

canoe focus

Features

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Sea kayaking west coast of Scotland



The Devizes to Westminster challenge
A mum's kayaking group



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Your contributions make Canoe Focus happen.

The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist

dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers.

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Above: Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Minister for the Olympics Hugh Robertson and LOCOG Chair Seb Coe launched Olympic ticket sales at Tower Bridge. To apply for London 2012 tickets visit www.tickets.london2012.com until 11:59pm on Tuesday 26 April. Photo: Getty Images.

Hello and welcome to the April Canoe Focus



It's been very pleasing to see signs of spring, albeit small, and I hope you're looking forward to doing lots more paddling in milder conditions.

I'm sure, like I, you enjoyed the celebrations last month as everyone marked 500 days until the London 2012 Olympics. Tickets for the Games are now on sale and you will need to submit your application by 26th April. Applications are due to be processed in May and you should

hear, sometime in June, if your application has been successful. More information about ticketing can be found at www.tickets.london2012.com. Good luck!

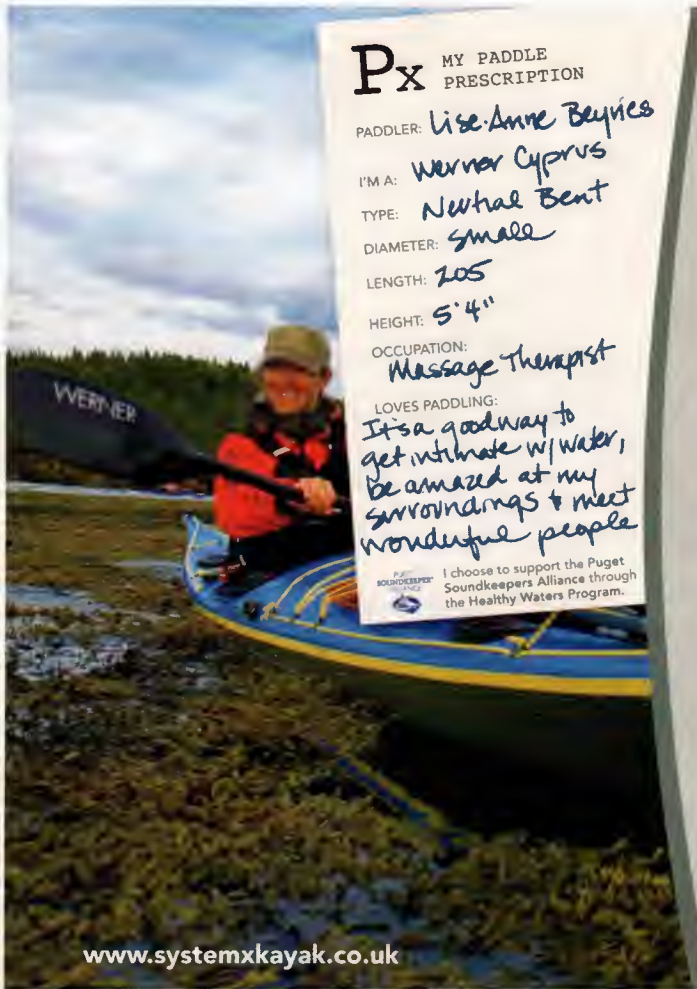
Before then though, there's lots to look forward to beginning with National Go Canoeing Week, which starts on 30th April. National Go Canoeing Week is a great way to introduce newcomers to canoeing so please do all you can to help out with any events being held in your area – it'd be great to repeat, or even better, the success of last year!

This year's international competition season is also fast approaching and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our teams the best of luck. Everyone has been working hard during the winter and I'm confident we'll produce another impressive set of results that everyone in canoeing can be proud of.

Preparations are also underway for the British Canoe Union's 75th anniversary, which will take place at the end of the year. This year's celebrations will also encompass Canoe England's Volunteer and Recognition Awards. More information will be available later in the year.

Until then, I'd like to wish you all a great summer, filled with lots of happy paddling.

Paul Owen, Chief Executive



Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: *Lise-Anne Beyries*

I'M A: *Werner Cyprus*

TYPE: *Neutral Bent*

DIAMETER: *Small*

LENGTH: *205*

HEIGHT: *5'4"*

OCCUPATION: *Massage Therapist*

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Competition



	Start	Finish	Event	Discipline
April	16 Apr	17 Apr	Grandtully - Premier	Canoe Slalom
	16 Apr	17 Apr	ICF World Ranking - Solkan, SLO	Canoe Slalom
	16 Apr	17 Apr	National Regatta - Nottingham - Selection Assessment	Canoe Sprint
	22 Apr	25 Apr	Devizes to Westminster	Canoe Marathon
	23 Apr	24 Apr	Div A - Classic and Sprint Tryweryn - GB Selection	Wildwater Canoeing
	30 Apr	01 May	ICF World Ranking - Pyrenees Cup 1 - La Seu de Urgell, ESP	Canoe Slalom
May	30 Apr	02 May	Lee Valley - GB Selection	Canoe Slalom
	06 May	08 May	World Cup 1 - Poznan, POL	Canoe Sprint
	07 May	08 May	National Regatta - Nottingham - Selection Assessment	Canoe Sprint
	07 May	08 May	ICF World Ranking - Pyrenees Cup 1 - Pau, FRA	Canoe Slalom
	10 May	15 May	European Championships - Kraljevo, SRB	Wildwater Canoeing
	13 May	15 May	ICF World Ranking - Tartras - Liptovsky Mikulas, SVK	Canoe Slalom
	14 May	15 May	ICF World Ranking - Tacen, SLO	Canoe Slalom
	21 May	22 May	World Cup 2 - Racice, CZE	Canoe Sprint
	27 May	29 May	World Cup 3 - Duisburg, GER	Canoe Sprint
	28 May	29 May	ICF World Ranking - Teesside, GBR	Canoe Slalom
June	28 May	29 May	Tees - Premier	Canoe Slalom
	28 May	29 May	European Cup 1 - St Omer, FRA	Canoe Polo
	04 Jun	05 Jun	National Regatta - Nottingham - Selection Assessment	Canoe Sprint
	09 Jun	12 Jun	European Championships - Le Seu d'Urgell, ESP	Canoe Slalom
	11 Jun	13 Jun	World Championships (Sprint) - Augsburg, GER	Wildwater Canoeing
	11 Jun	12 Jun	World Cup - Bovec, SLO	Wildwater Canoeing
Web	11 Jun	13 Jun	European Cup 2 - Essen, GER	Canoe Polo
	Canoe polo : www.canoepolo.org.uk		Marathon racing: www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk	
Canoe sailing: www.intcanoe.org.uk		Slalom: www.canoeslalom.co.uk		
Sprint: www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/sprint-racing		Surf: www.bcusurf.org.uk		
Freestyle: www.gbfreestylekayak.com		Wild water racing: www.wildwater.org.uk		

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The call of Africa

The picturesque River Stour in Suffolk is home to a blossoming canoe club with over 60 members, with numerous qualified coaches, slalom, sea and freestyle paddlers alike. It has an excellent junior set up with 30 youngsters often turning up to get a taste of paddlesports.

The man largely responsible for this is the same person who started the club, will lend his own boats out to perspective paddlers, who has held almost every position on the club committee and arranges the vast majority of trips. His name is Mike Dodd who has always endeavoured with undying enthusiasm and self-sacrifice to help others share his love of anything with a paddle. Whether it has been to ferry the club trailer around the countryside, load juniors in to his car or attend competitions club members are competing in, Mike has always gone the extra mile (or miles in many cases).

British team freestylers James Benns and Emily Wall are both fine examples of those who despite having no white water locally have competed at the top level thanks to Mike.

Even when Mike was suffering from serious illness he was always at the club and was back paddling far sooner than anyone expected.

On top of all his attributes as a person, Mike is also a fantastic paddler, with his ability to judge the river and use it to his advantage being unrivalled in the club. He competed at a high level in slalom and white water racing for the RAF and continues to impress with immense technique and skill at every club session.

When Mike goes to Africa to fulfil more paddling related dreams, his club will wish him the best of luck, despite the hole, impossible to fill, that he will leave behind.

Although Mike asks for no gratitude, only craving the smiles of his fellow paddlers, Sudbury Canoe Club would like to thank him for everything he has done for the club. He has provided the Stour with the canoe club it has always deserved and he will be greatly missed. The club be looking forward to his return, however far away that may be, when they are sure he will continue to inspire the next generation of paddlers.



Above: Mike Dodd offering British freestyler James Benns the benefit of his knowledge.

Bell Boats for China

By Andy Train, five times Olympian and three times World Champion.

Eighteen months ago the 'Paddle for Life' ideas that we developed in Worcestershire were circulated in China and picked up by the city of Weifang. They contacted us wanting to launch the ideas in Weifang for all of China and are now planning a major ceremony for the launch.

Two Bell Boats, the 'Spirit of China and Energy Climate Era' and the 'Spirit of Weifang and Energy Climate Era' are being sent over for the ceremony. In the spirit of diplomatic reciprocity, whoever names the boats in the UK, then the Chinese will ask the equivalent Chinese person to launch the boats and ideas in China. In February, Foreign Secretary William Hague named the two Bell Boats in a simple ceremony. He said that he would do all he could to help and we now hope that, with his help he will ask

David Cameron to do the same in his constituency. This would mean that the Chinese Prime Minister would be invited to launch the Bell Boats in China.

It was nearly 40 years ago when an enthusiastic young rector in Fladbury, Michael Goode, asked David Train to help youngsters to build one or two kayaks. David said that he had not the time but the rector replied, "What about your duty to society?" A 'deal' was done whereby the youngsters could access the river through the rectory orchard and David used his garage to build the kayaks. It led to the formation of Fladbury Paddle Club, with its proud Olympic record and eventually to the invention of the Bell Boat and the 'Paddle for Life' ideas.

The full 'Bell Boats for China' article can be read online, at the Canoe England Website.

In brief

Go Canoeing & Kayaking

GO Canoeing & Kayaking is a unique new publication being launched this spring as a joint initiative between the BCU and the publishers of the UK's best selling paddlesport title, Canoe and Kayak UK magazine.

GO Canoeing & Kayaking is a 100 page high quality, perfect bound bookazine that takes the reader through all they need to know about the wonderful world of canoeing and kayaking.

Aimed at newcomers to our sport it will cover all aspects from coaching to open canoeing, from sit-on-tops to sea kayaking and everything in between. Informative, inclusive and inspirational every page will be bursting with all you need to know about paddlesports.

GO Canoeing & Kayaking will go on sale from 18th April and is available through WH Smiths, specialist canoe shops, on-line at www.canoeandkayak.co.uk and through the BCU.

Craft clothing on BCU E-Shop

Grab yourself the latest Craft clothing, now available from the BCU's E-Shop, and keep cool during exercise. New products include tees, long-sleeved tops and hoodys at www.bcushop.org.uk.

Manchester to London by kayak

In 1957 Peter Woolsey kayaked from Manchester to Monkey Island, an island in the Thames at Dorney. At that time he was a novice member of the Manchester Canoe Club and the feat inspired Peter to kayak from Kendal to London a year later via five canals and the Ribble and Thames. Peter was the first to do such a trip, which also counted towards his Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Project.

In Spring of this year, Peter is to paddle Kendal to London Tower Bridge for the second time. He is planning to leave from Tewitfield near Kendal on 28th May and arrive at Tower Bridge on 12th June. This time Peter plans to use a medium sized sea kayak and will be staying in B&Bs instead of camping. The route will be via the Lancaster canal, the river Ribble, the Leeds & Liverpool canal, the Bridgewater, the Trent & Mersey and Coventry canals to the Oxford canal and then to and down the river Thames from Oxford arriving London 12th June – a route of nearly 400 miles.



Ollie Harding image

In the February edition Canoe Focus used images of Ivan Lawler without crediting Ollie Harding. Apologies to Ollie whose excellent paddling images can be viewed at www.paddlepics.co.uk.

In brief

London 2012 Olympic Games tickets on sale



On 15th March tickets for the London 2012 Olympic Games went on sale around the world. In the UK and within the EU, people can apply for tickets between 15th March and

26 April 2011 where 6.6 million tickets will be on sale. The tickets cover 645 sessions in 26 sports at 34 competition venues, with two-thirds priced £50 or less and 2.5 million tickets at £20 or less.

UK residents can apply via www.tickets.london2012.com at any time during the 42-day application period. It is not a first come, first served system and there is no advantage to applying earlier in the process.

From 15th March, ticket and accommodation packages will also go on sale in the UK through Thomas Cook branches and on their website www.thomascooklondon2012.com.

The 2011 ICF Masters Canoe Sprint Championships

The championships take place on the 26-28th August in Szeged, Hungary. Registration for the event is open until 26th June (you can register after this date up until 14th August, but there is a small admin charge).

Entries for the competition, which takes place after the Canoe Sprint World Championships, are coming in thick and fast. The Szeged course is an established venue for canoe sprint, hosting many World Cups and World Championships. More information can be found at: <http://szeged2011.com/icf-masters-championships/general-information>.

Entries can be coordinated by Andy Goodsell, BCU Competition Manager
E: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk

Safety first at Cardiff International White Water

The Cardiff International White Water Safety Symposium proved a great success with paddlers from a variety of disciplines and raft guides learning and developing skills in workshops. Workshops ranged from how to swim in moving water to technical rope tricks for boaters.

Palm Equipment who supplied not only the technical equipment workshop, great prizes but also flew in the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Dave Carroll, supported the event. The biggest thanks must go to all the participants who took part with commitment and enthusiasm in all workshops.

Photo competition winners

We are pleased to announce that the adult winner for January is Dave Barton, whilst the U18 winner is Lucie Finch. For February, the adult winner is Sam Jackson whilst Chyavan Rees won the U18 category. Turn to page 52 to see all the photos.

OK Classic fishing tournament

The first ever OK Classic Fishing Tournament held last year was a highly successful and enjoyable event raising £500 for the RNLI. This year, as Ocean Kayak celebrates its 40th birthday, it plans to be even bigger and better with the main prizes alone worth nearly £2,000. In addition to a winner's shield and winners' medals, there will also be other special prizes and fun awards on the day.

The tournament, sponsored by Johnson Outdoors UK and supported by AnglersAfloat, takes place at Swanage Bay, Dorset on 28th May. The competition is open to all amateur kayak fishermen who would like to take part. This is a catch and release competition with competitors trying to catch as many different species as possible during an allotted time period on the day of the tournament. It costs £10 to enter the



competition and all entry fees will be donated to the local Swanage RNLI Lifeboat Station.

For more information see: Johnson Outdoors UK www.johnsonoutdoors.co.uk or AnglersAfloat www.anglersafloat.co.uk

Mawddach Paddlesports Festival: May 21st- 22nd

The Mawddach Paddlesports Festival is a major new paddlesport festival for 2011 set in one of the most stunning estuaries in the UK amidst the mountains of southern Snowdonia.

The festival will host events for all levels of experience and ability, ranging from a guided ascent to a 20km challenge and six-man raft race. There are also lots of fun events planned within Barmouth Harbour, including paddle development classes.

There is a comprehensive festival website at www.paddlewales.com containing everything you need to know about the festival, with both postal and online entry forms so you can pre-book your choice of events – with updates on Twitter at 'Paddlewales'.

Organised by Mawddach Rotary Club in conjunction with 'Canoe Wales' this festival is being run as a charity event in favour of 'Hope House Children's Hospice' in North Wales and other Rotary good causes.

So come and enjoy this paddlesport weekend whilst helping those in need. See you on the day, from everyone at Mawddach Rotary Club and Canoe Wales.

Pyranha's big 40



This year Pyranha celebrate their 40th Birthday and are looking for readers' memories and stories from the last 40 years. With many first descents and expeditions,

World Champions and notable technical and safety firsts, Pyranha has become Europe's largest manufacturer of canoes and kayaks.

Pyranha are intent on recording the key moments and finding a way of hopefully celebrating it with as many of their paddling friends as they can and that's where they need your help. They are hoping to put on a display

of some of their key canoes and kayaks at Pyranha Fest in the autumn of 2011 in Llangollen, North Wales. They will also produce a limited edition book to record all the memories, which will be available at the end of the year.

There will also be a list of rare boats Pyranha would like to loan or buy for Pyranha Fest on the website. If you have any gems hidden in your garage they would love to hear from you and look forward to seeing you at the end of the year for their 40th Birthday party.

Please submit your memories at www.pyranhafest.com



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Racing gets underway at the Olympic white water stadium

In December 2010 the pumps were switched on at the Lee Valley White Water Centre marking the official handover of the site from the Olympic Deliver Authority to Lee Valley Regional Park, the venue being the first Olympic venue to be completed ahead of London 2012.



Since then significant work has continued at the site in order for it to be ready to open to the public on the 22nd April 2011.

GB Canoeing's slalom athletes and staff have been helping with the commissioning process in order to find the best configurations for the white water course.

Over the first May bank holiday weekend, the majority of the nation will be enjoying the extra time off, either glued to the telly watching the Royal wedding or holiday bound making the most of the four day weekend. However the canoe slalom family will be highly focused and working hard at the national team selection, the first competition to take place at the new Olympic site.

The weekend will consist of three days of competition, where we are guaranteed to see high quality, dynamic world class racing. The best canoe slalom athletes in Great Britain including Olympic medallists David Florence and Campbell Walsh will be fighting for their place in the 2011 GB team at the centre that will, in a little over a year, be hosting the biggest canoe slalom race of them all – the Olympic Games.

2011 is set to be an exciting year of racing for the GB Canoeing slalom team, with the Olympic test event being held at the centre in July and the World Championships and Olympic qualifier in September.



Nene kick-off for the freestyle season



This year's freestyle calendar opens on the 17th April at the Nene White Water Centre, Northampton. The event is open to everyone and has a novice/open category as well as being the first event of the British Championship league. A new format will ensure plenty of paddle time for all entrants. As well as the main events (jam style for the novice event), there will be a flat water freestyle competition and a bungee pull.

The flat water competition will see points awarded for moves from bow stalls and cartwheels to flat water phonix monkeys and more. In the bungee pull you can test your strength and stamina against a bungee anchored to the bank – a straightforward knockout competition where the paddler that can get the furthest advances to the next round. This promises to be a fun event for beginners and experts alike. Visit www.gbfreestylekayak.com for more details.



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From clockwise photos by: Liz Forshaw Steve Rogers and Pete Wood



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155	88 110 132 154 176 198 220 243 264 286 308 lbs

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Tees Barrage International White Water Centre

The UK's newest international white water centre is due to open soon and has a host of exciting new features for paddlers and rafters alike.

The Tees Barrage International White Water Centre's (TBIWWC) 300 metre long course has been re-configured with new eddies, a slalom gate system and is twice the depth of the previous course which is ideal for pulling those moves. All of the old features remain, but will be bigger and better than ever before. A great deal of thought has gone into the bottom section to reveal some interesting playspots. The brand new 95 metre short course (one of the steepest in the UK) has a drop of 3.7 metres from top to bottom which makes this a great addition to the venue. Fully capable of taking up to 14 cumecs (possibly more); this short course is not for the faint hearted! This is an ideal finale to a rafting experience, or for those paddlers who want more of a challenge in a controlled environment. Both courses are set up with the new Rapidblocs system, which are also used at the Olympic venue in Lee Valley. The blocks enable great flexibility in set up and discipline specifications.

A major investment in the project is the inclusion of four massive Archimedes screws which enable 24 hour operation when required. Prior to upgrade the course was run on the natural flow of the River Tees when tidal levels below the barrage allowed. This is still perfectly operable but with the addition of the screws, users can visit for the whole day and get a greater level of flexibility. The Lazy boy conveyor is another brand new feature, which is useful to keep users rotating around the course without the need to even exit your boat (provided you can stay in!).

The addition of the short course has enabled the centre to attract a partnership with Rescue 3, the leading Technical Rescue Training outfit in the world. TBIWWC is striving to become a centre of excellence in this field and Fire & Rescue services from around the country are already booking time slots on this course to run their water safety training which can include rescue from vehicles in water, and Swift Water Rescue Technician Units. The site is also about to trial powerboats in the channel which will be a first in the UK.

The iconic white water centre has undergone a major refit which has updated all internal facilities to cope with the demands of an internationally recognised venue. From refurbished changing rooms to a new shop and cafe (with free WI-FI), this building will be an exciting area for visitors.

A major investment is the new retail outlet, which will operate from the Centre and online. It will provide all of your equipment needs, stock all of the major watersports brands and latest products, and will be authorised demo centre.

Through the Centre membership scheme there are discounts for regular users including options such as: annual, monthly, pay and play and junior/student rates. Please check out the website for more details. As an additional benefit, all Centre members will receive discounts in the watersports retail shop.

Finally, if you want to be involved in this fantastic facility, TBIWWC are always looking for freelance raft guides and have set dates in the calendar for training. If you are interested please contact the Centre on 01642 678000.

Visit our new website www.tbiwwc.com for more information.



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Safeguarding and Protecting Children important contacts

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: 07740 820 113

(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.

Update on the vetting and barring and criminal records checks (England and Wales)

Last year the government announced a review of the vetting and barring and criminal records scheme aiming to bring it back to 'common sense levels'. In February as a result of this review the government unveiled plans to scale back both the vetting and barring and criminal records scheme.

A number of changes will result from this review but they are unlikely to take effect until next year. Any necessary changes in law will be included in the Freedoms Bill, which is expected to become law in early 2012. It is not clear at this stage how volunteers and coaches will be dealt with under the new system and consultation is still ongoing in certain areas. We will update you as soon as more information is made available.

One very welcome change is that CRBs will become portable between jobs. We are therefore investigating a process to help volunteers and coaches who have to undertake numerous CRB checks. For updates please check our website. In the meantime it is important to note that nothing has changed yet and all our policies and procedures remain in place.

Further support and guidance can be found on our website – and in particular the BCU Disclosure Policy (SPC P4) and Training and Disclosure Guidance (SPC G21) can be found at www.canoe-england.org.uk

Funding opportunities from Sport England

Sport England Small Grants

The Sport England Small Grants Programme has been set up to support local community sport projects, which seek to increase participation, sustain participation or develop opportunities for people to excel at their sport.

Who can apply? It is open to any bona fide not-for-profit club or association, statutory body or educational establishment. Individuals or organisations established to make a profit and distribute that profit to members, are ineligible to apply.

Guidelines to see whether your project is eligible

- Awards are for amounts from £300 to £10,000.
- The project cost should not exceed £50,000.
- Projects must be deliverable within 12 months and provide a monitoring report within 13 months of the date of the offer letter.
- Projects must seek to increase participation in sport, sustain participation in sport or provide opportunities to excel at a chosen sport.
- Priority will be given to projects that are able to demonstrate the biggest impact on Sport England's strategy.
- Sporting outcomes must be the main focus of the project. Applications for projects using sport as a means to an end are acceptable, but there must be a clear sporting benefit.
- Projects must be focused only on sports currently recognised by Sport England and delivered to beneficiaries based in England.

Sportsmatch

Sportsmatch is open to new applications

Sportsmatch 2011-12 opened to new applications on 17th January for projects starting after 1st April. The first awards will be made in early April and regular panel meetings will be held until November. The last date for submitting applications is 19th September 2011 – but applicants are advised to apply in plenty of time for when they want their project to start, and competition for funding usually increases towards the end of the year.

Sportsmatch makes awards to not-for-profit organisations that have secured sponsorship to deliver new community projects to grow or sustain participation in sport.

Sportsmatch uses money from the government to encourage new sponsorship of grassroots community sport. Priority is given to applications seeking to match sponsorship from the commercial sector but donations from private individuals or charitable trusts are also acceptable provided they meet the sponsorship eligibility criteria. Awards of between £1,000 and £100,000 can be made to match funding from no more than five sponsors, with each sponsor contributing a minimum of £1,000. Sport England funding for the project must be spent by 31 March 2012.

If you require further information or help please feel free to contact the Sport England funding helpline on 08458 508508. Email funding@sportengland.org www.sportengland.org/funding

National Go Canoeing week. Be part of it April 30th to May 8th 2011

National Go Canoeing week provides an intense and focused period of participation across England. Clubs and centres are encouraged to use this week to launch their own Go Canoeing events. We aim to encourage and support at least 75 events in celebration of 75 years of BCU. Please contact your Regional PDO to find out more and get involved.



TEAM NORTH

SDO North and PDO North West

Gareth Field

Email: gareth.field@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07738 185885

PDO North East and Cumbria

Ray Hudspith

Email: ray.hudspith@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07715 993535

PDO Yorkshire

Phil Scowcroft

Email: phil.scowcroft@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 0789 4396484

TEAM CENTRAL

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Tel: 0771 8982091

PDO East Midlands and West Midlands

Jenny Spencer

Email: jenny.spencer@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07889 168841

PDO East Jeff Toser

Email: jeff.toser@canoe-england.org.uk

Office: 0845 1576819

TEAM SOUTH

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Email: james.hives@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07834 583 369

PDO London Clive Whitton

Email: clive.whitton@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07794 051274

PDO South West Andy Davey

Email: andy.davey@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 0791 2466264

PDO South East Chris Edge

Email: chris.edge@canoe-england.org.uk

Tel: 07889 168843



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In brief

Northumberland schools indoor kayaking

Canoe England joined forces with British Rowing at the Northumberland Schools Indoor Rowing event held at Alnwick in Northumberland. Two hundred competitors, ranging from years seven to 13 from Northumberland's Middle and High schools took part in the 100-metre regatta course on the Kayak Pro machines. Canoe England would like to thank the competition managers from Northumberland and Durham for their support in organising these championships.



Regional development teams

Throughout every region there are a team of volunteers there to support and develop paddlesports. These Regional Development Teams are there to help support the paddling community in the region, they are made up of volunteers that chair the group along with secretary and treasurer, regional and local coaching organisers, access officers plus interested paddlers from the community. If interested in what they do and how they could help your club or group get in touch and head along to a meeting.

www.cumbriacanoists.org.uk

Chair: Matt Ellis

www.canoenortheast.org.uk

Chair: Len Smith

www.northwest-paddlesport.org.uk

Chair: Helen Sharples

www.yorcie.org.uk

Chair: Vacant

Olympic fever hits Reaseheath College

Reaseheath's Adventure Sports Diploma had an opportunity to participate in their own mini Olympic event as part of their canoe development day. The students took the opportunity to train and grow their paddling skills on the KayakPro Ergo before competing in heats over 200-metres. The fastest person from each team then raced against each other to see who was the fastest student, these four ended up being separated by 0.2 seconds. Throughout the day the students had opportunities to participate in a number of sessions aimed at developing their coaching skills. A huge thanks needs to be given to Richard Hathaway, lecturer at Reaseheath College for his involvement in organising the day.

Bobby Timperley Memorial Tyne race

Bobby Timperley and her husband Peter both were inspirational coaches who introduced the Wavehopper events to Hexham Canoe Club. Sadly both have since passed away, and as a tribute, North East competitors raced for a coveted trophy in memory of the couple.

Liam Robinson-Meikle competing in the Under 12 boy's category showed true grit and determination, which Bobby would have been

proud of. After an early capsizing during the morning training session in his first encounter with a Wavehopper, he went on to race down the Grade 2 water, negotiating the course well.

Cotswold Outdoors, who have recently expanded into Newcastle were present to award prizes to competitors, launching new partnerships within the North East region clubs.



Above: Preparing for the race.

Guinness world record Eskimo roll attempt

On 9th July 2011 Appleton Academy in association with a number of other organisations are hoping to break the current world record for the most number of kayakers performing Eskimo rolls.

In order to achieve this they will need at least 100 people performing Eskimo rolls at the same time. The attempt will take place at Doe Park Water and Activities Centre, Denholme, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD13 4LN

On the day there will be a range of other activities and attractions available including:

- Kayaking clinics and demonstrations by elite and GB kayakers
- Cheerleading performances
- Mobile climbing wall
- ERGO kayak machine sprint challenge
- Refreshments (food and drink on sale)
- Leading manufacturer and suppliers stalls and demo boats
- Raffle
- Hog roast

Further information including details on how to register for the event can be found at: www.appletonacademy.co.uk

Dart Loop 24-hour charity paddle

Richard Brooks, from Dereham Canoe Group in Norfolk, was looking for a way to repay the Big C cancer charity of Norfolk and Waveney for all the help they give his mother Sue, in her continuing fight against breast, spine and liver cancer. So, he decided to undertake a challenge similar to his father Tony's circumnavigation of the Broads/North Sea loop. Richard set his sights on trying to see how many times he could complete the loop of the upper Dart in a 24-hour period.

February 18th/19th was chosen for the prospect of a moonlit night, which as the best-laid plans are, was foiled by the weather. Supported by his loyal band of Norfolk 'hillbillies', his words, not ours, Richard managed to complete 11 laps of the upper Dart before the lack of visibility from driving rain and fog rendered their head torches useless. They then switched to the lower Dart loop for safety, and managed a further nine laps to complete the 24 hour period.

Richard would like to thank Mike Maslin from the Environment Agency for all of his help, making this challenge possible, and for the excellent bacon butties that fuelled him throughout the challenge.

The target was to raise £3,000 for the charity, and to date, at the time of writing, his friends and colleagues have donated £2,890.50 towards this. Please visit www.justgiving.com/richard-brooks1/ for an update on this total, and if you feel inclined, add to the list of sponsors.



Above: Richard Brooks.

Women and Girls canoe taster sessions

In response to the changes that have been made in flat water sprinting that allow women to now compete in the High kneeling Canoe class, Royal Leamington Spa put on a series of taster sessions at the beginning of this year for women and girls to try out and develop their skills in this discipline. Tibor Herbent, an experienced canoe coach led the sessions with the support of the club. A range of kit was made available allowing everyone to try out different boats, including one of the new Luddock boats that have recently been brought over into the UK by Canoe England.

On the first day five women and girls made the most of this opportunity. In the morning the group went out in a variety of C1s and C2s, with slightly more experienced paddlers doubling up and supporting less confident paddlers in C2s.

By the afternoon all paddlers had gained confidence and they had the chance to take to the water in a C4. With the help of an experienced club paddler in the back to support the girls they all thoroughly enjoyed it and many

felt it was one of the highlights of the day. Everyone came away having learnt some new skills and keen to do more.



Above: Getting a taste for the C4.

In brief

Helping out the RSPB

Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club was called in to assist the local Stort Valley branch of the RSPB in installing its latest nesting box. The box, for Grey Wagtails, needed to be fixed to the side of the canal in the centre of Bishops Stortford and it was felt that the best way to do it would be from a boat. Grey Wagtails feed on insects, which gather above the water, so the hope is that with a suitable nesting site to hand they will become resident in the town centre. The RSPB made the necessary arrangements with British Waterways and supervised the installation.

East Midlands regional news

The East Midlands Regional website has had a major update and is now the gateway to regional information. It provides access to local activity and coaching courses and currently hosts an appeal for assistance in updating local river guides. If you need help, can help us, or want to comment, visit www.empaddlers.org.

The third East Midlands Regional Coaching Day will be held at the Nene White Water Centre on Sunday 12th June and welcomes paddlers of all abilities for sessions on the river and white water course. Full details of the day and how to register can be found on our website – www.empaddlers.org.

The Northamptonshire Coach Update Forum will now be held at the Nene WWC on 2nd October – a change to the date listed in 'Code'.

Promoting the sport to the older generation

The West Midlands Regional Development Team is to run a series of sessions that introduce and promote canoeing to people that are aged 50+. The sessions begin on 6th May during National Go Canoeing week. For information visit: www.canoe-englandwestmidlands.org.uk/

Outdoor Leisure show success

The Outdoor Leisure show was a great success for Canoe England and helped raise the profile of the sport. Hundreds of visitors, of all ages, had a go on the KayakPro paddling machines. Numerous canoes and kayaks were on display at adjacent stands, providing much information.

As part of the weekend, a 'Forces Kayak Challenge' was set up on stage where three teams of two from the services including Monty Hall (TV presenter, expedition leader and ex-marine) and friend (ex-marine) went head to head in a 1000m race with each individual completing 500m. The crowd responded by donating to 'Help the Heroes'.

Many thanks to the volunteers of the West Midlands Regional development team who helped support Canoe England throughout the three days of the show.

In brief

Royal opening



Above: Prince Edward opens the centre.

On 29th September 2010 the Earl of Wessex Prince Edward officially opened the new Dolphin Centre. West Berkshire Council invested more than £1m in the project, whilst the Adventure Dolphin charitable trust contributed more than £350,000. The centre houses the West Berkshire Youth Activity Team and Adventure Dolphin programmes alongside the canoe club.

The celebrations continued after the Earl left with the presentation of the Canoe England Top Centre and Top Club Gold.

During 2010 many young people completed a Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition in Canada. The focus of these trips was not only the paddling but also about the personal and social development opportunities that paddling contributes to the development of young people.

Adventure Dolphin believes in the long-term development of paddlers, this can only be sustained by the commitment of volunteers. Many of these young people will go through the BCU award scheme; many will join the Cadet Leader programme and begin to gain the basic skills and experiences of a coach.



Above: Canoe England Top Centre and Top Club Gold presentation.

Club Mark and Top Club

Congratulations go to ISIS Canoe Club and Riverside Canoe Club, both of Oxford, for achieving Club Mark and Top Club respectively.

£50k fund for London centre

Congratulations to Westminster Boat Base who were recently awarded £52,633 from the Mayors Legacy Fund. This money will pay for instructors to deliver 2,400 hours of additional lessons, as well as a programme coordinator and new classroom equipment. The extra capacity would be focused on providing access to disadvantaged/disabled young people.

Accessible kayaking

Basingstoke and Deane Canoe Club (BADCC) worked with Treloar College in Alton to make kayaking available to the college students who have a range of disabilities. The project ran from November 2010 to March 2011 and was supported by an 'Inspiring You' grant from Hampshire County Council.

Treloar College – who provide education and independence training for young people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties – is just six miles from the canoe club's proposed clubhouse on the Basingstoke Canal.

The project had three underpinning elements:

- Disability awareness training for kayak coaches and volunteers from BADCC.
- Paddlesport awareness training for Treloar College staff and carers who assisted with the kayaking sessions.

- Equipment that is appropriate for use by paddlers who have a disability.

The pilot programme consisted of a series of kayaking sessions in the Treloar College swimming pool. These provided the students with an opportunity to try a range of different kayaks from single sit-on-top kayaks to double open cockpit boats and to develop fundamental paddling skills.

Colin King, a coach with BADCC said, "I have found the attitude and enthusiasm of the students really inspiring. The other coaches and I have learned a lot from the students and from the staff at Treloar College".

For more information on the BADCC please visit www.badpaddlers.org. For more information about, Treloars please visit www.treloar.org.uk.

Below: Vicky Millett and Joel Stanley.



South West RDT

Canoe England's Coach Update and RDT (Regional Development Team) annual meeting took place at Exeter Canoe Club on Sunday 27th February 2011. Due to the size of the venue, numbers were limited to 65 and proved so popular that it was fully booked two weeks prior! A big thank you to the coaches who ran the workshops. The annual RDT meeting was held at lunchtime.

RDT? What's that? What do they do?

The RDT are a small group of volunteers who meet four times a year to help shape and develop canoeing in the South West. They work closely with the volunteer Regional Coaching Officers (RCOs) and the Local Coaching Officers (LCOs).

How is this relevant to me?

The RDT can draw down money from Canoe England for development projects in the South West. They also raise money, primarily from

coach updates, where this money is then reinvested in the region. The present focus is on club development by financially supporting coach and paddler development within clubs.

The Chair of the RDT has a seat at English Forum and this is how we the membership can influence national policy on canoeing but this can only happen if the RDT/RCO team know your concerns. Contact details for the RDT, RCO and LCOs in the South West can be found at www.canoe-southwest.org.uk

The RDT are always on the look out for new members, so if you think you have something to contribute then please get in touch.

Exe Descent

Do you remember the Exe Descent! Would you like to see an event running on the Exe again? The RDT would like to put together a small group to look at the feasibility of running an event if you are interested then please get in touch with Andy Davey andy.davey@canoe-england.org.uk.

PADDLEFEST!

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Accessible club database

Last year we invited clubs to complete a disability questionnaire, to give us a better idea of how we could support clubs with the development of Paddle-Ability.

Thank you to all those clubs who sent back the completed forms, it has been really useful to see what activities you are providing at the moment and how you feel we could best support you in the future.

In conjunction with the results that were collated from this questionnaire we are hoping to create an online database of clubs that currently have the facilities and expertise to welcome disabled people to their club. If you would like your club to feature on this database please contact Clarisse Smith.

Open Paracanoe training

Recently we advertised the opportunity for disabled paddlers to take part in an open training day with the current Paracanoe training squad run by coach Trevor Wetherall. The day proved to be popular with paddlers and coaches wanting to find out more about the programme.

Although wet and windy, that did not stop Trevor and the 16 paddlers who attended the day. People who joined the group came from a range of backgrounds and sports from former Paralympians to injured service personnel.

The day took the usual format of a Paracanoe training day including a variety of activities both off and on the water. With this year's first sprint regatta fast approaching, the team are starting to really think about target times and developing their skills in preparation for this summer's World Championships.

Paddle-Ability mentors wanted

Do you have experience of working with disabled people in a paddlesport or alternate environment?

As the profile of Paddle-Ability and Paracanoe is growing, an ever increasing number of clubs and individuals are interested in becoming involved with providing accessible activities. People already working with disability groups will know there are a variety of solutions that can make an activity suitable for everyone.

We are looking for individuals who are already working with or have experience of working with disabled people in paddlesport who would like to become members of our regional paddleability mentor network. The aim of the network would be to provide advice and suggestions to other clubs and individuals about how they can adapt equipment, facilities and activities to make their club more accessible.

For more information visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/paddleability or contact Clarisse Smith, Disability Officer on 07702 954949 or at: clarisse.smith@canoe-england.org.uk

Searching for the Paralympians of the future

Following the announcement that Paracanoe is to be included in the 2016 Paralympic games, the hunt for Paralympians of the future has really begun. Together with raising awareness about our sport and holding open Paracanoe sessions, Canoe England has developed a link with the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) in Headley Court near Epsom to develop opportunities for injured service men and women to take part in paddlesport.

To kick-start this partnership Canoe England staff visited DMRC to introduce the staff and patients to the concept of Paracanoe and Paddle-Ability and showed them some of the equipment used for training and sprint racing.

The afternoon started with a workshop for their staff, giving them an opportunity to try out kayak and canoe ergos as well as letting them know about the Paracanoe programme. It gave the Canoe England staff the opportunity to find out about the work that was done at Headley Court and the type of injuries that service men and women at the centre have sustained.

Patients were also invited to come and have a go on the ergos while getting expert coaching from Trevor Wetherall, Sue Hornby and Chris Edge. Overall approximately 30 servicemen and women took part during the afternoon with a varying range of disabilities from neurological to amputees.



The session culminated with Sue Hornby, Director of Development, presenting the staff and patients at DMRC with a leaderboard that they can use to compete against each other. This was put immediately into use with Daniel Whittingham leading the 100m-time trial.

With the new recruits keen to take part, Paracanoe coach Trevor Wetherall looks forward to working with DMRC on a regular basis both off and on the water.



Above: Sue Hornby, Trevor Wetherall and Clarisse Smith with the patients.

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Outdoor Activities and Events

Hydro power alert

By Chris Hawkesworth

An electrifying experience for some becomes a play spot wrecking experience for others.

Approximately 200 Hydropower installations are planned, nationwide, this year and according to the Environment Agency (EA) there are 25,935 potential sites with over 4,000 win-win sites coming into consideration by 2015.

Most canoeists are environmentalists and it follows that many of us are in favour of 'green energy' but coming soon to a weir near you will be an application for a hydro power installation, which if granted will result in a turbine being installed.

To generate electricity it is necessary to have a flow of water dropping down from a height (head) on to a propeller or screw connected to a generator (turbine). The best way to achieve this is to build a weir or find an existing weir and divert the impounded water away from the river through the turbine and discharge the water back into the river, sometimes many yards even hundreds of yards downstream.

This siphoning off of the water reduces the amount going over the weir and some of our best

play spots will be adversely affected and in some cases lost all together.

Before a hydro installation can be installed it is necessary for the applicant to seek and receive 'Local Authority Planning' and 'Environment Agency' consents.

Though the EA have several leaflets and forms of good practice guidelines, the latest one only published in January 2011 (WR 325) there is almost no notice or consideration given to the possible effects of water abstraction upon navigations and even less to the possible effects upon recreation; it is not even mentioned on the check list.

We have already fought off hydro plans in the lock at Holme Pierrepont that would have adversely affected the white water course and another at Hurley on the Thames, which would have affected that play spot. We are objecting to several more that are at application stage; the Avon near Salisbury, Boat Slide weir in central Bedford, and another at East Lyn to name but a few.

In many cases we do not hear about an application until the very last minute and then

only because an eagle eyed paddler saw something about a planning application for a hydro in their local press.

I am not saying that we will be against all hydro, or even against most of them, but it is a fact that the bigger the weir, and the bigger the river, the more likely hydro will be efficient and at times, the installation will take all the spare water available in the river.

Hydro at the wrong location will curtail our sport.

Please be vigilant. Please let us know. Google 'environment agency hydropower' – for more details.



Above: Howsham Weir showing the canoe slot installed in the late 1980s with Sport England money to facilitate slalom. The hydro screw in the distance at the opposite end of the weir. The flow through either affects the other and the weir is a shadow of its former self.



Above: Howsham Weir on the Yorkshire Derwent near York in medium water conditions. Though difficult to see the turbine below the mesh, it is taking more than 50% of the river flow.




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In brief

Volunteer website – keep updated!

Keep up to date all the news and available resources by logging on to www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers.

Volunteer coordinator pack

Clubs, centres and committees are reminded that a resource for volunteer coordinators is available. The resource is designed to provide support in your role and includes 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.

RCOs receive their Gold awards

The Paddlesport Rewards Scheme is proving more and more popular with an increase in volunteers gaining their gold awards! Like a lot of volunteers in our sport, the 50-hour golden target is more than achievable and Canoe England has made some recent presentations in recognition of this.

In October, slalom volunteers were presented with their awards as recognition for the outstanding number of hours and contribution they dedicate to the sport. More recently, a presentation was made to the Regional Coaching Organisers (RCO) who all received the Gold award in March. At their meeting in Nottingham, the RCOs were presented with their Gold award t-shirt and certificates.

If you would like to register for the scheme, or would like more information on what it involves, then take a look at the volunteers section of the website.



Above: Steve Scorer with his gold award t-shirt.

For more information visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers or contact Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer julia.robertson@canoe-england.org.uk

Canoe England Long Service Award



Have you, or someone you know, volunteered regularly in Paddlesport for 25 years or more? The Long Service Award recognises the long-standing contribution of volunteers in England regardless of their role – from coaches and committee members to those behind the scenes making the tea or repairing equipment.

Launched at the Volunteer and Recognition Awards in December, five volunteers were presented with their Gold Long Service lapel pin badge and will soon be joining our roll of honour which can be found on the Canoe England website.

If you have completed 25 years or more of volunteering in the sport in England then you, or someone you know, can complete the nomination form to be considered for the award. For more information, take a look at the volunteers section of the website.

Roll of honour

Mark Windham
Tony Leach
Malcolm Cleal
Brian Aplin
Keith Tillen



Above: Malcolm Cleal receiving his award.

Regional awards launch

Following the success of previous years' awards, Canoe England is launching the **Regional Volunteer and Recognition Awards!** Each region's winners will be nominated for the national awards and will also stand the chance to be recognised at the Canoe England awards dinner being held later this year.

Do you know a volunteer who deserves recognition for the time and contribution they make to the sport? Has your coach or teacher made a huge impact by introducing you to

canoeing or helping you to improve? This year, nominations are welcome in a number of categories and awards will focus on those who not only volunteer in the sport but who make an impact through their work as a coach or teacher.

Nominations are now open until 20th June and forms are available on the volunteers section of the Canoe England website. This is your opportunity to thank and recognise the volunteers in your region!

Regional
Awards
2011

NEW

REGIONAL Volunteer & Recognition Awards

Canoe England are launching the first ever Regional Awards to celebrate the contribution of volunteers in each region. All regional winners will be nominated for the Canoe England VIP Awards which will be celebrated at an awards dinner later this year.

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

To make a nomination visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers



Young Volunteer

Event Volunteer

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Access & Environment Volunteer

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Education Award



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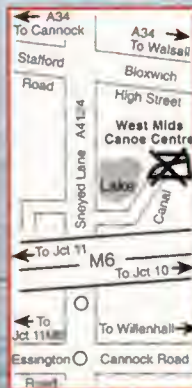
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An interview with Paul Wycherley Sprint Canoeist



Interview by:
Helen Reeves

On his return from winter training camps in Australia and Switzerland, I caught up with GB

Canoeing's 1000m squad members and former Junior World Champion Paul Wycherley, to talk about how he entered the sport of canoeing and what the 2011 season has in store for him.

How did you get into canoeing?

I tried canoeing on a school trip in Wales and fell in love with the sport. When I came home I begged my mum to take me to a canoe club and she obliged.

Did you play any other sports or try any other canoeing discipline?

When I was younger I tried all the usual school sports and, if I am honest, never really showed any flair at any of them. When I first joined Wey Kayak Club I hoped I would be doing white water kayaking but very quickly I fell in love with the liberating feeling of clocking up miles on the flat water and forgot all about ever wanting to do white water.



What is your most memorable canoeing moment?

I think it still has to be when I won the Junior Marathon World Championships in 2004.

What are your aims for the 2011 racing season?

2011 is all about qualifying for the Olympics. At the moment I don't know in what capacity I will be trying to qualify in terms of K1, K2 or K4. It's very easy in terms of K1, if you win the selection races you will race K1. However crew boats require an expert eye in their formation to select the right combination of people for the boat. I hope that I will be a part of a strong crew boat this year, so I am working hard on improving myself and leaving the crew boat formulation to the coaches and management.

Following the 2011 racing season, I hear you have another challenge – tell us about it?

Yes, I am aiming to raise £100,000 split evenly between Great Ormond Street Hospital and The Princes Charities by attempting the world record for crossing the English Channel. Huntswood are supporting me on this by covering all the costs of the event, thus every penny donated goes directly to the charities. To support Paul with the challenge visit his website www.crosschannelchallenge.com

What has been your biggest challenge to date?

I think Olympic qualification in 2008 was the toughest challenge, I just missed out on it and that was quite hard to get back up from. I also find the admin and political side of things quite hard to stay on top of. For instance every three months I have to submit a pretty arduous form telling the dope testers where I am going to be for one hour every day three months in advance. If I get it wrong I run the risk of being banned from sport.

What attributes does a sprint kayaker need?

Nowadays there seems to be kayakers of all shapes and sizes. So I would say a desire to improve and a refusal to give up!





Paul Wycherley

Men's 1000m Sprint Canoeist



**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

Chelsea Kayak Club – over 50% female members

Newly formed Chelsea Kayak Club can boast higher than average female club members. Apart from the recent adverts in Canoe Focus, they have done very little advertising or marketing for the club. The first year success has mainly been down to word of mouth and Google hits.

Females currently make up over 50% of their membership with ages ranging from 27 to 65. The club focuses on sea kayaking and touring which has been really popular with attracting females who don't particularly want to do white water paddling or polo (which is what most of the other non-elite clubs in the area do). They are driven more by the desire to get out and explore!

Female Level 1 courses 2011

A series of female only Level 1 courses will be run between March and October 2011. To find out more visit www.canoe-england.org.uk or contact rachel.derry@canoe-england.org.uk

The mum's



Above: Left to right: Kathy Ruff, Miranda Churchill, Pearl Vorley, Jackie Williams, Clare Somers.

It all started after last year's Paul Gilbert race.

Five of us, all mums of junior girls, entered the fun race in an open Canadian canoe, dressed as cheerleaders – the Royalettes. We had also entered the race the previous year and one of us suggested (it wasn't me!) that, rather than make our sortie onto the river just an annual event, why don't we learn to paddle a K1 and go out every week? Someone even suggested racing!

So, carried away with the idea that we could be racing at Nottingham next year, I asked my husband, Alan, if he wouldn't mind taking us out for a few sessions. So, we had our first lesson on a dry, mild Saturday afternoon in September 2009. After we learnt how to get into the boat without falling straight out again and holding our paddles correctly, we set off round the backwater, where I promptly fell in! After emptying my boat and getting back in, we all managed a few more times up and down the backwater without any dramas.

Our next sessions with Alan saw us venture further afield to Teapot and then to Kingston Bridge and the Hogsmill, staying very close to the Surrey bank. Paddling out onto the main river was like paddling down the middle of the Amazon to us; it seemed so vast. Alan then took us over Teddington Lock and onto the tideway, which had always seemed to us like a boundary that we crossed at our peril. However, it proved to be a pleasant surprise, with still waters and no back washes, and we made it safely to Eel Pie Island and back. All the time Alan was teaching us how

kayaking group



Above: Miranda Churchill and Pearl Vorley.



Above: Left to right: Kathy Ruff, Miranda Churchill, Pearl Vorley, Jackie Williams and Clare Somers with tea and cakes.

to paddle properly and how to improve our technique. At this point Alan felt his work was done and it was up to us to go it alone. It's thanks to him that we ever got started and how he had the patience to stay with us while we were paddling at ludicrously slow speeds, I don't know.

Valuable experience

We continued to go out every Saturday in rain, gales and all weathers, sometimes just around Trowlock Island if it was particularly nasty but mostly up to Kingston Bridge and back. It may not have been that pleasant much of the time but we were always glad we did it and it gave us valuable experience. When the river was on red alert and we couldn't go out we went to the gym and went on paddling machines. Come the spring we were able to also start going out on Wednesday evenings and we started paddling longer distances, making it to Ravens Ait and beyond and regularly paddling down to Richmond. All these places that had seemed so far away when

we started were now reached with ease. The river had also shrunk, no longer the wide expanse of water it once was. The summer weather was glorious, which was lovely for paddling but also for river traffic and we were hit with washes from rowing launches, motor boats and pleasure boats but we survived them all, even the Merry Thames. They didn't seem to be so much of a problem anymore.

River Wey

One Sunday afternoon we decided to treat ourselves and we went to Guildford to paddle on the River Wey. It was a beautiful hot sunny day and it was a joy to be on a small, calm river with no other river traffic apart from the odd narrow boat. We paddled for about two hours and vowed we would come back and do other parts of the river.

Now winter is upon us once again and we are still going out together. Other mums have joined us and there are two distinct groups, the fast (by our

standards) and the not so fast. Miranda and Pearl raced at the Elmbridge Marathon in October, in awful weather conditions, finishing a very creditable fifth and 12th respectively in Division 9. Some of us, however, know we'll never race because we'll never be that fast but it's just a pleasure to be out on the river with a group of friends, enjoying the wildlife and the scenery and (in some cases!) having a good natter. When we finish it's always back to the club for a cup of tea and cake.

So, if you've learnt how to canoe and wondering what to do next, come and join us. It's great fun and a good way to keep fit and you don't have to be fast to keep up.

And maybe, just maybe, we might race at Nottingham next year!

By Jackie Williams on behalf of Anne Baker, Pearl Vorley, Miranda Churchill, Kathy Ruff and Clare Somers. ♡

Bring on the c

For most of us Easter is a time of rest and relaxation but for several hundred people, (along with their support crews) they will be out in all weathers on the Kennet and Avon Canal and the Thames taking part in the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race (www.dwrace.org.uk). The race always generates a lot of excitement and this year is no exception. In the series of build up races several well-known and not so well known crews have been seen racing.

Feature by: John Handyside and Tamsin Phipps. **Waterside A (Great Bedwyn to Newbury) was a hotly contested event. Ivan Lawler and Ben Brown were out racing not only practicing for the DW but also to break the course record. Rain leading up to the race made the banks very muddy for the competitors and supporters. The lack of traction during Waterside A affected everyone in different ways.**

Ben and Ivan flew down the course so quickly that the camera crew had difficulty in keeping up with them let alone getting any filming of the action! As one of the faster crews they may have overtaken close to 100 K2s, each one, especially the inexperienced ones presented a challenge. They had to change portage points, slow down or speed up to pass people in appropriate places. They are a very experienced crew so it was easier for them to adapt than expect the people around them to. However, each move or change affects the race time. Despite the odd hitch on the way Ivan and Ben broke the Waterside A record. They took it from fellow club members Steve Harris and Conor Holmes who had held it since 1998.

Setting the record for Waterside A was a real boost to them and, speaking afterwards, Ivan admitted that the scale of the whole



Above: Kat Burbeck and Shuna Braithwaite. **Photo:** Ellie Deegan (Aged 9).

challenge was beginning to hit home. He said, "It was strange to me to find I actually cared about whether we got the record or not. It has been a long time since that sort of thing mattered to me. To get that just set us off on the right track for the next few weeks, a boat with confidence is a lot easier to manage!"

Ivan and Ben are by no means the only people doing the DW. There are Richard Hendron and James King, who though not as fast as Ivan and Ben, do have distance credibility so there is a race to be had there too. Basically a win/record are by no means guaranteed from anyone no matter who you are as 125 miles is a long way and anything can happen!

From Ben and Ivan's point of view the race is about the record. They will set their schedule for record pace and see how long they sustain it. There will be no backing off to guarantee a win. They have got together a good team of advisors in everything from gym work to nutrition and are giving it a genuine go. For Ivan the learning curve of what training/racing you can do at 44 compared to 24 is a bit of an eye opener!

The four-day K1 race looks like being a really hard fought affair too and at the moment it's anyone's race. The C2 race also has been competition within it. Kevin Smith and Jan Raciborski (well known former international kayak racing competitors) are out of 'retirement' and now racing a C2. They could certainly make it move quickly. Kevin and Jan were the inspiration for Ivan when was he an impressionable teenager... and that was nearly 20 years ago!

What is Devizes Westminster?

Devizes Westminster is a 125-mile flat water marathon event. It starts in Devizes, Wiltshire, and ends at Westminster Bridge in the heart of London.

How long does it take? Depends how hard you've trained and what race you're taking part in. There is a non-stop race for seniors. When you leave Devizes the clock is running until you reach Westminster. Under 24 hours is a good target. There is also a four-stage race open to juniors (over 15s) and K1s. This splits the section into four sections, providing three rest points along the course.

That's incredible. How do crew prepare? With lots of training, preparation and hard work. It's the longest non-stop kayak event in the world, but anyone can take part if they train properly.

What sort of boats? Almost any, but K2's and C2's are the only boats which can take part in the non-stop race.

Who can enter DW? Anyone over 15. The non-stop race is only open to seniors.

Can I get involved this year? Too late to start your training this year as most people start at least six months before the race. You can come down and watch. Or volunteer to get an inside view. Visit www.dwrace.org.uk for details.

challenge



Above: Tim Pendle. Photo: Ollie Harding.



Above: Ben Brown and Ivan Lawler. Photo: Ollie Harding.

With the junior ladies record taken last year by Amelia Churnside and Amoret King (16:28:18), Isobel and Naomi Smith who came an exceedingly close second (16:28:58) are looking good if they are out to try for the record this year.

There is also a senior female crew preparing for the DW and possibly looking at a record attempt. Kat Burbeck, a self confessed DW junkie and Shuna Braithwaite, an ex-member of the senior GB sprint team came together in the middle of last season to paddle marathon K2 races. The pairing worked, they had a laugh as well as encouraging results and the partnership was consolidated with dedicated training and preparation for the race since October.

Their backgrounds in the sport are quite different: Shuna coming through the ranks of the sprint team, being a silver medallist in the 2004 Junior European Championships in K2 with Tara Nutt and then going on to be in the Under 23 and then the senior team. Finishing full time training in April 2009 having been a 500-meter specialist, Shuna probably never imagined that two years later she would be back in a boat racing 400 times that distance! She is not unfamiliar with the race however, having supported Paul Enoch and Harriet Farish in 2010 during their record-breaking mixed K2 run.

Kat's initial forays into the sport were through DW in 2003 paddling a junior K2 for Dauntsey's school team and then a junior vet race in 2004, her first taste of the non-stop race was 2007 when, with Gilly Mara, she finished in under 20 hours, winning

the women's event, the university event and achieving the second fastest women's time in the history of the race. In addition to all this, she played polo, won the Universities Wild Water Racing Championship, raced in sprint and started to climb the slalom ranking lists.

Whilst a record-breaking attempt is on their minds it is not the only motivator. The thought of 125 miles of having Jaffa Cakes, hot-cross buns and Jelly Babies rammed down their throats on many occasions is far outweighed by their desire to fundraise for a charity close to their and their families hearts. Shuna's father, Richard has been a life long supporter of the Royal National Lifeboats Institute, but sadly is not well enough to continue helping with any fundraising. Kat's father, John, is a keen sailor and their family have also supported lifeboats for many years.

The whole beauty of the Waterside series and the DW is that everyone has their own personal challenge. Unlike most other races very few people in the DW are out to win, everyone's challenge is a very different one but deserves equal respect.

So come on down to the event, what better way can you think of to spend Easter weekend? Help people by cheering them on to complete their own challenge.

Support for Kat and Shuna's attempt would be greatly appreciated, whether it be through their 'Just Giving' page: www.justgiving.com/KatandShunaDW, details of their training and progress can be found at: www.peakuk.com.

Support Ben and Ivan who in addition to attempting to break the record are raising money for the 'Right to Play' charity at www.justgiving.com/helpbenbrown/. 🐦



Above: Jan Raciborski and Kevin Smith. Photo: Ollie Harding.



Above: Naomi and Isabel Smith. Photo: Ollie Harding.

Bula! Kayakin

Bula – meaning life – is the universal greeting in Fiji, a country made up of over 300 islands. Everyone there is incredibly friendly and seems to have a permanent smile on their face, no doubt due in part at least to the beauty of their environment and their laid back lifestyle.

Feature by: In September I went paddling with Southern Sea Ventures and a bunch of Ozzies in the northern Yasawa islands. Our trip began from the island of Tavewa, a four-hour boat journey from Viti Levu, 'the mainland' or largest Fijian island.

Dave Ashplant.

I was given a Nimbus sea kayak from Canada which was a joy to paddle. On our first day we paddled some four hours north up the east side of Nacula (pronounced Nathula) island to a village called Navatua on the north eastern coast. Tides dictated our timings; at low tide it is too shallow to cross the reefs safely.

Island life

Navatua, is a traditional Fijian village – we had to remove our sun hats on arrival and the women in the group had to cover their shoulders and put on sarongs as soon as we arrived on the beach. In converting the locals away from cannibalism the missionaries also instilled a very modest dress code. At 6 am every morning the drum is sounded to call the villagers to church, although the cockerels had woken us long before that!

The one room bures they live in have no furniture and many are thatched in the traditional manner. Money is in short supply but with fruit and crops growing easily in the benign climate and fresh fish straight from the sea they don't go hungry.

The following day the Pacific looked grey and angry. We paddled out to Sawa-I-Lau, a limestone island pointed like a volcano with forested slopes that could pass for something out of a James Bond film or Jurassic Park. The swell was about one and a half metres and crossing the reef to get there was exciting. Inside Sawa-I Lau are caves with underwater swim channels to other chambers. The offshore rocks are very jagged.

After another night in Navatua drinking cava, the local beverage throughout the South Pacific, which numbs your mouth and leaves you feeling very relaxed, we struck camp and loaded our gear into our kayaks. We paddled through the channel separating Nacula and Yasawa islands and then headed north up the western coast of Yasawa island.

Unpredictable gusts of wind hit us side on. Our destination was Vewa off the north western coast of Yasawa island. The wind

had now changed direction and was coming straight at us from the north. White horses raced at us and at times we were barely moving forward at all but we

“Vewa is a true tropical paradise of white sand beach and palm trees – an idyllic camping spot”



Above: The party passing Vewa.

finally reached the shore and jumped out quickly between breaking waves with only one of us capsizing in the process.

The 'uninhibited' island

Vewa is an uninhabited island – or uninhibited island according to the Ozzie ladies; four outrigger racing paddlers from Queensland who could always be relied on to produce some rum or whisky late afternoon and even once at breakfast! Vewa is a true tropical paradise of white sand beach and palm trees – an idyllic camping spot.

Jacques Cousteau christened the Fijian islands as the soft coral capital of the world and the coral reefs starting just metres from the shore are truly beautiful as is watching the tropical fish, turtles and other marine life that fed off them or swim around them. At some snorkelling sites we had to jump off rocks in between waves to get in. Reef sharks about two metres long are common here but they just ignore you unless you are stupid enough to aggravate them. When putting your feet down it is advisable to look so as not to stand on any coral, which is very fragile and also to check no stingrays or stonefish are resting on the bottom.

g the Fiji islands



Above: Campsite on Vewa.



Above: Children heading down to brush their teeth.




A couple of blissful evenings were spent round the campfire lounging on palm fronds under the vast starry South Pacific sky. The nearest landfall west of here is Vanuatu about 500 miles away and then it is another 1000 miles or so to Cairns in Australia. Judd, our guide for the week has led expeditions from Antarctica to Greenland so had plenty of interesting tales to tell.



On our last day we paddled down the western side of the islands. There were frequent reefs on this more exposed side of the islands. It was awe inspiring to watch large waves break on the reefs and travel along them in a massive wall of water. The sheer power and vastness of the Pacific is hard to take in.

At our lunchtime stop on the west coast of Nacula local children came down to clean their teeth in the sea and we followed them back to visit their school. During the afternoon we passed more deserted white sand beaches and turquoise coloured flying fish regularly jumped out of the sea in front of us. As we approached Tavewa the water became ever more translucent and turquoise and it was with great reluctance that we paddled ashore and got out of our kayaks for the last time.

The following week I was lucky enough to go scuba diving off Ono Island in the far south of the Fijian archipelago. The Astrolabe reef, the fourth biggest reef in the world, surrounds Ono but there is virtually no one there! You can also kayak around Kadavu, a larger island next to Ono; to circumnavigate it is about 60 miles. I met an Austrian who had flown all the way from Austria with his Wayland folding sea kayak and was preparing to do just that. 

Paddling adv

Do you dream of paddling somewhere a bit more exciting than the local river or canal? I sometimes find myself flicking through the pages of kayaking magazines, inspired by the glorious photographs and tales of derring-do, but baffled by tidal complexities and intimidated by the knowledgeable authors. Now I've discovered you don't have to be a fantastic paddler with years of experience to get out and enjoy the amazing wildlife and coastal scenery of the UK. If you are confident in a kayak then a wealth of sea kayaking trips are waiting for you. You just need to know how to do it safely.

Feature by: Rhoda Daniels. **We contacted Rob McIntyre of Sea Kayaking South West who we had met previously when he did some training courses for Bath Canoe Club. We explained we wanted to paddle on the west coast of Scotland in order to have fun, see some wildlife, and maybe cross to an island. We drove up to Scotland and Rob met us with a trailer load of gleaming sea kayaks and equipment.**

We had arranged bunkhouse accommodation at Glenuig Inn on the edge of Loch Ailort off the Sound of Arisaig. I know the word 'bunkhouse' conjures up images of bunk beds, sleeping bags and cob-webby kitchens. Not at Glenuig Inn - the brand new bunkhouse was immaculate. The pub itself served breakfasts vast enough to satisfy the hungriest kayaker whilst packed lunches (including a paddler's platter) and evening meals were available if required. The owner, Steve Macfarlane, is a paddler himself and the pub walls are covered with charts and photographs which Steve uses to illustrate his route suggestions.

We started off with day trips leaving Rob to do all the planning, and were amazed at the variety of scenery within a short distance - sparkling white beaches, misty islands, a ruined castle sitting picture perfect in a tree clad loch, sea cliffs and waterfalls.

As the week progressed it was amazing how quickly our skills and confidence increased. It wasn't long before we were looking seaward toward the small isles and wondering if we could get there. Midweek the wind dropped and the sea calm

so we took our opportunity.

The plan was to leave from Glenuig after a good breakfast; head across the loch to Rhu Beach for a pit stop, then do the open crossing to Eigg. We took

“ Sparkling white beaches, misty islands, a ruined castle sitting picture perfect in a tree clad loch, sea cliffs and waterfalls ”



food and tents to allow for an overnight stay with the option of a ferry back if needed.

The first 8km leg across the loch to Rhu Beach flew past except for a pause as we passed a colony of grey seals. Although we tried to paddle slowly and far enough away not to disturb any seals basking on the rocks none of us could resist stopping to look at the ones who approached us in the water, gazing up at us with their huge dark eyes and occasionally snorting as they closed off their nostrils before diving under our boats.

Most of us had not experienced a long open crossing before and Rob gave us top tips and handy hints. We had snacks to



entures for all



“Eigg has plenty of great history to find out about too – pirates, bloodthirsty fights with the MacLeods of Skye, monks, and warrior women”

eat while paddling and ensured that these were easily accessible in buoyancy aids and day hatches. Water bladders tucked under the deck lines or in buoyancy aids were excellent as they allowed us to drink little and often while paddling – it's easy to get dehydrated on the water. Rob ensured we had safety equipment, first aid and repair kits. Everyone had a sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen at the ready and I'm happy to report we needed them.

Group dynamics

When paddling any distance, group dynamics are all-important. There is nothing more demoralising than the slowest paddler seeing the front of the group slowly disappearing into the distance. Rob encouraged us to paddle in a line abreast at exactly 6km per hour and we were surprised at how well this worked. We found a GPS invaluable, not so much to check the course Rob had worked out, but to monitor our speed. Paddling abreast was great for chatting and general encouragement within the group.

Paddling toward the Eigg in this fashion we were surprised at how quickly the island got closer – until a certain point when it felt like however much you paddled you were never going to reach it.

Eigg is easily recognisable from the mainland by its remarkable peaked crag, the Sgurr, which dominates the landscape - although when later we paddled round the south of the island we could see that the crag is in fact the end view of

a long rocky ridge sliced off by glacial ice. Many Scottish Islands are a bit bleak but not Eigg – the woodland comes almost to the cliff tops with just a small rim of lush grass. Looking out to sea we could see the mainland in the distance – a satisfying feeling of paddling well done.

To our right towered the mountains and sea cliffs of the Isle of Rum with the Cuillin Mountains of Skye behind, still shrouded in mist looking magical and remote. Eigg has plenty of great history to find out about too – pirates, bloodthirsty fights with the MacLeods of Skye, monks, and warrior women. Eigg made history more recently when it was one of the first islands to be bought out by the community who lived there and who now own and run the place.

We decided to head on to Muck (9 km away) where about half way across our carefully planned bearing was abandoned when Dee spotted indistinct black shapes to our left. We headed in that direction and soon all of us could see the triangle shape of a dorsal fin. Excitement rose as the fin started to come towards us and a smaller triangle of tail could be seen weaving some meters behind it confirming it as a basking shark.

Basking shark

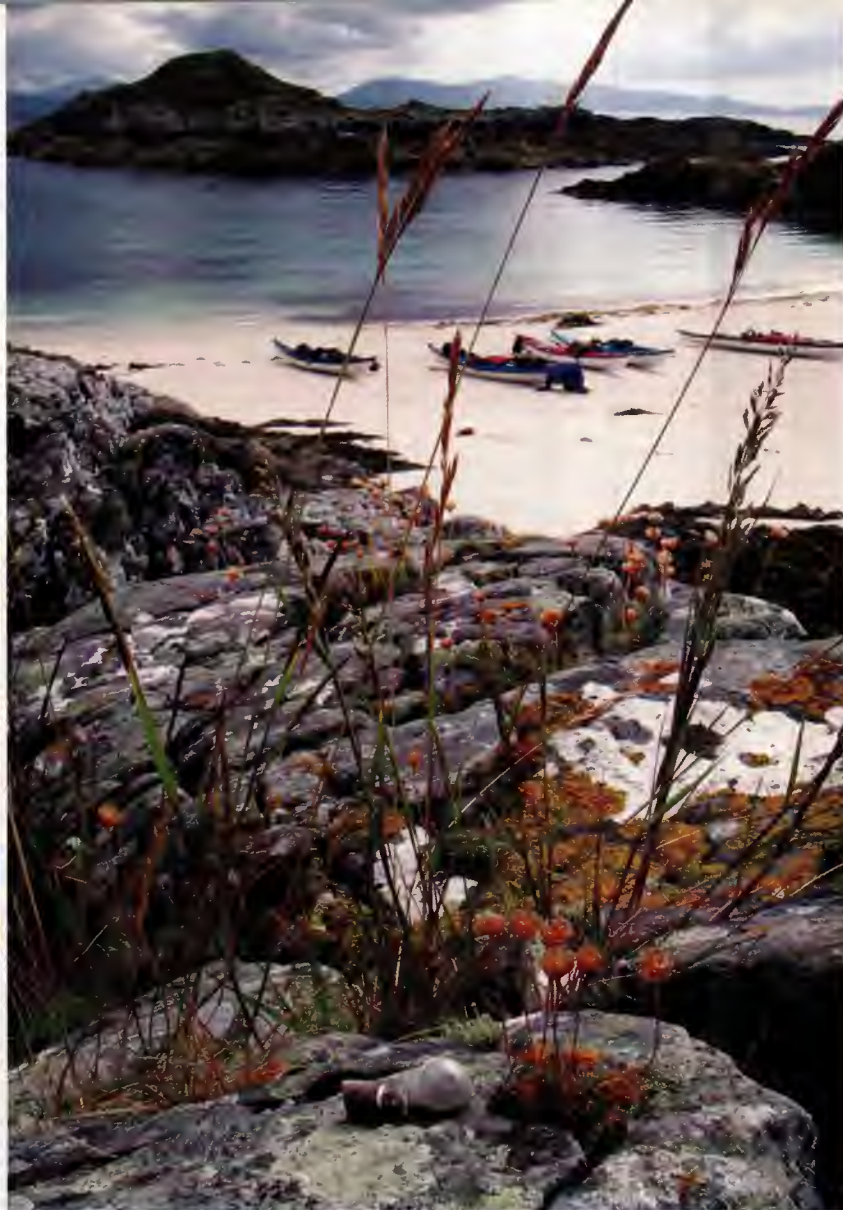
This huge creature headed straight towards my husband Phil who shrieked like a girl as the shark approached and brushed against the side of his kayak, the dorsal fin level with his nose! The basking shark circled the boats for a good 15 minutes, regularly passing so close under the kayaks that its fin or tail would touch us, its huge mouth agape as it filtered plankton - looking like the inside of a watery blue ribcage. The tail fin was level with the stern of our sea kayaks as the dorsal fin passed the bow,



by which we estimated this basker to be a whopping ten metres. The basking shark didn't seem bothered by our attentions and we had to eventually drag ourselves away from it with many backward looks.

This excitement kept us going pretty much until we reached Muck in the early evening. On reaching the main slipway we waddled about a bit until we had stretched out our legs. Sadly there was no sign of anything remotely resembling a tearshop; we learnt afterwards that we should have gone much further into Port Mor to find civilisation and cakes. Instead we settled on a small headland where there was enough breeze to keep off the midges and Philippa cooked up dinner. Philippa managed to keep a hungry sheep away from the salad long enough for us all to fill up on cheesy pesto pasta accompanied by debates as to the merits or otherwise of transporting celery sticks in a sea kayak – or indeed anywhere. Needless to say the odd celery stick or three made its way in the sheep's direction while we concentrated on the cheesy bits.

Socially digesting our dinner it was a while before we started to discuss where we should put up tents. Meanwhile a glorious evening was unfolding. It being the middle of June, the sun was setting but the light did not fade. The suggestion was made that we forgo camping and paddle straight back to the mainland and after discussion this is what we agreed to do; being flexible with your plan is essential in sea kayaking. We set off on a 26km open crossing in a magical seascape of silvers, purples and pinks. The hazy outlines of Muck, Eigg, Rum and Skye could be seen on our left whilst to the right the distant twinkling lights of the Ardnamurcham Peninsula and Mull offered a reassuring down wind emergency get out plan. Many in our group had already paddled further than ever before and for all of us tiredness was creeping in, but despite this we



were surprised to find we could still maintain a reasonable 6kmph paddling speed. We were accompanied most of the way by a grey seal, who circled us warily and appeared unpredictably at different points of the compass giving us something to look out for. We were also treated to a display of aerobatics by numerous aptly named shearwaters that flew close in front of our boats, often trailing their lower wing tip in the water leaving behind a tiny wake.

Mesmeric paddling

The evening crept by and the light dimmed until we could no longer see the islands behind us, but it never got completely dark. We could easily see the outline of the mainland ahead of us with the distinctive mountain range behind the entrance of Loch Moidart providing easy transits to keep us on track. We were making good progress and it became clear we had enough energy to get all the way back to Glenuig Inn. Rob used his mobile phone to let Steve back at base know that we would be in late and Steve promised to have the beers lined up on the bar to toast our return. Amongst the rocks and cliffs it seemed darker and silence descended as we crept along the shoreline looking out for otters (only brief glimpses today). The lapping of the water on the rocks accompanied our mesmeric paddling until the silence was shattered by the shrieks of an irate oystercatcher that, woken from sleep, decided to dive bomb us repeatedly, uttering its shrill cry the whole time.

Around the last corner we crept in ones and twos, encouraged by the glow of lights from Glenuig Inn shining on the water, welcoming us home. The Glenuig website boasts it is only 50 paces from the high tide mark to the bar and we were certainly glad it was no further as our legs seemed to have forgotten how to walk. Leaving our sea kayaks on the grass above the



high tide mark we staggered into the pub just after midnight. As promised Steve was there to hear all about our epic adventure as we drank our well earned pints. We toasted Rob our guide, congratulated each other, and indulged in one last round of guess the final GPS stats. At last, prying our fingers (which by now were reluctant to straighten) off of our beer glasses, we settled into bed still feeling the bob of the sea in our dreams. ♡

An interview with Kathryn Grieves, Canoe Polo

Spring is in the air! How have you found this year's winter training? What have you been doing to prepare for the 2011 season?

After the 2010 World Championships in September I had a short break and then began to plan my training for 2011. My winter training for 2011 began in October and has consisted of a variety of different water (boat) and gym based sessions. I have tried to add in a bit of variety this winter by trying different things such as spinning classes and swimming especially when it has been too icy to paddle!

How did you first get into canoeing and, in particular, what made you choose canoe polo?

I started paddling when I was eight-years old with Friends of Allonby Liverpool, it was initially my parent's interest in canoeing that allowed me to join them at the club sessions and I went on from there. I used to paddle a lot of rivers with the club and really enjoyed competing at slaloms but when I was 12 I decided to try canoe polo. One of the main reasons I chose polo was because I really enjoyed being part of a team and I loved the competitive nature of the game.

Friends of Allonby encourages many other canoeing disciplines? Have you ever been tempted to try out any other types of canoeing and, if so, which ones?

I have been quite lucky that the club has always been able to provide me with opportunities to try different types of paddling disciplines but the ones I have taken to the most have been canoe slalom which I competed in briefly for five years when I

was younger (11-16) and canoe polo. Through a partnership between FOA and Runcorn Canoe Club I have been able to try K1 sprint/marathon paddling. Last year I paddled with Runcorn Canoe Club and their K1 marathon paddlers. The K1 paddling was a completely new challenge to me and definitely a discipline that I would love to try and compete in if I didn't play polo.

Canoe polo is very much a team game. Can this make it more difficult than an individual-based discipline?

At times I think polo can be more difficult than an individual discipline because you are reliant on your team mates for so much, to all have a good understanding of each other, to read situations of a game in a similar way, to all have the same desires and passion to win. This can also make it easier than an individual discipline because if you are part of a good team with a high level of understanding and passion, you always have your team mates for support; you all know each other's strengths and weaknesses and can fight to win for each other.

What would you describe as being the main attributes to becoming a successful canoe polo player?

I think a successful player needs to be passionate and have the desire to win; be determined and committed; be a team player and have good game awareness. You also need a high level of physiological attributes such as good strength, speed, power, ball and boat skills and agility.

My advice would be; be focused on what you want to achieve, get lots of game experience, work hard and enjoy it!

You've achieved some great things with the GB women's canoe polo team (including World, European and World Games gold). Is there one moment that stands out as being particularly special to you?

I have got two moments, which stand out to me! The first is when we won the final in Taiwan at the World Games; this was one of the hardest and most intense competitions that we have ever played in. There is so much pressure at the World Games because there is no room for mistakes as we only get to play the top five teams in the world once to make it through to the semi and final. During the Games, especially the semi final and final it took every last bit of all our energy, passion and sheer determination, we played our hearts out as a team to make sure that we came home with the gold. Standing on the top spot of the podium was amazing and the ultimate team achievement.

My second moment is at the World Championships in Milan 2010, we had gone to the tournament to defend our previous gold medals and prove that we were the best team in the world. Again being able to go to the championships with a team of your friends who you know will fight with you to win and to be successful made me feel really proud of myself and the team.

Do you get nervous before a match? What do you do the night before a big competition?

I do get nervous before a big game but I try to channel my nerves and stay positive. The night before a big competition the team normally have a meal together and a chat to focus before the start of the championships or the night before really big games. I then like to have some time to relax and try not to think too much about the next day!

And do you have any pre-competition rituals or superstitions?

I don't really have any pre-competition rituals but I like to make sure I am well prepared, even with my food and drinks! I am not normally a superstitious person but I guess I have fallen into a particular routine to get me ready before a big game.

It's the Canoe Polo European Championships later in the year. Who do you see as GB's biggest competition and which players should we be looking out for in particular?

I think the main teams to watch out for this year will be France, Germany and Italy.

What are you looking forward to this summer?

I am obviously looking forward to competing in all of the major championships this year but I have recently become engaged so I am looking forward to planning our wedding next year too.

Read the full interview with Kathryn on the Canoe England website, in the Members Area.



Above: Kathryn in action. Photo: Glenn Summerbell.

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Changes to our inland waterways



Many of you will remember the very recent issue over the ownership of the public forests but now it is the turn of some of the inland waterways to undergo a significant change. Further to recent articles in Canoe Focus, we have been asked as to how the changes will affect us.

Many canoeists use the canals and have a keen interest in the future maintenance and development of them. It is important to note that British Waterways (BW) has rivers as well as canals as part of their portfolio. The rivers include the Severn and the Trent and it currently manages 2,615kms of navigable waterways, of which about three quarters are canals. They are a significant part of the waterways network so therefore the changes are important to us.

The recent debate has been about turning BW from a public corporation into a charity and as to whether or not the Environment Agency (EA) should also be included. On Monday 28th February the Minister Richard Benyon MP announced that although he has a compelling vision of a national trust for the waterways that

includes the British Waterways and Environment Agency navigations a phased approach to the delivery of this vision, so that assets and liabilities can be transferred sustainably needs to be undertaken.

In phase 1, the liabilities and assets of British Waterways in England and Wales will transfer into the new charity, alongside an 'endowment' consisting of the property portfolio owned by British Waterways in England and Wales. In phase 2, the EA navigations would transfer to the new charity, if sufficient funding can be found in the next Spending Review to enable the charity to take on the liabilities associated with them, and subject to the agreement of the charity's trustees.

The government's proposed approach, which will be subject to public consultation as part of

the forthcoming consultation on setting up the new charity, is that the EA navigations should transfer to the new charity in 2015/16 in the next Spending Review period, if it is affordable to do so. To maintain momentum, a review will be undertaken in 2014 to assess the progress and achievements of the new charity and to consider the options for the transfer of the EA navigations.

The government has stated that it is absolutely committed to delivering its exciting vision for a national trust for the waterways over the coming years and considers that over time the new waterways charity offers the most sustainable future for both the BW waterways and EA navigations.

The Defra consultation on the principles of BW becoming a charitable body is expected to be released in March 2011, (so should be available by the time you read this). The consultation is expected to cover all the major issues, such as structure, governance and finance. It will last the required 12 weeks. It is important that a wide variety of groups and interested parties/persons respond to the consultation. The consultation will be up on the Defra website but we will also provide links on the BCU, Canoe England and RAC websites.



Have your say about the NWC as it will have an impact upon our sport

In addition to the consultation the development work for setting up the charity is being undertaken. It is planned that there will be 11 local waterway partnerships with the first one being for the Kennet and Avon and Taunton to Bridgewater Canals. The inaugural meeting of this will have taken place by the time this magazine goes to print and Tamsin Phipps, BCU Government and Public Affairs Manager, who lives in the Kennet and Avon area has been selected to be on that partnership by BW.

The local partnership is to be an integral part of the team that supports the Waterway Manager in managing the local waterway unit (within a defined geographical area).

The partnership will work with the management team on every aspect of waterway management including:

- The allocation of available resources for the management and improvement of the waterway.
- The development of the funding, volunteer and other resources for management and improvement of the waterway.
- The balancing of the interests of waterway users, the local community and others with an interest in the waterway.
- Championing the interests of the waterway to local political, business and voluntary sector leaders and organisations, fenders and others in a position of influence.

The essence of these partnerships is that they are local and Canoe England would be very keen to hear from people who would like information about them with the potential to becoming involved with the partnerships at the local level.

All of this work and the positioning of canoeing helps with our campaign. Campaigning is about lobbying, developing key relationships and links, as well as changing opinions. The campaign has also been instrumental in placing a Private Members Bill before parliament entitled 'Public Access to Inland Waters 2007' that reflected the principles of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The Bill reached a second reading in the House of Commons and raised the issue of public access to inland waters to the heart of government. Often we are unable to publish whom we are working with as this could compromise important, beneficial information.

As a result of our relations, several organisations including the Sport and Recreation Alliance (formerly CCPR) have recognised there is an issue with access and are supporting the RAC. The Facilities Inquiry (www.facilitiesinquiry.org.uk/) along with other NGBs and some government departments recognise that access issues limit the development of our sport. More recently, they have also acknowledged that canoeing can provide huge benefits to society, including revitalising communities, combating social exclusion and boosting tourism.

The Rivers Access Campaign policy is to continue:

- To investigate the existence of, and seek the restoration of, historic rights of navigation where they exist.
- The campaign for a statutory right of access to inland waters in England, if required.
- To advise all canoeists that the decision whether or not to paddle a water, rests with the individual and not Canoe England.
- Advise all canoeists to take into account the environmental conditions and paddle only when these are suitable as laid out in the Canoe England leaflet 'You, Your Canoe and the Environment'.

Canoeing is now at the 'table' of discussions, with regards to the development of inland waters as well as the need for greater access for recreational activities.

The campaign promotes the need for access to and along, waters and not for free access. We are required to buy licences for navigations such as the canals, River Medway and other managed waterways; most of these are part of the CE membership package. We are not campaigning to stop paying these licences.

We have been advised that there will be no new legislation during this Parliament, time not allowing, but Canoe England will continue to promote the great need for access to waters on a daily basis and will seek to develop opportunities to discuss access to water with key stakeholders and government, wherever possible.

Canoe England is passionate, committed and focused on achieving greater access. We have canoeists' interests at the heart of all our activities.



River transport 1189 – 1600

Thesis by Rev'd Dr Douglas Caffyn

For all with an interest in the law and public access rights to inland waters in England, the recently published thesis 'River Transport 1189 – 1600' by the Rev'd Dr. Douglas Caffyn has stimulated much interest. This latest research on inland waters has gained him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Sussex.

The thesis and a supporting synopsis of this work entitled 'Boats on our rivers again' follows on from his earlier work 'The Right of Navigation on Non-tidal waters and the common law 2004'. All are available at www.caffynonrivers.co.uk.

Caffyn challenges the present day understanding of the law that all unregulated rivers are private (rivers without an active navigation authority) and considers there is public access to these waters. Caffyn has concluded:

- 1 All rivers, which were physically usable, were legally usable.
- 2 There is a high probability that each section of a river, which is now physically usable, was usable by small boats in the period 1189-1600.
- 3 On the balance of probabilities each section of a river, which is now physically usable, was used during that period.
- 4 There is therefore, a public right of navigation on all unregulated rivers, which are physically usable.

Investigation is made as to which rivers were physically usable, which were legally usable and the economics of land and river transport. The legal opinion that all unregulated rivers are private is discussed. The evidence of historic use is examined and these records are compared with the recent limits of use of the rivers. Many of the rivers listed are familiar to canoeists and not without access problems.

The strength of the research warrants the widest attention as a significant contribution to the access debate. As an open question, Caffyn has asked if there are any significant errors in his research.

Following the publication of the thesis in February, Douglas Caffyn has since made the following notes available on the background to producing this research:

"In places there are 'those with other interests' (TWOIs) who seek exclusive use of the rivers, at all times of the day, for all of the year. The 19th century Law Books said that landowners had 'sole and despotic dominion over their land in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe'. Because of the actions of the TWOIs there are some counties where there is no non-tidal river, which canoeists can use freely.

This started my research as to what the law actually is. I found that historically there was a public right of navigation on all rivers which were physically usable and that a right of navigation can only be extinguished by statute, statutory authority or the section of the river becoming unusable. These results were first published in 2004 in a very technical paper. I have continued the research and have obtained the degrees of Master of Laws and Doctor of Philosophy.

When one carries out research honestly it is not known where it will lead. The facts control what is written. Since 2004 my work has been widely distributed and has not been challenged, although there have been TWOIs who have refused to accept it. No organisation or individual interested in the use of rivers has published any alternative academically acceptable opinion concerning public rights of navigation.

For almost a hundred years some TWOIs have thought that they had the right to keep boaters off the rivers. I believe that the way forward is for us to share the rivers and for no one to ignore the interests of others and environmental considerations.

There is enough water for all, if all the water is available at suitable times and everyone cooperates."

MP visits to canoeing b

Following on from our letters inviting MPs to come and see what canoeing is all about and the benefit it brings to society, two more MPs have visited canoe clubs. Team North have very kindly co-ordinated these visits for us.

Wayout in Gateshead

On Friday 11th February David Anderson MP for Blaydon (www.daveanderson.org.uk) visited Wayout in Gateshead (www.wing.org.uk).

Mr Anderson spent 90 minutes at the centre where he spoke with staff and volunteers from one of the many projects they do. The morning started with a presentation from Ray Hudspith, Paddlesport Development Officer for North East region showing how much canoeing goes on and how much benefit it brings to the region not only in terms of economic development but to the participants through personal development and lifelong skills.

Jenny Jackson the centre manager explained about some of the projects they undertake including 'Pushing the Possibilities'. David Anderson then had a tour of the facilities where he saw the 10-week 'Build a Boat' project. This is where marine ply and glass fibre are used to build a boat. It is then painted and it taken on an expedition by its builders! He also saw a range of equipment including the new kit bought through a Sport England small grant scheme.



hear of enefits

As canoeing does not just happen on the water, David Anderson was shown a Canoe England Kayakpro ergo machine which enables people to train and race each other on dry land. It was demonstrated by some of the young volunteers from the project.

Wayout offer a range of paddling activities.

Macclesfield Canoe Club

On Friday 14th January, Macclesfield MP David Rutley met Macclesfield Canoe Club members and Gareth Field, Canoe England's Regional Development Officer during a very active evening in the pool at Bollington Leisure Centre. David attended one of their winter evening paddling sessions not only to meet them but to join in action too.

David and his family have canoed on holiday, so when he and his sons joined club members in the pool for the one-to-one coaching, they were rapidly paddling their kayaks with ease and confidence. Gareth said, "We were able to show David that canoeing is a sport for all. The attractive combination of getting close to nature, getting fresh air and keeping fit at the same time is difficult to ignore and it's a great way to meet new people."

The Macclesfield and District Canoe Club offer a range of paddling activities. If you live in or around Macclesfield and are interested, have a look at www.madcc.co.uk. Come along to one of the club's summer Monday evening paddling sessions on the canal at Bollington - these start in late April.

Why not make sure your MP knows more about the work you do. All MPs have had a letter from us so why not write or call them and invite them down to meet you on the water; in your clubhouse; at a pool session or at an event next year. To find the address for your MP visit www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/.

Write and let us know how you get on. Pictures and a short article would be welcomed. If you need any help from us please contact: tamsin.phipps@bcu.org.uk



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Kayak fishing safety

Kayak fishing is a wonderful sport but it must not be forgotten that safety is of paramount importance.

For years all the UK kayak fishing forums have championed the safety first message and done a great job of getting the message across. Safety is an important issue for us all in the sport of canoeing as it contributes to both the enjoyment and the pleasure of the sport. This is especially so for kayak fishing and there are a few simple things we can all do to improve safety whilst kayak fishing.

Feature by: Terry Jackson, North Wales Kayak Fishing. **Top of this list for safety is to always wear a PFD (personal flotation device/buoyancy aid) and ensure it is correctly fastened at all times when on the water. This is probably the most important thing you will ever buy. The PFD will keep you afloat if you should fall in to the water, keeping you on the surface and giving you time to re-enter the kayak or get help.**

Do not clutter your kayak. If you do fit rod rests, anchor trolleys etc, then please try to keep them on one side of the kayak but not so much as to alter the balance of the craft. By keeping one side free it gives you the unhindered side to exit or re-enter should you need to.



It is important to carry some means of communication with you, preferably a VHF radio, as this is your means of summoning help should you need it. Even a mobile phone in a waterproof bag with a fully charged battery is better than nothing but remember if you are too far from shore or in an area where there is no signal it may be of limited help. The VHF radio is also a way of listening to weather updates and hazard warnings from the coastguard and other water traffic while you are out kayak fishing. When carrying radios/signalling devices such as a small mirror, a torch and/or some flares keep them in a watertight package within easy reach. It's no use having them packed away in a hatch you cannot reach quickly in an emergency.


It is important to carry a first aid kit but this need not be anything extensive just a simple kit containing the vital essentials in a waterproof box or bag keep this in your PFD pocket. Covering small cuts etc when out fishing, if they occur, can save a lot of discomfort later.

Fishing on the sea

One very important implement to a lot of kayakers is a knife and none more so than when fishing on the sea. If fishing on the sea one should carry a small safety knife, which should be a chiselled or ground end knife. Pointed knives could cause more of a hazard. Your knife should have a cutting blade on one side only and should be kept in your PFD so it is at hand in an emergency such as for cutting free your anchor or a snagged line.

Carry a towline in case a friend or fellow kayaker is in need of help and you can tow them to safety.

Always make a paddle plan and leave it with someone ashore. On the plan state where you will park your car, its make, model, colour and registration, the time leaving, the area you are aiming to fish in and the estimated time of return. You should also include the number in your group and what colour the kayaks are and what safety kit you are carrying. This is all useful information if any rescue is needed. Try to always paddle and fish with a 'buddy' it's safer and you are both able to help each other should the need arise.

By carrying the right safety kit we can all keep safe in the sport we all love and enjoy so much even if those unexpected emergencies should crop up. 





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More information, along with the terms and conditions are available at www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/photo-competition. The winners are announced on page 10.



Above January U18 winner: Lucie Finch – Bude beach.



Above: Alex Nichol – 'Old open' at Frome CC.



Above: Katie Strycharczuk – Scotland.



Above: Daniel Osborn – Chertsey Weir.



Above: Dave Smith – Farne Isles.



Above: Phil Hemsley – Harlyn Bay, Cornwall.



Above February U18 winner: Chyavan Rees – Hurley Weir.

tion



Above January adult winner: Dave Barto – Charlie



Above February adult winner: Sam Jackson – Priory Watersports Centre, Bedford.



Above: Paul Evans – Norway.



Above: Simon Bovill – Hurley Classic.



Above: Marek Pawlik – River Nevern.



Above: Alan Baker – River Wye.



Above: Dee Paterson – National Marathon Championships.



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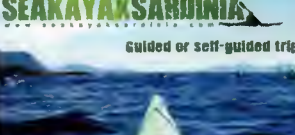
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Behind the scenes

An interview with Albert Woods, President of the BCU

An excellent team of people support the work of both the BCU and Canoe England.

This hard working team of staff and volunteers 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.

You're the President of the BCU. Can you describe your role in just three words?

Representing the membership.

And now, with a bit more detail...

I am a member of the BCU Board of Directors as the Chairman of the World Class Management Group. I am the President of the European Canoe Association and a Board Member of the International Canoe Federation. I am also Vice Chairman of the British Olympic Association.

How did you first become involved in canoeing?

Through a friend in 1966 who was already in canoeing.

And what attracted you to the sport? Were you interested in any other sports as a youngster?

I was interested in rugby and cross-country running at school. I began my

interest as a member of the Nottingham City Kayak Club."

You've been involved in the sport for many years on lots of different levels, including as a member of the GB wild water canoeing team, canoe slalom team manager and President of the European Canoe Association... to name but a few! What roles have you enjoyed the most and why?

I have to say that the most fulfilling role is as Vice Chairman of the BOA where I have contact with all Olympic sports both summer and winter.

You will have, no doubt, experienced many memorable moments since you first started canoeing. Do any stand out as being particularly special and why?

In 1971 I paddled in the first ever C2 to go down the Grand Canyon with Jon Goodwin. The most memorable moment was when we had completed it without drowning!

You have been involved in various Olympic Games throughout the years, including Chief Official for Canoeing at Barcelona in 1992 and Olympic Technical Delegate for Atlanta 1996.

Why do you think it's been, and continues to be, so important for canoeing to be involved in the Games?

It is fundamental for canoeing to remain in the Olympic Games, because the vast majority of funding is received to participate at the Games and also the International Canoe Federation exists primarily from the funds given to it by the IOC. It is also a great thing that Paracanoeing is in the Paralympic Games in Rio 2016. This will only strengthen canoeing's position in the Games.

The London 2012 Olympics are fast approaching! How do you think the home Olympics will affect the development of canoeing, in this country?

I believe that the Games in London will focus us all on the British athletes in all sports and if we continue to be a success in canoeing it will bring people into the sport like a magnet.

You must be an extremely busy man, juggling your various different roles! If you have any, what do you like to do in your spare time? Do you have any hobbies away from the sport?

Yes my main hobby is that I have a pond in the garden with Japanese Koi Carp.

What are you looking forward to this summer?

I will be happy this year when the two Olympic test events of sprint and slalom are completed and that we know that most of the British athletes in the two disciplines will have boat places allocated after the two World Championships in sprint and slalom.

Read the full interview with Albert on the Canoe England Website, in the Members Area.

Quickfire questions!

I would describe my character as...

Bubbly and humorous.

When I'm not canoeing I... Run my business as a heating engineer.

The last book I read was...

Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less.

The last film I watched was...

Sherlock Holmes.

My ultimate goal is... To complete my working and leisure careers successfully.

I relax by... Meeting friends.

My favourite food is... Curry.

My favourite drink is... Chardonnay.

My favourite TV programme is... CSI.

My favourite car is... Jaguar XKR.

My favourite place in the world is...

Sydney.

The person I most admire is...

Tim Brabants.

I get really angry about...

Minutia large problems I deal with in my stride.

If I hadn't got into canoeing I'd be... A wealthier heating engineer!

In 10 years time I'd like to be...

Still alive!

One thing you don't know about me is... I am half Greek, my mother was

Greek and I am extremely proud of my ancestry and the Greeks long connection with the Olympic Games.

I also speak Greek, French and

German.



Above: Albert Woods.



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