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focus



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Above: Men's C2 Bronze medallists, Etienne Stott (left) and Tim Baillie (right).

BCU (UKCC) Coaching Awards

Congratulations to the 3000 candidates who have completed training and assessment for the new BCU (UKCC) Level 1 since its roll out in October 2007. With about 400 having completed training for the new BCU (UKCC) Level 2 since October 2008 significant progress has been made in our sport in establishing the basis for a high quality and sustainable coaching system in line with the needs of both participants and coaches.

We now look forward to introducing the new BCU (UKCC) Level 3, endorsed by the UKCC and National Qualifications Framework, later this year.

Against these successes we aim to consolidate and evolve the new coaching service provision. We will work closely with Sports Coach UK to ensure that the BCU offers the best possible coaching products. Again many congratulations to those coaches who have embarked on this new and exciting journey.

Welcome to June's Canoe Focus

Firstly, thank you to all of the volunteers and people involved with organising a successful 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships. The event was truly outstanding in all respects.

With British medal success, personal bests, magnificent weather, an army of dedicated volunteers and many supporters, the white water course at Nottingham was vibrant and full of life and the event extremely well received.

The event would not have been possible without the 320 volunteers that ran the event and the support received from UK Sport and Nottinghamshire County Council.

It is a three year paddle to 2012, but the athletes, volunteers and support team all got a little flavour of just how exciting the London Olympics will be.

I would also like to congratulate Rachel Cawthorn who, at the sprint racing World Cup in Poznan,

won a Gold medal in the Women's K1000m and a Silver medal in the Women's K1 500m event.

Lani Belcher and Lucy Wainwright also won a Bronze medal in the Women's K2 500m.

John Grogan MP continues to support the Rivers Access Campaign and he came to the European Slalom Championships in Nottingham to experience a part of the world of canoeing. John was impressed by the event and has introduced an EDM (Early Day Motion) as support and also as a request for greater access to inland waterways. The EDM no 1577 (Increased access to Waterways in England and Wales) and can be read in full here: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=38755&SESSION=899>.

Talk to your MP, contact details available at www.parliament.uk and ask them to support the EDM.

On a separate note, welcome to the 2,500 new members who have joined Canoe England and the BCU in the past two months and who will be reading this magazine for the first time!

Lastly, enjoy the warm weather and pleasant paddling!

Paul Owen

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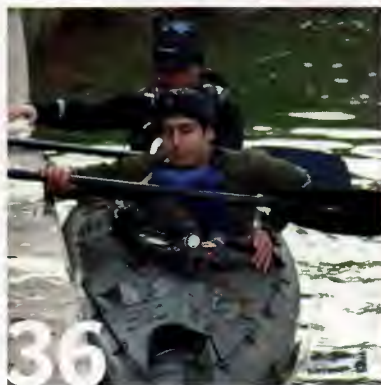


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Competition

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event	
June	12-Jun	14-Jun	Freestyle	Euro Cup - Plattling, GER	
	13-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Lea - Div B and Wavehopper - South East Series 3	
	13-Jun		Slalom	Fairnilee - British Under 14 & 16 and Veteran Championships	
	13-Jun	14-Jun	Slalom	Fairnilee - Div 2 and 3	
	13-Jun	14-Jun	Marathon Racing	World Cup - Copenhagen, DEN	
	14-Jun		Slalom	Fairnilee - Div 4	
	14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Burton - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K2	
	14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Macclesfield - Hasler 09 - North West - K2	
	14-Jun		Coach Update	Yorkshire - Humber	
	14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Lower Exe and Estuary - Hasler 09 - South West - K1	
	14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Leighton Buzzard - Hasler 09 - East - K1	
	14-Jun		Freestyle	Youth Series - Nene	
	14-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal - Hasler 09 - London & South East - K1	
	14-Jun		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Canoe Club Regatta	
	17-Jun		Marathon Racing	Linlithgow Loch Summer Series 10km	
	19-Jun	21-Jun	Freestyle	Euro Cup - Bratislava, SLO	
	20-Jun	21-Jun	Slalom	Orton Mere - Div 3 and 4	
	20-Jun	21-Jun	Slalom	Langham Farm - Div 3 and 4	
	20-Jun	21-Jun	Coach Update	North West - Anderton Centre	
	20-Jun	21-Jun	Slalom	Alva - Div 3 and 4 - Scottish Schools Championships	
	20-Jun	21-Jun	Slalom	Rhug - Div 3 and 4	
	20-Jun	23-Jun	Canoe Sailing	National Championships - Stone	
	21-Jun	27-Jun	Wild Water Racing	European Championships - Valtellina, ITA	
	21-Jun		Marathon Racing	Oxford Midsummer Hasler - Hasler 09 - Southern - K2	
	21-Jun		Marathon Racing	Hereford - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K2	
	21-Jun		Marathon Racing	Derwebt - Mike Jones Memorial - Hasler 09 - Yorks & Humb - K1	
	21-Jun		Sprint Racing	Strathclyde Park Regatta	
	25-Jun	28-Jun	Sprint Racing	European Championships - Brandenburg, GER	
	26-Jun	28-Jun	Freestyle	Euro Cup - Lienz, AUT	
	27-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Conway Ascent - Open - Welsh Series 2	
	27-Jun		Slalom	Bala Mill - Premier - Pan Celtic - Welsh Championships	
	27-Jun		Marathon Racing	Conwy Ascent	
	27-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal Padding Challenge	
	27-Jun	28-Jun	Slalom	World Cup 1 - Pau, FRA	
	28-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Chester Dee - Div B and Wavehopper - Open Canoe Championships	
	28-Jun		Slalom	Bala Mill - Div 1	
	28-Jun		Marathon Racing	Wey Marathon - Guildford - Hasler 09 - London & South East - K1	
	28-Jun		Marathon Racing	Shropshire Paddlesport - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K1	
	July	4-Jul	5-Jul	Sprint Racing	National Regatta - Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham
		4-Jul	5-Jul	Marathon Racing	Cheshire Ring
		4-Jul	5-Jul	Slalom	World Cup 2 - Bratislava, SVK
		4-Jul	5-Jul	Slalom	Washburn - Div 2
		4-Jul	5-Jul	Slalom	Ogmore - Div 3 and 4
		4-Jul	5-Jul	Slalom	Shepperton - Div 3 and 4
		11-Jul		Sprint Racing	Royal Junior Sprint Regatta
		11-Jul		Sprint Racing	Home Countries Sprint Regatta - Cardiff Bay
		11-Jul		Freestyle	Youth Series - Boulton
		11-Jul	12-Jul	Slalom	World Cup 3 - Augsburg, GER
11-Jul		12-Jul	Canoe Sailing	Ullswater	
11-Jul		12-Jul	Slalom	Holme Pierrepont - Div 1 and 2	
12-Jul			Slalom	Bala Mill - Div 3 and 4	
12-Jul			Marathon Racing	Exe Circuit - Hasler 09 - South West - K2	
12-Jul			Marathon Racing	Runcorn - Lightning Special Event	
12-Jul			Marathon Racing	Pangbourne - Hasler 09 - Southern - K2	
15-Jul			Marathon Racing	Linlithgow Loch Summer Series 10km	
15-Jul		18-Jul	Wild Water Racing	World Championships - Juniors - Buochs, SUI	
16-Jul		19-Jul	Sprint Racing	European Championships - Under 23 & Junior - Poznan, POL	
17-Jul		18-Jul	Canoe Polo	IWGA World Games - Kaohsiung City, TPE	
18-Jul			Marathon Racing	Runcorn - Hasler 09 - North West - K1	
18-Jul		19-Jul	Slalom	Washburn - Div 1	
18-Jul			Wild Water Racing	Derwent Sprint - Midland Series	
18-Jul		19-Jul	Slalom	Abbey Rapids - Div 2, 3 and 4	
19-Jul			Marathon Racing	Thames Valley Circuit - Wokingham - Hasler 09 - Southern - K1	
23-Jul		2-Aug	Surf	World Championships - Ocean Spirit - Santa Cruz - Portugal	
24-Jul		26-Jul	Slalom	European Under 23 & Junior Championships Liptovsky Mikulas, SVK	
24-Jul		26-Jul	Marathon Racing	European Championships - Ostroda, POL	
25-Jul			Wild Water Racing	Nene 2 - Wavehopper - South East Series 4	
25-Jul			Club Event	York River Festival Canoe Race	
25-Jul			Sprint Racing	Reading & Wokingham Sprint	
25-Jul		26-Jul	Canoe Polo	National Club Championships - Hatfield Water Park, Doncaster	

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
Jul	25-Jul	26-Jul	Slalom	Howsham Weir - Div 2 and 3
	26-Jul		Marathon Racing	Reading - K4
	31-Jul	2-Aug	Sprint Racing	World Championships - Juniors - Moscow, RUS
	1-Aug		Marathon Racing	Bath to Bradford
	2-Aug		Marathon Racing	Bradford Circuit - Hasler 09 - South West - 09
	2-Aug		Marathon Racing	Medway
	2-Aug		Marathon Racing	Inverness Marathon - Canal and River
	7-Aug	9-Aug	Canoe Sailing	European Cup - SWE
	8-Aug		Marathon Racing	Southampton - K2 - Assessment
	9-Aug		Marathon Racing	Ironbridge - Hasler 09 - Midlands - K2
August	8-Aug	9-Aug	Slalom	Harefield - Div 3 and 4
	9-Aug		Marathon Racing	Southampton - Hasler 09 - Southern - K2
	12-Aug		Marathon Racing	Linlithgow Loch Summer Series 10km
	12-Aug	16-Aug	Sprint Racing	World Championships - Dartmouth, CAN
	15-Aug		Marathon Racing	Elmbridge - K1 - Assessment
	16-Aug		Sprint Racing	Scottish Sprint Championships
	18-Aug		Marathon Racing	Strathclyde Park 10km
	19-Aug	23-Aug	Canoe Polo	European Championships - Essen, GER
	20-Aug		Marathon Racing	Forth Canoe Club - 10km Time Trial - Union Canal
	22-Aug		Slalom	Llandysul - Div 2, 3 and 4
	22-Aug	23-Aug	Surf	Mega Plastic Championships - Woolacombe
	22-Aug	23-Aug	Slalom	Pre-World Championships - Tacen, SLO
	22-Aug	23-Aug	Slalom	Fairnilee - Div 2 and 3
	23-Aug		Marathon Racing	Tonbridge - Hasler 09 - London & South East - K1
	23-Aug		Slalom	Fairnilee - Scottish Junior Under 14/16 Championships
	23-Aug		Marathon Racing	Adlington - Hasler 09 - North West - K1
	23-Aug		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Canoe Club Regatta - Kinghorn Loch
	29-Aug	30-Aug	Wild Water Racing	Welsh Series 3 and Youth Ch 7
	29-Aug	30-Aug	Slalom	Grandtully - Div 1 and 2
	29-Aug	30-Aug	Slalom	Nene - Div 2 and 3 plus Short course Div 4
	29-Aug	30-Aug	Marathon Racing	National Championships - Longridge, GBR - Assessment
31-Aug	6-Sep	Freestyle	World Championships - Thun, SUI	

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 website (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.canoe polo.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

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Lessons learned

After 15 years of active coaching, a change in career forced a 10 year break in my paddling, out of nowhere I found myself with six weeks to prepare for a paddling trip to India.

Towards the end of my preparations, I found myself with my coach on the River Conwy in fairly high water. Most of my paddling life to date had been as a coach and now I found myself as a recreational paddler and student.

Rather embarrassingly I had to bail out of my boat and take a rather nasty swim downriver; fortunately I managed to swim to a small eddy halfway down a section of rapids in a small gorge.

Having taken a few breaths of the sweetest air in my life, I found myself bruised and bleeding, hanging on to a small rock and contemplating my climb out of the river.

Thoughts of my family flashed into my head, then my mind focused on trying to attract the attention of my coach to help me exit the river. At this point I wasn't feeling particularly brave about climbing the bank, as the prospect of falling back into the river was just unacceptable.

I started to shout, which I soon realised was particularly pointless due to the noise of the water. It was at this point, I reflected ironically on my past paddling where a whistle was as much a standard a piece of kit as a boat.

To cut the story short, my coach was unable to locate me and contacted the emergency services.

It is my opinion that if I had had a whistle:

1. My anxiety and that of my coach would have been reduced.
2. He would have not needed to call out the emergency services.

Throughout all of my training for my trip, my coach was exemplary and I would not hesitate to paddle with him again, although he may not be so keen!

Paul Kenwright

Keith Hampton, BCU National Development

Coach replies: Paul has raised a valuable point. The whistle is probably the cheapest, smallest and lightest piece of safety equipment and has saved thousands of lives. Although paddlers recognise the benefits of its application, it's worth remembering as coaches, how invaluable the humble whistle can be.

The most common system of whistle signals being taught on water safety are rescue courses are:

- 1 blast – raise attention or acknowledgment.
- 2 blasts – move or look upstream.
- 3 blasts – move or look downstream.
- 4 blasts – emergency or assistance needed.

These are simple and easy to understand and are taught on all levels of BCU safety and rescue training courses, from foundation safety and rescue through to the advanced WWSR. These are not the only signals out there but whatever you use, they must be simple and understood by everyone in the group.

Remember to use a plastic 'pea-less' type whistle often referred to as a shrill whistle, these cut

through the white noise of the outdoors environment and carry further, they also allow water to be blown out on the first blow.

Well done, BCU

I've just read through the 'Volunteer' pages on the Canoe England website and I have to say that I'm impressed, both personally and professionally, by the range and depth of the resources, advice, guidance, hard work and thought that have clearly gone into not just the resources but the whole support structure available through the website. It is quite clear that considerable thought has gone into what volunteers need at club level and the content of the site reflects this.

As a coach and the club welfare officer with Huntingdon Canoe Club, it gives our club and other organisations, the reassurance that we have the mechanisms in place to not only safeguard paddlers but also to make canoeing accessible to our local communities. An example of this is that as a club we have just been awarded a £2,000 grant. In applying we had to provide documentation of our policies and processes around accessibility, diversity, equity, safeguarding vulnerable paddlers and volunteers, all of which the website allowed me to give to the club member making the application.

I know it's easy to knock the BCU, but I really have to say that the volunteer website is a wonderful example of how well it can be done, good hit!

Alex Paterson

Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development

Officer replies: Thanks Alex, it's great to hear your feedback. We are working hard to ensure the website is a valuable source of information - especially the volunteers and safeguarding sections - through providing the guidance, resources and support for our volunteers to undertake their roles. We're pleased to hear it is useful for your club!

All together now

I was interested to read Geoff Webb's article about the lack of canoes in the magazine. I consider myself to be a kayaker first but have competed in canoes, dragonboats, rafts, O1s and even surf competitions.

Over the winter I returned closer to home to encourage others and run some training sessions. This eventually culminated in my club, Hemel Hempstead, entering the Waterside series in a Canadian boat. This raised a few eyebrows. Too often I have found that an individual sings the praises of one type of paddlesport in order to show him/her in the best possible light or to push their own agenda. But this is damaging to all.

Parliament and other quangos that distribute funds are generous to those sports with large numbers and rarely listen to minority sports. The organisations that argue amongst themselves become weaker both in terms of members and influence on legislature.

It is also not true to suggest that it is impossible to appreciate the river if you are racing. I have enjoyed rivers both travelling fast and slow.

There have been some excellent examples of individuals switching from one sport to another. Quite often if one brings something new to a sport from outside, one could have an advantage over the competition. For example Tom Fryer is a raft racer and I am a kayaker but together we beat all the canoeists in this year's DW race.

Let us celebrate the similarities between all the sports that sit on something and use a paddle and all enjoy the benefits from the greater lobbying power the numbers produce.

Chris Preston

'Kayak Focus'

I just thought I ought to write and say how much I enjoyed Geoff Webb's comment about 'Kayak Focus'. It is a shame that those of us who paddle canoes find little of interest in the magazine. However, with so little access to UK rivers there is not too much chance of getting a critical mass of open canoeists sufficient to generate content for the magazine. As a fairweather, along the canal to the pub, my exploits just don't bear repeating.

There is also the issue that for national exposure and access to funds, there has to be a national body for the sport. That means there must be competition and the more entertaining for spectators the better. Kayaking wins that competition over open canoeing without even trying. It is a pity because it then means 'canoeing' is seen as being all about competition and white water. Open canoeing, as part of the 'slow' movement for recreation, is left in the shade.

To end on a positive note, how about calling the magazine 'Paddle Focus' and show our emphasis is on the enjoyment of paddling.

Dr Peter F Cuthbert

Howard Blackman, Head of Paddlesport

Participation Programme replies: The BCU is interested in and committed to all areas of paddlesport. As an organisation, we are constantly looking to develop all areas of our sport, both recreational and competitive. To achieve this we have a dedicated development team, who support clubs and centres to publicise to the community the full range of canoeing activity.

An example of this work is our newly developed initiative, Canoe 2012. Canoe 2012, has been commissioned to help expand the pathway into the singled bladed disciplines of paddlesport and increase the number and depth of paddlers participating.

Supported by suitable equipment and a coach education programme, it will establish new regional and local events that are attractive to and easy to access by everyone. The programme will be led by our paddlesport participation team and delivered through our regional and local club coaches.

Canoe Focus would welcome any articles about recreational canoeing, please turn to page 16.



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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.



Vision Express

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What would you like to see?

Canoe England and Vision Express have joined forces to provide members substantial savings on eye care through the 'Vision Select' scheme.

You can have a standard eye examination for £10 or free when purchasing complete glasses. In addition, you can save £30 when purchasing a complete pair of glasses with a frame costing £69 or more. When you join the contact 7 direct debit scheme, you qualify for a free consultation, registration and three month's supply of lenses (worth up to £44.85). Terms and conditions apply.

Simply present your Canoe England membership card in any Vision Express store and the Vision Select voucher. The Vision Select voucher is available to download off the Canoe England website – member's area. Phone 0800 738090 or book your eye examination on-line at visionexpress.com.

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.

Canoe and kayak retailer discounts

Here at Canoe England we continue to seek great deals and discounts that members can benefit from. We look to secure only deals that we think are relevant to members. We are now pleased to announce that we have negotiated a 10% discount at selected canoe and kayak retailers around the country. For the retailer's contact details visit the Canoe England member's area – www.canoe-england.org.uk. To take advantage of the 10% discount, just show your membership card at the time of purchase.

WEST MIDLANDS: Bear Creek Adventure, Worcestershire; Brookbank Canoes, Warwick; Canoe Kayak Trader, Warwick; Joel Watersports, Worcester; West Midland Canoe Centre, Walsall **YORKSHIRE:** Fear Gear, Doncaster; Robin Hood Watersports, Heckmondwike; Wipeout, Sheffield; Yorkshire Canoe and Kayak, Doncaster **LONDON AND SOUTH EAST:** Brighton Canoes Ltd, E. Sussex; Kent Canoes, Kent – Kent Canoes offer 10% discount on boats and 5% discount off kit; The Family Boat Shop, Surrey; UK Kayaking, West Sussex; Whitewater The Canoe Centre, Middlesex **EAST MIDLANDS:** Desperate Measures, Nottingham; Tradewinds Outdoor, Northamptonshire **EASTERN:** Nucleus Watersports, Clacton; Reeds Of Cambridge, Cambridge **SOUTHERN:** Berkshire Canoes, Reading; Marsport Ltd, Reading; Riverside Central, Oxford; Woodmill, Southampton **NORTH WEST:** Brookbank Canoes, Stockport **CUMBRIA:** Brookbank Canoes, Carlisle; Brookbank Canoes, Lancaster; Carlisle Canoes, Carlisle; UK Canoes, Lancaster; Windermere Canoe Kayak, Bowness-on-Windermere **SOUTH WEST:** Camel Canoe and Kayaks Ltd, Cornwall; Cheltenham Canoes, Cheltenham; Cornwall Canoes, Newquay; Family Adventure Store, Wiltshire; Kayak and Paddles, Plymouth; Outdoor Active Ltd, Gloucestershire; Performance Kayaks, Weston-Super-Mare; Totnes Kayaks, Devon **SCOTLAND:** Stirling Canoes, Stirling, Central Scotland; Nevis Canoes, Fort William, Highlands; Brookbank Canoes, Perth.

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

Safeguarding and protecting children

Website and new resources

We have reorganised the website pages for Safeguarding which we hope will make it easier to find what you need. There are three additional pages for Safeguarding which includes resources, CRB and training. In addition the resources have been updated. They have been divided into policy, guidance and templates. Each document has a number and date which will help to identify the latest version.

Independent Safeguarding Authority

The government has recently announced a major change in the implementation process for the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Individual applications for scheme registration will not now begin until summer 2010 with a five-year phase in of the scheme anticipated.

Consultation for the needs of sport in the new scheme are currently being undertaken by representatives for sporting organisations. Canoe England will update all clubs and members once this is completed and will provide guidance to support everyone who is involved with young people. For further information see the Safeguarding and Protecting section of our website.

Paddlesafe – online Child Protection course

The course is a first step in helping volunteers and coaches to understand more about child protection in an easy to access format. Coaches who regularly work with young people should still attend the Safeguarding and Protecting Children workshop. You will find further details on our website under training. For all Safeguarding matters go to: www.bcu.org.uk or www.canoe-england.org.uk and click on the Paddlesafe box on the home page.

Important contact numbers

Canoe England 24-hour child protection:

email: childprotection@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 0777 570 7364

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

BCU Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Harassment Lead Officer:

Mike Devlin: 0845 370 9514

Canoe England Child Protection Support Officer:

Nigel Timmins: 017684 80084

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

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

Tel: 0800 800 5000 (24 hour).

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111

The Big 5 Kayak Challenge team complete Land's End to the Isle of Scilly

The 40-mile crossing took a gruelling nine-hours and 30 minutes in large Atlantic swells of between 4-5 metres. Seven members of the team left Lamorna Cove at 09.00 on Saturday with several hours of paddling against the tides before tidal assistance kicked in. The support boat, Sapphire, was expertly piloted by Joe Pender, the Isle of Scilly lifeboat man. One of the highlights enjoyed by the team was a 'fly-by' from a Royal Navy helicopter whose crew gave a standing ovation to the team.

The rolling swell made members of the team feel extremely nauseous and Dave Gordon in particular discovered a lack of sea legs and began to feel really ill. Exhausted and running on empty he was forced to abandon the crossing after six hours of perseverance and rest up on Sapphire.

A resident seal greeted the whole team on arrival on the Isles of Scilly in the inner sound. Rounding the headland the team arrived in St Mary's and joined the excitement of the World Gig Racing Championships. The Isles of Scilly are a sea

kayaking paradise with diverse wildlife, idyllic beaches and some interesting water to paddle.

The final leg of the challenge sees the team kayak the Inside Passage, almost 1000 miles from Vancouver Island to Alaska. Visit the website to follow their progress and support the charity.

Raising money for The Muscle Help Foundation and awareness for the River Access Campaign. Visit our website www.big5kayakchallenge.com



Above: rafting up mid-water

BCU Interclub Touring Award

The BCU Gold Touring Award went to Westell Canoe Club with 6982 points by 17 paddlers. Jeff Simmons founded Westell Canoe Club, based in Hampton, in 1970. This is the eleventh time in 20 years that the club has been named touring club of the year.

Silver went to Canoe Camping Club, Thames and South East region with 4340.6 points by 17 paddlers. Bronze to Purley Canoe Club with 2333.40 points by 47 paddlers.

The award ceremony took place at the Boathouse Pub on the River Thames in Chertsey.

Congratulations to all the clubs that took part! www.bcu.org.uk.



Above: Jeff Simmons, Adrian Barclay – Awards Administrator and Barbara Simmons – the winners.

Canoe polo launch new website

After months of development work, Friends of Allonby Liverpool Canoe Club have launched their new website. Visit www.friendsofallonby.org.uk and take a look for yourself!

Achieved Safeguarding Standard



The BCU is delighted to announce that they have achieved the Advanced Standard for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport.

The achievement reflects many years of hard work, commitment and dedication by staff, volunteers and coaches to develop suitable policies and procedures, and implement them in clubs and centres.

Sport plays a key role in the lives of many young people; so the standard of safeguarding and protection they receive when canoeing has been the BCU's primary focus.

The BCU would like to take this opportunity to thank the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) whose support and guidance has been invaluable in helping them to achieve this standard. They also wish to acknowledge the many sports that have shared best practice advice, helping to enhance the standards across sport.

Paul Owen Chief Executive said, "The BCU is delighted to have achieved this award. Our mission statement is, 'helping and inspiring people to go canoeing' and fundamental to this is that children and young people can do so safely. The BCU believe that it is everyone's responsibility in canoeing to ensure that all children have a fun and positive experience in the sport. Safe participation has been, and still is, the mains stay of our approach to embedding equitable and ethical policies and practices, to support the delivery of paddlesport."

Scottish adventure

This is an expedition that started in May 2008. Starting from Wales, rounding Ireland to Rathlin Island before heading north through the Scottish Islands. On 4th June Patrick Winterton will start from Oban, paddling north to join forces with Mick Berwick in Stornoway. At the first sign of stable weather they hope to make it from there to the Faroes in three legs.

Mick and Patrick aborted an attempt in August due to injury and poor weather and required assistance from the RNLI to make it safely back to the mainland. One year older and wiser, they will try to prove that it is possible in production boats. This time round they will be raising money for the RNLI. Visit: www.paddlefaroes.com.

Record breaking attempt

A lawyer from West Sussex is attempting a record-breaking challenge to raise money for 'Help for Heroes', which supports injured servicemen and women from Britain, on July 5th weather providing. Mike Ellis, 41, will cycle from London to Dover, kayak across the English Channel to Calais, and then cycle from Calais to Paris. To get into the record books, he will need to complete the challenge in less than 24 hours. Visit Mike's charity page at www.justgiving.com/L2Pbybikeandsurfski

Isle of Wight charity challenge

Recreational canoeist, Malc Young is kayaking around the Isle of Wight to raise money for charity. The 49 year-old from Southampton will be raising funds for Leucan. Based in Sussex, Leucan help to support local families of children with leukaemia, cancer or bone marrow failure. Visit: www.mycharitypage.com/IOWCircumNavforLeucan/.

Kayaking Britain's coast

An ex-serviceman is kayaking around the coast of Britain, to raise money for charity. Eric Innes, 46 from Lancashire will start at Blackpool and paddle north up the west side to Fort William. He will be raising funds for 'Help for Heroes', which support injured servicemen. The journey is scheduled for June and will take him between eight and 12 weeks to complete. Contact Eric at ericinnes@btinternet.com

1,200 mile walk, kayak and cycle

On 1 June, Andrew Fairbairn from Banbury in Oxfordshire, began The Fairbairn Challenge, a 1,180-mile journey involving kayaking, cycling and walking from Bishop Rock on the Isles of Scilly to the lighthouse at Muckle Flugga in Shetland; set on the most northerly rock in the British Isles. By completing the challenge he hopes to raise £25,000 for 'School for All in Africa'. Donations can be made to: www.justgiving.com/andrewfairbairn

Club improvement fund available



Canoe England is pleased to announce a new funding programme to support club facility development and improvements. The programme is the result of a successful funding submission to Sport England to support and increase community sport.

The new scheme will be known as the Canoe England Capital Grants Programme and a total of £2,400,000 is available from 2009-2013. The funding is for capital building projects and there are two categories that clubs can apply for:

- Small Grants – £10,000 to £100,000. These will typically target improvements to existing facilities, such as changing rooms and showers, boat storage etc.
- Large Grants – £100,000 and upwards. For facility redevelopment.

There is a third category for equipment grants, which will be for boats in the community and will

be purchased centrally. Clubs that are interested in being considered for receiving this grant assistance are asked to complete in the first instance a simple 'Expression of interest' form – a copy of which is on the Canoe England web site.

The procedure that Canoe England will follow will be very similar to that of the previous funding stream, the Community Club Development Programme (CCDP). However, funding in the new programme is agreed annually and must be spent in the year of the award.

The 'Expression of Interest' forms can be returned at any time, but all projects for spending between April 2010 and March 2011 must be received by September 30th.

More information will be posted on the Canoe England website as it becomes available including grant criteria, conditions of grant, officer assessment criteria and other procedures.

Chris Hawkesworth – Planning and Facilities Manager

Jessica Oughton takes Gold



Above: Jessica earlier in the year

Jessica Oughton has won Gold at the Pre-World Championships in Spain. Jessica placed first with a time of 1:46:32, just ahead of the Czech Republic's Michala Mruzkova in 1:48:60. Jessica was .08 seconds behind Mruzkova after the first run but forged ahead with a 3.28 seconds improvement, to win first place.

In the team race Jessica, Radka Felingerove and Hannah Brown took Silver in the women's event, whilst Grant Anderson, Tim Lawrenson and Michael Sims finished ninth in the mens. Congratulations to Jessica and all the athletes!

YORCIE www.yorcie.org.uk

The annual Coachfest at Aldwark in April was definitely the region's coaching event of the year and broke the previous records for the both the number of courses and coaches taking part. Janet and John ran a fantastic weekend and have asked me to thank all the staff from cooks and coaches to secretaries and support staff from Nottingham.

The Coaching Yorkshire Roadshow has now visited the four regions of the county and all the frequently asked questions are now on the new facelift look coaching web. Please look at www.yorcie.org.uk/coaching and let us know anything else you would like to see rco.yorkshire@yorcie.org.uk

The city of York has a two-week river festival with something for everyone from the 11-26th July. Leeds also has a waterfront festival based on the new Clarence Dock over the weekend of July 11-12th. On July 24th Manvers are having a general 'come and try it' and on August 2nd a 'race day'. Details available at manvers@yorcie.org.uk and Gareth@bcu.org.uk

Enjoy all the light nights and let us know your news.

Dick Constable, Chairman Canoe England, Yorkshire Region RDtchair@yorcie.org.uk

London Youth Games



Thames Water is to be title sponsor of the LYG Regatta. The five-year sponsorship deal will run from 2009 to 2013 and secures the permanent return of the regatta to the games after an absence of seven years. It follows Thames Water's sponsorship of a successful pilot regatta in 2008, which saw over 400 young Londoners competing in sailing, rowing, kayaking slalom and canoe sprint.

Windermere charity paddle

Last year Alastair Campbell's wife was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. In August this year, Alastair is planning to kayak the length of Windermere Lake with support from the Scouts and Cancer Research UK on August 15th. Alastair is looking to encourage as many kayakers as possible to join him on the paddle in teams of three. The plan is that the combined mileage of all the teams will add up to the 700-mile length of the UK. Visit: www.windermere2009.co.uk.

Longridge National Open Marathon

29-30 August. Longridge Canoe Club at Longridge, Marlow. The event often attracts international paddlers from Europe, as this event is one month before the world championships in Portugal. The paddlers will race over distances up to 20km and are contested in age groups from under 10s through to over 65s.

Duck Mill reunion, Bedford

Since 1966 canoeists from the Bedford area have gathered every year on Boxing Day to celebrate Christmas, with a brief paddle at Duck Mill Weir in the town, followed at 11.30 by a synchronised mass Eskimo roll. Some of the participants have mooted the idea of a reunion sometime this summer. Peter Parker has set up a Facebook site named Duck Mill Duckers and would be pleased to hear from anyone who has taken part. Contact Copper Harper on 01234 822134 or Mike Carter on 01234 215441.

Open canoe weekend, Devon

2-5th July Axmouth, Devon. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of this very popular event and in celebration of his memory; it will now formally be referred to as Bob's Open Canoe weekend, after Bob Ottley who passed away in 2008. Bob received the BCU's Special Award for Services to Canoeing in January 2008. Two things make this event special: the expertise and experience of the coaches leading the activities and the variety of paddling possibilities. The event is based at Axmouth in Devon and camping facilities are available. Book in advance at: www.axevalecc.co.uk or contact Val Ottley on 01460-63812

York River Canoe race

Saturday 25th July. Enjoy a great day out at historic York. Free car parking on the riverside. Camping facilities available. Three different distances all passing through the city centre. Start and finish at the Millennium Bridge. Canadian canoes, GP kayaks, sea kayaks, tourers, K1/ K2 / river racers. Plus annual cups, team trophies and race certificates. Contact Phil Puckrin: Tel: 01904 654 302 Email: philpuckrin@freenet.co.uk

Ed Ecclestone

It is with much sadness that we have to announce the death of Ed Ecclestone who died in April. I first knew Ed back in the 1970s when he was involved with the Harrow and Wealdstone Venture Scout. Ed was involved with a group who took up canoeing and was probably one of the most influential people in me taking up the sport. He didn't participate himself. He was the mainstay behind supporting and training many of the boys taking part in the Devizes to Westminster canoe race and taking groups to the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base. He would also be found at most of the local slaloms supporting any individual. He was a man of few words but his dry sense of humour will always be remembered.

Ed became more and more involved with slalom canoeing at GB level. In the days before the World Class Programme, he was a huge supporter and spent most of his holidays travelling as manager of the senior team. He continued with this support for many years on a voluntary basis with including the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. About this time he introduced the team day sheet, a much-appreciated initiative and a real boost to group arrangements.

If there ever was a shortage of something he would go and get it, sometimes lending his new purchase long-term to the team – we still have his trailer and one of his radios! Paddlers hugely appreciated him, especially when he accepted a challenge on the penalty front where his best cards were 'benefit of the doubt', knowledge of ICF rules and ability to accept decisions against without fuss.

He was right on the technology front using Wi-Fi. Ed could be relied upon; one belief being, 'happy paddlers make better racers'. From 1993, he produced an International results manual, a much-sought-after volume amongst other teams. Over later years this became a CD and the manuals remain a Team GB historical record, as do the CD files up to 2008. He was known as 'Big Ed' because his presence amongst officials was always respected worldwide.

In more recent years Ed has regularly been seen sitting on riverbanks as a judge or as a member of the jury. He had volunteered to help with the organisation of the European Championships at HPP in May and the class C world ranking event in Llangollen in October. Ed has also been responsible for the setting up and printing of the slalom yearbook for many years and will be sorely missed in the world of slalom both in the UK and abroad. The kick he got was working with others to make canoe slalom happen at its best for the athletes. He was very, very proud to be in a position to do this, to be a working member of the GB canoe slalom team. Ed leaves behind a brother Steve to whom we send our heartfelt sympathy.

Anne Hounslow and John Macleod

Barry Peak

It is with great sadness that we have to report Barry Peak passed away on 14th April, after suffering with cancer. Barry, aged 65, got involved in canoeing in the 80s for Vale Royal Canoe Club. Barry was chairman of that club from 1986, for several years.

In 1990 Barry became secretary to the BCU Slalom Committee, vice chairman in 1993 and then chairman until 1997. Our thoughts go to Barry's wife Margaret, his two daughters and family. If you would like to make a donation in Barry's memory the family have chosen Christie Hospital as a beneficiary. Appeals Office, The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4BX. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Christie.'

Jim Croft BCU Slalom Administrator on behalf of the BCU Slalom Committee

Morgan Rowlands

If you were active on the rivers of north Wales from 1986 to 1994, you are likely to have seen Morgan around. If you were very lucky you may have shared some of his days. After a fantastically productive time at college in Bangor, he left with both a 'pass' and many rivers under his belt in the Dominican Republic, Nepal and Uganda. Austria was his love, where he settled in Pfunds.

Telemark skiing gripped his life and became his major outdoor passion. I spent time skiing with him and he was good! There are very few who can take their Telemark skis into the steep off-piste mountain couloirs. It was here that he lost his life. Skiing with a couple of friends in the backcountry an avalanche took him. If Morgan were looking down on this now, he would have some regrets. Firstly... well that one is obvious! Secondly and I suspect it is a close second; he was described in the Austrian press as a 'snowboarder'. He will not be at all pleased about that – Telemarking was very important to Morgan.

He leaves behind a trail of broken hearts and memories that make me laugh and cry and smile and wince and leap with the joy that I loved him and he loved us all too. My own son carries his name and I'll be made up if he turns out to be anything like Morgan Rowlands.

Spike Green

Youth freestyle

The 2009 series kicked off on the River Dee, Llangollen, under bright blue skies and warm sunshine. Unfortunately this meant the water levels were really low as there had not been any significant rain for sometime. The paddlers were faced with a tricky choice of either trying to find the deepest spot in the feature, losing plastic, or staying horizontal.

The morning's event consisted of 'free paddling' with some hands-on coaching from GB team-paddlers if required. Those who were slightly newer to freestyle were able to participate in a number of workshops.

By the afternoon the organisers had discovered that there was a feature deep enough to get vertical and this was therefore used for one run of the freestyle competition, with the other being completed in the shallower middle-hole. The scoresheet for this year has been adapted to allow points to be awarded for anything that is not on a standard scoring sheet i.e the best tricks: paddle spins/swims/deck grabs/hand paddling. These tricks are always popular with the spectators and usually followed by loud shouts of encouragement from the judges, who were more than happy to hand out extra points.

The Dagger Downriver Race, sponsored by Dagger, followed the freestyle event. Due to the number of competitors the age groups were further split down into heats and each heat of four or five either had a flat-out race to complete (in their playboat) or had some kind of entertaining challenge to achieve before/during or after the flat-out race. This made for some close finishes and a couple of not so close finishes – with one competitor finally making it to the finish line in a sunken boat at least two heats behind! The winners of the heats were pitched against each other in a final throwline-throw-off and the most accurate 'thrower' was declared the overall winner.

Due to the huge number of sponsors supporting the series this year (Palm, Dagger, Big Dog, Squarerock/Jackson kayaks, Wavesport, K3) there were plenty of prizes available for those who entertained us and the winners.

The next event will be held at the Nene on 14th June. For details of how to enter and results visit www.youthfreestyle.co.uk

Fiona Jarvie

Below: Trying for extra points with the air guitar.



GB senior international sprint racing team



Above: Rachel Cawthorn. Credit: Antony Edmonds.

With 2009 international racing selections as the major prizes of the weekend, the selectors were not disappointed in what they saw. Spectators were treated to some quality racing at the National Water Sports Centre.

In the women's individual class (K1) the regatta belonged to Rachel Cawthorn, who bagged the 500m and the course record in the 1000m on Sunday. These two wins will surely guarantee her an outing in the world cup events in K1.

In the men's class, all of the senior races were excellent with Paul Wycherley nothing less than irrepressible all weekend. He took the K1 500m title in relative ease 2.5 seconds ahead of Ed McKeever and proceeded to win the 1000m event at a scorching pace.

In their favoured K2, Jon Schofield and Ben Brown won the 500m comfortably 3.5 seconds ahead of the new crew of Ed Cox and Ed Rutherford, who were racing their first regatta together. However, Rutherford and Cox put a more testing exam paper to Brown and Schofield in the 1000m who took the line by just 0.05 seconds.

The WK2 500m race was no less stunning. Cawthorn, teaming up with Hayleigh Mason and the Lani Belcher/Lucy Wainwright pairing, hotly contested the closing stages. Belcher and Wainwright took it on the line by 0.2 second.

In the women's K4, the top billed crew of Jess Walker, Louisa Sawers, Hayleigh Mason and Lucy Wainwright were undone in the final stages of the race by the U23 crew led by Abigail Edmonds, Jenna Hawkey, Angela Hannah and Victoria Towers. This was a fantastic result for Towers and Hannah who came into canoeing through the UK Sport Sporting Giants scheme.

In the men's K4 1000m, the crew of Ben Farrell, Stuart Hastings, Paul Wycherley and Andy Daniels looked very solid on the water. Farrell set the pace, the rest followed. They then went on to

complete a professional job by polishing off the race in a new course record.

In junior racing, it was good to welcome Dean Terry back into the junior scene after illness and he had wins in both K1 500 and 1000m events. He went on to partner Matt Welch (Wey) in the K2 1000m and won comfortably. An equally warm welcome was extended to Amoret King, getting back into racing from a short sabbatical. Wrapping up the junior action, it was a joy to watch nine female K4 crews contest the Division D races. Watch out for young P Quittenton of the Lincoln club who is taking first place in the under 12 mini K1s race as his own personal property!

In the canoe class, while James Train and Matt Lawrence continue to dominate the top of the tree in the C1 class, James Styan's performances are showing that he too is moving on. Also impressive has been the form of the fast track canoeist Matt Sollars, also recruited through the UK Sport Sporting Giants project. In the C2 races, he paired up first with Richard Jefferies in the 500m, to produce a class-winning performance and again in the C2 1000m with Mario Santos Costa.

Anne Ferguson

- Since this article, Rachel Cawthorn has won Gold and Silver in the Poznan Second World Cup. Lani Belcher and Lucy Wainwright also won Bronze in the World Cup.



Above: Ben Brown/Jon Schofield. Credit: Antony Edmonds.

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Viking Kayak Club named runners up for Sports Club of the Year award



Having been awarded BCU Club of the Year in March, Viking Kayak Club has now been named in second place for Sports Club of the Year (SCOTY) 2009.

Representatives from the club attended the awards evening, hosted by Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) on Tuesday 5th May. They were announced joint second, with Times Amateur Boxing club, and collected a cheque for £3000. Richmond Volleyball Club, based in South West London, took the first prize of £6000.

Rob Bates, chairman of Viking Kayak Club commented, "We are really chuffed at coming second for the Sports Club of the Year award, so soon after being named BCU Club of the Year. It's been a real team effort over the last couple of years to get the club to where it is today and so we're delighted to have this national recognition for our achievements. We think there's still more for us to do but there can be no greater encouragement."

SCOTY, sponsored by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and Runningsports, is now in its 16th year. The award recognises the significant contribution of sport and recreational clubs at a grassroots level. Each year, SCOTY distributes a total prize fund of over £15,000 to six clubs.

Congratulations to all the winners and nominees!

Results

1. Richmond Volleyball Club
2. Viking Kayak Club
Times Amateur Boxing Club
3. Sutton Sting Ice Hockey Club
Luton Town Hockey Club
Inverness Blitz Academy of American Football

Recreational canoeing



Canoeing is not always about being the first past the post or the team who scores the most goals. In fact the vast majority of canoeists are recreational paddlers. Many of those who compete like some timeout as well, to enjoy the serenity one can get from being out on the water – in slow time. In our very busy and hectic lives, millions of us are drawn to the water, not only for exercise but also for a break from work.

There is nothing quite like messing about on the river. The peace and closeness to nature a paddler can find in a canoe or kayak is a feeling second to none. Maybe it's the quiet 'dap dap' of the paddle or the lapping of the water which is music to your ears. Or maybe it's the adrenaline rush as you pass down a stretch of white water, breaking in and out of eddies, that inspires you. Or it might be the rocking motion and the vast expanse of the sea, which draws you to the water. Whatever it is, we would like to know more about the recreational canoeing that you do.

Where do you go? What journeys have you had? What is your favourite paddle? What expeditions have you been on? What stories do you have about your white water trips?

Canoeing covers many competitive disciplines but here, at Canoe Focus, we're also keen to represent recreational canoeing and the different types of paddling that you do. Let us know where you have been!

We want to hear from you

If you would like to submit an article, to share your experiences and inspire others to get out paddling, please send it (along with photographs if possible) to canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk.

Deadlines for 2009 Canoe Focus magazines

August: 7th July
October: 7th September
December: 9th November

“The peace and closeness to nature one can find in a canoe or kayak is a feeling second to none”

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1997

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2005

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EDGE

Canoe 2012 something for everyone

A Canoe England initiative designed to develop and widen the pathways into our Olympic discipline events. Canoe 2012 events are aimed at those already involved in paddlesport who would not normally have the opportunity to try the Olympic disciplines of sprint and slalom. The initiative will be reaching out to clubs, centres and paddlers providing local, accessible events tailored to the needs of the participants.

Who are Canoe 2012 events aimed at?

The initiative is aimed at both adults and juniors who wish to develop their skills in a friendly yet competitive environment. We would recommend paddlers be at least BCU Paddlepower Passport or 1 Star standard and coaches are a minimum of BCU Level 2. Volunteer helpers are highly valued.

The race course

The Canoe 2012 events should be tailored to suit the local environment as well as the paddlers' needs and ability. The events would work on the basic elements of the Olympic race format, providing the participants with a 'taster'.

Canoe 2012 sprint events

The sprint events could range from a land-based paddling machine event to a water-based event. These could take the form of a cross stream challenge, mini time trial or head to head race.

Canoe 2012 slalom events

The slalom events could be run using slalom gates or buoys and the rules altered to include or exclude penalties for touches. The gates could be hung with no maximum height or width and the paddlers would have the opportunity to complete the course any number of times.

Team events

A challenge designed for two or more paddlers to compete together over the same course. Age group, gender and boat class may be mixed.

Equipment

Any type of boat can be used. You do not need any specialist equipment to get started. Just turn up with the boat you are happy to paddle and you will be made very welcome!

Event safety

Canoe 2012 events should be flexible and easy to deliver so check out your standard site risk assessment and amend accordingly.

Suggested age / gender groups

Age groups for a competition will be based on 1st January and there would be different competitive classes for girls, boys, women and men in: under 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 23 and 35. 35+, 40+, 45+, 55+, 60+ and 65+.

Top centre goes live

Canoe England recognises that our clubs and centres are a key factor in the development and growth of our sport and we value their commitment. It is important that all participants have a quality introduction to paddlesport with clear signposting to clubs that will allow for continuation in our sport. It is also important that the centre offers an accessible environment for young people; quality coaching and training practices.

Canoe England's Top Centre accreditation scheme is aligned to the Sport England's Clubmark award to ensure that a centre operates above minimum standards offering paddlesport to young people.

Benefits of Clubmark

- One visit per year to coincide with centre approval to gain both kitemarks.
- A high profile listing on the BCU website.
- Promotion of the centre as a Top Centre.
- Additional support from PDOs and regional/local club coaches
- Discounted rates on many of the resources produced by Canoe England to support paddlesport participation from the E shop.
- Access to grants.

As a single, national standard, gaining Clubmark accreditation have seen many benefits:

- **Continuous improvement.** Accreditation encourages organisations to adopt better, more organised systems and structures.
- **Funding.** Many funding bodies state that applicants must be Clubmark accredited or working towards accreditation.
- **Facilities.** More local authorities and leisure operators give priority-booking slots to Clubmark accredited organisations.
- **Developing coaches.** As part of the Clubmark process, organisations are entitled to receive help to develop the skills of coaches.
- **Volunteers.** Clubmark promotes a volunteer culture where dedication is recognised.
- **Links with schools.** Increasingly, schools are looking for the presence of child-friendly systems and procedures. Clubmark clubs are normally the first invited to work with schools, which are being encouraged to signpost pupils to Clubmark clubs.
- **Raised profile.** Clubmark is a highly valued accreditation. An organisation gaining accreditation will benefit from a raised profile with local authorities, NGBs, sporting and community organisations.
- **Marketing and communication.** Clubmark gives organisations confidence to promote themselves. All Clubmark organisations can access the Clubmark member's area, utilise

the Clubmark logo and take advantage of other brand resources.

- **Club/centre development.** The foundation for any club based at a centre is its youth structure. The Clubmark accreditation process is designed to assist clubs to attract and cater for young members.

Not forgetting the most important reason of all – the positive impact Clubmark has on the way in which centres provide for young people!

For more details contact your Paddlesport Development Officer.



Development contacts

TEAM NORTH

SDO NORTHERN

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PDO LONDON and SOUTH EAST

Position vacant. Contact James Hinves.

PDO SOUTH WEST

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Club Coach and Leader Symposium

Team North are organising a symposium for club coaches and leaders in the Northern region. The aim is to run sessions for club coaches and leaders to help develop their personal skills and practical coaching or leadership tips from some of the top coaches. The catered weekend is based at a bunkhouse in the Tee's Valley. One pre-requisite is that you will need to be an active coach or leader in your club. Contact your RCO for more information.

Cumbria Wavehopper event

Once again Cumbria region held its annual Wavehopper race, hosted by Carlisle Canoe Club on the River Eden. The highlight was a small weir creating a good shoot of water, which provided plenty of excitement for the competitors. This year there was also a small band of wild water race coaches from various parts of the UK helping train a number of promising young paddlers. Thanks to Torstein and Ben.

Nigel Timmins and Ray Hudspith

Where it all started

Prudhoe Wavehopper event was where it all started for World Junior WWR Champion Sandra Hyslop six years ago. So when the event organiser Ray Hudspith received a call from Sandra, asking if she could help the response was a very positive "Yes!" Sandra along with coaches from other clubs in the region helped to improve the young paddler's technique and speed in the morning with racing taking part in the afternoon. Thanks must go to all involved and fantastic safety cover offered by Blyth Canoe Club.

Ray Hudspith

Newburn '2012 Go Paddling Day'

This was a new event to encourage friendly competition amongst the North East region clubs. To prepare for the event Ray Hudspith, along with coaches Simon Tibbitts and Darren Cresser, encouraged paddlers to have a go in Wavehoppers and Lightnings over a series of coached sessions and events. Once finished, the individuals got together in their respective club teams for the Bell Boat 750m mad-dash to win the Timperley Trophy. This is a new award in recognition of the hard work of Bobby Timperley who recently retired as PDO and her late husband Peter who had worked tirelessly behind the scenes over many years including the Tyne Tour.

Lakes challenge



Above: Amanda McCullagh and Angela Emanuel.

Back in Autumn 2008, my work colleague (and fellow paddler) and I were discussing ways of raising funds to enable us to help our school. Brimrod Community Primary School in Rochdale has an outdoor learning pledge, runs team building, kayaking and climbing sessions and more recently we have added skiing to the programme. This year we are expanding further still by including archery and orienteering. These activities are wonderful but cost money – and in an increasingly gloomy financial atmosphere it is getting harder for the school to subsidise these activities.

As kayaking was the first activity that we introduced to the children and as it is a favourite pastime of Amanda and myself – what better way to raise money than to organise a sponsored paddle. We talked to Gareth Field who pointed out that paddling four lakes made quite a nice north-south traverse of the Lake District (Bassenthwaite Lake – Derwentwater – Thirlmere – Windermere). And so the Four Lakes Challenge was born!

Our first access point was on Bassenthwaite before dawn on 24th January. The lake was beautiful and gloriously calm and quite eerie in the early morning light. We reached our arranged point of egress without mishap, loaded the boats

on the roof of the car and headed off to lake number two.

Derwentwater was a little choppy, and after an initial panic that there was something amiss with Amanda's boat, we headed south towards Kettlewell. Another pleasant leg of the journey – on a lake that we both know well as we paddle here frequently. We loaded up the car again and set off for Thirlmere.

Thirlmere is often subject to rough conditions, as the wind tends to funnel up or down the valley. We set off from the

northern dam and as we rounded the first headland, we were amazed that the water was suddenly as flat as a millpond. We made our way south in a leisurely manner, soaking up the magnificent views of the surrounding snow-capped mountains and marvelling at the peace and tranquillity.

Windermere was, as expected, much busier than the others. For much of the first four miles we found ourselves paddling on one side in an attempt to stop the boats turning to face the wind – this was hard going to say the least. Progress had slowed right down and spirits were beginning to drop a little but after an energy-boosting snack we continued. It was much more sheltered in Bowness Bay – but as we rounded the point at Storr Temple a headwind greeted us. We hugged the shoreline and made steady progress with a couple of 'wobbly' moments (both the boats and our emotions). At last the end was in sight, two very relieved paddlers headed to the lakeside to be greeted by plastic beakers containing champagne!

Overall, a brilliant day - and we managed to raise over £500 for the school!

Angela Emanuel

Humbledon race

Phil Puckrin and Chris May founded Humbledon Outdoor Activities Association and the three-mile race in 1987. They offer three trophies for first boat home, first lady and first paddler with disabilities. Roswitha Wagenknecht came first in a sea kayak with a good lead. Paula Wick was first lady with Tony Hilton (right) taking the Special Needs Trophy. Thanks to Ruth May and to those who helped out with the boats and to Judith Arowsmith for presenting the trophies.

Steve Watson



Sponsored paddle on the River Nene

Over the weekend of the 18th/19th July, Steve Shaw, with the aid of Packers Canoe Club, will be organising a sponsored paddle on the river Nene on Saturday. On Sunday, the embankment at Peterborough is booked for a fair and trade stands. All in aid of The Prostate Cancer Charity and Sue Ryder Care, these being two charities very close to Steve. Following the loss of his father to the illness two years ago, he is looking for a way to repay their kindness to his father.

The main event is a 57-mile non-stop paddle from Northampton to the Peterborough Embankment, starting at 00:01 on the Saturday morning at Northampton. It is timed to catch the ebb tide on the final stretch of the Nene to enable those who want to go onto the mouth of the river, to do so with the assistance of the outgoing tide. This will add an additional 31 miles to the main 57 miles and is an option for experienced paddlers only. If the thought of 88 miles is a little off putting, there are two shorter distances, with start points at 22.5 and 15 miles.

All 38 locks will be manned by volunteers to assist with the portaging, and Steve would like to emphasise that this is not a race and for participants to be patient at the portages and to enjoy the experience of the paddle, whilst raising money for two worthy charities.

For more information and to download an entry form, please go to the events website at www.paddle4shaw.co.uk or e-mail Steve on steve@paddle4shaw.co.uk.



Bell Boating in Cambridgeshire



Above: The coaches on Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Lake.

On April 25th, ten coaches from Cambridgeshire participated in a Bell Boat helm course run by Stuart Briggs. The course was based at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and used the park's pair of Bell Boats. These boats are generously available without charge to appropriately qualified people using them on the lake at the country park.

The day started with the new challenge of assembling the boats and after a few scratched heads everyone got involved. Soon the four halves looked like they might have created two boats suitable to hold the paddlers.

Whilst the course covered some familiar ground in terms of manual handling, water safety and getting in and out of boats, it also broke new ground for many in terms of giving the coaches

the opportunity to develop skills in coordinating a large number of paddlers to work towards a common aim and looked at ways of dividing up the boat and different strokes used to create different turning rates.

The organisations represented on the course were Grafham Water Centre, Huntingdon Canoe Club, Hinchingsbrooke School, the Hunts School Sports Partnership and Hinchingsbrooke Scout District. All participants left enthused about how they could use this new resource to increase general participation, improve access to canoeing for individuals with additional needs and how the boats could be used as a tool for environmental education and developing teamwork.

Ed Sibson

Peak paddlers celebration

Peak Paddlers Canoe Club celebrated the gaining of a lottery grant in style at the weekend with the launch of their new fleet of boats funded by the grant. Cllr Tony Bingham, deputy Mayor of the High Peak and his wife, Mary, deputy Mayoress followed by a few words from the club chairperson Mo Stewart, cut the ribbon. A paddle past of the new kayaks then took place in front of guests who have also donated money to the club.

The presentation took place at Errwood Sailing Club, which was kindly loaned for the day. Membership of the club has swelled to nearly 100 members in less than 12 months so the new equipment is much needed to help the club keep afloat. However, more funds are required to assist with coaching to keep up with the fast growing pace of the club. Anyone interested in support or sponsoring the club or joining should view their website at www.peakpaddlers.co.uk



Above: Members of Peak Paddlers CC.

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Safety cover

Want to be involved in possibly the biggest open water swim in the UK but don't want to swim? Well you could be if you can paddle!

Hospicecares sw1m 2009 is taking place at Roadford Lake near Okehampton, Devon on 26th September. Wadebridge Canoe Club with help from the Paddlesport Development officer (PDO) Andy Davey, is assisting with the safety cover and they need 40 paddlers to help provide it. It will involve being on the water for two hours watching the swimmers and assisting any in difficulty. You will be helping a worthy charity raise money; get a free breakfast and lunch on the day plus two nights' free camping. Contact the Wadebridge Canoe Club Secretary carol@thedaveys.org 01208 813125 or check out www.bcusw.org. For details of the swim check out www.onemileswim.co.uk

Coach updates

The latest coach update for the South West was held at Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre. Over 90 coaches attended the day, which kicked off with James Hinves Senior Development Officer (SDO) giving an update on the developments in the coaching scheme. This was the first update to have the new Continual Personal Development (CPD) modules in the programme, which proved to be popular and fully booked within two weeks. As well as the CPD modules there were a variety of both indoor and outdoor workshops taking place.

The general feeling from the participants was that the day was well organised and run, though some complained about the windy conditions; the organisers are now looking into the possibility of purchasing some wind breaks. A big thanks to all the coaches/tutors who gave up their Sunday to make the day such a success, to Local Coaching Officer (LCO) Paul Hurrell and Weymouth Outdoor Centre.

Go paddling days

Go Paddling events are taking place with the Bere Forest canoe polo team.

Website: www.bereforest.co.uk

Venue: YMCA, Fairthorne Manor, Botley, Southampton

Date(s)/time: Starting Saturday 30th May and every Saturday after for 10 weeks at 10.00-12.00 hours. Aimed at over 18s that have not paddled before or have limited experience. Sessions will take place over 10 Saturdays with a qualified instructor.

Also introduction to polo sessions, which are aimed at over 18s that can already paddle to 2 Star standard on one Saturday per month, contact Andy Hooper: andysuphoops@hotmail.co.uk

Awards for All grants success



Above: Andy Davey PDO handing over cheque for £10,000 to junior club representative Kimberley. Also present is the club chairman Richard Barrow and other club members.

Wadebridge Canoe Club

Wadebridge Canoe Club celebrated an Awards for All grant from the National Lottery of £10,000 – a great achievement for the club, which only formed in September 2007.

The club is working closely with Cornwall Sports Partnership and One Cornwall, securing additional funding through the Sport Unlimited Programme. This will allow the club to develop its links with local schools and engage with the young people in the area.

Looking to the future the clubhouse is on a proposed development site and will at some point lose the facility, so the club is actively looking to finding a permanent site and hopes to engage with local businesses and other partners to fund this project.

The club is also working closely with South West PDO Andy Davey, to gain the Canoe England's Clubmark award. If you want to know more visit their website www.wadebridgecanoeclub.org.

from the BCU Southern region development team and, a PESSYP school club links grant.

Over a hundred competed in the challenge including four World Class paddlers: Stuart Hastings, Ben Farrell, Rachel Cawthorn and Louisa Sawyers showing us all how it was done.

Southampton Canoe Club

Southampton Canoe Club are to work together in a new direction with an award of nearly £10,000 from Awards for All. The grant will be used to purchase crew boats, which will include Rocket Junior four person kayaks – the first in Hampshire. SDO James Hinves says, "We know from other sports that people prefer to learn as a group and then stay longer with the sport. What better option could there be than all being in the same boat. This grant is a huge opportunity for Southampton Canoe Club to move forward and develop what it does." For more information please visit the website www.southamptoncc.org.uk

Longridge Activity Centre

Longridge Activity Centre celebrated the official handing over of a cheque from Sport England and the completion of the boathouse refurbishment by having an open day.

Longridge Canoe Club set up three linked Dansprint ergos for a 200-metre race for which they charged one pound with the money going to Longridge Activities Centre. Using Dansprint software, the race progress was displayed on a large screen. The club had recently purchased the ergos with a grant from Awards for All, support



Above: Members of Southampton CC.

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Thank you



A big thank you to everyone who volunteered at the European Canoe Slalom Championships at Holme Pierrepont in May. The 2009 championships was

staffed mainly by volunteers from those already involved in the sport of canoe slalom as well as those with an interest in supporting canoeing and the community. Your hard work and commitment were appreciated and we could not have made the event as successful as it was without your help! Thank you!

Club forums

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 information on 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

Heart and soul

For many lucky clubs, there are those indispensable volunteers who throw their heart and soul into volunteering and you may even wonder how the club would survive without them. Often, you just never know when that person may walk into your club. But when they do, they are definitely worth keeping hold of!

For Southampton Canoe Club, the invaluable Caroline Barnes walked into the club's life following a Return to Sport taster session run by the club and Hampshire County Council.

Caroline is now the secretary for the club taking on a mountain of tasks and dealing with all the organisation of the club – from creating registers to writing the minutes of committee meetings. Her commitment doesn't stop there either.



Above: Caroline Barnes

Caroline also compiles all the statistics which are often requested from organisations.

As a competitive paddler herself, Caroline also finds the time to train and race as well as organise coaches for the junior section – herself included! In order to assist in the development of the club, Caroline qualified as BCU Level 1 coach in 2008 to help coaching in club sessions.

Fellow club member and Senior Development Officer for the South, James Hinves, says, "Caroline cares passionately about the development of the juniors and their progression through the ranks."

Just to demonstrate her tireless ability to volunteer in the sport, Caroline is seen as one of the valuable volunteers who commit themselves to ensuring the success of one of canoeing's biggest events – the 125-mile DW race. Caroline's commitment to the sport is outstanding!

Many thanks to all the volunteers in paddlesport. Let Canoe England know about volunteers in your area for the chance for them to be recognised in Canoe Focus and receive a special gift of thanks.

Caroline cares passionately about the development of the juniors and their progression through the ranks

REGULARS

Paddlesport Rewards Scheme

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

What counts as an hour of volunteering?

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.

Volunteer coordinator pack

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.

Volunteer website – keep updated!

The website is updated regularly with templates and news to assist volunteers and clubs in recruiting, rewarding and retaining volunteers. Don't forget that your club can add your volunteer opportunities to this section of the website – if you are looking to recruit more volunteers in any role then let the Volunteer Development Officer know! Likewise, if you are looking to take on another role at club, regional or national level then keep your eyes posted on the website!

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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Women and Girls in Paddlesport



Tell us your stories!

Are you or do you know of a female coach or paddler that helps inspire 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 and inspire others. Please send any articles or good news stories to womenandgirls@bcu.org.uk.

Well done to Yorkshire region who recently received £200 from the Women Sport and Fitness Foundation to support coach education in the region.

Burton Canoe Club's 'Women and Girls Introduction to Paddlesport Programme' funded by Access Across Staffordshire, has got off to a flying start with the course attendance at maximum capacity.

DW challenge

Sixteen-year olds Alana Cox and Catherine Russ competed in the junior K2 event of the DW2009 after paddling for only eight months! They finished an impressive sixth in their class in a time of 23:25:05.



What inspired you to do the DW race?

(Alana) I was inspired to take part in the DW race by my sister and dad who have previously taken part. I came to the conclusion that if dad could do it then I had no reason not to!

(Catherine) I have wanted to compete in it since I acted as support crew for my older brother and sister in 2005 and 2006, and for Alana's sister in 2007; this is when Alana and I decided to partner each other.

How much training did you do?

(A) We trained from August up until the week before the race, three times a week.

(C) We built up the distance week by week, and also took part in the Thameside, Waterside and Royal series of races to get used to competition. I found it very useful to have covered the DW course, as we knew what to expect during the race.

What was your most memorable moment from training and/or the race?

(A) From training: the first time we went on the Thames, falling in opposite a weir and realising what a difference the current made! And from the race: Coming up to a lock and seeing a smartly dressed guy hooking out weeds from a sluice shortly before flipping over the bar and falling in the canal, laptop and all! That was a great way to put a smile on our faces after a bit of a downer!!

(C) So many things! Being chased by a swan, my sister falling off her bike, the man falling in the canal with his laptop and suit and John our coach having to ride his bike for seven miles without the saddle after it broke during the race.

Where is your favourite place to paddle?

(A) Through Windsor and the park, you have the flow of the river and plenty to look at!

(C) The Oracle in Reading, as it is different to all the rest of the canal with lots of people watching.

What are you most proud of?

(A) I have completed something that few people will understand the true challenge of. I am also

extremely proud of Cat because without her encouragement the race would have been much harder to achieve.

(C) The fact that we completed the race in a respectable time and still speaking to each other!

What is your favourite piece of kit?

(A) Our boat. A few weeks before the race we were unsure of whether it would hold out, but I am pleased to say it made it! Also it was a great excuse to wear fluorescent pink headbands without getting too many strange looks!

(C) Our pink headbands, hats and baseball caps.

Who has influenced you the most?

(A) My dad has influenced me the most in the sport, he is not the greatest paddler but he's done the race several times and showed commitment to our training and encouraged us the whole way!

(C) Nick (Alana's dad)

Do you have any advice for female paddlers?

(A) Go to races and do your best, even if you come last it doesn't matter. Try to smile and chat to as many people as possible off the water.

(C) It's really fun once you get into it. Go for it. Most people you meet are very keen to help you.

What will be your next goal?

(A) Our next goal is to do DW next year and knock a couple of hours off this year's time.

(C) My next goal is to become a canoe coach and help set up the Devizes Canoe Club to get other people involved in the sport.

How has completing the race changed you?

(A) Completing and training for the race has given me more confidence in everyday activities. I now look at a challenge with a completely different attitude than before. I have also found my competitive side – a surprise to most of my family!

(C) It has made me more organised (revising for GCSEs as well as training) and has helped me mix better with other people.

Below: Alana and Catherine refuelling on route.

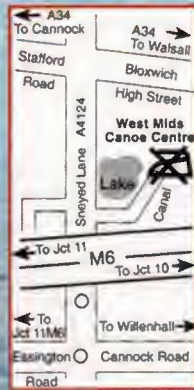


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You can't do

My first night by the Colorado River was spent swaying in my hammock watching stars in a big sky and it was only jet lag that kept the excitement at bay.

Feature by: This was a private trip down the Grand Canyon and after spending 16 years on the waiting list we were finally there. Until recently I had just assumed I would paddle a kayak but sometimes you get a strange idea that just won't go away. "What about doing it in an open canoe?" came a little voice in the back of my head. I was initially embarrassed to ask for advice, in case I was laughed at.

Andy Morris.

When I finally did tentatively canvas opinion, most people tended to talk to me as a grown up might talk to a small child. To be told "I wouldn't if I were you – it's a kayaking river" turned out to be a bit like a red rag to a bull and all the time the little voice kept saying "why not do it in an open canoe?" So, when the opportunity arose to rent an appropriate canoe I decided to take it.

After an exciting first day we made camp on some big sandstone ledges. My second night was in complete contrast to my first. I was exhausted, dehydrated and concerned. During the first day I had paddled some of the biggest and fastest water I had ever been on. The waves in the main flow were massive and I found I took on too much water. I remember going over one particularly large standing wave at such speed that as the boat fell down the back side of the wave, I seemed to carry on going up and eventually fell back down onto the saddle with such a slap that it was like being kicked up the backside. For a moment or two I questioned whether I had not made one of the biggest mistakes of my life. If I had got this wrong and the river was going to be too much for me in a canoe I was in for a two-week nightmare.

Serious thinking to do

The biggest rapid of the day had been a Grade 5. This sounds impressive until you discover that the rapids on the Colorado are graded 1 to 10. The first rapid the following morning, 'House Rock Rapid' was a Grade 7, so rather than just lying awake being scared all night I had some serious thinking to do. I had to come up with a plan that adapted my normal paddling style to cope with what lay ahead.

The first thing I needed was an injection of confidence and this I received after paddling an inch perfect line down 'House Rock Rapid'. With that behind me the grade of the rapids eased off a bit but the intensity increased.

Throughout that day and the next, there were numerous mid-grade rapids and although I took a couple of swims I was developing my technique to cope with the river.

“For a moment or two I questioned whether I had not made one of the biggest mistakes of my life”



Above: Mike, Pete, Mike and Mark looking for a camp site at the end of a long

Below: Andy entering Grapevine Rapid.



that in a canoe!



hot day.

Below: Slime paddling Granite.



Below: Debbs rafting Granite.



Above:

Fellow paddlers Dave, Bob, Polly and Mike exploring one of the many side canyons.



Left: Deer Canyon.

Far left: The head of Thunder River.



Above: More stunning scenery.

There are canyons within canyons on the Colorado. On day five we approached one such inner canyon knowing that it contained the majority of the large rapids to be found on the river. Famous names like 'Granite', 'Horn' and 'Crystal' were banded about. Some allowed for easier lines to be paddled down the side of the main rapid, however the term 'easy' is quite subjective and a swim would have been long and painful. On others there was no easier option, the choice was to paddle the guts of the rapid or to take a lift down on one of the rafts. To be honest by this stage in the trip, I dreaded the raft option more than the rapids themselves and almost wished that it was not available.

A violent flip

Every success added to my level of self-confidence. But confidence breeds complacency. I was stood up scouting 'Upset Rapid' (all rivers should have one) from my boat. Someone asked me what it looked like and I answered that it looked OK, start left, go right and make sure you miss the big hole in the middle.

After the event I wondered why I had not allowed for the speed of the water or why I had started so far over on the left. What was for certain was that the hole I had inadvertently paddled into sideways was the biggest hole I had ever been in with an open canoe. For a second or two I actually managed to stay upright on a big low brace and I remember hearing some of my friends whooping and a hollering from the side and wondering how I could hear them over the roar of the rapid. I then experienced a violent flip up stream and the world went quiet and wet for a while. I was met by smiling rescuers, possibly relieved to see me in one piece and definitely happy I had provided such quality entertainment.

On day 12 I felt cheated. We stood on the bank looking at Lava Rapid. It was big, fast and loud. Every line you traced down the

rapid contained some huge feature that was probably a roll for the kayaks and a swamping-cum-pasting for me.

I just couldn't see how I stood a chance down any of these main lines so my attention turned to the easy run down the side. It was rocky and technical and not easy at all. If I strayed off the chosen line to the left I would get pinned on the rocks and if I strayed too far to the right I would end up duelling with some of the nastiest holes I had seen on the river. Tight and technical with no errors was what was called for and that is exactly how I paddled it. The elation I experienced at the bottom was intense. Not only had I survived 'Lava' but also with that I had paddled the Grand Canyon, as, although we still had a few days left, that was the last of the major rapids.

My memories of the trip are complex. I have mentioned very little about the mix of wonderful people I shared my experience with and not anything about the stunning landscape and wildlife that I experienced. Nor the amazing food, the beautiful side canyons we explored or even the fact that we still had beer left on the last night. Yet it is a mixture of all these things and more, which combined to make the trip such a special one. ♡

Below: Pete and Alfe taking it easy in the Little Colorado.



“The mixture of sickness and weakness you feel as you walk back to your boat after scouting and the clarity of mind and calmness you experience as you enter the rapid”



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European Canoe Slalom Championships

Over the weekend of 28-31st May, over 25 nations, 320 volunteers and nearly 3000 spectators swarmed to Nottingham to the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships.

Feature by: Chloe Nelson. **The last time a major international canoe slalom competition took place in the UK was the world championships in 1995 and more recently the Junior and U23 European Canoe Slalom Championships. Despite not regularly hosting such a prestigious event, there were positive reviews all round. It helped that on the Saturday there was a flurry of medal success and new personal bests.**

Photos by: Pete Wells, official BCU photographer.

Location: The competition took place at the National Water Sports Centre on the white water course, which has recently benefited from a £700,000 upgrade making it the best course in the country.

It helped that on the Saturday there was a flurry of medal success, creating a jubilant atmosphere amongst the athletes and supporters alike. Great Britain (GB) won four medals in total; a gold in the Men's K1 (kayak single) team event, a gold in the Women's K1 team event, a Silver in the Men's C2 (canoe double) team event and a Bronze medal in the Men's C2. Competing on home water provided a very memorable experience for the GB athletes.

In the Men's C2 (canoe double), Etienne Stott pinpoints the moment when he realised how an Olympic appearance in his home country might feel – just as he and Tim Baillie emerged from the fifth gate of the course. "At that point the crowd were roaring and I felt that real exhilaration and excitement. It makes my hair stand on end thinking about it and I'll treasure that for the rest of my life."

Campbell Walsh, Olympic Silver medallist from Athens described the event as the "highlight of his career."

There were also congratulations on the quality of the organisation and look and feel of the event. The venue looked magnificent, decked out in banners and flags with a superb sound system and ideally placed big screen. The weather was glorious, making stunning pictures for the live BBC television.

Like clockwork

Huw Swetnam, achieved a personal best position of eighth in the Men's K1 class commented, "It's probably been one of the best run events I've ever been to. Thanks to all the volunteers and organisations that have put money and effort into it, it has been absolutely superb. From an athlete's point of view, everything ran like clockwork: it's far easier to compete when it's like that."

Helen Reeves, former Olympic Bronze canoe slalom medallist turned BBC commentator said, "It has been excellent. It looked good, the paddlers have paddled well and the foreign teams are

buzzing and have said it has been excellently organised. The event went really smoothly, the crowds have been great and we have been lucky with the weather. It was so

“It makes my hair stand on end thinking about it and I'll treasure that for the rest of my life”



Above: Tim Baillie (front) and Etienne Stott (back) in the Men's C2 (canoe double)

great to see British competitors coming down followed by crowds of their friends and teammates, the local crowd shouting at them, flags flying," added Reeves.

The event was also well received by the European and International federations. Albert Woods, President of the European Canoe

Association (ECA), attended the championships and commented: "We were delighted to have both the President and General Secretary of the International Canoe Federation present to witness the competition in Nottingham at the weekend and they both expressed to me how impressed they were by the organisation and spectacle of this championship.

"As President of the British Canoe Union as well as the ECA, I was very proud not only of the British team but also the



Above: Men's C2 Bronze medallists Etienne Stott (left) and Tim Baillie (right).

oe pionships



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Above: Men's K1 (kayak single) team Gold medallists: Richard Hounslow, Campbell Walsh and Huw Swetnam.

Below: Women's K1 (kayak single) team Gold medallists: Louise Donington, Lizzie Neave and Laura Blakeman.



Above: Men's C2 team Silver medallists, front row L to R: Goddard, Florence and Baillie, back row: Radmore, Hounslow and Stott.

execution and delivery of the event as a whole. I look forward to working with the BCU and our partners to continue to improve towards the home Olympics in 2012."

Simon Toulson, Secretary General of the International Canoe Federation said, "The European Championships went extremely well and were organised to a level

that the ICF would like to see all major canoeing championships organised at. The weather helped and the competition on the water was world class. Now we need to see how we can have similar events in GB in the run up to 2012."

The event would not have been possible without the help of its supporter UK Sport and Nottinghamshire County Council.

Esther Nicholls, UK Sport's event consultant for the 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships, said: "We were

delighted to support the BCU in bringing this championship to the UK and specifically Nottingham, after 15 years since the sport's last major international competition there.

"The British athletes responded well to the home crowds and over 280 volunteers also had the chance to gain experience of a major international canoeing event in preparation for London 2012. The event attracted over 2500 spectators on the final day of competition, showing the enthusiasm for world class sporting events in the UK."

Mick Burrows, Chief Executive for Nottinghamshire County Council said, "The championships have been a fantastic event both for the National Water Sports Centre and in supporting Nottinghamshire's reputation as the sporting county.

"Many of the athletes told me that the refurbished white water course is now the best in Europe.

This complements our exciting plans for the future of the National Water Sports Centre, to make it not only a world-class sporting facility but one of the premier leisure attractions in the country." 

“As President of the British Canoe Union as well as the ECA, I was very proud not only of the British team but also the execution and delivery of the event as a whole”



Above: The public try ergo paddling.



Above: The car park.



Above: Opening ceremony.



Above: Huw Swetnam Men's K1.



Above and below: Volunteers.



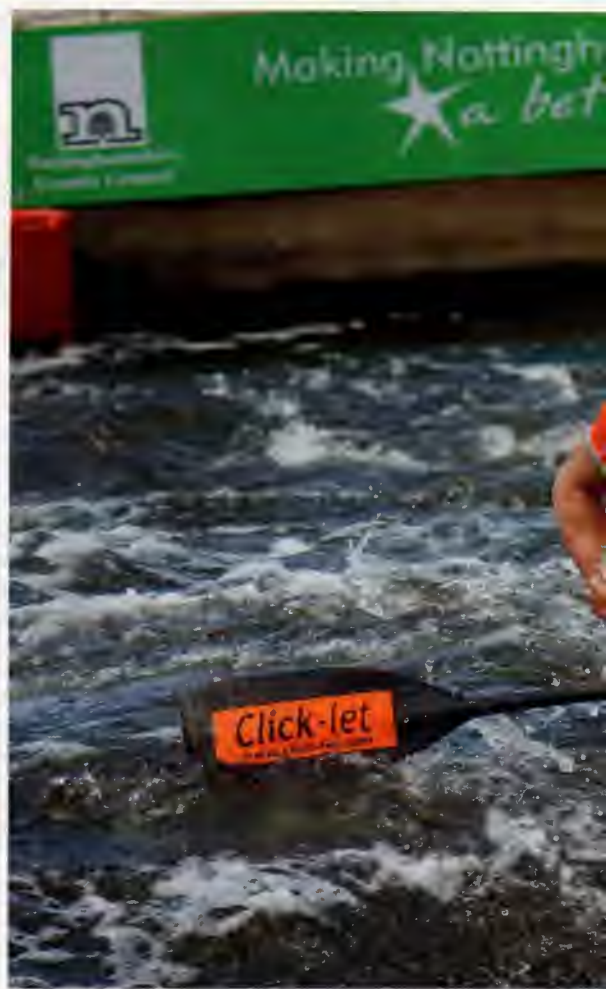
Below: Filming for the BBC.



Above: The course in its full glory.



Above: David Florence fan.



Above: David Florence (front) and Richard Hounslow (back). Below: W





Above: Campbell Walsh Men's K1.



Above: The course.

Women's K1 (kayak single) team Gold medallists: L to R Louise Donington, Lizzie Neave and Laura Blakeman.



Above: The spectators. Below: 'Come and try it' session run by Canoe England.

Below: Huw Swetnam Men's K1.



2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships results

Men's K1 (kayak single)

1. Daniele Molmenti ITA
2. Boris Neveu FRA
3. Julien Billaut FRA
5. Campbell Walsh GBR
8. Huw Swetnam GBR

Women's K1 (kayak single)

1. Elena Kaliska SVK
2. Emilie Fer FRA
3. Mathilde Pichery FRA
10. Lizzie Neave GBR
14. Louise Donington GBR
15. Laura Blakeman GBR

Men's K1 (kayak single) team

1. Great Britain
Campbell Walsh; Richard Hounslow and Huw Swetnam
2. Germany
3. France

Women's K1 (kayak single) team

1. Great Britain
Lizzie Neave; Laura Blakeman and Louise Donington
2. Slovakia
3. Germany

Men's C1 (canoe single)

1. Michal Martikan SVK
2. Alexander Slafkovsky SVK
3. Jan Benzien GER
5. David Florence GBR

Men's C1 (canoe single) team

1. Czech Republic
2. France
3. Germany
5. Great Britain
David Florence; Mark Proctor and Daniel Goddard

Men's C2 (canoe doubles)

1. Pavel Hochschorner/Peter Hochschorner SVK
2. Damien Troquetet/Mathieu Voyemant FRA
3. Timothy Baillie/Etienne Stott GBR
9. David Florence/Richard Hounslow GBR
15. Daniel Goddard/Colin Radmore

Men's C2 (canoe doubles) team

1. Czech Republic
2. Great Britain
Timothy Baillie/Etienne Stott; David Florence/Richard Hounslow; Daniel Goddard/Colin Radmore
3. Poland



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Fern Britton
This Morning television presenter Fern Britton (far left) is heading to China for her fifth Women for Women challenge

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Devizes West

Record numbers of competitors completed the 2009 Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon with 290 boats crossing the finish line over the Easter weekend.

Feature by: Peter Hutchison. **Conditions over race weekend were benign, with warm temperatures, overcast skies and almost no wind. Course chairman and chief DW pundit Paul Ralph said,** "It was a great event. Atmospherically the conditions were perfect. There were some good solid times out there, slower than you'd hope – but there was almost no flow on the river."

Over 650 people in 350 boats started the 125-mile race. The gentle conditions reduced retirements to 17% – less than the average of around one third.

Roll call for the winners

Owen Peake and Daniel Seaford of Reading Canoe Club won the senior doubles with a time of 17:16:51. Winning was "a relief" said Peake, reflecting on the pressure that came with being pre-race favourites in the world of paddlesport and his hometown of Devizes.

With a background of sprint and marathon tracing, Peake recalled it was quite a nervous day, adding "You've just got to get on with it. As races get bigger, you tend to get more hyped-up, with DW you need to keep it low key."

Overall conditions might have favoured most, but Peake and Seaford were looking for a fast time and the conditions were far from ideal. Lucky with the weather, the lack of flow made the canal like a series of lakes. The lower drops required greater care taking more time. "We had a great boat and great kit," said Peake, adding that the race gives even greater respect for the record time of 15:34:12 set by Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish.

Owen saves his greatest praise for the team, "Whether we were the fastest boat is not important, we were probably the best prepared. We knew the course very well and had a superb support crew."

Junior doubles title was once again taken by Tim Muller and Frederick Reif from Cokethorpe School. "It was a good race, we actually enjoyed it this year," said Muller reflecting on the horrendous wintry conditions that accompanied their 2008 win. Their 2009 time was four minutes faster (16:34:21) reflecting

the Cokethorpe team approach that successfully won the Junior Team Trophy for the Berkshire school. "We really enjoyed being with the team," adds Muller.



Above: Daniel Seaford and Owen Peake - winners.

Steffen Burkhardt of Berlin Canoe Club, Germany, won the senior singles race. It was the third win out of four entries for Burkhardt, reflecting the growing international interest in one of the world's toughest of endurance events. Veteran junior doubles was won by Rhys Byrne and Andy Worth of Exeter CC, in one of the largest vet-junior entry fields for years.

The runners and riders

Winners aside, DW provides every paddler with the opportunity for a real sense of personal achievement. One Endeavour crew managed an Easter Sunday morning stop to broadcast a sponsorship request to their church congregation, only to be let down by the fading battery of a mobile phone. DW race takes its toll on everything.

Commemorating 30 years of the senior doubles course record in 1979, Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish were reunited in the boat for DW2009. With Cornish travelling in from South Africa, training was at an absolute minimum. Boat and compatibility problems led to the pair retiring at Aldermaston after just over seven hours with back trouble for Brian. "To a certain extent both of us have changed our paddling style, last time we paddled together we used asymmetric paddles, now we both use wings, and use different style," explained Greenham.

“The conditions were far from ideal. Lucky with the weather, the lack of flow made the canal like a series of lakes”

minster 2009



Above: Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish.
Photograph from Tim Cornish.

Below: Tim Muller and Frederick Reif – junior doubles winners.
Photograph from Tim Muller.



Below:
Bernie Shrosbree and James Cracknell after the finish with medals.
Photograph from Peter Hutchison.



Statistics on miles and minutes stack up to show Greenham and Cornish were in the top three at Newbury. "Tim and Brian were going fast on the canal," says Ralph. Chuffed they were considered top five potential for this year's race while both nearing 50, they're up for competing again at some point. Cornish says he would "Prefer to wait until I can have the time to spend a few weeks in the UK before the race," highlighting the need for time, practice, kit and support for a successful DW campaign.

Cracknell's challenge

Double Olympic rower James Cracknell paired up with former SBS member Bernie Shrosbree. Cracknell's DW challenge would see him paddle the Henley Straight for the first time looking where he was going.

Clambering out of the boat at Westminster with an impressive time of 20:36:50, Cracknell was frustrated at having arrived at Teddington just before high tide. After the race he said, "we had prepared ourselves for a long hard day and that's what we got." Cracknell touched on the potential benefits of years on the water in rowing boats, "timing is important, and not reacting to the wobble of the boat."


Shrosbree has a reputation as a task master, and is recruited to assist elite athletes to improve mental discipline, which is how he and Cracknell first met. He was genuinely impressed by DW before

the event and is now in awe of "a brilliant, brilliant event that is really under-rated" and the "special people who complete DW."

So what tips are there for people considering DW? "You have to have an honesty policy in the boat about how you're feeling and your training," explains Shrosbree. The hours, days, weeks and months of training serve to work on the husbandry with the team, kit, boat, food and support. Cracknell and Shrosbree called on some of the best experience available with five-time DWer Andy Worth of Kirton Kayaks and nine-time competitor Mark Stubbs providing the knowledge of kit and course. "The support crew was crucial, James was brilliant on the timing and we paced ourselves really well," reflects Shrosbree.

Cracknell's in-boat escapades were reflected with Beijing double Olympic rowing medallist Debbie Flood supporting colleagues Tom Parker and Adam Moffatt down the course in 26:52:19. Come on over rowers, the water's great when you can see where you're going.

Breaking the records - DW2010

The challenge to the paddlesport community in the boats is to push for the records. As Peake suggests, the kit, boats and training must be better than 30 years ago. So why is that 15:34:12 record still standing? DW 2010 takes place from 2nd-5th April. Visit www.dwrace.org.uk. 



Devizes to Westminster standing up!

Stand up paddle (SUP) boarding is becoming an increasingly popular paddlesport. Originally hailed as the latest, greatest surf riding sport it's actually becoming almost more popular on flat water. With Hawaiian roots, there's no doubting its heritage and place in the timeline of paddling.

Feature by: John Hibbard. **I guess it was only a matter of time before the challenge of DW would attract a stand up paddler. Anthony Cooper and I were the first to enter and complete DW standing up.**

After winning the 2008 UK SUP Distance Championships I was looking for the next big challenge. A quick internet search presented me with DW. Work constraints, sponsors, photo shoots and life in general did a very good job of trying to derail our training, but we managed to do just enough paddling in the run up to the event.

Anthony and I knew that most people had no understanding of what we were doing. This was obvious when we'd approach low bridges and people would cry out "I'd like to see you get under there!" They were obviously forgetting we had legs that bent and we just crouched or lay down to navigate under the bridges – easy!

I'm making it sound like everyone doubted us, which is not true at all. We lost count of the times we were quizzed on what we were doing and where people could try it. As the days went on the other support crews got used to seeing us and in the end I think they stopped being surprised to see us finish each day! We'd like to say a huge thank you to the other paddlers who were exceptionally supportive, particularly the school teams.


Stand up paddling is very easy to do. Although we are experienced surfers, windsurfers and endurance athletes we don't have superior balance – you don't need it. The boards we paddle are stable, lightweight and very easy to use. Portages were a joy for us. We literally skipped on and off our boards with ease. You get warm paddling so we were able to wear just shorts and t-shirt and we didn't fall in the whole way. In fact we didn't fall at all during the whole 500 miles of training!

Stand up paddling is a great all over body workout and the sensation of glide is amplified from a standing position so it becomes an addictive pastime very quickly. That improved vantage point you get from standing is one thing that kept us

going through the race. Each day we found miles 23-30 to be really hard. Boredom, tiredness and the distance still left to cover wore us down mentally and physically. However, we were confident we could make it and one of the biggest motivators was to get to day four to show people just how easy we'd make it down the tideway. We met a Frenchman at the end of day three who basically wrote us off and told us we'd never make it, so, on day four, we literally skipped out of bed in readiness to prove him completely and utterly wrong!

All in all, DW was a great fun challenge. I'd like to think we opened many people's eyes to stand up paddling. When asked why we were doing it our only reply could be – "why do it sitting down?" We didn't mean that in a negative way, we just wanted to show that sometimes there is more than one way to do something. I finished the race in 26 hours and six minutes and Anthony completed it in 27 hours, 32 minutes.

Thanks

We'd like to thank everyone who cheered and waved at us along the route, your support was like a tonic. Thanks to Gill, our lone support crew, Starboard for the boards and Go Fast for the energy! We'd really recommend you all to try stand up paddling. For more information see www.standuppaddlesurf.co.uk. Maybe we'll see you standing up at DW 2010? 



Below: The finish at Westminster.

“We met a Frenchman at the end of day three who basically wrote us off and told us we'd never make it down the tideway!”

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Anna Hemmings

Anna bids a fond farewell a

Anna Hemmings, six time marathon world champion, two time Olympian, British female canoeing legend, stellar ambassador for the sport and downright good person, has decided to draw the curtain down on a glittering canoeing career.

Feature by: Anne Ferguson. **For 32-year old Anna, who has formally announced her retirement from the sport, it is a bitter sweet parting, as she shared her thoughts with me about her decision.**

"I've been canoeing for 23 years... That's 23 years of riverbanks and cold winters. Of those, 15 have been in the senior team, which I made at the age of 17." Anna paused... "That's over two thirds of my life," she looked at me as if subconsciously assimilating the enormity of the time she had invested in the sport and how much it had knitted into the fabric of her life. "It's hard to let it go, it's quite sad to leave," she said.

Versatility

Hemming's unique trademark, and what she is most proud of, was her versatility to switch between the two codes of flat water racing: sprint (over 500m) and marathon (18 miles). In 2001 she was seventh in the Sprint Senior World Championships and one week later, won two gold medals (WK1 and WK2) in the Marathon World Championships in Stockton. This is just one highlight in a whole back catalogue of successes, which collectively add up to a fantastic canoeing career.

In 1999 she won her first marathon world title and in 2000, was selected to represent Great Britain at the Sydney Olympics in the Women's K1 500m event.

In the last eight years, she collected five more marathon world titles and competed at the Beijing Olympic Games along with making a number of European and World Championship finals in sprint. This is even more extraordinary when you realise that she was struck down with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in 2003 and re-emerged from that in 2005 to regain her marathon world title in Perth, Australia.

"That was hugely emotional" she said, "coming back after illness and the challenge of getting back to the very top. To then also make the Beijing Olympics, with help from coach Miklos Simon, who's a great technical coach, was really special."

It's no surprise that Anna identifies with Lance Armstrong who fought cancer and went on to win seven

“The one who wins is the one with their brain in gear. I've worked with a sports psychologist since the age of 16 and I believe that's a huge part of training – it's in your mind.”



Above: Anna Hemmings wins the World Marathon title in Gyor, Hungary for

Tour de France titles. She states openly that he is one of her heroes, I am sure if Armstrong knew of Hemming's story, he may have her on his list.

Strong self-belief

The reasons for Anna's successes are easy to detect "A huge portion of success is self-belief" she says. "Physically there is not much to choose between the nine competitors on the start line of a (kayaking) final. The one who wins is the one with their brain in gear. I've worked with a sports psychologist since the age of 16 and I believe that's a huge part of training – it's in your mind. I always asked myself what it was I could do to be the best. I knew what I needed by reading a lot and developing my understanding of what was needed to make an athlete successful. I constantly searched for improvement and getting the best performance. I took responsibility for my training. You realise that you have to pay attention to the detail of training, at the top level you can lose a race by 0.01 of a second and attention to little things can make the difference. I wanted to leave no stone unturned. At stages, I personally sourced and paid for video, massage and nutritional input. Athletes these days

ngs

fter 23 years in the sport



“It’s hard to let go but I’m ready to move on and I’m proud of my achievements and looking forward to my new career and challenges”

the sixth time in 2007. Photo by Peter Szalmas.

Above: Anna with gold medal. Photo by Mark Watson.

sometimes can take these things for granted. I don’t know how many would pay for it now.”

There is no doubt that Anna’s focus, drive and motivation are key factors in helping her to achieve her goals – since the age of eight she had dreamed of competing at the Olympic Games – “I wanted to show I could keep being the best.” Hemmings has certainly demonstrated that time and time again.

So what were the reasons for retiring?

“At Beijing I did think it could be my last Olympics but I was still fully committed to making the most of it. Over the winter I didn’t enjoy the day-to-day grind of training. Training is so intense, and volume so great that you’ve got to enjoy it – and when you stop enjoying it – it’s time to move on. That’s where it was for me. I wasn’t prepared to make ‘sacrifices’ to be the best. Three years ago, I made the life choice to move to Nottingham to train. It was an easy decision; it was the best thing for my sport. Nottingham is 2.5 hours away and this winter, I didn’t want to travel one hour to Bisham to join the rest of the group. I felt I wasn’t prepared to make the sacrifices to be the best. In the past they weren’t sacrifices but choices. At the Seville training camp

there wasn’t the will to push myself beyond where it hurts – and you need that. It wasn’t there anymore. The thought of racing was no longer exciting. It’s hard to let go but I am ready to move on and I am proud of my achievements and looking forward to my new career and challenges.”

Here was an interesting change in vocabulary – life choice to sacrifice. It was clear that at some point during those dark winter training days, she had reached the tipping point where it was no longer a choice but a sacrifice. And who would deny her the choice to make that decision? She is keen to embrace the world of sports journalism. If her past record is anything to go by, don’t be surprised if, in August 2012, you hear... “and it’s Anna Hemmings reporting for the BBC from Dorney Lake at the Olympic Games.”

On behalf of all in canoeing, congratulations on a fabulous career Anna. Thank you for your enormous contribution to canoeing and in particular, women’s canoeing. Good luck in your new challenges. World – be alert – a gifted person is coming your way! ♡

One day like

“Throw those curtains wide, one day like this a year will see me right.”

Paddling around the Isle of Skye, the words from a song on the latest Elbow album ‘The seldom seen kid’ kept echoing around Pete Bursnall’s head as he drifted off under the hypnotic rhythm of the paddle and the warm soporific power of the sun.

Feature by: Pete Bursnall. **There were five of us on this eight day trip, my old dad Dave and mates Rod White, Tud Slaven and Mick Grey. This was the third day out from the Skye Bridge and a day that we were all looking forward to.**

Photos by: Pete Bursnall, Michael Grey, Tudur Slaven and Rod White.

The previous night we had worked our way up the coastline into a strengthening easterly wind looking for somewhere to spend the night. All plans for crossing Loch Slapin that evening had been re-written on account of the large breaking waves that were blowing down the loch and out to sea. We all felt we had no interest in a scary and committing paddle in a cross-sea at the end of a long, but pleasant day. A fine pitch at Dun Scaich was rejected because of the poor plumbing in the castle before we found an ideal spot a further windy kilometre along the coast. The following morning however, the world was a better place – no wind, just sun and blue sky. We were up early for a slightly hurried breakfast, too little wind you see to keep the midges at bay, and then off, onto the sea, back where we belonged.

We split into two groups as we crossed the loch, with myself and Mick catching up on nearly 15 years of gossip while the other three chatted happily behind us. On the calm water it was possible to hear every word of conversations taking place several hundred metres away. Frequently there was no sound in the bay other than the gentle splashing as five paddles stroked smoothly along.

As we neared the far shore we were met by a shoal of fish running for the open sea and breaking the event-horizon as momentary flashes of silver. Quick as you like our bushman, Mick ‘Dundee’ Grey, had his hand-line out and I shot off to corral the shoal in his direction. Sure enough three mackerel duly sacrificed themselves on his hooks and before you could say ‘fillet’ Rod had them topped, gutted and cable tied to the back of Mick’s boat, the things he had in that deck-bag!

Dad and I mooched off to explore along the coastline with its caves, inlets and perfectly clear water while the others drifted by on the ebb tide. It was great to be out on a trip with the old boy, not since the Three Peaks Yacht Race some 10 years previously had we been on a proper trip together. Of course not everyone’s dad has more than 50 years paddling under his belt but this was actually the first proper sea kayak trip we had taken together.



Above: Pulling out at Elgol.

This was because up until about a year ago I was Mr ‘I don’t do kayaking’. I have a completely rational fear of being enclosed underwater. Last year though a seagoing itch got the better of me and I finally got round to learning to roll, ably assisted by dad, Tud and the murky warm waters of the Brenin pool.

Back together again as we all paddled south along the stunning coastline passing a few houses that pushed the mantra ‘position, position, position’ to new heights. I wondered, “Just how many sea kayakers get to round Rubha na h-Easgainne in perfect flat calm conditions?”

All ecstatic

With a few feet of swell breaking onto the shoals this could be a thought-provoking place in a sea kayak, but today we were able to relax and sink deep into the experience. Passing between the headland and the island of Eilean na h-Airde, talking to the seals and gazing deep down through the invisible waters at the sea life below we were all ecstatic, this is what we had signed up for!

A quick break on the shoals outside Port an Luig Mhoir before rounding the western end of the Elgol Peninsula under the majestic, carved cliffs, cut through with holes and revealing some ‘must climb’ lines straight out of the water. Surely someone has... We passed under an Easter Island style carving of the face of Bruce Forsythe then rounded into Loch Cavaig, “nice to see you...” and there, finally within our grasp, were the peerless Cuillin. As someone said “I have run out of superlatives.”

Below: Scrambling the rough slabs.



this...



Left:
Sea gypsy encampment.



Left:
Dave exploring the coastline.



“We were quiet, soaking it all in, lining the memory banks for future recall, taking those ‘envy photos’ to wind up those who had missed the trip”

Left:
Pete on Loch Coruisk.



Left:
Mackerel lunch at Loch nan Leachd.

As we rock-hopped our way towards Elgol I was developing an ‘I never want this to end’ feeling, but I was also hungry. The five of us strolled up the steep hill to the welcoming café for a brew, cake, sandwich and postcard home. But there was a problem; the picnic benches were tucked around the back, out of sight of the Cuillin. After 20 minutes Mick and I were the first to crack, leaving the others and heading back down to the boats. We had an irresistible urge to be on the sea again, to paddle into the Cuillin, worried perhaps that the glorious conditions could not last. We were looking forward to the best afternoon paddle in the world.

‘Smug mode’

As we skirted the edge of the bay, the others took a more direct line and we met up again under Skurr na Stri. Sometimes it all comes together, weather, effort, scenery and company to make something exceptional, engage ‘smug mode’. We were all under the thrall of the mountains, gliding effortlessly towards them through salty oil. We were quiet, soaking it all in, lining the memory banks for future recall, taking those ‘envy photos’ to wind up those who had missed the trip.

We pulled out onto the sandy beach where once again the bush tucker man went to work lighting a driftwood fire and cooking the mackerel in oven-foil. Dried fruit, fresh mackerel and a brew, delicious, as the boats bumped their way up the beach on the incoming tide.

On days like this sea kayaking is by far the most civilised and intimate way of journeying through the environment. You can carry all the luxuries you need, fresh veg, wine, cheese and fruit without trashing your knees. A well-laden kayak will still glide effortlessly for hours and take you to places no other craft can. You can even pack your hill gear and venture onto dry land for a change of perspective.

We checked the portage from the beach into Loch Coruisk then decided to see if we could get out closer to the Coruisk Memorial Hut, slippery, but for four men to a boat it was fine. Tents up, gear unpacked and then where the shortest river in the country tumbles down the smooth rocks to the sea we discovered an infinity pool. Seconds later five naked salty bodies plunged into the cold water to wash away the efforts of the last few days, cold but glorious.

Later we portaged the sea-boats into the freshwaters of Loch Coruisk and paddled into the heart of the Cuillin in the early evening light. I was amazed that after three days on the sea that I could actually feel the difference between fresh and salt water, lighter, thinner, quicker even. At the end of the loch we went walkabout a little way up the valley. The rock here is so rough that you can walk hands-free up some very improbable slopes and as we sat on top of a steep volcanic lump admiring the view we laid our plans for the following days scramble. Back down to the boats and we slid serenely home to our encampment.

After a well-earned dinner followed by wine and gin ‘n’ tonic we lay glowing on the warm rocks admiring the magical marriage of clear water and steep mountains, dreaming of tomorrow. And what a great day it would turn out to be... “Throw those curtains wide, one day like this a year will see me right, for life.”

Mission Icela

Mention Iceland to most kayakers and you get the same responses throughout the world. I thought it would be time to address some of the myths.

Feature by: Too cold (more sunshine hours than California!)
Mark Hirst.

Photos by: Too expensive (read the news).

Anup Gurung, Andrew Kellert and Miia Komi.

Iceland sits directly in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean. During the summer months this island basks in almost 24-hour sunshine, which in turn works its magic on the some of the biggest glaciers in Europe. Add to this a pretty dramatic geological history and you have a kayaking oasis.

Iceland is probably one of the few remaining European kayaking hotspots still to be truly discovered. Big waterfalls, clean undisturbed rivers and some mind blowing creeking, mixed in with some of the biggest volume runs in Europe, which in time could come to compete with European neighbours such as Norway and Italy.

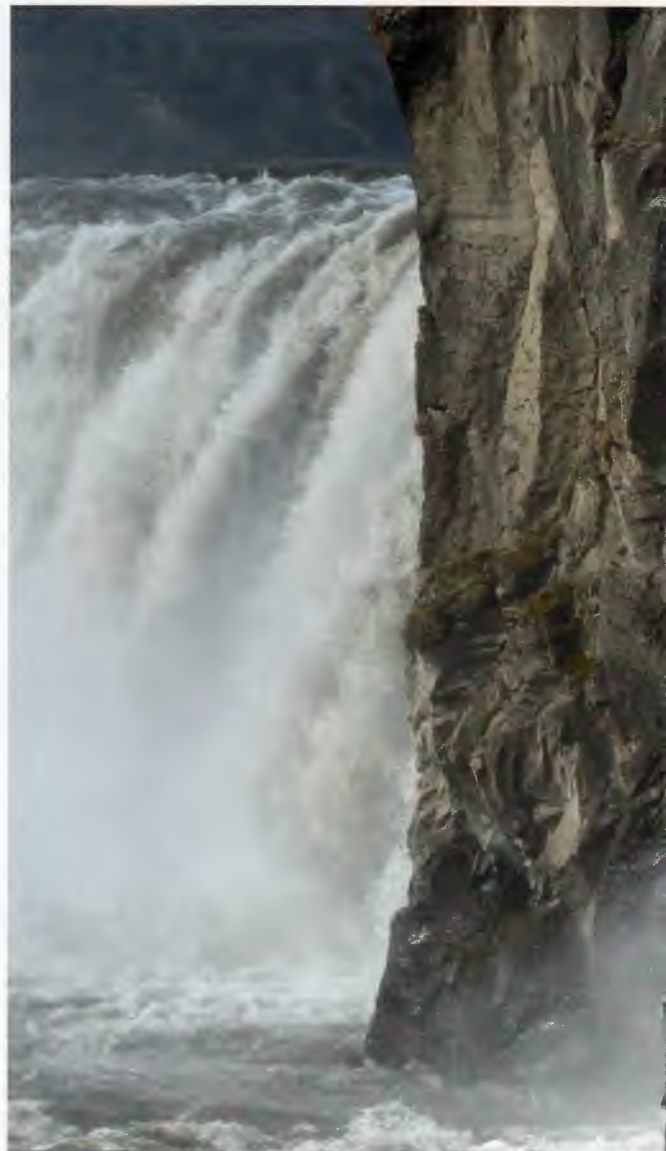
Austari Jökulsa

Sitting in the Skagafjörður region in northwest Iceland the Austari Jökulsa (East Glacial River) is the diamond in the Icelandic kayaking crown. The river acts as the drain for the second largest glacier in Iceland, the Hofsjökull. During the spring months of April to early June, the East River filters the snowmelt from the surrounding mountains. Then from June onwards hold onto your hats as the warm southwest winds from the Gulf Stream start to melt away at the glacier. The water turns darker in colour and doubles in volume to around 50-70 cumecs. The East Glacial River has it all: the top section is a constant Class 3-4 read and run steep boulder run, while the lower canyon intensifies in volume into a Class 4. Eighteen kilometres of liquid heaven!

For the adventurous the run of 54km could be accomplished in one day during the 24-hour daylight of the summer. The top section of the river normally sees less than five kayakers per year, which is truly unbelievable considering there is a uninterrupted stretch of continuous Class 3-4 for nearly 15km.

The start for the trip is high up in the Sprengisandur highland where the drive to the river is an amazing journey in itself. Climbing up into the empty moonscape desert gives you an eerie isolated feeling. On a clear day magnificent views of the glaciers are possible and a dip in the geothermal hot pool in Laugerfell is

the ideal way to relax and enjoy the awesome surroundings. It is possible to camp or hire a cabin if needed.



Above: What awaits you if you misjudge Godafoss.

The river is a short 20-minute drive away where a black volcanic sand beach is the perfect entry. The first 3km are quite flat and allow the body to adjust to the cooling water. As the river bends to the left a beach appears on the river left, the perfect place to stretch the legs and poke your head around the bend to see the start of the action. The river now starts to pick up and the fun begins: the first rapid is a Class 3 rapid with no major moves needed. The next 15kms are a rush of non-stop continuous Class 3-4 boulder gardens with a few slides thrown in for good measure. Read and run is the order of the day here. Due to the lack of kayakers visiting this section of the river none of the rapids actually have names (yet!)

A tributary on the right of the river eases the flow and is a good place to regroup. For the next 10km the river becomes a playground of waves and holes allowing all levels of kayakers

“My stomach was now in overdrive. I could feel myself shaking as I was putting my deck on. I had a feel of dread inside me”

nd



Left:
Enjoying a cup of thermal hot chocolate.



Above: Anup Gurung on the East Glacial.



Above: Rob Litherland in 'Green Room'.



Above:
Commitment in high water.



to push their personal comfort zone. A solitude hut on the right (Hildasell) is the ideal place to stay for those wanting to experience a multi-day trip. Simply pre-book and enjoy the comfort of a warm cabin with a cosy bed or mattress with full use of a kitchen, all in a breathtaking valley.

A further 6km of paddling brings you to a large grass verge on the left, which marks the entry point for the commercial rafting groups. Here the mid-stream is covering a rock, which may be better to avoid and save for another day. If the top rock is uncovered the lower canyon is good to go. The bridge, a further kilometre downstream is the last point to get out of the river safely should any problems occur. You will notice the river narrows down now – the walls become high and intimidating forcing the water to increase in speed, creating excellent surf waves and boiling eddy lines. The first major Class 3 rapid

named 'Alarm Clock' has big standing waves leading into a large hole on the right with a convenient collection pool at the bottom. Hopefully not needed.

From 'Alarm Clock' onwards the river turns into continuous Class 3 and 4+ for the next 10km. The second rapid is named 'Commitment' (3+) and cannot be scouted (hence the name). It is a river wide drop with a raft-eating hole at the bottom. This rapid is best run on the right in medium water and has a habit of unseating kayakers in spectacular fashion. A large eddy on the left is ideal for setting up protection and kit collection. A further 50 metres downstream of 'Commitment' is 'Screaming Lady'. The rumble of a big one and a distinct end to your line of sight marks 'Green Room' – the biggest rapid on the East Glacial River. Most tend to agree it is a stiff Class 4+ and definitely Class 5 in high water. The river plunges three drops in just 70 metres. Each drop



Above: For those running Godafoss, this rapid awaits those who miss the final eddy.

has an interesting hole at the bottom. The drops are run right, left, right with a large boulder in the middle of the rapid to add to the fun and can be scouted, portaged and protected from river left. The final drop is the actual 'Green Room'. Rafting customers love to watch their friends attain some major downtime at the bottom of this awesome rapid.

The river continues to be a thrill a minute to the last big rapid, named 'S Bend' (Class 3+). A series of large waves work their way through a natural bend in the river with a large pour over to finish. This now marks the end of the major rapids and the river calms down and allows you to take in the amazing volcanic rock formations of the canyon. The confluence with the West Glacial River signals the end of the East River. Four kilometres down stream is the rafting takeout on the left at Villinganes. This is the end of a true white-knuckle paddle.

Godafoss

I still remember the childhood pictures I had of Shaun Baker and company running Godafoss. At the time I thought this was

insane and Godafoss stayed in my dreams until one early morning in June 2007. Chris Doyle-Kelly, a fellow raft guide, woke me up and came out with the best come kayaking line I have ever listened to "Mark, wake up it's been sunny all night, let's go huck Godafoss". I dragged my body from my pit not really understanding where I was going never mind what I was getting myself into. After a stunning two-hour drive at 06.00 in the morning from Varmahlid, we arrived at Godafoss knowing we were near something big because I could see the spray 500 metres before we turned from the road to the car park. My stomach felt like a butterfly sanctuary.

Chris was right; the level was huge and we met a dark glacial brown river not the postcard blue you normally see. All of a sudden I got the, "you can do this" voice starting to play in my head as I changed. The onlooking tourists were starting to give us the, "you are not serious" look. Chris, South African kayak guru Andrew Kellert and I gave the falls one last look. Chris went first. He walked 20 seconds from the van and made six paddle strokes before a 15-metre lift-off. Chris disappeared and then surfaced minus his boat swimming to the side cursing his collapsed deck before his boat eventually popped up. Andy was next as he cheekily made a final eddy and smiled. Andy got the perfect line, however, again the deck collapsed, although he managed to stay in his boat.

My stomach was now in overdrive. I could feel myself shaking as I was putting my deck on. I had a feel of dread inside me. I finally pushed all of those thoughts away and unconsciously started to paddle towards the drop. It was not until the final stroke I thought, "what are you doing?" Too late! All I could see was the water getting closer. Hell bent on not over-rotating I hit the water and went so deep the lights were off – it was dark and cold. I was waiting to feel cold water inside the boat from an imploded deck but not today. My trusty NRS deck had stood up to the challenge. My time under the water felt like a lifetime. I eventually surfaced to meet Andy laughing. He said I was centimetres away from over rotating, I smiled and then the pain hit – I thought I had broken a rib or three. Thankfully not. I revisited Godafoss again in 2008. I sat in the eddy put my deck on and decided to walk away with a cheeky smile on my face. I realised I am finally becoming sensible! ♡

Important information

Getting around

Reykjavik is approximately 2.45 hours from Manchester. Keflavik airport has all of the usual car hire suspects with some very capable 4x4s on hire. Ferries are possible from mainland Europe with a stop over in the Faroes. Iceland has one national highway that circumnavigates the country. It was built in the 1960s and is in fairly good condition. Do not speed – fines are heavy and are to be paid on the spot. The daily buses from Reykjavik can also reach Varmahlid. Once there check out the local rafting companies for places to paddle. Iceland does not yet have a guide book (I am working on it). Besides that look at the road maps – look out of the windows you will see tons to paddle. Be sure to stick to all of the normal rules. Change discreetly; ask permission before going over private land etc.

When to go

Iceland has water all summer. May and June are a good time to catch the spring run off, so some of the local creeks will be flowing. For the glacial rivers, a few days of warm weather from the south will start to push the levels up. The days start to become quite cold from mid-September.

Accommodation

Take a sleeping bag, lots of cabins and guest houses all offer sleeping bag accommodation. This basically means you get a room with an unmade bed for a cheaper price. Iceland has an abundance of camping grounds, which are normally near the local swimming pool with a hot pool.



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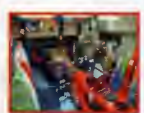
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Natural justice

Canoeing has been the most popular watersport for the last six years with over 2.5 million participants. The benefits of the sport are felt far and wide, ranging from the medals won at the Beijing Olympics to the 'Street Paddler' initiative in Devon, where troubled youngsters are taken out canoeing to gain in confidence.

Great for all the all the family, something for everyone and truly a sport for all. Tired of wearing lycra, pumping iron or running in the gym breathing in someone's exhaled air? Well canoeing could be the open-air sport for you.

The health benefits are great, not only does a session out in a canoe ease stress but helps to develop your cardio-vascular system as well as helping develop muscles and co-ordination. Canoeing is so much fun on a water-based nature trail that the children forget they are exercising as they eagerly search the bank for wild flowers and wildlife.

Imagine not having the freedom to experience the pleasures that canoeing can bring. This is the case in 98% of England and Wales, as there is no clarity and certainty of access to the waters – yet many rights of navigation are still on statute.

With the government constantly talking about health issues, lack of active participation and anti-social behaviour, they need look no further than the sport of canoeing to assist in making positive steps to changing all this.

Below: RAC Brownies out and about on the waterways.



Natural justice is about enabling people to share the countryside including the inland waters. It was also the main reason for the Scottish Land Reform Act (SLRA).

In England we stressed that the SLRA would not only provide greater access to inland waters but also ensure rights came with responsibilities. The Countryside Code, which England has, is weak and limited concerning rights and responsibilities.

The Welsh Assembly government has been much more proactive and modern in their approach to river access. Remember in England we have to go via Westminster, where all UK MPs have a vote in what will happen in England; so not only do we have nearly 700 MPs to convince but some use good old politics against it and us!

Doug Caffyn's work has a commentary that the Magna Carta did not create new law – it reconfirmed old laws. The preface to an Act of 1472 stated that Magna Carta provided that ships and boats might have their large and free

passage in all rivers seems to indicate there was a PRON (Public Right of Navigation) on all rivers.

Canoe Wales in verbal evidence to the National assembly for Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee said: "Examination of statute shows that in 1969 the Statute Law (repeals) Act left four articles of Edward I 'Confirmation of the Magna Carta', as current statute. One of these articles applies to Navigation and states '...the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, by land as well as by water. Furthermore, we decree and grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports shall have all their liberties and free customs.'"

The history of the Charter is known to have strongly influenced the formation of modern law in the world. Perhaps this one article is the reason why customary use of waterways around the globe is commonplace."

It would seem that the PRON bestowed by Magna Carta remains in place. Access to inland water in Wales is a right of equity and social justice.

The current situation regarding rights to inland water in Wales is confusing, untenable and unworkable; there should be the same right of public access as there is in Scotland, according to the National Assembly for Wales's Petitions Committee.

The main recommendations of the Petition Committee's report are:

- That a further more wide-ranging inquiry be carried out by one of the National Assembly's Scrutiny Committees with a view to bringing forward legislation in this area, to which all stakeholders would have the opportunity to submit evidence.
- That a full scrutiny inquiry should also consider introducing a mandatory code to accompany the legislation in order that a new right of access along inland water in Wales can be managed and regulated, including some attempt to develop an identification system for regular water users.

The petitions committee will now be writing to the chairs of both the Sustainability Committee and the Communities and Culture Committee to ask whether one of them wishes to take forward the suggestion of a full scrutiny inquiry.

The full report of the Petitions Committee's short inquiry be viewed at:

www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-pc-home.htm

Inland Waterways Advisory Council announcement

The Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) shows how inland waterways can be used to combat social exclusion.

Its new publication called 'Using Inland Waterways to Combat the Effects of Social Exclusion' describes how a small number of local authorities and community groups, the BCU and the National Community Boats Association have cooperated to deliver a range of important social benefits, including:

- Young people at risk of offending gaining transferable skills to help them find work.
- Older people in care and people with disabilities becoming more independent after attending waterway residential courses.
- Offenders on community service orders carrying out environmental improvements in the community.
- Young people from different ethnic backgrounds learning to live and work together on a canal boat, promoting teamwork and social cohesion in the wider community.

IWAC's publication also recommends that the government should recognise and promote the value of inland waterway projects, which help combat social exclusion. The pamphlet contributes to the ongoing update of government policy on inland waterways, expected by the end of this year to replace its existing policy document 'Waterways for Tomorrow' published in 2000.

John Edmonds, who chairs IWAC, said: "Eighty per cent of people in Britain live within five miles of a canal or river - this means that inland waterways are ideally placed to be used to combat social exclusion within people's own local communities."



Above: Teaching guiders how to use the locks.

Campaign comment

The campaign was invited to attend the last IWAC Conference in March and did a presentation titled 'Changing lives one paddle stroke at a time.'

Canoeing has many excellent case studies where we prove time and time again how beneficial it is to a huge range of people including those who have been socially excluded. We know canoeing can and does help combat social exclusion as well as reaching many of the government's targets but what we need to have is access to and along our inland waters!

We are using this and many other good examples of the benefits of canoeing to keep the pressure on the government. The pamphlet is available on IWAC's website at www.iwac.org.uk/reports

What are we after?

In reality to be able to use the inland waters; to enter and exit at agreed access points; use the rivers as blue pathways and not to cross private land or picnic in people's back gardens but to pass along them as one walks on a footpath for enjoyment. If the rivers were used regularly we could be the eyes and ears and report hazards and problems.

Keep in touch at www.riversaccess.org

A trip on the River Loddon

An invitation to paddle, on a normally unavailable stretch of river, could not be turned down, so we took part in Reading University's survey and bank inspection of the River Loddon. The river is one of the many inland waters without 'access'. The Loddon passes through Berkshire and Hampshire and is a tributary of the Thames, rising within Basingstoke and flowing to meet the Thames near the village of Wargrave.

The university has responsibility for the river going through Shinfield near Arborfield. Responsibility means not only looking after the ecology but also ensuring the banks are in good order and the drainage systems are working after considerable flooding. There are a couple of weirs on this stretch but the responsibility for them lies with Thames Water.

Amongst the party were estate managers from the university, a contractor and an EA fisheries officer. Dominic (from the EA) is also a member of the fishing club based on university land. He was able to provide us with a huge amount of environmental information about the local area and fish movements.

It was interesting to hear what the EA had to say in terms of flood management and removal of trees and blockages etc. Fundamentally he did agree that rivers such as this were suitable for canoeing



Above: The River Loddon.

providing access was granted. Part of the river had several trees hanging in the water and causing a blockage, but as we were told they are also good places for fish to hide!

The Loddon is the same as many inland waters where access is unclear but where the rivers are suitable for canoeing and many other non-powered watersports.

How do I get my MP to listen?

Within the next few months there will be a general election, so why not ask the candidates where they stand over natural justice and access to inland waters. Question what they are going to do to assist you gaining access to the inland waters?

Go along to a husting or public meeting and ask them. They will be out and about canvassing your votes so ask them when they are standing on your doorstep see what they say and how they are going to help you.

Time to talk to your MP and really see if he/she is for natural justice. Your MP can be found here www.parliament.uk. Do contact them as ask them to support the EDM below. We would be interested in their reply. If you want help with a letter and facts to send to them please do contact info@riversaccess.org but local examples of the impact of the lack of access is a good starting point even if you say 'X' canoe club, youth group or your family and yourself are unable to go to 'Y' to go canoeing, which is restricting your participation in a healthy sporting activity.



Above: John Grogan MP trying ergo paddling.

Below: John Grogan MP speaking to David Florence.



Who is listening to us?

Our cause and need for access to our inland waters is one in which we can all be involved. Although we might feel passionately about it, sometimes we feel our hands are tied and no one is listening. The campaign receives emails and comments like "What good is a letter to X or going to see Y" but all these actions do make a difference.

Let's take John Grogan MP for example. He has never been in a canoe and until the European Slalom Championships at Nottingham, not near one either! Yet he has been an excellent champion and campaigner for the Rivers Access Campaign. So why did he get involved? As MP for Selby he had received letters from canoeists at the local canoe clubs, one of which is the Lower Wharfe Canoe Club and felt that the lack of access is unacceptable. Why should the general public not have access to their waterway heritage?

Following this John contacted the campaign, we met up and we have worked together ever since. John has laid down two Early Day Motions (EDM) concerning access to inland waters, however, both times Martin Salter MP has laid down amendment EDMs to try to counteract John's motion. The first EDM attracted over 120 signatures and resulted in a debate between himself and Martin Salter on Radio 4 on 2nd January 2006. John has also been working hard behind the scenes and arranged a meeting with the Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs (Huw Irranca-Davies MP) with himself, Peter Bottomley MP, the campaign and BCU Chief Executive, Paul Owen. This provided us with the opportunity to put our point across without any intermediaries.



Above: L to R: Ivan Lawler MBE, John Grogan MP and Dr Tim Brabants MBE.

John continues to support us and he came along to the European Slalom Championships in Nottingham to see for himself just a part of the world of canoeing. He was really impressed by the competition, the set up and the enthusiasm of all involved for the sport. Whilst he was there, John was able to meet many of the athletes, Canoe England employees, volunteers and even had a go on the canoeing ergos. We have promised to get John out on the water too, maybe even down the white water course at Nottingham!

John was very impressed by the event and laid down an EDM as support and as a request for greater access. He did this within 24 hours of getting back to work after his visit!

EDM 1577

Increased access to waterways in England and Wales

02.06.2009. Grogan, John

That this House applauds the British Canoe Union for staging an excellent 2009 European Canoe Slalom Championships in Nottingham, 28 to 31 May 2009, and celebrates the notable success of Team GB in taking four medals in total two Gold, one Silver and one Bronze; welcomes the BBC's live coverage on a busy sporting weekend; notes that over 2.5 million paddlers in Britain only have access to 1,400 miles of inland water in England and Wales, which is less than four per cent of the total 41,000 miles of waterways over three metres wide; further notes that while the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002 only incorporates land, the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 and its supporting Scottish Outdoor Access Code includes waterways, ensuring that paddlers have the same rights as walkers and access to all of Scotland's waterways; and calls on the government to set a realistic target for increased access to waterways in England and Wales by the Olympic year of 2012.

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Help us to keep and improve the environment by following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the environment:

- Leave the environment as you find it.
- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Take care not to cause damage when launching or landing along natural banks. Float your canoe for launching and lift out when landing (i.e. not seal launching).
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- Gravel banks may contain fish spawn— avoid paddling over them in low water conditions.
- Paddle at a distance and in a manner to minimise any disturbance to wildlife.
- Be aware of Environment Agency information to help protect the fresh water environment after using canoes and equipment overseas.

Report pollution or damage to the relevant authorities.

Environment Agency – 24 hour incident reporting. Telephone 0800 80 70 60.

British Waterways – Emergencies. Telephone 0800 47 999 47.

RSPCA – Report birds or animals in distress to the RSPCA. Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours).

For Coastguard and other emergencies call 999.

River clear ups

Why not clear up your local river environment. Get the press involved to show how much we care for our environment. The Environment Agency may be able to help provide you with rubbish sacks or skips – you could contact them. Perhaps you could undertake the work with other voluntary groups who want to improve their environment?

Let us know what you do to help with the environment and water through river clear ups etc we would be happy to feature your activity and what you found in Canoe Focus.

The environment

Being environmentally aware is not just a trendy thing to be but by preserving the environment we are ensuring that the other generations will have the pleasure of it for years to come.

The canoe is a traditional craft used throughout the world for exploring wilderness areas and quietly observing wildlife and flora. It causes no erosion, noise or pollution, and leaves no trace of its passing. Canoeing at appropriate water levels is an environmentally benign activity and causes no damage to fish stocks. However, it is important that paddlers themselves are not damaging the environment either. You may have seen signs on beaches etc, which say, "Leave nothing but your footprints." Well canoeing should leave nothing at all as the ripples of a boat passing will soon be lost within the watercourse.

Comment has been asked for possible exclusion zones for canoeing and other activities in Jersey where the Atlantic puffin breeds. This is just an example of the many environmental questions Canoe England becomes involved with.



“canoeing should leave nothing at all as the ripples of a boat passing will soon be lost within the watercourse”

The Atlantic puffin is an iconic species in Jersey and the other Channel Islands and populations in these islands should be considered part of an English Channel or French Atlantic sub-population. Although globally common, numbers of puffins throughout this sub-population are very low following steady declines during much of the 20th century. The suggestion was to have a no go zone for canoeing but still allow commercial fishing.

In our reply to the Puffin protection proposals it was important to state that, “Canoe England will always support the development of environmental protection measures, however we must underline the necessity that schemes need to be based on sound scientific evidence and that any measures decided upon should be equitable to all.” Failure to do this has been shown to undermine the ability for such protection initiatives to succeed and indeed without the basis of sound research, they may actually have little value in protecting the intended species or habitat.

You your canoe and the environment

Canoeists and kayakers take environmental concerns very seriously and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England’s own guidance notes outlined in the ‘You your canoe and the environment’ publication.

Taking responsibility for the environment is all of our responsibilities from not damaging the water courses, banks or leaving litter, in fact most of us actually probably bring more litter home in our boats that one could imagine! Many of us pick up rubbish from the water: bottles, plastic bags, balls etc and where possible remove fishing lines and hooks from trees.



Canoe FOCUS

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Front cover photo:
Men's C2 Bronze medallists Etienne Stott (left) and Tim Baillie (right).
Photo: Pete Wells, official BCU photographer.

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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 10th JULY 2009. Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the AUGUST 2009 issue. Canoe Focus encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated the publishers assume no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or photographs. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the BCU, its committees or members. The printing of an advertisement in Canoe Focus does not necessarily mean that the BCU endorse the company, item or service advertised. All material in Canoe Focus is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.

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HYDRATE YOUR BODY

As the weather warms up and the canoeing season is in full swing maintaining your hydration becomes even more important.

Replacing the fluids and electrolytes lost through sweat will help you maintain hydration before, during and after canoe training and races.



FUEL YOUR MUSCLES

For training or event longer than 30 minutes at high intensity or 60 minutes or longer at any intensity it is important to consume carbohydrate to fuel your muscles and maintain performance.

To enhance physical endurance, consume sport drinks and snacks which contain glucose and provides carbohydrates, fluid and electrolytes to help fuel your muscles and maintain hydration.



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ACCELERATE YOUR RECOVERY

Rapid recovery after and between your training session and races is vital to get the most from your performance.

It is important to consume a recovery snack or product soon after sport. Recovery requires protein to enhance muscle repair and growth and carbohydrate to replace stores used during exercise.



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Both sprint and slalom canoeing are strength and power based sports, as such increasing strength is vital to performance. Protein is the key building block and is vital to include in a nutrition plan while combined with resistance training.

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Behind the scenes

An excellent team of people support the work of both the BCU and Canoe England at the Bingham office in Nottinghamshire.

This hard-working team are mainly unknown to members. Many of you may have spoken to them or received mail from them at some time, so we thought we would unlock the mystery and show you who they are. They are a very important part of our organisation.

Howard Blackman, Canoe England

Howard Blackman aged 44, is the head of the Paddlesport Participation Programme for Canoe England based in Bingham, Nottinghamshire.

Howard's current role gives him a chance to help and inspire more people to go paddling. Most of Howard's time is spent ensuring that the Paddlesport Participation team is reaching out across the community to develop long-term sustainable opportunities for all to get in a boat and go paddling. The Paddlesport Participation team is a diverse group, that helps to ensure that the focus is always set at a wide angle!

Howard says, "This year is a very busy, yet exciting year as we begin to engage with more over 16s, without ignoring the under 16s. You will begin to see activities such as Go Paddling days, Canoe 2012 events and, coming soon, a new youth leadership award.



“I train as often as I can but in reality that's only twice a week, a far cry from 10 years ago which was 12 times a week!”

"There is never a dull moment. During a typical week I drive or travel over 500 miles, answer over 50 emails per day, spend two days at meetings, which could be anything from discussions with a school who want to deliver our sport, to meeting our colleagues from World Class, to sitting down with Sue Hornby, my line manager, to discuss targets and budgets. The best parts of my role are seeing projects such as Paddlepower and Cross Stream Challenge develop into excellent products that have been well received by paddlers and coaches alike. One thing that I really do care passionately about is fixing issues, if someone reports an issue, I want to correct it and 'delight' the member.

"What makes my role easier is having an excellent team. Sue Hornby does a brilliant job ensuring I have the resources needed to deliver the Paddlesport Participation Programme. Nigel Timmins, James Hives and Stuart Briggs all do so much to keep the programme driving forward nationally.

"I have worked for Canoe England for nine years initially as CDO for the Midlands and PDO for East Midlands before being offered the Head of Participation role in 2007. Before taking up my position at Canoe England, I was employed part-time in wild water racing (WWR) as National Development Coach. Prior to that and continuing on today, I spend as much time as I can as a volunteer coach at Burton Canoe Club.

"I first tried paddling with the Scouts based in Hastings as a 12-year old. This inspired me to join the school canoe club at Grove School Hastings. The club was run by my PE teacher Mike Thompson, an accomplished coach, slalomist and wild water racer. Mike was and still is a great coach. The other thing that inspired me was the thought of beating my brother Neil in a slalom competition. My first boat was a homemade Stip Yak, which Mike helped me to make. We cut an inch

off the deck and the hull to make it a 'low volume boat; it also made it about 12 inches shorter, which seem to help me at slalom events!

"My brother Neil and I have both tried most forms of paddlesport, both competitive and recreational over the last 30 years. Our greatest success was winning a Bronze medal at the 1995 WWR World Championships in the C2 team event. We still compete these days together in sprint and marathon in K2s and one of our most memorable results was winning the Exe Descent in a K2. However, we still just love to go paddling. I train as often as I can but in reality that's only twice a week, a far cry from 10 years ago which was 12 times a week! I have a family now that is growing up fast who also like to go paddling.

"I do get to sneak off to race at local marathon races where I seem to be just maintaining Division 4 status, however, my sons Matthew and Paul will be racing soon.

"I have always enjoyed sport and PE was my always my favourite lesson at school. When I left I worked at Bowles Outdoor Pursuits Centre and as a result learned to ski, eventually gaining my BASI 2 qualification and worked abroad for a couple of ski seasons, before settling in the Midlands working at Swadlincote Ski Centre as the head of the ski school. In between that I completed three DWs, ran three marathons with a best time of 2:56 minutes and finished an Ironman Triathlon.

"The final amazing fact is that three former Grove School Canoe Club members work for the BCU: Andy Goodsell as BCU competition manager, Wendy Blackman as administration manager for GB Canoeing and myself!

"Enjoy your Paddling."

Howard Blackman

New gear

Pyranha

Z-one

www.pyranha.com

I have heard many people say that the Z-one doesn't know what it is. It's not a playboat or a river runner. However, I think I have worked it out – it is a true general-purpose boat, one that can be used for a huge diversity of paddlesports. I have been using it for coaching, leading, river running, paddling on flat water, slalom, surfing and playing. It can do it all.

I have been paddling the large version. Very soon it hit me that this boat is the fastest boat I have paddled in a long time. With a really fast hull the boat can fly around the river, making cross-river moves really easy. On the Washburn I was making ferries that others couldn't accomplish due to the amount of speed the boat could carry out of the eddies. It still carves well even with its softer edges and can turn sharply into and out of eddies. The bow does dive on drops and surfing small waves but can be recovered quite easily.

It is a forgiving boat with gentle edges that don't catch you out. It rolls easily and makes the paddler feel safe. However to get the best performance out of the boat you need to get quite dynamic in your paddling and drive the boat around quite aggressively and you'll feel the boat come alive.

Slalom paddlers have mentioned to me that it has similar handling characteristics to their slalom boats. With its speed it would be great for entry level slaloms and I imagine it would be great out in the surf but I



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Above: Gareth paddling the Z-one.

haven't had chance to try that. The biggest issue I have had is that it has been the most uncomfortable boat I have paddled for a while. I have played with the outfitting but I feel it is just the size of my legs and feet are just too long!

"Good for river surfing, good all round river running boat ideal for club use."
Mark Davies, chairman, Manchester Canoe Club.

Gareth Field

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When I was offered the chance to demo the new Marsport Eta I leapt at the chance. Billed as a mid-level stability boat but with racing lines, I was not sure that it would really have the speed for me to perform to my best, how wrong I was!

The boat is a very pretty craft using the look that has become the norm across all racing boats of late but still with the identifiable Marsport



characteristics such as the cockpit handle/HRM fixing and a curved front deck. The other major addition is the inclusion of a lip on the inside of the side of the cockpit making the boat much easier to portage in a suitcase style carry.

Performance is what you are probably after though, over a very unscientific 400m course I recorded a faster and a slower time than in my Alpha but on average I was faster in the new boat. In the rough water of a club 12-mile session on the Hamble, the extra stability came in to its own allowing me to give the rest of the group a hard time through the choppy conditions.

The extra stability also allowed me to work harder for longer whilst holding better technique so this has to be a major plus having the confidence to glide beyond the stroke in a short effort on a fast outgoing tide. Putting me closer to contention with the fast boys than I have been for years.

Fittings on the test boat included a Gees platform seat – the benchmark for seats allowing the stability to be adjusted through seat height. The rest of the standard UK fittings are where the boat really scores over the some of the competition.

This boat has been paddled by a wide group of people whilst at the club and a lot of people have said that it is going to be a winner.

Will I order one to improve my paddling – oh yes!

James Hives, Southampton Canoe Club

Photo competition



Above: Neil Willis, Newbiggin Bay, Northumberland.

Below: Rob Davies, Budleigh, Salterton.



Above: Andrew Morley, River Wye, near Symonds Yat.

March and April's Winners

MARCH ADULT WINNER

Neil Willis

MARCH UNDER 18 WINNER

No entries

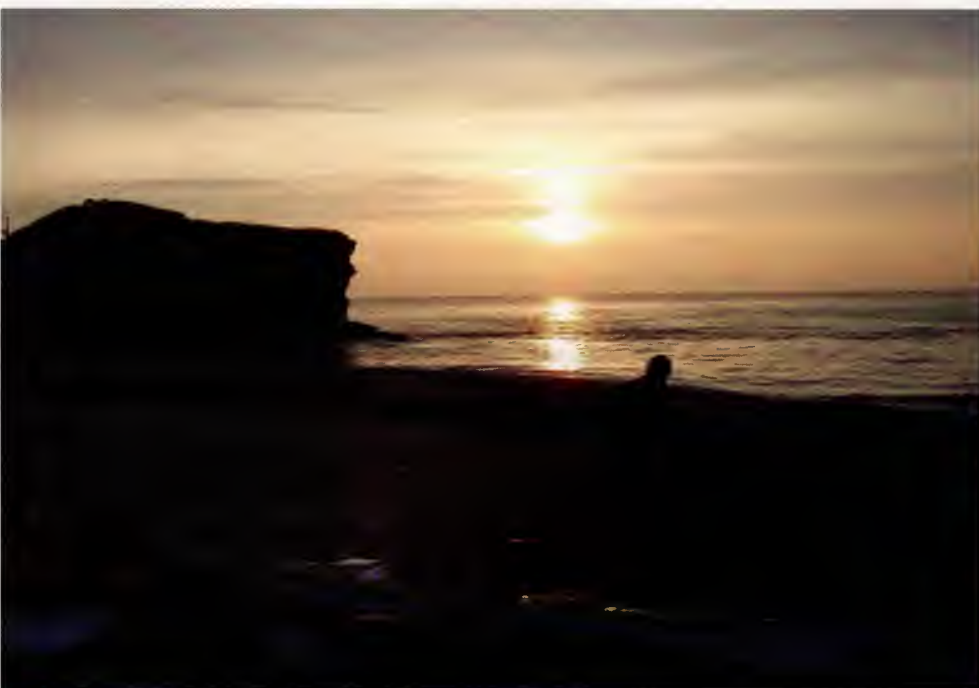
APRIL ADULT WINNER

Jonathan Maddock

APRIL UNDER 18 WINNER

Matthew Ryder

Below: Mo Stewart, new boats at Peak Paddlers, Buxton.





Above: Jonathan Maddock, Whitesands Bay, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

Below: Matthew Ryder, River Wye.



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 online 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.

Terms and conditions

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

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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 ineligible entries or entries made fraudulently.

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

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

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

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

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- Working closely with and managing all other team coaches.
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- Ensuring individual athletes are given the necessary advice to develop a personalised training plan culminating in International Competition.
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- Be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about Freestyle with previous freestyle coaching experience.
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Matthew Bowley

Wild water racer



Matthew Bowley is only 14 years old but an excellent Division A junior in wild water racing (WWR). He is also sprint boys B; marathon Division 3 and therefore takes part competitively in several of the canoeing disciplines.

Matthew has a fine list of achievements already:

2008 under 14 national WWR champion.

2008 under 14 500m and 1000m Silver medalist, Sprint National Championships.

2008 under 14 Bronze medalist, National Marathon Championships.

2009 under 16 third 800m sprint final, St Laurent, France.

2009 under 18 third in marathon, Gent, Belgium.

How did you become involved in canoeing?

I got into a canoe for the first time when I was three years old during a scout camp. I joined my local canoe club when I was nine years old.

What is it about the sport that you like?

I like being able to compete in something that I enjoy doing, travelling to varied locations and it's a great feeling to win.

When did you win your first race?

Under 10 Lightning race at my club aged nine.

Which of the disciplines do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy all three for different reasons; I enjoy the thrill of WWR, the endurance of marathons and the intensity of sprint racing.

How often do you go training and how do you fit it all in around schoolwork and other activities? Who coaches you and do you train in a group etc?

I swim for a club three times a week; workout in the gym; run three mornings before school and one evening and canoe two evenings in the week and Sunday morning. Most weekends, especially March to October, consist of regional marathons, assessment marathons, sprint regattas, wild water races, sprint profiling days and development and training weekends. I have to make sure I do not fall behind with school work as they have always been co-operative with authorised absence and encouragement. I am coached by Bill Lawrenson who has always encouraged me in three disciplines.

The club has a small racing team but no other juniors of the same ability to train alongside. Sometimes fitness training has to be done alone, but I prefer to train as part of a group with seniors and I am given advice and encouragement on a one to one basis from people such as Howard Blackman, Richard Golder and Tim Lawrenson. When I compete at races and participate in BCU training, then I enjoy

mixing with other junior paddlers of the same ability and have been lucky in 2008 to have Mark Clive as a K2 partner in the same region.

What has been your best race to date and why?

Hasler Finals 2008, where I had the support of a home crowd. I had not lost a race that year and I won Division 5 and being faster than all the racers in Division 4 was then promoted to Division 3.

What else do you do in your life?

I swim for my local club with monthly galas in two county leagues, have a season ticket for Derby County FC, enjoy going to the movies and playing on my Xbox. I also enjoy roller coasters.

Are you naturally competitive?

Yes, I enjoy trying my hardest even at things I'm not very good at, football for example!

What is the highlight of your career so far?

My first race abroad: WWR pre-worlds in Switzerland 2008. I won a Gold medal in the under 14 classic race and Silver medals in the sprint and team races.

What is in the pipeline for the next year or so as far as canoeing goes?

I have selection races for the WWR World Championships coming up; I am working at trying to get promotion to sprint boys A and perhaps another trip abroad with the marathon team.

Who are your greatest supporters?

My parents, as without their help both financially and transport wise, I would not be able to train and race at the level I am at now.

What is your ultimate goal in the sport?

Like most people my ultimate goal would be to win Gold at the Olympics and also win the world championships in both marathon and WWR.

Who are your heroes?

Tim Brabants, Ian Wynne and Jonny Schofield are all good people to look up to in canoeing. They have achieved great things in their different disciplines and so make great role models.

- In the April issue, Robyn Peracey's website was incorrectly published as www.surfachick.com. The correct website address is: www.sirfachick.com



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