of the Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee.

A delegation from the Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee went to the Scottish Parliament on Monday, 2nd March, to gather evidence, on the success of the Scottish Land Reform Act (SLRA).

Canoe England has used the SLRA as an exemplar for access and has supported the Cross Parliamentary groups who have looked into it as well. We also used the SLRA as a basis for The Public Access to Inland Waters 10 Minute Rule Bill which was put in to Parliament by Des Turner MP in 2007. The Bill incorporated the main concepts of Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, in so far as they relate to inland water, but the bill was adapted to take account of the different circumstances in England. The bill proposed that the public would have been able to have statutory rights of access to rivers, canals, lakes and other inland waters, but on the basis that these rights only apply in so far as they are exercised responsibly. The Bill indicated what would and would not be responsible for both visitors in taking access and owners or landholders in providing it, respectively and guidance would have been put in an Inland Waters Access Code.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002 established a statutory public right of access on foot

(in England and Wales) subject to safeguards, in large areas of the countryside and provided a right of access to be extended to the coast in the future, complementing the public rights of navigation and fishing which exist on non-tidal waters.

It had been hoped that this Act would extend to water as well, but it did not, indeed canoeing and other forms of water recreation were specifically excluded from the operation of the Act. This has resulted in a serious disparity whereby the need for statutory public rights of access for land-based recreation on foot in much of the countryside has been recognised, but the similar need for statutory public rights of access for inland water-based recreation has not.

However, when the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 was passed, it applied to both land and water with the result that a statutory public right of responsible access to most inland water in Scotland has been established. This is supported by a Scottish Outdoor Access Code, approved by the Scottish Parliament, clarifying the operation of the right in a wide range of practical circumstances.

For the Welsh visit to the Scottish Parliament Eddie Palmer, SCA Board Member (Access) and Mike Dales, SCA Access and Environment Officer produced a paper stressing the success and possibilities of implementing the Act in Wales but as already mentioned it could easily be England. It is reproduced in part here...

"The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has created a legal presumption in favour of access to land and inland water in Scotland. We believe this has led to many positive benefits; the most obvious being that there is now an overwhelming emphasis on education rather than campaigning for a right. Organisations like the SCA are now working on far more productive initiatives to educate paddlers, and work with land managers to produce site based information and generally enable canoeing and kayaking to take place alongside other forms of water-based recreation.

"When it comes to the really serious issues that we now face, like working to keep the salmon parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* (Gs) out of Scotland, the SCA is now at the table working with Government and the angling bodies. That is because we have a right to be on the rivers and both the SCA and anglers recognise the importance of preventing Gs, and other biological threats, from reaching our shores. It is of concern to those of us in Scotland that canoeing and angling bodies throughout the rest of the UK are not working together on this kind of issue, because the legal problems over access are preventing the two sides from working cooperatively on disease control measures. It is entirely possible that Gs could get into the UK as a result of the lack of communication between the various interest groups in the rest of the UK and that is something that concerns canoeists and anglers in Scotland.

"In terms of the implementation of the new Act on the ground, the SCA does recognise that there are still access problems in Scotland, and part of our work is concerned with monitoring those problems and working with local and national park authorities, as well as angling and land managing bodies, to resolve them. The problems that exist now tend to be on a small handful of rivers and our priority for this year is to work with the authorities to resolve, or at least reduce, the problems in those areas.

"There are those who still criticise Scotland's new access rights. Our new access system provides the public and land managers with a level of certainty that they did not have when accessing our countryside in the past, as well as people to help them with access management issues. We are still in the early days of a long term commitment to re-connect the people of Scotland with the land. So far the system has only had four years to settle in. There is far more we can and will be doing in terms of education and site based information to enable that system to work increasingly well over the years to come."

Below: In kayaks... Starting the Nene White water course. **Photo:** Tamsin Phipps.



A success story from Scotland

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) came into law in February 2005, after the passing of the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003. The main intent of the Act was a political one – it gave all citizens almost total access to the countryside and the main effect has been to give ordinary people the confidence to know where they can go and how.

The result of the Act's inclusion of water is to create for the first time major highways through and across Scotland, although it was fairly clear from a legal point of view that the major rivers at least had been used as navigational waterways for transporting timber for centuries.

For the canoeist, kayaker and indeed anyone with an un-powered craft that can float, it means that no longer is there any doubt about "can I go to this one spot and practice here?", or "can I plan a trip with children and travel without harassment?"

The principles are very simple and therefore clear – there are no restrictions of time, date, season, or whether a group is a canoe club run by volunteers, a coach taking a group somewhere and being paid for it or a charity taking deprived children on a rare countryside trip. Contrary to what some people outside of Scotland might have thought, or claimed, there have been no riots, no public disorder and if anything, some disappointment within the Scottish Government that more citizens have not taken the opportunity of greater outdoor access, considering the strong political agenda for health and fitness.

Of course, the issue with this is one of human behaviour – people do not change behaviour overnight and so some landowners and managers have not yet become used to the new law.

Problems? Conflicts? Issues? Yes, of course there are but to a very minor degree. The tired old chestnut about canoeists disturbing fish has been shown to be anglers being disturbed (sometimes) by seeing other people at all – walkers, dogs, cyclists, horse riders and other water users. The main change has been the challenge to the selling of fishing as 'exclusive' but has come over years to mean some anglers not willingly sharing the countryside with anyone else.

The second old chestnut about 'who pays?' has also been harpooned; anglers pay for taking fish out of the water and all of us as taxpayers pay for part of the job of putting fish into water, to clean up rivers, to deal with pollution and to pay for the infrastructure. Other governing bodies, for example the SCA, now put considerable funds into improving access infrastructure such as car parks and signage. This is not government money, but likely to be self-generated, or from charities.

At times, children jumping off rafts and swimming do disturb anglers and the solution is in better education. At times, both absentee landowners and anglers from other countries, make the mistake of

trying to move canoeists off the water, because they are ignorant of Scottish law as it now is – the answer is again education.

Those outside Scotland are also unlikely to be very aware of the access machinery, enshrined in a national access forum, which examines policy and local access forums. These are in all 39 access authorities, which month by month oil the wheels of smooth public access. Each employs paid access officers and it is these staff that day by day tackle any issues. A swift and brief visit by an access officer has usually been very effective in ensuring that illegal notices or obstructions etc are removed.

The SCA is proud of the act, which it worked so hard to bring in to cover water and also of the effects on communities. Many hard-pressed rural communities are finding that kayaking, canoeing and rafting add value to the other outdoor sports of walking, climbing and cycling that bring people in for holidays. This income is also far more likely, it has been shown, to filter down to local small businesses than the more traditional 'countryside sports'.

So, overall, an important, but often-unsung successful piece of legislation that has had very beneficial effects.

EDDIE PALMER



Above: Brownies learning all about nature and wildlife in the water through pond dipping.

Photo: Tamsin Phipps.

Peter Bottomley's comments



Above: Peter Bottomley canoeing.

We have received several letters recently from a couple of fishing organisations as a result of Peter Bottomley's comments (see February 2009 Canoe Focus) at the Opening of Parliament concerning the Marine Bill. They have taken umbrage and written letters pointing out that they believe the SLR Act is not working let alone is really the way in Scotland. A great deal of time has been spent in replying in order to reinforce the fact that the SLR Act is in fact law and works well. Eddie has been extremely helpful with dispelling the myths and reinforcing the facts for which we are very grateful.

Well onwards and upwards undoubtedly there will be many more letters to reply to!



Keep in touch at
www.riversaccess.org

Environment Agency

Strategic planning for water related recreation for the south west of England

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Huw Arranca-Davies at the National Sailing Centre, Portland, launched 'Enjoying Water' as the strategy is now known on 5th February. The University of Brighton and associates, for the Environment Agency (EA) that leads a steering group comprising British Waterways, Natural England, Sport England and the South West of England Regional Development Agency, have developed it.

Full and summary versions of the work that covers the period 2009-2014 are available at www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation. The EA is co-ordinating the delivery of the strategy to maximise the potential benefits of inland and coastal water resources in south west England. This closely relates to government policies for health, the local economy, tourism etc based on a range of priorities and opportunities to address:

- Maximising the available resource.
- Gaps in provision.
- A focus on water recreation at existing and new multi activity centres.
- Participation and growth in activity.
- Providing better public information for use.
- A need for 'green' and integrated planning in urban and suburban areas.

Whilst there is much in the strategy that is welcomed it is essentially a tool kit for planning and very dependent on funding.

A key interest for the paddler is the stated abundance of coastal and inland waters in the south west from an audit, covering the use of 1,400km of coast, over 7,500km of (main) rivers and hundreds of square kilometres of estuaries and enclosed waters. Significantly only 20 or so rivers have canoe access by arrangement and most of this is restricted to certain times of the year.

This disparity between the number of rivers in the region and those with access for canoeing is highlighted by mapping and as a gap in provision, where a lack of access and facilities can be acute for some activities. It manages to succinctly detail the access situation described by Canoe England and why there is an access campaign. However, the strategy surprisingly claims access for canoeing is generally good throughout the region.

There are also concerns greater pressures will be placed on people and places to use the existing resource when there are no specific provisions or targets for more access, other than the River Lyn. Canoe England came away from the launch event with the message that access remains an issue, and the scope for realising the recreational potential of inland waters for canoeing in the south west remains limited.

Much the same comment applies to 'Enjoying Water' as was made for the draft strategy consultation. For that Canoe England response, plus the full and summary versions of 'Enjoying Water'. See

www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-/consultations

KEVIN EAST

Access terminology

Access legislation is full of phrases and terminology which are not normally deemed as plain English. This article is an attempt to start to unravel the maze of words which could be defined as access terminology. Condensing all this information into one article, is rather complicated so over a few editions of Canoe Focus there will be more articles which will endeavour to bring out the key issues that affect access to water.

Public Rights of Way

Starting at the beginning, as a paddler one needs to be able to physically get to the water. The main way this is achieved is via public highways. Other than the normal classes of metalled roads the main routes are usually Public Rights of Way (PRoW). There are four classes of Public Rights of Way these are:

- Public footpaths.
- Public bridleways.
- Byways open to all traffic.
- Restricted byways.

Each of these PRoWs has limitations to its use, however as far as we are concerned it is sufficient to know that all of these routes may be used on foot.

What can I take with me, or do whilst on a Public Right of Way?

This is a bit of a 'grey' area as you will see. Whilst on a PRoW you can take with you what are referred to as 'natural accompaniments', these are things which one might normally expect to have with one whilst out for a walk, or a ride, or if on a byway whilst out driving. For example it is generally accepted that if you are on a footpath you could take a push chair or a dog (under close control) but not a bicycle. The logic here being that as one cannot legally ride a bicycle on a public footpath, why would one want to push or carry it instead of using a public bridleway where it could be ridden more efficiently?

It is important to recognise that what is meant by a natural accompaniment directly affects paddlers. It is thought that it is perfectly acceptable to carry a canoe or kayak on a Public Right of Way, where that Public Right of Way leads to a body of water that has navigation rights. So long as care is taken to avoid damage to the banks and bed, then it is acceptable to launch at these points.

The reasoning behind this goes back to why these paths came into existence. Historically Public Rights of Way evolved from the need to get somewhere to do something, so in the case of a river, stream or lake, to draw water, get food (fish) or to launch your canoe/craft.

According to Public Rights of Way law, it must be noted that not all paths, tracks and roads have public rights; there are many other routes which are often referred to as, or are assumed to be public, but are in fact private. Also if you leave the PRoW and cross private land to get onto the water then you will almost certainly be trespassing unless you have the landowner's permission to do so. If you are in any doubt contact your local Public Rights of Way group, normally housed at your local council.

For the next Canoe Focus – the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Common Lands.

ANDY GREEN





Voluntary Access Arrangements for all year access to and along water

An explanatory note

A new benchmark Voluntary Access Arrangements (VAAs) has been set, with the adoption of all year round access, on a number of rivers. This is a significant change from previous arrangements that have restricted access to a set number of days or at most a few months a year.

Canoe England believes there is growing support and a strong case for existing and proposed VAAs to be revised so that they reach this new standard of consistent, all year round agreements.

Support for improving access has been demonstrated by the position taken by the Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, and some National Park Authorities, local authorities, angling organisations, landowners, and other individuals.

Their adoption of the principle for all year access with environmental protection as appropriate has enabled this type of arrangement to be established on both lowland and upland rivers in England during 2005 and 2006. These access arrangements that include other conditions of use that are an important factor in this new standard are listed below and apply to particular sections of river.

It has been clearly established that these arrangements have continued to work well and that it is feasible to create and successfully enable all year access to water. The Ipso Mori report confirms this view. Furthermore, government policy based on research by the University of Brighton produced VAA arrangements with all year access to water.

VAAs are one solution to address the imbalance of the limited access to inland waters. The preferred resolution is legislation similar to that proposed by government for coastal access and in place with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

If VAAs are used Canoe England maintains they should have all year round access. During the next 18 months Canoe England will undertake an exercise to renegotiate existing VAAs to this standard.

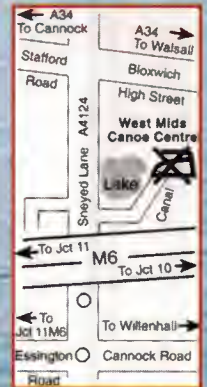
Canoe England will reserve the option to withdraw from VAAs that do not meet an all year settlement.

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Canoe trails

Let's get people canoeing England!

One piece of information people ask when purchasing a canoe or kayak is "Where can I paddle?"

To help paddlers identify where they can paddle, we intend to produce an up to date canoe trail's book.

It appears that many people are unable to work out where they can go canoeing. This could be due to things such as lack of time or knowledge about how to go about researching places to paddle. This difficulty is not helped by the uncertainty of the access situation.

Society has also changed and in many areas there is the expectation that the information is to hand on the internet, in a book or another publication. We are planning to produce a canoe trail book to be on the shelves in 2010, to assist the excellent work that the access volunteers and other members do, as well as give information to paddlers about opportunities and trails where they can canoe. It is high time we had an updated canoe trail book to replace the '100 Paddles in England'. The '100 Paddles in England', although excellent, is rather out of date, however, some of the trails can most certainly be updated and put in to the new format to feature in the new canoe trail's book.

Book style

- Be in full colour with maps and photographs.
- Contain historical and environmental/wildlife information and pictures.
- Be clear and concise about parking and transport including public transport where applicable.
- Contain trails from all the main regions of the country where in the first instance we will align these to the sport council regions but may break down further. We need a good spread of geographical and type of water.

The trails will be on waters where there is not only clarity of access but certainty too. In some minds this will miss out on some beautiful waters but we have to have a starting point. There will be opportunity for other books later.

The canoe trail book will also do the following:

- Update the image of canoe touring.
- Show to government we are a viable activity for tourism and the more water we have the more money we can put in to local and rural economies.
- Show our environmental credentials.
- Help promote canoeing in England as we work towards 2012 and the London Olympics.

Trails and their layout

We would like to cover all aspects of water types within the book as well as cover all regions. Each trail will need to have roughly the same layout in terms of information. The trails will be colour coded on difficulty and accessibility for the disabled. There are possibly trails which will not cover portages so are suitable for all.

How?

We are hoping that you all will be able to help in this. It is hoped that you or people you know will be able to assist in writing a trail(s). The relevant access adviser prior to editing and printing will check the trail. Once the trail is checked and adapted to the book format as appropriate it will be sent back to the original author for checking. The relevant access adviser will also be helping to check the information.

At all stages the author of the trail will be involved especially when sketch maps are drawn up to assist the reader. If the author of the trail could contribute a rough sketch map, that would be most helpful.

Photographs

We really like to make the book as colourful and informative as possible so to this end we would prefer to include photos for each trail. The photos should be a mix of canoes, scenery, places of interest, wildlife, portages etc.

Responsibility

Each contributor will be credited in the book but not allied to a particular trail. The responsibility for the information sits within Canoe England and not the contributor.

Where will the profits go?

If there are any profits, these will go in to the Canoe Foundation to support further canoeing projects.

Timescales

The book is planned to go to print end of 2009 ready for sale in spring 2010.

Please do consider helping us so that we can encourage greater participation in our wonderful sport.

Contact tamsin.phipps@bcu.org.uk or the Access and Environment Department access@bcu.org.uk for a canoe trail's information pack to register an outline of your ideas.

The trails should outline

- Access and egress points.
- Car parks (public conveniences etc if possible).
- Grid reference locations.
- Historical points of interest.
- Wildlife in the area.
- Difficulty of water – guide to water levels and skill levels.
- Campsites.
- Public transport if possible.
- Accessibility for the disabled.





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Canoe England photo competition



Above: February winner – Mel Barton, Hurley Weir.

Below: January winner – Kelvin Horner, River Sprint.



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 coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk or post your photos on a CD to: Coral Jackson, 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 Under 18 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 2009. 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 website where people can vote for their favourite image by emailing the number of the photograph to coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk

OVERALL WINNER

At the end of January 2010 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.

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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 illegible 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.



Above: Selected – Richard Docker, Bigbery kayak surf competition.

The winners for January and February (as voted by you)

JANUARY ADULT WINNER

Kelvin Horner

JANUARY UNDER 18 WINNER

No entries

FEBRUARY ADULT WINNER

Mel Barton

FEBRUARY UNDER 18 WINNER

No entries



Below: Selected – Ian Williamson.

Above: Selected – Phil Hemsley, Bantham Rivermouth.



Pyranha

Karnali

www.pyranha.com

When I received the Karnali I was a little shocked as to how big the boat was. Even though I am a big guy I wasn't convinced that I would enjoy paddling what looked like a huge boat. As a six foot, three inch paddler who likes pies, the cockpit area of the boat is really comfortable, with plenty of room – in fact this is the first boat I can get in wearing my 5:10 Canyoneer boots! However, with the outfitting I can make myself really snug and connected with the boat.

Initial thoughts of paddling the Karnali are one of reassurance. It feels really solid with excellent secondary stability. It is easy to edge and hold plus it handles well on flat and moving water. While on the Tees the other week I scratched my eye, which in turn led me to paddling the rest of the river with one eye closed. The stability of the boat gave me the confidence to carry on down the river partially sighted.

The design has great hull speed giving the kayak the ability to accelerate quickly and track really well. The edges give the boat great carving speed to drive across flows and into and out of eddies. It is a really dry boat, which rides high and with its hull speed punches through features when needed.

As stated, the boat is large but it doesn't feel that way on the river where it plays and surfs well. Making the most of its heritage, it is a fun playful boat that is also responsive. On the flat water it doesn't feel a drag and on the canal it is easy to keep up with other paddlers in a diverse range of boats.

Having said all this it doesn't quite have the top end performance of some other river boats. The area where I noticed its size was in sharp manoeuvres,



into small features. Due to its size you will also need a longer set of paddles. It is aimed at the average paddler for whom it does the job really well. I would feel comfortable advocating this boat to paddlers who want to progress their paddling from 2 Star right through to 5 Star.

GARETH FIELD

Above:
The Karnali in action.



Dimensions

Length: 260cm

Width: 66.5cm

Weight: 22kgs

Seats: 1

Optimum load:

80-120kg

Application:

River running to big volume.

Starting from around £650.00



Pyranha

Speeder

www.pyranha.com



Dimensions

Length: 450cm

Width: 60cm

Weight: 22kgs

Seats: 1

Optimum load:

80-120kg

Application:

River, on the sea, lake or flat water.

Starting from around £680.00

It's brilliant – I love them! I have been borrowing and using speeders for the last year now with many different groups and organisations and I think they are brilliant fun.

I have bought two Speeders for coach education courses as a straight running boat, but over the Christmas period I started using it for myself when paddling.

I had a day on the Eden paddling with some friends and, instead of taking my river kayak or canoe down a river I have paddled many times, I took the Speeder and had a blast and a swim! Racing down rapids as fast as I could go, but still able to throw it into eddies and try and surf waves (hence the swim). When it came to a rescue I still felt stable enough to assist the swimmer.

The next time out was out on Windemere for a gentle paddle, with some friends. Happily the Speeder hatch swallowed all that we needed for a day on the lake. Cruising down the lake, the Speeder easily kept up with my friends in tandem canoes.

The stability gets better with more weight, as the hull goes deeper in the water it becomes more stable. This changes the paddler's reaction to the boat and by adding weight into the hatch it adds stability for the tippy paddler.

Is it an open canoe or a kayak? Everything that you can do in an open canoe you can do in the Speeder. From river running through to expeditions, you can do it all.

GARETH FIELD

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02 Softer Edges

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03 Modern Seating Position

- ergonomic design with raised knees for more foot room.

04 Smoother Hull Profile

- for increased forward speed.



“The Z.One is a very fun boat and is also very forgiving. I had a blast in the bigger holes in it. It felt very balanced from bow to stern, was comfortable, and fast too.”

Dave Fusilli - Team Pyranha US



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In 2009 we plan to open 7 days a week in the main season. Therefore, we need more enthusiastic, qualified instructors to join our friendly team to deliver activity sessions between May and September.

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Activity Instructors

Robyn Pearcey



Surf kayaker

Robyn Pearcey is just 21 and has many successes to her name and has recently won the British Open Surf Championships for the second year running. Robyn is currently training for the World Championships, which are to be held in Santa Cruz, Portugal from July 30th to August 9th.

How did you first become involved in kayaking?

Growing up watching my dad kayaking made me curious as a child and so when I reached my teenage years, curiosity got the best of me.

When did you take up surf kayaking and why?

It wasn't until my mum and I joined my dad out in California for the 'Steamer Lane Annual Surf Kayaking Festival 2007' that I became really interested in surf kayaking. An old family friend named Dan Crandal got me in a kayak that week and within 15 minutes had me rolling again after an absence of three years.

What is it about the sport that you like so much?

Each surfer is different, and develops their own style – it is not one of those sports where everyone is trying to conform to the same thing. Within surf kayaking I have the freedom to be myself and if I get recognised for it through my competing all the better.

When did you win your first competition?

The first competition I won was the HP (High Performance) Finals run by Darren Bason at the end of the summer 2007.

Why surfing and not any of the other kayaking disciplines?

Since I have started competing I have tried other disciplines, such as sea kayaking and white water, but don't get out of them what I do with surfing. There is something exhilarating about shooting down the line of a perfect six-foot face that I just don't experience when I am on a river.

What have been the toughest moments and how do you keep yourself motivated?

Winning the British Open last year. I had only been surfing for one year and suddenly I had this huge title behind me. It had a big impact on me and when you win such a prestigious title, people begin to see you differently, and they expect a lot from you.

What is in the pipeline for 2009?

Well, 2009 is a busy year for me. As well as my graduation from university this year I have the World Championships to look forward to. This is the biggest event in surf kayaking and is held every two years. Within the competition there are both team and individuals events which I will be entering.

What is a typical training day/session like?

For me a typical training day is an hour in the pool, swimming front crawl solidly and then an hour and half session at the gym in the evening. I tend to get out between two to three times a week in the surf, however this will most likely increase once university has finished.

What is your ultimate goal in the sport?

To be world champion.

Which club is your base and how long have you been there?

Before I moved to Cornwall for university, it was Martlet's Canoe Club in Brighton. I owe a lot to these guys, especially Marc Woolward, I was in his surf academy for a year.

Kayak surfing is getting more popular, how can people get involved?

Pop down to your local canoe club and ask if they do any surf kayaking sessions. If not go on the BCU website www.bcusurf.org.uk, and get yourself on a course.

If anyone would like to talk to me further about surf kayaking please feel free to contact me at surfachick@hotmail.com. I will also have my own website www.surfachick.com up and running soon with an up to date blog.

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