

# canoe

## focus

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Slalom and sprint national selections



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18 Market Place, Bingham NG13 8AP

Tel: 0845 370 9500

0300 011 9500

Fax: 0845 370 9501

E-mail: info@bcu.org.uk

www.bcu.org.uk

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**President**

Albert Woods

**Chair**

Brian Chapman

**Chief Executive**

Paul Owen

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**Publisher**

Peter Tranter

peter@canoefocus.co.uk

2b Graphic Design

49 Greenfields, St. Ives, PE27 5HB

Tel/Fax: (01480) 465081

www.canoefocus.co.uk

**Advertising Sales**

Anne Egan: (01480) 465081

advertising@canoefocus.co.uk

**Contributors**

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Above: Lee Valley White Water Centre. Photo: Antony Edmonds.

## Hello and welcome to the June Canoe Focus



**I hope you have been enjoying the warm weather and bank holidays with lots of paddling.**

The last two months have been filled with lots of exciting news and important milestones for us.

At the end of April, we won our bid to host the 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships at the Lee Valley White Water Centre. We're all extremely excited to be involved with the Championships and are looking forward to delivering a world class event that can be enjoyed by everyone. Thank you for all your support during the bid, it was great to get so many messages of encouragement from you all.

The Lee Valley White Water Centre was also the venue for this year's GB canoe slalom team selection racing, which took place during the early May bank holiday. It was fantastic to see the athletes competing, for the first time, on the course and with the help of a large crowd there was a great atmosphere throughout the weekend.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish good luck to all our GB teams competing over the next few months.

Our next generation of athletes may also have taken to the water during the bank holiday, as part of Canoe England's National Go Canoeing Week. This year's Go Canoeing Week saw a record number of people, of all ages and abilities, taking part in taster sessions. Thank you to everyone who helped to run a session – you've helped to show even more people how fantastic canoeing is!

I hope you enjoy this issue of Canoe Focus. Happy paddling.

**Paul Owen, BCU Chief Executive**

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# Competition



|      | Start  | Finish | Event   | Discipline  |
|------|--|--------|---|---|
| June | 11 Jun   | 13 Jun | World Championships (Sprint) - Augsburg, GER                  | Wildwater Canoeing  |
|      | 11 Jun   | 12 Jun | World Cup - Bovec, SLO  | Wildwater Canoeing  |
|      | 11 Jun   | 13 Jun | European Cup 2 - Essen, GER                                   | Canoe Polo  |
|      | 18 Jun   | 19 Jun | ICF World Ranking - Bourg St Maurice, Isere, FRA              | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 18 Jun   | 19 Jun | Cardiff - Premier   | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 20 Jun   | 26 Jun | World Championships - Plattling, GER                          | Canoe Freestyle   |
|      | 23 Jun   | 25 Jun | World Cup 1 - Tacen, SLO                                      | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 25 Jun   | 26 Jun | European Cup 3 - Mechelen, BEL                                | Canoe Polo  |
|      | 25 Jun   | 26 Jun | World Cup - Rome, ITA   | Canoe Marathon  |
|      | 30 Jun   | 3 Jul  | European Championships - Under 23 & Junior - Zagreb, CRO      | Canoe Sprint  |
| July | 1 Jul  | 3 Jul  | World Cup 2 - L'Argentiere la Besse, FRA                      | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 2 Jul  | 3 Jul  | National Regatta - Nottingham - MacGregor Inter Clubs         | Canoe Sprint  |
|      | 8 Jul  | 10 Jul | World Cup 3 - Markleeberg, GER                                | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 9 Jul  | 10 Jul | Pre-World Championships - Juniors - Wausau, USA               | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 15 Jul   | 17 Jul | European Championships - Under 23 & Juniors - Banja Luka, BIH | Canoe Slalom  |
|      |  |        | World Cup - Sort, ESP   | Wildwater Canoeing  |
|      | 22 Jul   | 24 Jul | European Championships - St Jean de Losne, FRA                | Canoe Marathon  |
|      | 23 Jul   | 27 Jul | Olympic Training - Lee Valley, GBR                            | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 25 Jul   | 31 Jul | World Championships - Juniors - Opava, CZE                    | Wildwater Canoeing  |
|      | 28 Jul   | 31 Jul | Olympic Test Event - Lee Valley, GBR                          | Canoe Slalom  |
| Aug  | 1 Aug  | 5 Aug  | Olympic Training - Lee Valley, GBR                            | Canoe Slalom  |
|      | 5 Aug  | 7 Aug  | World Championships - Junior - Brandenburg, GER               | Canoe Sprint  |
|      | 12 Aug   | 14 Aug | World Cup Final - Prague, CZE                                 | Canoe Slalom  |
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|      | Canoe sailing: <a href="http://www.intcanoe.org.uk">www.intcanoe.org.uk</a>                                |        |   | Slalom: <a href="http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk">www.canoeslalom.co.uk</a>                      |
|      | Sprint: <a href="http://www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/sprint-racing">www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/sprint-racing</a> |        |   | Surf: <a href="http://www.bcusurf.org.uk">www.bcusurf.org.uk</a>                              |
|      | Freestyle: <a href="http://www.gbfreestylekayak.com">www.gbfreestylekayak.com</a>                          |        |   | Wild water racing: <a href="http://www.wildwater.org.uk">www.wildwater.org.uk</a>             |

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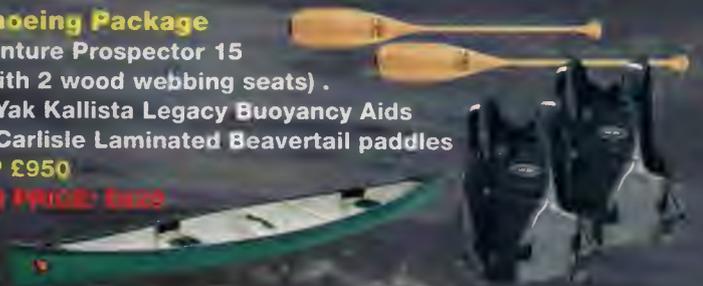


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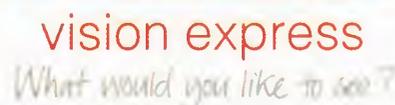
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# BCU secures legacy for canoe slalom

The BCU is delighted to announce that the International Canoe Federation has awarded GB the 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships at the Lee Valley White Water Centre, London. In a tightly fought contest, the BCU managed to prevail over a strong bid from the French Canoe Federation, bringing the Championships back to British waters for the first time in 20 years.

Delighted with the announcement, Paul Owen, Chief Executive of the BCU, commented, "The British Canoe Union is extremely proud and excited to have been awarded the 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley White Water Centre. We are fully committed to delivering a World Class Event on behalf of the International Canoe Federation. I would like to thank our partners for the fantastic support the British Canoe Union has received in preparation of the bid, especially that of our government, Lee Valley Regional Park, and UK Sport who all played a substantial part in the bid's

success. I am convinced that the 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championship will be a fantastic event, providing an excellent opportunity to showcase our sport worldwide."

A contributing factor in the decision to award the championship to Great Britain was to ensure the legacy of the state of the art white water stadium post the Olympic Games, Lee Valley and canoe slalom are the first 2012 legacy venue to have won a World Championships.

Seb Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee said, "This is fantastic news. We always said that hosting an Olympic and Paralympic Games would lead to a legacy of world class sporting events happening in the UK. The Lee Valley White Water Centre will be a fantastic canoe slalom venue in 2012 and 2015 and I offer my congratulations to the British Canoe Union, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and all involved in the successful bid."



## Juneau to Whitehorse

The Big 5 Kayak Challenge is heading back to Alaska and Canada for expedition No. 11 to fill in the missing link between their previous 1,000-mile expedition along the Inside Passage and their 700-mile Yukon trip. This will involve a 230-mile journey starting in sea kayaks in Juneau and paddling up to Skagway.

The team of four will then take to the historic Chilkoot Trail crossing the border into Canada on foot. Climbing to an elevation of about 1,300 metres, the team will then make their way to the lakes that join onto the Yukon River.

The start time for the expedition in the first week of June is aimed to coincide with the end of the break-up. This should ensure that there is still snow in the mountains but that the rivers and lakes will be unfrozen. In the event that the lakes or the river are still frozen then the team will end up being forced to trek further rather than use their rafts.

The expedition will take an estimated 10 days on the trail and paddling to allow the journey to be documented by video and images. For more information contact Richard Harpham richard@prokayak.co.uk

### Loch Lomond camp byelaws

The Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) is alerting paddlers heading to Loch Lomond this summer about the introduction of new camping byelaws that are about to come into force on the east side of the loch.

As a result of persistent anti-social behaviour in an area close to the road between Drymen and Rowardennan, the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority has applied to the Scottish Government for a byelaw banning camping in this area. That byelaw has now been approved and will take effect from 1st June. In future years it will operate from March to October.

Precise details of dates and the area covered by the byelaw can be found on the Park Authority website at: [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/). There will soon be a leaflet explaining the camping byelaws, so you may wish to obtain a copy of that leaflet if you are planning to visit the area.

The Park Authority are well aware that paddlers can be caught out in bad weather, so taking shelter in a tent as a result of conditions is totally acceptable. Our own safety comes ahead of the byelaw and that is written into the byelaw.

The Park Authority is working with Forestry Commission Scotland to develop a semi-formal campsite at Salloch Bay. It is hoped that this will be open for the second half of this summer. Please check the park website for details of this opening up.

**Mike Dales**  
SCA Access and Environment Officer

### Ulster circumnavigation 2011

This summer Richard Lineham (NI) and Gethin Thomas (Wales) are going to sea kayak 350 miles around the province of Ulster in Ireland. The circumnavigation of Ulster will involve paddling the coast of Northern Ireland, Donegal and crossing Ireland from Dundalk to Ballyshannon using rivers and loughs.

In May 2009 Richard's wife, Alex, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and started on a course of chemotherapy that would last nearly 18 months. During this time Alex made a conscious decision to keep living life to the full and even three days before her death was still organising a party! Over her last 18 months Alex managed to raise over £9,000 pounds for charity. Alex lost her battle with cancer on the 10th September 2010.

Whilst Alex was ill, Macmillan helped Alex come to terms with her diagnosis and make sure that she had all the help and support that she needed. After Alex passed away, Macmillan were still there and helped Rich get back on his feet. The team are aiming to raise £3,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

To find out more about the trip visit: [www.ulstercircumnavigation2011.co.uk](http://www.ulstercircumnavigation2011.co.uk).

To find more about the great work that Macmillan cancer support carry out visit [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk).

P and H Custom Sea Kayaks and Reed Chillcheater are kindly sponsoring the journey.

## Criminal records and vetting and barring schemes

Our update in the April issue covered the government announcement in February of their plans to scale back both the vetting and barring and criminal records scheme. Many of the changes are linked to the Protection of Freedoms Bill, which is due to receive Royal Assent in November this year. Whilst many of the proposed changes have been generally welcome, sport does have concerns over certain areas, which have been forwarded to the government as part of the consultation process.

We will have a clearer idea later in the year what the implication of the new legislation will be to sport and our current policies and procedures and will update you then of likely changes. It is important for all coaches, volunteers and clubs to note that all policies and procedures remain current at this point in time.

In the meantime, following the announcement that CRBs will be portable in the future, we have investigated what we could introduce in the interim to help volunteers and coaches who have to undertake numerous CRB checks. As a result of this we have introduced a portability process with effect from the 1st April 2011 – full details are available on the Safeguarding section of our website together with further support and guidance. [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk).

## South West Canoe Show

A.S Watersports are pleased to announce the dates for this year's South West Canoe Show. Taking place in Exeter on Saturday 1st October at the waterside location of Piazza Terracina, Haven Road Exeter. The show is open to all and is free to attend. The biggest display of paddles sports equipment, talks, demos and much more. A.S look forward to seeing you there.

## Pyranha Team Tour 2011

The Pyranha Team Tour sets of this month to visit the major events around Europe this summer. Heading up the trip is Matt Bostock, Kayaks North West Manager who will be visiting Italy for the Val Sesia festivals and heading over to Switzerland. The tour then heads to Milan and down to France for a freestyle paddle day with Ludo from Roc Roi and Gael Kernin.

The team tour then gets to the World Freestyle championships in Plattling then onto Voss for the infamous Ekstremsportveko and then to the Sjoa Fest and Sweden for the Masters of the water event.

For a full list of dates and places the van and team are visiting see [www.teampyranha.co](http://www.teampyranha.co)

## Photo competition winners

We are pleased to announce that the adult winner for March is Robert Deller. For April, the adult winner is Andrew Hargraves whilst Grant Underwood won the U18 category. Turn to page 50 to see all the photos.

# State of the art Paddlefest 2011

**There was a fantastic new venue for the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland's (CANI) annual paddlefest this year. Tollymore National Outdoor Centre has just reopened after a major revamp. Gone is the cluster of wooden huts in the forest and in its place is a building that combines state of the art facilities with superb en-suite accommodation and jaw-dropping architecture amidst the Tollymore forest park overlooking the Mourne Mountains.**

A team of local paddlesport coaches, who freely give their time and expertise, provided the backbone of the weekend. Swelling their ranks this year were international expedition kayakers Lowri Davies and Jeff Allen, whilst Paul Ralph of Marsport brought over a new fleet of K1, K2 and K4 sprint and marathon boats for CANI and stayed on to deliver sessions on the finer points of efficient forward paddling. Dave Carroll, one of Ireland's best known boaters, joined the fun with lots of sage advice for local paddlers, "You can't be sad while you're doing shoulder shrugs" for example!

The theme this year was expeditioning and, as well as running coaching sessions, Lowri and Jeff delivered entertainment and inspiration with evening talks on their travels around the more remote parts of the planet.

The weekend programme was packed with a bewildering variety of workshops and sessions which had paddlers scratching their heads over which box to tick, probably not helped by the fact it was only the day after the annual St Patrick's Day celebrations.

Top of the list on the board for Sunday sessions was Steep Extraction Skills. "Is that about



dentistry?" wondered someone. At the closing session the first two Northern Ireland Clubs to achieve Clubmark, Foyle Paddlers and Mid Ulster Canoe and Kayak Club, received their certificates.

The event was supported by some of the top retailers in the UK. Desperate Measures, Brookbank, Valley, Big Dog, Pyranha and RLS all turned up with van loads of gear and boats for people to demo.

A final thank you to SportNI for its continued support and all of the staff at Tollymore National Outdoor Centre for helping to make Paddlefest 2011 a great event.



## Mersey memory paddle

**The River Mersey Canoe Trail from Stockport to Carrington provides 18 miles of river touring.**

A guide can be found on [www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk).

Chris Cleaver had the twin objectives of publicising the trail and raising funds for the Alzheimer's Society and decided to promote a charity fund raising paddle along the trail. The tour is organised jointly between Canoe England North West, Macclesfield and District Canoe Club and Alzheimer's Society and supported by Carrington Parish Council who own the recreation ground where the trail finishes.

The tour runs the full 18-mile length of the trail from Stockport to Carrington. The river is suitable

for kayak or canoe with three weirs to shoot or portage (carry around), one compulsory portage and many rubble weirs or rapids. The river is considered easy by experienced paddlers but exciting by beginners. First-time river paddlers should not go alone but with an experienced paddler, instructor or guide. Two local companies can provide canoe hire and one a guide.

The entry fees go to Alzheimer's Society and paddlers are encouraged to collect sponsorship. Sponsorship forms are available with the entry information. The tour is on Sunday 12th June.

For more information visit [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk) or [www.madcc.co.uk](http://www.madcc.co.uk)



**This year Pyranha celebrate their 40th Birthday** and are looking for readers' memories, stories and images from the last 40 years...

Whilst we stand some chance of remembering it all, we are intent on recording the key moments, and finding a way of celebrating with as many of our paddling friends as we can. And that's where we need your help.

#### Memories

We hope you'll send in your recollections of your Pyranha Kayak and any photos you might have. We are interested in the expeditions, but we're also and perhaps more so, interested in the memorable paddling close to your home, perhaps on your own, with your family or club, and what your Pyranha kayak has meant to you.

#### Boats

We have been fairly prolific with our designs over the years, and some designs we haven't seen for a while. There will be a list of rare boats we would like to loan or buy for Pyranha Fest on the website. If you have any gems hidden in your garage we would love to hear from you!



Submit your memories at [www.pyranhafest.com](http://www.pyranhafest.com)



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# The weather b

The driest March on record followed by the warmest April on record led to some very challenging conditions for the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon (DW) this year. Normally temperatures in the mid-20s and clear blue skies make for ideal kayaking – unless it's late April, Easter and the DW. The lack of rain meant that the canal was very low and the river and parts of the canal, which normally have flow simply were static. Most competitors look forward to the moving sections to give them a touch of speed but 2011 was not the year for any additional help!

**Feature by:** John Handyside, Peter Hutchison and Tamsin Phipps. **Whilst in any year there can be several potential crews who triumph, a crew has to actually cross the line before they can win! This year's race had at least three pairs with a good chance of winning, including DW first timers and current Marathon World Champion Ben Brown and six times World Champion Ivan Lawler who were out to try and break the record.**

Lawler and Brown, along with Tim Cornish and Ollie Harding, opted for a daylight run on the Sunday. The latter crew both have a long history with the DW. Tim Cornish has a half share in the current record and Ollie Harding finished second in that 1979 record-breaking year. Meanwhile, Richard Hendron and James King teamed up for their third consecutive DW, having finished first and second in the last two years. They opted for the night run starting on the Saturday.

As King and Hendron were heading towards Teddington and the final 17 miles the other two crews were just starting their respective races in Devizes.

Brown and Lawler stayed in Devizes the night before the race and paddled from their accommodation to the start line! Although well prepared, with a superb support crew, they had pre race nerves

Ben said, "I've pretty much never been so nervous in my whole life! I think we had a couple of minutes before the start and I said if we don't go now I'm going to throw up."

Despite having no flow at all on the canal the pair completed the canal section in just short of seven hours. They looked good as they came on to the river and portaged at Dreadnought Reach.

Not too far behind them was the crew of Harding and Cornish who quietly portaged and went on their way.

Brown and Lawler retired at Cookham with just over 75 miles done, blaming the lack of flow, illness and a fairly stiff head wind that started to eat into the record schedule they'd built up on the canal.

"The canal was easy to work hard on and we could just paddle hard but I wasn't expecting such a contrast in conditions coming off of the canal" said Ben. Meanwhile Ivan stated, "Our problem with the food this morning was purely down to fear. I always eat my breakfast every time I go training and it's fine but today I think I underestimated how little I could digest when I was as scared as that."

“I think we had a couple of minutes before the start and I said if we don't go now I'm going to throw up”



**Top:** Ben Brown and Ivan Lawler paddling near Hurley Lock. **Above:** Tim Cornish and Ollie Harding coming into Hurley Lock. **Photos:** www.jaypegphotos.com.

How do a couple of World Champions take the retirement and what about the future?

Ben said, "Having done the five hours fifty training paddle. I didn't feel a lot more tired when we stopped after nine hours or whatever it was, which is encouraging for the future, knowing that our preparation physically was fine."

Ivan commented, "People need to know that the record is doable, so that somebody will go and have a pop at it. So we had our pop at it and failed but I have come out of it with the knowledge that the record is there for the taking, you've just got to be a bit luckier than we were."

## A good strategy

It was Hendron and King, who won the race in a time of 18 hours, 8 minutes and 6 seconds. Shortly after staggering up the steps, Hendron said, "We gave it our best chance. If Ben and Ivan blow up, we'll pick up the pieces." A good strategy as the pair notched up another top two finish.

Commenting on this year's event, Hendron from Richmond Canoe Club said, "It was mentally tough as there was no flow." A good point backed up by Environment Agency figures saying the dry weather had reduced the flow to just 25m<sup>3</sup>/second – the slowest for six years, and just one fifth of the flow in 1979.



**Above:** Cornish a

# breaks the records



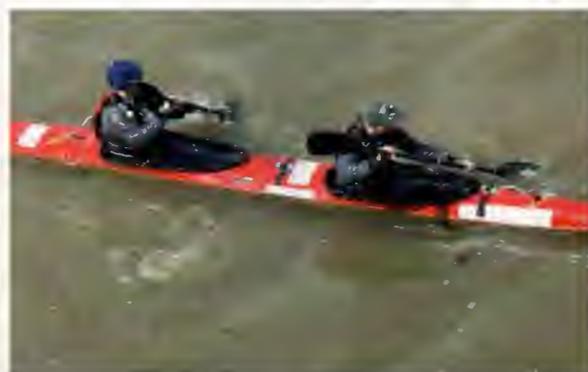
Above: Setting out from Devizes. Photo: Peter Hutchison.



Above: Arriving at Teddington Lock. Photo: www.jaypegphotos.com.



Above: Marsh Lock portage. Photo: www.jaypegphotos.com.



Above: Kat Burbeck (Front) Shuna Brathwaite (Back). Photo: John Handyside.

Brian Greenham (DW Course Umpire) helps Tim t Boulders lock. Photo: Tamsin Phipps.

Above: L to R: Kat Burbeck and Shuna Brathwaite. Photo: Gareth Wilson.



**Above:** The finish at Westminster Bridge.  
**Photo:** Peter Hutchison.

Cornish and Harding's second place was particularly impressive, as said Ralph, for "a couple of guys nearly in their 60s." Coming up the steps at Westminster, Harding mentioned it was his toughest DW yet and he has certainly done a few!

The Senior Women were as much affected as all other competitors. With the conditions working against them, the attempt by Kat Burbeck and Shuna Braithwaite to break the 1995 record time of Sandra Troop and Danielle Sellwood gradually slipped away as they got further down the river. The task changed to finishing as high up the field as possible. A tactical shift of their start time, from the original, meant starting earlier to increase the chances of getting the best of the tide at Teddington.

The pair set a good pace, but after encouraging progress up to the Crofton Portages, their speed started to drop as the lack of flow became apparent.

Gradually the time behind their record schedule began to increase. After 55 miles, at Dreadnaught Reach they were 18 minutes down on schedule. Having seen no one on the canal, they were now starting to see and pass crews who were all going for the same tide. Following much needed nourishment at Royal Canoe Club, they hit the tideway at bang on the right time to get the optimum flow, Richmond Half Lock closed literally five minutes after they went through. They were then the eighth boat to finish the race, having been one of the later crews to start.

Their achievements in the race:

- Winners of the Women's event.
- Sixth place overall in the Senior K2's, the highest placed women's crew in the history of the race.
- Fourth fastest time on the tideway.
- Within the same percentage point down on the Senior Men's winning time this year that Troop and Sellwood were in 1995.

## Class winners

DW is far more than a K2 race for senior elites. It's open to all and some classes, like the Junior Doubles, who make a point of preparing for the race with focused, intensive training in the preceding months. This year saw a shift in the balance away from schools dominating the race with canoe clubs taking the top three places. The Richmond pairing of Frederick Purcell and Alex van Tuyl recovered from an eight minutes loss on day one to end up winners on day four in Westminster.

In the Senior Singles, Stuart West won the race, with a good international field pushing up the quality. "It's good to see so many internationals in the UK to take part in DW," says Paul Ralph, "especially this year as DW is part of the International Canoe Federation's inaugural Classic Marathon Series."

Ed Blackwell and Ben Murphy were one of 12 teams from Kelly College – the largest from a single school. Friends and family, including Ed's step-grandfather Dr Oliver Dansie who completed the race back in 1951, watched the pair.

## Open to all

DW is open to all comers and something that anyone with an interest in kayak and canoe paddlesport can train for with careful planning and preparation. It's a challenge for everyone. Stewart Clark, a paraplegic paddler paralysed from the waist down, completed the race in a C2 with John Avery in 28 hours and 37 minutes. Stewart used sticks on the short portages, but with that modification was chasing a time of 26 hours.

Stewart and John were one of three K2s from Chelmsford Canoe Club that including Simon Orenstein and Roger Edwards, has finished DW 11 times in all. Chelmsford were one of 83 canoe clubs entering teams. In total almost 600 paddlers took part in the race with entries from 18 nations. Entrants have a huge range of personal stories and this year there were father/son and husband/wife teams. There was even a brother and sister racing against each other! For some this challenge provides an opportunity for fundraising. This year's entrants have raised close to £70,000 for a wide range of good causes.



**Above:** Richard Hendron after winning. **Photo:** Peter Hutchison.



**Above:** Dr Oliver Dansie (1951 winner) with Ed Blackwell and Ben Murphy. **Photo:** Peter Hutchison.

## DW 1000-mile club

Steeped in tradition, DW Organisers have decided to create a 1000-mile club – an exclusive club made up of people, who have completed DW eight times, with at least four being in Senior Doubles. It's hoped that a large number of the sixty or so 1000-mile club qualifiers will be able to make it to the DW2011 awards in June.

Prize giving for this year's event is at 2pm on the 11th June at Bouverie Hall, North Street, Pewsey, SN9 5ES.

## Results

### Senior Doubles

1. Richard Hendron (BPP University College) and James King (Cranfield University) 18:08:06
2. Timothy Cornish (Longridge CC) and Ollie Harding (Longridge CC) 18:28:22
3. Clive Neale (Tonbridge CC) and Gabor Levai (Tonbridge CC) 18:35:41

For a full set of results for all the classes and to find out more information about the race, its history and all the records go to [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk).

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## Safeguarding and Protecting Children important contacts

### Canoe England 24-hour child protection:

Email: [childprotection@bcu.org.uk](mailto:childprotection@bcu.org.uk)

Mobile: 0777 570 7364

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

### BCU Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Harassment Lead Officer:

Mike Devlin: 0845 370 9514

### Canoe England Child Protection Support Officer:

Nigel Timmins: 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.

## Accreditation – almost 100



Canoe England recognises that our clubs and centres are a key factor in the development and growth of our sport and we value their commitment. We also recognise that all organisations differ, so therefore have introduced a three tier structure to the accreditation scheme. Top Centre is aimed at centres supporting long term community development. The accreditation process ensures that an organisation operates to a set of consistent criteria at the minimum operating standards expected of any sports organisation. The scheme enables clubs and centres to plan their development so that these practices and principles become a part of everyday life.

We currently have 95 clubs and centres accredited and are fast approaching the magic figure of 100. Which regional, county, centre or club will be the 100th accredited? Whoever it is, it will be cause for celebrating all the 100 organisations that have achieved accreditation. So in anticipation, congratulations to all 100 organisations, we will list you all in a roll of honour in the next edition of Canoe Focus.



# BCU lifeguards new safety award

The BCU Lifeguards are pleased to announce the launch of the new Swim Event Safety Award (SESA) to help meet the training requirement of paddlers that provide safety cover at open water swim and triathlon events.

The award is aimed at providing paddlers with the skills and knowledge required to be a proactive part of any water safety team and even involves candidates getting into the water to experience what it's like to be a swimmer. It's the first award of its kind and has been piloted throughout May with a huge amount of success.

The award can be completed by any paddler aged 14 and above and in any craft, providing the candidate can demonstrate good control of the boat. The only other pre-requisite is a minimum four hour First Aid Award.

For more information on SESA or to view the courses syllabus please visit [www.bculifeguards.org.uk/SESA](http://www.bculifeguards.org.uk/SESA). There is also a pathway for BCU Level 2 Coaches and above to progress onto delivering SESA and if you are part of a club that regularly provides safety cover at events or open water swim sessions then you are encouraged to look into this.



Above: Safety cover at the Blenheim Triathlon.

## National Go Canoeing Week 2011 – Thank you

A huge thank you to all who have supported the third National Go Canoeing Week during the 30th April to 8th May – it has been a massive success. Over the nine day period, well over 75 opportunities were provided across England for both new and existing participants. On offer was a whole mixture of events including a Go Canoeing opportunity at the Lee Valley White Water course, the venue of the London 2012 Canoe Slalom competition.

The Go Canoeing programme continues throughout the summer and into the autumn. For all the latest information on what is happening visit [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk)

## National Go Canoeing Week 2012

The date for the 2012 National Go Canoeing week is 6th-15th April, which we appreciate, is slightly longer than a week, in fact 10 days! But we are currently working on an even bigger Go Canoeing project for 2012 and beyond and therefore we will hope to use Easter 2012 as a springboard. The first day of National Go Canoeing Week 2012, will also leave just 112 days until the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The aim of the 2012 National Go Canoeing Week is to encourage 2012 new participants to be weekly participants by date of the 2012 Olympic opening ceremony.



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## In brief

### Dolphin centre pool slalom

Tees Tigers organised another innovative Division 4 pool ranked slalom in Darlington. The idea is a fantastic way to encourage anyone to try slalom in the warmth of a swimming pool. Many competitors entered for the first time in C1 and C2 as well as in K1. The club has cleverly planned these events at times that avoid clashes with the busy weekend events and club calendars.

### Ludock racing in Durham

Competitors taking part in the Durham Race organised by Humbledon Outdoor Centre on the 3rd April had an unexpected bonus by trying out the new Ludock craft purchased by Canoe England. Paddlers taking part in this 2012 Sprint event experimented at paddling this versatile craft out as a K1, K2 and Sprint C1. The event was the last in the hugely successful 4 race series traditionally held each month starting in January.

### Team North staffing update

Over the last few months there have been a few changes in the Canoe England staff team within Team North. Ray Hudspith who has been the PDO for the North East has completed some major national projects and has taken over the responsibility for supporting Cumbria as their Paddlesport Development Officer (PDO). Steve Swallow has come on board working with supporting disability canoeing in Manchester through Oakwood Youth Club.

### Canoe England staff team in Team North are:

**Gareth Field:** Senior Development Officer Team North and PDO for N West.

gareth.field@canoe-england.org.uk

**Ray Hudspith:** PDO N East and Cumbria.

ray.hudspith@canoe-england.org.uk

**Phil Scowcroft:** PDO Yorkshire.

phil.scowcroft@canoe-england.org.uk

**Scott Bradley:** Team North Senior Competition Development Coach.

scott.bradley@canoe-england.org.uk

**Dave Cook:** Competition Development Coach, Crosby.

dave.cook@canoe-england.org.uk

**Steve Swallow:** Participation Manchester, contact through Gareth Field

**Jamie Mayers:** Participation Runcorn, contact through Gareth Field.

### York River Festival Canoe Race

On Saturday 23rd July, bring your friends and families with their canoes to enjoy a great day out at historic York. Three different distances (2,500; 5,000 and 7,500 metres) all passing through the city centre. Free car parking on the riverside and free camping in Rowntrees Park. Information from Phil Puckrin. Tel: 01904 654 302. Email: philpuckrin@tiscali.co.uk.

# The epic triathlon

**In April 2011, Ant Emmet and Bruce Duncan completed an epic trilogy of challenges to finish with the Devizes and Westminster Canoe Race. As a warm up, Ant and Bruce decided to complete the most epic triathlon possible in the UK. Taking the pinnacle of challenges in fell running, cycling and kayaking, the boys linked what can truly be described as an epic adventure in every way.**

Starting in Cumbria with the fearsome Bob Graham round comprising of 65 miles, 42 Mountain Tops, 27,000ft of climbing in 23 hours and 46 minutes. They then had only 12 hours to travel north up to John O'Groats to start their tandem ride to Lands End, 874 miles, in 79 hours and 22 minutes, with 400,000 pedal turns! After completing this they only had five hours to arrive

at Devizes to enter the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race. So with only ten hours sleep in the five days preceding the canoe race, Ant and Bruce completed the 125 miles with 77 portages, in 27 hours and 54 minutes and finished in the top half! As you will see from the picture they used a stunning lightweight wood endurance kayak from Fyne Boat Kits due to its robust properties and sleek designs.

This feat of endurance was for the great cause of Cancer Research UK. Full details of the challenge, images and videos can be found on [www.theepictri.com](http://www.theepictri.com) with a chance to donate to the charity. Ant and Bruce would like to thank their support crew who were instrumental in them completing the challenge and their sponsors for all their generous support.



Above: Ant Emmet and Bruce Duncan. Photo: Eddie Winthorpe.

### Deame Valley Eco Expo

On 18th March, members of Manvers Waterfront Boat Club and Canoe England representatives attended a festival hosted by Deame Valley College. The event was aimed at promoting environmentally friendly organisations' initiatives in the Deame Valley area.

The club were able to promote the benefits of their sport and showcase the facility at Manvers – one of the most energy efficient buildings available, which receives energy from the adjacent lake to provide heat for the building.

One visitor was the local MP, the Shadow Front Bench Spokesman on Health the Rt. Hon. John Healey MP. The club members took the opportunity to discuss issues at Manvers and also persuaded him to try his hand on a Kayak Ergo machine.

Manvers Waterfront Boat Club will be having their grand opening on the 23rd July. More information on the club can be found on [www.manverswaterfrontboatclub.org.uk](http://www.manverswaterfrontboatclub.org.uk)

### Yorks coaching weekend

Over the weekend of 9-10th April, Aldwark Scout Activity Centre hosted the annual Yorkshire coaching weekend. This has become a regular fixture in the diaries of all paddlesport coaches in the Yorkshire region and beyond, with people travelling from various areas of the country to take advantage of the courses available.

A broad range of courses were on offer from Star Award training to coach assessments and rescue skills to first aid training taking place. Paddlers of all abilities were taking to the water in a whole range of different craft.

Saturday also saw a coach update day taking place with 37 coaches updating on the day and taking the opportunity to get involved in a range of workshops including CPD modules, safeguarding courses and BCU resources.

A huge thank you must go to John Lucas the Yorkshire region RCO for organising the event yet again and making it such a success, as well as all the coaches.

## Making a big splash

Teams came from across Wychavon to make a big splash and compete in a Canoe 2012 polo event on the 26th March. Andy Pitt, Wychavon District Council active communities co-ordinator, helped organise the event with Wychavon Kayak and Canoe Club (WKCC), based in Pershore. Nearly 60 people came to play canoe polo for their first time in a four-hour tournament with a succession of thrilling high-speed six-minute games.

The event was organised as part of the new Droitwich Activities 'FunKit' Initiative, a scheme set up with Worcestershire County Council

'Health Matters' funding to train enthusiasts to become coaches and play an active role in promoting sports.

Alongside the boys and girls' teams from WKCC, teams from Droitwich took part in the tournament, including Spa Housing Group, the Young Firefighter's Association, Girl Guides and the Air Training Corps. The youngest participant was just nine-years-old.

With new skills to be learnt and plenty of fun along the way it was a successful day. The overall winners were the WKCC boy's junior team, captained by Jason Pitt.



Above: Wychavon Kayak and Canoe Club competing in canoe polo.

### Slalom in Norfolk

Norfolk is not normally thought of as a hot bed for canoe slalom but on 17th April, Russ Smith, Canoe England's National Competition Development Coach, ran the Discipline Support Module for 12 coaches from across the East region, with the majority from a recreational or flat water background.

The sun blazed for the classroom session but during the early lunch the weather changed enabling the candidates to get a good grip on gate techniques without being roasted. During the exercises, the coaches discussed, with great enthusiasm, how they could take these basic gate techniques and transfer them into their coaching sessions within their clubs.

Thanks go to Dereham Canoe Group, especially Ian Thirkettle and Trevor Minshull. More details on: [www.paddlesporteast.org](http://www.paddlesporteast.org)



### Partnership building

Midland Canoe Club, based on the River Derwent near Derby, has recently extended its launching facilities to provide for a greater range of users, including those with a disability.

In partnership with Derby City Council's Youth Service and its outdoor centre, Darley Barn, the club has been successful in raising £20,000 to plan, purchase and install an interlocking pontoon system that provides easy access to the river over a wide range of river levels and conditions throughout the year.

The adverse weather conditions during the winter months caused the official opening to be delayed but a huge achievement in such a short time.



## In brief

### Young talented canoeists

Canoeing has been making quite a stir in the East Midlands, with four young athletes being chosen by their county sports partnerships to be part of a bursary scheme that recognises talented athletes. Congratulations to Kimberly Woods (slalom, Rugby CC), Edward Quittenton, Elizabeth Gray and Emma Tonner (Lincoln CC sprint and marathon).

### Clubmark Top Centre success

Clubs and centres across the region have been busy achieving accreditation standards. Congratulations to Solihull Canoe club for gaining Clubmark, Lincoln Canoe Club for progressing up to Top Club Gold and Leicestershire Outdoor Pursuits Centre for becoming the first centre within Team Central to gain Top Centre accreditation.

### Witnessing the wetness

Over 90 new paddlers took to the water at Hemel Hempstead Canoe Club's (HHCC) Go Canoeing day, on 17th April. A large contingent of volunteers were on hand to give all comers a free taster of the exciting world of paddling.

Club chairman Andrew Brierly said, "This is proof certain that paddlesport is one of the fastest growing leisure activities around. With so many smiles it was clearly a great success."

Club treasurer Ruth Gungadoo commented, "I was handing out buoyancy aids and paddles and people just kept coming, it was fantastic and they all seemed to be having a great time, or so they said when they gave me back their kit after."

For information visit: [www.hhcanoeclub.com](http://www.hhcanoeclub.com)

### Lea Valley invitation

The new Olympic course is located on the border of the London and East regions, so the respective Paddlesport Development Officers were invited to the open day on April 19th.

With a demonstration of rafting on the Olympic course and a freestyle event for juniors on the Legacy course, there was plenty to whet the appetite prior to the official presentation in the marquee. Amongst the speakers, were David Florence, Albert Woods, and Richard Fox, giving a perspective on the benefits of the centre to the canoeing world pre and post Olympic Games. Professor Will Pope from EEDA, Derrick Ashley, Chairman of LVRPA, Shaun Dawson CE of LVRPA and Paul Deighton CEO of LOCOG emphasised the benefits that the course and other Olympic facilities will bring to the regions.

The staff at LVWWC then offered the delegates the opportunity to descend the course in one of the centre's rafts.

## In brief

### Canoe club championship

Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club has been crowned National Club Champions of wild water racing, for the second year running. More than 50 clubs competed in the 2010 championship, but WYCC finished a staggering 300 points ahead of second placed Chester Canoe Club.

WYCC chairman, Andy Lloyd, said: "This is a fantastic result for the club and highlights the dedication and commitment of our youngsters, not forgetting the coaches and parents who all play an important part in encouraging the children in this exciting and fun sport." For more information contact Mr Jon Finch on 01225 790484.

### Bath to Bradford

13th August Bath to Bradford/14th Bradford Circuit.

Its not often that you see those coming well down the field smiling so much when they cross the line, but the annual Bath to Bradford has that effect on competitors as its a real race where speed is not the only skill you need to win! A traditional race in its truest sense there are demanding portages up weirs, a field run, more than a few places to get lost and some shallow sections to test the real racing skills!

The start time is going to be in the afternoon, allowing those who wish to travel and combine both races in the weekend, with some overnight camping on the banks of the river at our Bradford on Avon boathouse with toilet facilities and showers. Full details will be available on the Bradford on Avon Canoe club website soon [www.boarc.org.uk/canoeing](http://www.boarc.org.uk/canoeing) or email the race organiser at [stevem@monahans-fsl.co.uk](mailto:stevem@monahans-fsl.co.uk).

### PaddlePower Sports Hall Regatta

A new concept by the BCU, the PaddlePower Sports Hall Regatta is designed to get young people into paddlesport, without the need of any paddle-specific equipment. This is an exciting new development that forms a part of the Canoe England Schools Competition Framework.

This has recently been tested at The Westgate School, Winchester with over 150 nine and ten-year olds taking part. Head of PE, Rob Wylie (Ex GB slalom and wild water racing team member) had 40 Year 10 sports leaders to organise the activities.

The concept is simple – complete a series of challenges using everyday school equipment, in teams, and score each one, to get a winning team. Activities develop co-ordination, teamwork and some canoe specific skills.

The afternoons were a great success – both for our year 10 students, who led the activities, but also to inspire the year 5s and introduce them to canoe sport. With the right follow up activity, and the development of school-club links, this is a perfect way to increase awareness of our sport.

## DW – a wives tale

**From absolute beginners to DW veterans in six months, this has been the achievement of four ladies from rural Wiltshire. Up until October last year they had never heard of marathon canoeing but in the spirit of one-up-woman-ship on their husbands and to raise money for charity, they wanted to have a go at the Devizes to Westminster Race. Their husbands had completed a bike ride last year to raise money for Asthma UK as one of their friends tragically lost their 10-year old daughter to an asthma attack. They supported their husbands on the bike ride and now it was their turn.**

Every year at Bradford-on-Avon Canoe Club they receive enquiries from people who have heard of the Devizes to Westminster race and want to have a go. When they realise what it entails and that they have to learn to paddle first and maybe get a bit wet the interest dwindles, let alone get fit and do some running. Back in October 2010 they received an email from a lady who, with her nine friends, wanted to do the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race. The club agreed to run an introduction session



for them. Nine turned into four after some of them decided it just wasn't for them.

Four weeks, and quite a few swims later, all four were still turning up to training sessions undaunted by the home truths they were told about the race.

Their goal was to complete the four-day Endeavour Challenge. The four ladies fell into two natural K2 crews and an atmosphere of healthy competition developed. Cheryl Hurring and Caro Taraskevics were crew 612 finishing in a time of 22:29:05 and Pip Schofield and Jill Blane were crew number 613 finishing with a total time of 23:35:32.

## Wiltshire Council funds future Olympians

**Thursday 17th February saw the presentation of the Funding Future Olympians grants at an event in Devizes.**

Wiltshire Council hosted the event with guest speaker Liz Johnson, gold medallist at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and World and British Champion for 100m breaststroke.

Grants of £1,000 were presented to five potential Olympians. This funding will be used to help them access training and competitive opportunities, purchase equipment, and cover transport costs for attending regional and national events.

**Some of the grant recipients are:**

### Joseph Coombes, canoe slalom

Joe is 19-years old from Alderbury near Salisbury. He is a member of the Canoe GB 2016 Olympic

Pathway squad. He is currently ranked fifth in the UK and has competed in the under 23 European Championships.

### Tom Simmons, canoe sprint

Tom is 19-years old from Bradford on Avon. He is a member of the Canoe GB 2016 Pathway squad and has completed in both junior and under 23 European and World Championships. He won at the national regattas in Nottingham.

Liz Johnson, Paralympic Champion 2008 Beijing said, "It was great to be part of an evening that is supporting talented young athletes. I know the dedication and support that it takes to get to an Olympic Games and this grant will help these athletes to fulfil their potential and realise their dreams."



Above: Joseph Coombes with Liz Johnson.



Above: Tom Simmons with Liz Johnson.

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## Bendrigg Trust receive grant to run expeditions

The Bendrigg Trust has, since 1978, been providing high quality outdoor activity courses to groups with special needs and disabilities of all kinds. This year they are expanding provision to offer specialist courses and journeys to individuals with disabilities.

Receiving a grant from the Big Lottery Fund has allowed them to start a new project named the Bendrigg Trust Expeditions and Adventure. This year they hope to kick start their programme with Canadian canoe camping trips on the River Wye with the view to go further afield and possibly include sea kayaking next year.

The Bendrigg Trust also hope to create links through the country to ensure that the exit routes into paddlesport are available to disabled people taking part in activities at their centres and organised by them.

If you would like to find out more about the Bendrigg Trust and the expeditions they are offering this summer please visit [www.bendrigg.org.uk](http://www.bendrigg.org.uk) or follow them on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/bendriggexpeditions/](http://www.facebook.com/bendriggexpeditions/)



## Are you a potential Paralympian?

Look out for Va'a and Paracanoe Go Paddling days coming up in the future. If you can't wait that long then contact Clarisse Smith to find your local club.

For more information visit [www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/paddleability](http://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](mailto:clarisse.smith@canoe-england.org.uk)

# Free pool sessions

**Surrey Canoe Club recently received funding to run free pool sessions for a Paddle-Ability programme. The first session was a real success, seeing 23 paddlers attend, with a range of learning, sensory and physical disabilities.**

Since starting its Paddle-Ability programme less than a year ago, Surrey Canoe Club have worked with disability organisations and local authorities to develop their fast growing membership. Currently 17 disabled people have joined the club of which two are training to become Level 1 coaches.

To further develop this programme, the club has been successful in receiving funding from Spelthorne Borough Council and the Community Foundation for Surrey. They also received a donation from Free Spirit Active and all the funding has gone towards buying four new boats and equipment as well as paying for pool hire.

Claire Moore, Sports and Facilities Manager for Spelthorne Borough council commented, "In the run up to London 2012 it is wonderful that opportunities to take part in Paralympic sports are increasing locally and Spelthorne Borough Council are delighted to support these sessions. They are a great opportunity for local residents to exercise, have fun and make new friends while also offering the opportunity for competitive sport."

Panagiota Angelopoulou, Hon Secretary of the club, added, "We will run 15 sessions in total, 12 in the pool and three assessment sessions on the river." The club's aim is that the sessions will allow for the development of paddlers skills so that they can progress towards BCU Star and PaddlePower Awards.

If you would like further information visit [www.surreycanoeclub.co.uk](http://www.surreycanoeclub.co.uk).



## Paddle-Ability convert is awarded sporting honour

**After recently taking up paddlesport, Ian Marsden has been honoured for his sporting achievements at the Stoke-on-Trent Sports Personality of the Year Awards.**

Ian, who has been awarded the Disabled Sports Person of the Year at the awards for the past five years, has not only been awarded the title of Inspirational Achiever but was also named Stoke-on-Trent Male Sports Personality of the Year!

Formally a World and European powerlifting medallist, Ian moved to handcycling following a spinal injury. Ian has had a very successful career in handcycle racing across the world coming third in the Handcycling Federation World Championships in 2007. However, Ian has now moved his sights onto paddlesport.

Ian has been training with John Court and Dan Hopwood at Trentham and has taken to the Va'a craft starting in a V6 boat and moving into the V1 while continuing to train in K1.

Ian says, "I enjoy being part of the group at Trentham, and I am very keen on working my way to the top in the sport. I enjoy sports where I am against someone or against the clock." His involvement in handcycling and powerlifting has allowed Ian to develop his upper body strength and cardio output allowing him to transfer into paddlesport with ease.



Above: Ian Marsden



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# Hydro power alert generates big postbag

Feature by Chris Hawkesworth

Photos by Dave Mann

Judging from my post bag and phone calls a considerable number of you read my 'Hydro power alert' article in April's Canoe Focus.

Your responses divided into three categories:

**The vast majority were pleased that they had been alerted and would keep a look out.**

Some thought that the green energy of hydro electric power was so important to our future that hydro should be installed everywhere come what may and, if we canoeists lost a few favourite play or slalom sites, then tough on us.

Finally the trustees and users of Howsham Mill and Weir contacted me to say my article was unfair on their site.

This latter group got very upset indeed, not particularly at the article, but because I had used a photo of their hydro scheme to illustrate my general point that water taken from one end of a weir affects what goes over the other end. They said, "did you know that our hydro is canoe friendly and you should be using us as an example of how hydro should be managed."

This I am happy to do and I would like to thank Phil Stephenson, the slalom coach of Lower Wharfe Canoe Club, for his assistance.

Phil tells me that at Howsham, which is located on the Yorkshire Derwent a few miles east of York, the trustees have been very supportive of canoeing. The water to and from the hydro screw is managed in a number of ways to better facilitate canoeing, by optimising the water available than would otherwise have been the case with a purely natural water flow.



When canoeists are around, the rate of water taken by the Archimedes screw that is producing the hydro electricity is adjusted such that more water goes down the canoe chute/fish pass at the other end of the weir and this together with yet more help from the trustees, has enabled Phil and his colleagues to create a slalom training facility with permanent poles. This in turn has led to the resurrection of the Howsham Weir annual ranking slalom – a competition which I competed in during my youth!

The interior of the mill is used for slalom control and electricity for the event is provided from the

hydro screw also. More recently the trustees have offered the mill race above the hydro as a mini slalom course and the hydro also provides sustainable electricity for flood lighting the river.

If only the owners, promoters and trustees of the many other hydro schemes that are being promoted up and down the country were all as enlightened as at Howsham then we canoeists would not have a problem. Perhaps a few of them might just read this article and think about us!



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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](http://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.

### Canoe England Long Service Award

If you have completed 25 years or more of volunteering in paddlesport in England then the Long Service Award may be for you! The 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. For more information, take a look at the volunteers section of the website.



### Regional awards

Nominations for the Canoe England Regional Volunteer and Recognition Awards close at noon on Monday 20th June. The response so far has been fantastic and there is still time to nominate those people who dedicate their time to our sport. Whether it is your coach, teacher or a volunteer who has made a difference to your club, event or the sport then make sure you tell us all about them. There are 10 categories in which you can nominate volunteers or paid coaches and more information can be found on the opposite page. All regional winners will be nominated for the national awards and stand the chance to be recognised at the Canoe England awards dinner being held later this year. Forms can be completed electronically or by hard copy but must be submitted by noon on June 20th. This is your opportunity to thank and recognise the volunteers in your region!

For more information visit [www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers) or contact Julia Robertson, Volunteer Development Officer [julia.robertson@canoe-england.org.uk](mailto:julia.robertson@canoe-england.org.uk)

# The Youth Action Network forum goes live

**The Canoe England Youth Action Network (YAN) is a group of young volunteers who aim to represent the views of young people in canoeing. Tim Parker, a member of YAN, tells us more about the group.**

The Youth Action Network (YAN) has continued its recent development process through the creation of a brand new online discussion forum; the catalyst to process and discuss many exciting new ideas, in an innovative and engaging way. This is an inventive solution to bring together the members of YAN who represent young volunteers from a wide geographical area.

This new forum has immediately made communication between individual members of the group much easier, as well as making the liaison with Julia Robertson (Volunteer Development Officer and Forum Administrator) more fluent too. The forum is the result of ideas, development and planning by members of YAN, and has already been influential in new ideas being suggested, discussed and quickly acted upon, in order to bring about real change. Naturally discussion has focused, with fresh enthusiasm, at developing YAN internally through

redrafting the terms of reference, planning the implementation of a chair person and creating a new membership and recruitment action plan.

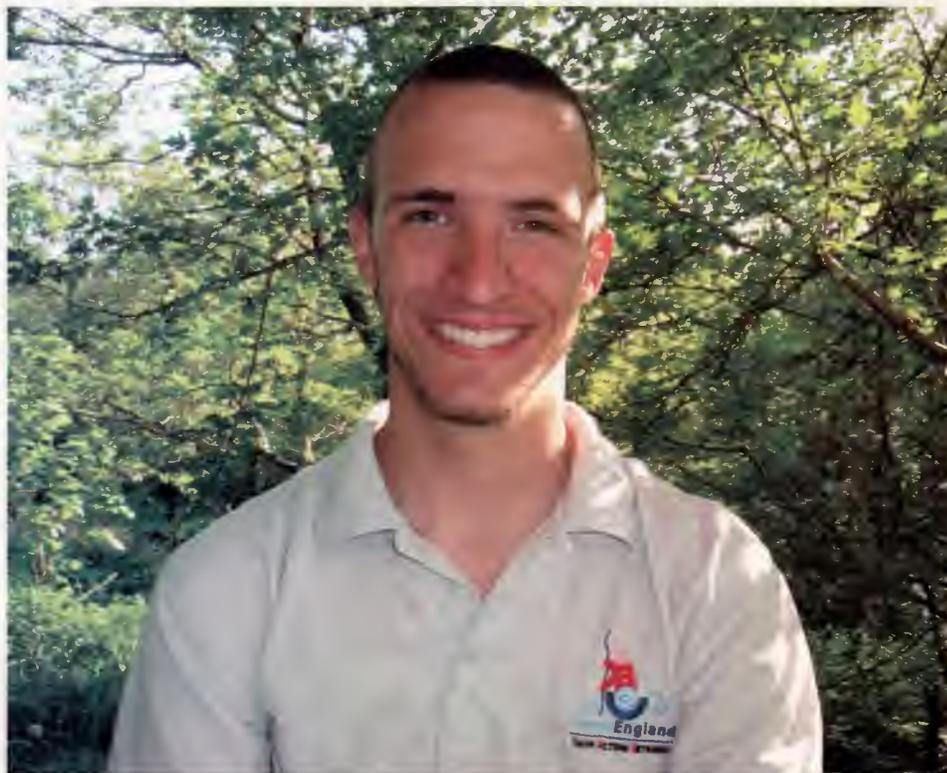
In the coming year YAN is planning to arrange two meetings (one in the summer and one at the coaching conference in December), which, alongside the forum, will help bring about change for young people in paddlesport.

#### Be a part of YAN:

YAN are currently looking to recruit new members of the group. If you are under 21, a volunteer in paddlesport, and someone who would like to make a real difference for other young people, then we would love to hear from you! To apply to become a YAN member, please email Julia Robertson.

#### YAN on Facebook

YAN are now on Facebook! If you are a young person then make sure you join the group to have your say, find out about new initiatives or events, and help YAN to provide the voice of young people. To join the group go to, [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).



**Above:** Volunteer Tim Parker, part of the Youth Action Network.

Regional  
Awards  
2011

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## 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](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers)



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# An interview with Campbell Walsh Canoe Slalom



Interview by Helen Reeves

In the comfort of Starbucks at the new Lee Valley White Water Centre I caught up with Campbell Walsh, before he heads off to Europe for the international season, to find out about the new site and what makes him a world-class slalom paddler.

**Was canoeing your first sporting love or did you play any other sports?**

I was big into rugby before I took up canoeing and used to turn out for the Sterling County mini rugby team. When I was 12, the clash with canoeing on Saturday and Sundays began and I had to make the decision to compete in canoeing or continue playing rugby. It also coincided with all the other boys getting pretty big and myself staying small and it started to hurt!

**What has been your most memorable canoeing moment so far?**

I'm not sure really – for me it isn't necessarily the big competitions – it is more the events that

changed my confidence. I remember GB team selection in 2004 when, after the event, I said to my physiologist, Hugh Mantle, that I suddenly understood what being experienced was. I felt for the first time I had used my experience to produce a good performance and that's something that has stuck with me throughout.

**You have just moved from Nottingham to Lee Valley – how's it going so far?**

Good – I enjoy living here; I like my new house as it's really close to the course, which is very convenient. It's been sunny almost every day since I have been here too! Training on the course is great, I found it pretty frustrating when I first



arrived as it was difficult but it has improved since then and training has become more enjoyable.

**How does the LVWWC compare to sites around the world?**

It's hard undoubtedly and if you ask the foreign paddlers they will say the same – it is harder than it looks. It's continuous with an awful lot of stopper, even the small ones really kill your boat speed, so it's very tiring if you're off line and getting it wrong.

**What are your ambitions for 2011?**

I am targeting my training towards the World Championships, I want to get myself into a position where I go to that race and sit on the start line knowing that, if all goes to plan, I'll be good enough to win..

**What is it about Campbell Walsh that makes you a world class slalom paddler?**

If I am going to do something I have to do it well and I think that comes over into my paddling. I don't mind hurting myself and pushing myself very hard physically, I often throw up in training so I guess I'm not shy of working hard. I am an analytical person and spend a lot of time thinking about the sport and how I can make things better.

**How would you sell canoe slalom?**

It's exciting, there is an element of unpredictability with the sport and you never know who is going to win on the day.

**Describe yourself in three words?**

That involves imagination, which I haven't got!





# Campbell Walsh

Olympic Silver Medallist

European Champion

World Bronze Medallist

World Cup Winner

GBR

NELO



Women and Girls  
in Paddlesport



# Women c

The first ever all female British Canoe Union UKCC Level 1 coach course took place in Bude, north Cornwall in March. Coaches Sam Roberts, Grace, Jenna and Andrea supported the women all the way in their canoeing and kayaking coach adventure. The north Cornwall event is just one of the all-female pilot sessions being run throughout the country.

Article by:

Andrea Vaillancourt-Alder, BCU L2



The group as well as onlookers along the Bude Canal enjoyed the camaraderie of the participants and the positive learning environment as the course took place. Fishermen, dog walkers, locals out enjoying the fantastic sunshine, young and old alike took part through banter and support as the ladies braved the cold water of the heritage waterway as they trained to become canoe coaches.



## 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](mailto:womenandgirls@bcu.org.uk)

**The sight of the all-female group inspired a local female Police Community Support Officer who shared that she, "Has always wanted to get into the sport" but thought it involved serious acrobatics and fitness. Witnessing the trainee coaches laughing and having fun inspired this local worker to get paddling! Well done ladies!**

Encouraging women into sport is an area that Canoe England is keen to develop further as currently the sport is traditionally male dominated, which can be intimidating for many females. By providing this funded female only opportunity, Canoe England has opened up the sport to new audiences thereby improving access

to the sport for those traditionally not able to take the first step towards paddlesport.

The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation working in partnership with Sports Coach UK have produced a number of fact sheets to help introduce and support women into coaching, these can be found at [www.wsff.org.uk/content/coaching-women](http://www.wsff.org.uk/content/coaching-women) and are well worth a read.

The south west students ranged in age from 23-54, all with an incredible amount of life experience, which will enhance their coaching activity. St Austell, Tamar Canoe Association, Port of Plymouth, South Avon Canoe Clubs and Mendip Outdoor Pursuits centre were represented.

# an!



Jenna Sanders travelled from the midlands to Bude, as there is a shortage of female assessors in the South West. Something, which we hope will be remedied in the near future! Jenna shared that she, "Was really impressed by the supportive atmosphere and the increase in confidence gained throughout the course was inspiring!"

The potential impact of this funded opportunity will be determined over the up and coming paddling season as the ladies introduce beginners and continue to support paddlers participating in the sport through their clubs, work places as well as through recreational waterway sessions.

### Learning environments

Sam Roberts explained that, "Coaching is an open book and to offer ladies only, men only or mixed groups, provides options for up and coming coaches to decide which learning environment is best for them. This was a very positive ladies only session, very dynamic! Having run many courses I've never had this type of honest feedback from ladies before, it was totally different with a lot more reflection and ideas coming out. I'm bowled

over! I learnt so much from these ladies and have new ideas for games too!"

The ladies passed with flying colours – all scoring above 94%, well done ladies!

The participants provided some thought provoking ideas for making the sport more accessible to female paddlers across the country. One main concern was the lack of promotion of the course, which many found out through word of mouth. While clubs received the information directly, many did not promote it with their female members.

### Where to go next

The ladies are also keen to continue on their learning path and would welcome information on where to go next, tips on progressing on to Level 2 with ideas for running club sessions to help them progress.

One lady shared that, "When advertising coach courses a background of the coach running the course could be helpful. This would help me see who may suit my learning style the best, some are more female friendly than others!"

### When asked what the best thing about participating in an all-female course was?

- Similar learning style, no one person trying to show off.
- Training with like-minded people.
- Cake, flowers, sweets, strawberries and Linda's ducks!
- Coaches that understand females.
- It was a more relaxed atmosphere and a more honest learning environment because everyone seemed happy to talk about their strengths and weaknesses openly.
- It was empowering and made me feel proud to be a female paddler!
- Great as a confidence builder as I realised that I am not the only one who has self-doubt. I don't think that men would verbalise this fact. Can't learn if you're fearful!
- Having the confidence to practice coaching without feeling intimidated.
- Atmosphere feels supportive and not competitive.
- The more confident and ebullient ladies also had great fun standing on the gunnels to paddle or trying out a K1 to test their mettle and skill. The course was gentle but it certainly didn't hold the more adventurous women back.
- I can be me.

### Participants also revealed that:

- This has been the best kayaking/canoeing course I have done yet, even after 20 odd years of paddling there is still more I can do to improve my sweep stroke!
- I would recommend this course to any female paddler wanting to get in to coaching.
- Sam has been a great sport! It has also been great fun sharing our experiences, worries, anxieties etc.
- Considering I was a bit nervous that I wouldn't be up to standard it's been far from intimidating, very open and I've learnt a lot!

**Thanks to Canoe England for taking the initiative and running this pilot and to all who took part. Special thanks to Sam who changed roles and made the ladies lunch every day! What a great treat for all involved.**

**For all those ladies reading this we hope that you are inspired to get onto the coaching ladder. Never doubt your ability; these ladies proved that anything is possible!**

# Sun and splashes for the

## Slalom selection

Whilst the majority of the country enjoyed an extra day's holiday to celebrate the Royal Wedding, the canoe slalom fraternity also headed to London, to the new Lee Valley White Water Centre, venue of the 2012 Olympic Canoe Slalom competition, for the 2011 GB Canoeing national team selection and the UK Championships.

**Feature by:** Helen Reeves. **Although having trained on the exciting and exhilarating white water throughout the early months in the year, it was to be the first time that canoe slalom athletes raced in anger down the fast and furious course.**

**Photos by:** Antony Edmonds.

More than 5,000 people flooded through the gates across the weekend to get a glimpse of what is to come 16 months from now – being the largest ever crowd for a GB Canoeing selection event. There was an obvious buzz of excitement and enthusiasm amongst the crowd, as they enjoyed the thrill of canoe slalom competition.

Lee Valley was basked in glorious sunshine throughout the weekend, but the relentless wind provided difficult racing conditions for the athletes. With three races across the weekend – drama and suspense was inevitable. To gain an all-important top three position for a place in the 2011 GB team, the athletes had to compete in all three races with their best two results counting.

Already pre-selected in the C2, following their bronze medal at last year's World Championships, David Florence and Richard Hounslow took the opportunity to gain essential racing practice and demonstrated their continued form, recording

three stylish wins. Tight racing amongst the Under 23 crews saw second place go to Rhys Davies and Matt Lister and third to Adam Burgess and Greg Pitt.

In his C1, David Florence came back from a first round hiccup to dominate the second and third races, taking the overall title. Having a win on day one of the competition, Mark Proctor confirmed his second place with another solid performance on day three. Daniel Goddard took third place having changed discipline from C2, back to his first love C1 at the end of last season.

Richard Hounslow came out with all guns blazing in the Men's K1 to dominate racing from the outset taking the win in race one and two and cementing himself in first place, ahead of Olympic silver medalist Campbell Walsh who finished second. Third place was a tightly fought competition with a number of boats relying on the final day of racing. Huw Swetnam put his experience into practice, producing a stunning final run to win day three and take the third position overall in the UK Championships.

The Women's K1 event saw Laura Blakeman take the lead on day one and with second places on days two and three she took the overall win. Having just recovered from shingles, 2008 Olympian Fiona Pennie was hot on the heels of Blakeman taking a win and second place to finish overall second. Lizzie Neave pulled everything out of the bag on her last run of the weekend claiming the third spot.

Following her impressive debut on the senior team last year, Mallory Franklin continued to dominate the Women's C1 class, winning all three races of the weekend to take the UK Championship title, with Alice Spencer finishing second and Jacquelyn Shaw in third.

Head Coach Jurg Gotz commented, "It's been exciting racing here this weekend, there have been very good performances in extremely difficult conditions. The race has run like clockwork and seeing so many spectators is fantastic, it provides the athletes with the environment they get when competing abroad."

With the team selected, next stop is the European Championships in Le Seu d'Urgell in June.



**Above:** Laura Blakeman.



**Above:** Huw Swetnam.

# The start of the racing season

## Sprint selection

Glorious sunshine shone on the regatta course in Nottingham for the start of the sprint racing season. The regatta was the first opportunity for GB athletes to race since the World Championships last year and was a chance to stake their claim for a place in the 2011 GB team.

**Feature by:** Helen Reeves. **In the Men's kayak events, Paul Wycherley was the star of the show, storming to victory in the K1 1000m race, with a five second lead ahead of Ben Farrell who finished second with Jon Boyton in third.**

**Photos by:** Antony Edmonds.

Teaming up with Boyton, Wycherley took the K2 1000m crown ahead of Tom Hide and Ed Rutherford, his winning streak was to show no sign of wavering as he made it a clean sweep of the 1000m titles winning the K4 1000m race with crew mates Farrell, Boyton and Andy Daniels.

The racing in the men's 200m was top class with a field full of World Championship medallists. Amongst the line up was World Champion Ed McKeever, world bronze medallists Jon Schofield and Liam Heath and their relay team mate Ed Cox.

In Saturday's 200m final, it wasn't to be McKeever's day, being narrowly beaten by team mate Heath. Heath continued his winning streak in the K2 200m with partner Jon Schofield, whilst McKeever teamed up with Andy Daniels finishing in second and Ed Cox and Kristian Reeves finishing third.

Demonstrating his mental toughness, McKeever gained revenge in Sunday's 200m race taking the victory from Heath with Schofield close behind in third.

Richard Jefferies demonstrated his continual development having only been canoeing for three years, by dominating the C1 200m from start to finish, looking in great form.

The C1 1000m race saw veteran James Train take the win ahead of Matt Lawrence. Lawrence then teamed up with James Stein to take victory in the C2 1000m.

With world bronze medallist Rachel Cawthorn absent, the Women's K1 500m was an eagerly anticipated race. 2008 Olympian Jessica Walker stormed to first place ahead of Lani Belcher with Angela Hannah in third. Walker continued her K1 dominance, winning the 200m just in front of Hannah. Later, teaming up with Belcher, Walker added to her titles by claiming the win in the K2 500m finishing just a fraction of a second ahead of Abigail Edmonds and Louisa Sawers.

In the Women's K4 500m event racing was tight, seeing two high quality crews battling right to the line for first place where Edmonds superbly stroked her boat of Mason, Sawers and Hannah to the win.

The busy weekend of racing, illustrated the class and strength of our GB Canoeing team leaving us with confidence that 2011 will be another medal winning year.



Above: Hayleigh Mason.



Above: Jess Walker.



Above: Paul Wycherley.

## Freestyle kicks off

April saw the kick off of this year's Freestyle kayaking league. With the crown of British Champion and a place on the GB Freestyle team up for grabs for the overall winner, there was a competitive edge in the air.

First up was the flat water freestyle competition, where competitors had 50 seconds to impress the judges with their skills.

The open competition was held in small pour over feature with aerated water dropping into a pool. The feature was hard and made fluid rides very difficult, it lent itself to the lower scoring cartwheel and split wheel combinations and only gave up loops, godzillas, mcnasties and phonics' when they were executed perfectly.

The day ended with a prize giving for the novice competition, kindly donated by Square Rock, and everyone saying goodbye until next time.

## Student surf

Gwithian Beach saw the third annual student surf kayak competition. There were some exceptional performances by Phil Watson, Emma Wynter, Jack Barker and a fantastic turn out. The event was added to greatly by the presence of AS Watersports who kindly provided some fantastic prizes and also had demo equipment available. For more information and results visit: [www.englishsurfingkayak.org.uk/](http://www.englishsurfingkayak.org.uk/)

## Norwich 5k

Big cash prizes, made possible by the generosity of sponsor DM Active Sport, gave paddlers from all over the country the incentive to compete in the Norwich Canoe Club 5k.

First race was the under 12 male and female 2.5k. The Norwich team dominated both the races, with the boy's win by Kieren Hayward. In the female race sisters Marnie and Freja Banfield battled it out but in the end it was the older sister Marnie who gained first place.

The second race of the day was the junior and senior men and the cash prizes had attracted some of GB's top paddlers. From the start Tim Pendle went off hard, working with fellow Norwich paddler Ben Bradshaw to build up a lead on the other paddlers. Pendle and Bradshaw kept pushing and the gap between them and the other paddlers continued to grow, securing them first (Pendle) and second (Bradshaw). Third place was Wey's Phil Gunney.

The final race of the day saw the ladies take to the water. Leading from the start and finishing in first place was Claire Gunney from Wey. A group of Norwich paddlers fought hard for second, where Stacey Terry pulled away from the rest of the group. Third place went to 15-year old Matilda Stevenson.



Above: Marnie and Freja Banfield

# A festival of surf

**The Black Rock Surf Festival, at Widemouth Bay, is comprised of the Shoreline Extreme Sports Handicap event, followed by an evening out in Bude and finishing with the Bude Canoe Club's Black Rock Contest on the Sunday.**

The Handicap Event follows a unique format where competitors of all abilities surf against each other scoring points, which are later added to their handicap rank to give a final result.

Competitors must surf safely and fairly, avoiding collisions and points are given for choice of wave, good position on the wave face but most of all for the manoeuvres that are performed during the ride.

Early in the contest Marc Woolward, Jack Barker, Jim Winter, Ed Long and Jack Horwell were looking particularly good and local youngsters Jack Davies and Josh Balsdon were having a battle of their own catching some great white water reforms. The final itself was a brutal affair taking place now in the high tide shore dump, bravery was as important as wave selection with finalists James Hawker, Chris

Hobson, Philip Watson and Sam Davenport pushing their skills to the limit.

On to Sunday, where the surf was just as formidable, especially at low tide and where the sun was even brighter than the day before. The Long Boat Open was the biggest event during Sunday with some spectacular wipe outs and end manoeuvres especially in the early heats. A great number of juniors fought hard in the Junior Short Boat class with some very stylist surfing particularly from Dylan Petherick, Jack Barker, James Gossan, Glenn Scott and Aidan Brackenbury.

Andy McCullough won both the over 40 short boat and over 40 long boat, a fine performance at the end of the day and very well deserved. In the Open Long Boat the final battle was between Philip Watson, Simon Hammond, Aidan Brackenbury and Ed Long. All surfed some spectacular waves but it was Philip Watson who narrowly came out on top.

For information see: [www.shorelineactivities.co.uk](http://www.shorelineactivities.co.uk)  
Photo: Austin Davies



## Reigning champions defend their titles

**Selection for the British raft team took place at Lee Valley White Water Centre in April. The competition followed the usual IRF format of time trial, head to head sprints, slalom and endurance.**

With the racing underway, it was down to last year's champions to defend their title against every other team giving it their all for the chance to represent GB at the forthcoming World Championships in Costa Rica this October. There was no room for complacency here – the unforgiving water had the potential to take any team off their line.

The men's racing proved very tight between last year's champions and the relative newcomers: Team Square Rock, made up mostly of young slalom paddlers, managed to equal the defending men's team in the slalom event meaning that their slower runs were compared. In the ladies, SHERaft team had an incredibly unfortunate couple of races, which set them back, costing them their second

place title. Showing great improvements since last year, the Welsh Dragons stormed through to take silver position, securing their place in future European competitions.

Team Square Rock, who apart from coming second, are all under 21, meaning that they will also be heading out to Costa Rica to take part in the Youth World Raft Championships.

Photo: Jason Pacey





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# Reaping the rew

## Dave Burne and team have an interesting time on the Yagnob, Tajikistan.

I first heard about Tajikistan four years ago through a kayaking article written by a friend of mine, Jay Sigbrandt. His description of the country, with its fascinating culture, big volume rivers and huge mountain ranges left me keen to get out there myself some time. That time came last summer.

**Feature by:** Dave Burne  
**Photos by:** Hugh Thomas, Dave Burne  
**There have only been a very limited number of groups that have headed out to Tajikistan. Most of these groups had been there between September and November. We hoped to do some more exploratory boating in the country and wanted high water levels in the hope that some side creeks that are usually too low later on in the year would still be in condition.**



### Exploring the Pamirs

Most of the exploring was done in the first few weeks boating. We were in the spectacular Pamir Mountains in the west of the country. Despite all the red tape and driving we met some great people and found some cracking runs.

Our rough itinerary was put together relying on maps as well as local knowledge but we had to be flexible as some rivers were too big and some seemingly insignificant tributaries turned out to be well worthwhile! There were also uncountable generous offers of riverside chi and bread, which have also added to the requirement of fluid plans!

The only real disappointment of the Pamirs was that the power of the Gunt was a bit too intimidating for us! With a huge lack of eddies, individual rapids lead into one another, meaning scouting your line a kilometre at a time. No thanks!

We were uneasy about our next mission for Tajikistan and our real aim for the expedition. To be the first British group of only a handful worldwide to complete the Yagnob River. We were

expecting it to take us roughly three or four days on the water, but what we were looking forward to least was the 26ku hike over a 3,800m pass with all our food, cooking and sleeping equipment, safety kit, first aid, sat phone. It was going to be a long painful walk! Making the decision as to when the Yagnob would be best paddled was made even more difficult because we couldn't see the river and its level before deciding whether to get on or not.

After much deliberation we decided to give her a go. Food and supplies were bought from a busy bazaar in the Dushanbe, the capital city, ready for a six-day unsupported trip.

### Day one: Shakira joins the expedition

Previous experience had 'subtly' suggested that rivers were high at this time of year, so it was encouraging to drive past the Sarey Miyonna (our warm up river) on the journey to Romit. This had dropped substantially, so hopes for the Yagnob were raised.

The village of Romit marked the end of the track we were using as a road. It was all leg work from here on. Luckily we had some kayak carrying systems, which made the awkward 30kg luggage slightly more bearable. Something else that helped out was Shakira – our new donkey. Because it was harvest season, and the farmers had to attend to their crops, it was actually cheaper to buy her than to hire her with a 'leader'. Two minutes of donkey management training later and we were off.

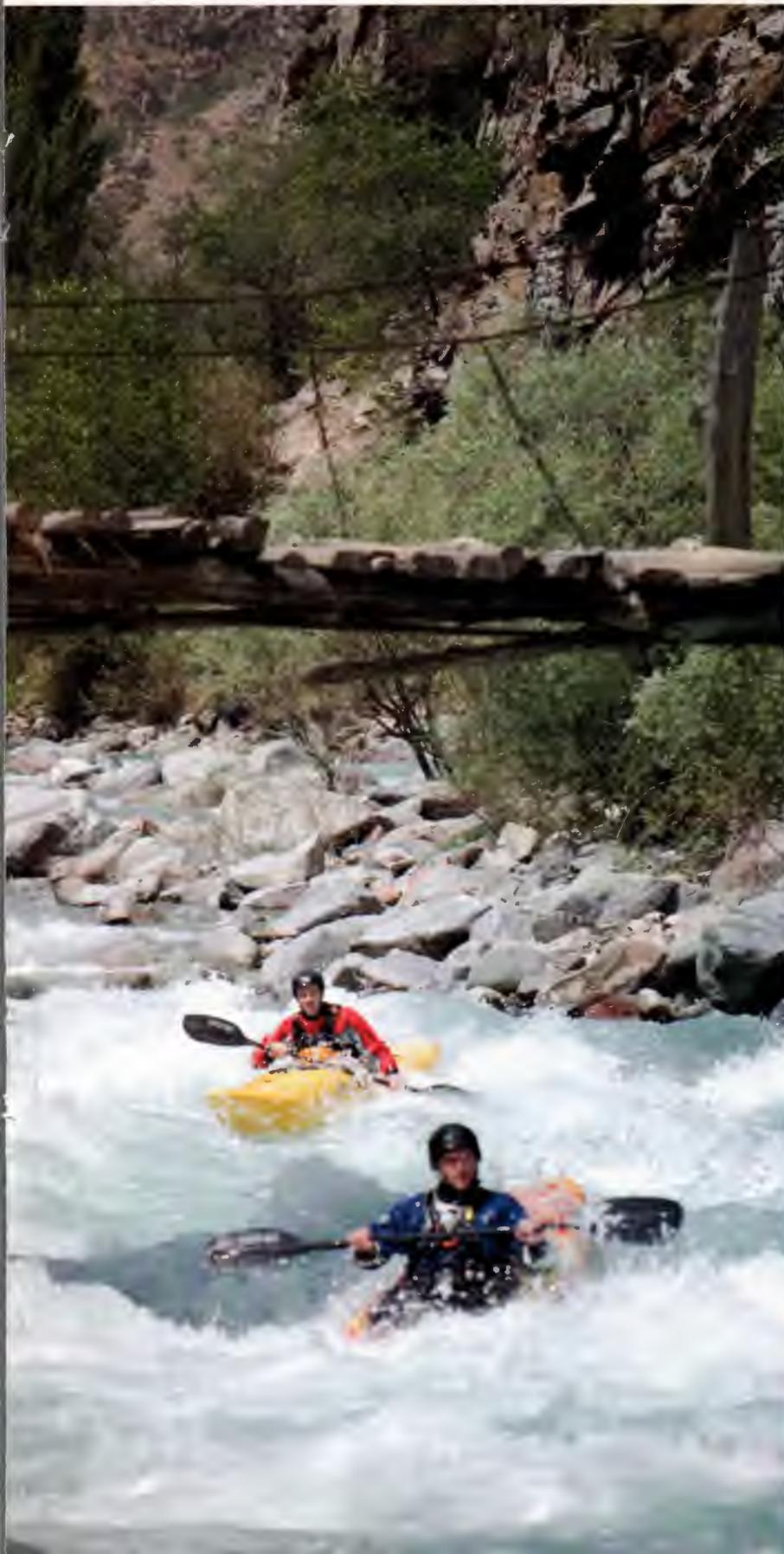
Due to a late start we didn't get far that first day, so rested up beside the fire with our alarm clocks set for an early morning.

### Day two: pain in the donkey

It turns out there is a lot of skill to donkey management. Even loading Shakira up and in an even, comfortable way was made to look easy by the villagers the day before. Then there's the difficulty in directing a thistle loving donkey with a massive heavy lump attached to your back! Somehow we made it to the peak of the pass, just in time for a celebratory photograph in the setting sun, and the knowledge that going a shorter distance down hill the next day couldn't be half as bad... surely!



# ards... eventually!



## Day three: Taking the high road

The day before we set off for the Yagnob we received an email from some American friends who had paddled the river before: "If the first few kilometres are pushy, you're in for a rough ride!"

We were nervous! What had the river got in store for us? Our first glimpse of the river set in some relief though. From what we could see, the water colour indicated it wasn't too high, and it was no more than Grade II until for as far as we could see.

However, a couple of kilometres down the line and we ran into our first real problem. A long boulder garden rapid thundered round the corner. We battled the terrain to portage the first section, only to realise that the rapid entered a deep canyon, which we couldn't scout from river level.

A decision had to be made. Retrace our steps (scrambles) then carry our kayaks up and around the gorge. After two days of pain and exhaustion, this was not the welcome we wanted from the river! Fortunately it did give us a better viewpoint to inspect the whole of the 5kms of steep sided gorge.

## Day four: Take me to the river

The results of the inspection showed some positive results. If we could find somewhere to access the river side the rest of the gorge looked amazing from 30 metres up. With a nifty bit of ropework and a whole load of scrambling, we were ready to boof our way through the great pool drop rapids that the gorge had in store for us.

We exited the gorge to glorious sunshine and corner after corner of continuous Grade III/IV. However, after 5kms of gentle paddling there was more bad news. A long, clean entry gorge lead into a huge constriction in the river, with all the water seeming to go under a huge slab of rock, which had been wedged at water level between the narrow walls gorge walls. Time to shoulder the boats again!

This was the pattern that developed over the next day or two. Some lovely rapids followed by a horrible gorge what, at best, required a long difficult inspection of its entirety and at worst had to be walked in its entirety.

## Day five: Civilisation!

These portages were always long and difficult, with unstable boulder scrambling required or tight traverses around steep slopes. It was exhausting work!





For the rest of the day Hugh was busy finding out (not unsurprisingly), that when you're in the middle of a gorge in remote Tajikistan, insurance companies are not much help. Despite promising to send an ambulance to our location which would arrive the next day at 08.00.

Meanwhile we were making some more attainable plans about Hugh's exit strategy. These involved two donkeys, a load of rope, and a farmer to lead the way and a large sum of Somoni, the local currency!

Discussions and talks with the villagers were even more limited than normal. Usually our Tajik phrase book came up with the goods but the Yagnobi ethnic group are the only remaining speakers of Soghdian – an 8th Century eastern Iranian language.

We were happy to have our first glimpse of civilisation on day five – a small village up on the hillside. After eating rice and flavourings for such a long time we didn't mind the long walk up the hill to take advantage of local hospitality.

Our welcome was typical of Tajik style, the Chi was already coming up to boil and the round, nutty bread was being torn for us to share. Undoubtedly though the best bit about our arrival was a bucket of hot water to dip the feet in. The numerous blisters definitely appreciated that one!

It turns out we were going to get to know this quaint little village quite well!

After the much appreciated meal we hauled our boats back on our shoulders, and made our way down to the riverside... but we didn't get far.

Surviving narrow paths with vertical cliff sides, loose scree slope traverses and steep rock scrambles seemed to be no problem for Hugh but now we were on the most smooth and well worn path of the trip he took a tumble. Twenty minutes after saying our goodbyes, Hugh hobbled back to the house propped up by two of us either side, ankle tightly wrapped in a splint. We were in the middle of nowhere, in a village not marked on our Russian maps, unsure of the nearest route to an accessible point. This was bad news! On the plus side the maternal instinct of the mother of the house took over and we were fondly looked after, even having a consultation with the local 'doctor' whilst hiding out from the oncoming storm.

With help from the local villagers and the GPS, we were able to find out exactly where we were on the map and that we were only 30ku away from the nearest road.

**Days six and seven: Things can only get better**

While Hugh was trying his best to enjoy an uncomfortable ride on a donkey, the rest of us were discovering that the river gods of the Yagnob had a heart. The sun broke through the storm clouds and the river became more pool drop in nature. There were still gorges, but they were breathtaking monuments of geology and best of all, could be paddled.

After the challenges of the past couple of days, this is what we wanted from the expedition. Everything became clean and runnable. The only thing hindering us from truly enjoying the experience was the guilt that, having completed the painful part of the trip, Hugh was unable to reap the rewards as we were doing.

This was only one river out of many. All in all, Tajikistan will work you hard but reward you well. We had many successes and some disappointments but it's all worthwhile in a destination which provides some fascinating cultural experiences, spectacular scenery and of course, quality boating in a range of styles.

David Burne is a 23-year old medical student who has a passion for kayaking. He paddled with fellow Brits Hugh Thomas, Ben Bedingham, and Danny Young.

**Thanks**

Big thanks to Palm and Dagger for the equipment and Nomads; To the Canoe Foundation (UK) for help with funding. Also to Middy, Andrew and Simon from 'Paddle the Pamirs' for their enthusiasm and help. To Umed our translator for getting us out of multiple tricky situations! 🏡

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## An interview with James Benns, Freestyle

James Benns is Freestyle's junior men's British Champion. He won a silver medal at the European Championships in Lienz last year and, at just 14 years old, was the youngest competitor at the event.

**This year's international competition season is upon us, starting with the World Championships in Germany later this month.**

**How are you feeling ahead of the championships? Have you set yourself any targets?**

I have set myself the target of top ten; I think this is going to be difficult but hopefully achievable with some hard work.

**Who do you see as being your biggest competition and why?**

I see the juniors from America and Spain as being the toughest competition; Dane Jackson is a favourite to win this year and Quim Fontane Maso is paddling really well at the moment; I'm sure you can guess who is from which country!

**And are there any other members of the GB team you think we should be looking out for?**

The team, this year, is stronger than it's ever been. Matt Rogers is new to the team but is an extremely talented paddler and an experienced competitor.

**How did you first get into canoeing and, in particular, what made you choose freestyle?**

I thought kayaking sounded fun, so I contacted my local club. The brilliant people at Sudbury Canoe Club taught me a lot, from sweep strokes to my first Eskimo role. I chose freestyle because I

thought the people I saw doing cartwheels looked coolest and so, naturally, I wanted to do it too!

**To score points in freestyle, you have to pull off lots of different moves – which are your favourites, and why?**

The air loop never fails to impress and I've always enjoyed the whu, because of the amount of quick rotations and cartwheels.

**Are there any moves you've struggled to master, or are currently working on?**

I'm currently working on making my moves consistent in a wide range of features and I'm trying to slip out of the bad habit of just doing right-handed moves!

**You won a silver medal at the European Championships in Lienz last year. That must have been a really special moment for you – tell us how it felt.**

I placed way higher than I expected to and it was an amazing experience. I aimed for top ten, so I was very happy when I made it all the way to second place!

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

I don't really get nervous anymore. The night before I like to know exactly what I'm going to do, eat well and get lots of rest.

**And finally! What's next for you – what are you looking forward to this year?**

I'm really looking forward to a summer of paddling with good friends. I can't wait to break up from school either!

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



### Quickfire questions!

**I would describe my character as...**

laid back (some call it laziness!)

**The last book I read was...**

I don't have the patience for books!

**My ultimate goal is...** to get by whilst living a fun and full lifestyle.

**I relax by...**

chilling out with friends on the riverbank.

**My favourite food is...**

cereal, especially sugar puffs.

**My favourite drink is...** any fruit juice.

**My favourite place in the world is...** I haven't been to enough countries to decide but as of yet, it is any decent play spot with good company and warm weather!

**On my iPod I'm listening to...** anything a little catchy with a good beat, excluding Justin Beiber and Westlife!

**The people that have influenced my success most are...** Mike Dodd from my club has taught me a lot and been extremely helpful throughout my time paddling. More specific to freestyle, I have a lot to thank Matt Chadder for. He has supported me totally, from my very first competition and he continues to support young paddlers through the youth freestyle series. My parents have been outstanding in allowing me to go away so often and driving me all over the place. They have been supportive and helpful from the first time I ever paddled white water.

**The one thing I would change about Freestyle is...**

I would make it more appealing to everyone. I also think a surfing style score system would work well, maybe a style multiplier. In recent years, freestyle has become quite restrictive which isn't really what the sport is about.

**If I hadn't got into canoeing I would be...** achieving highly at school!

**In 10 years time I would like to be...**

as good at paddling as I can possibly be and achieving highly in competition.



Above: James Benns.



## Southwater Watersports 12/12 Paddlethon

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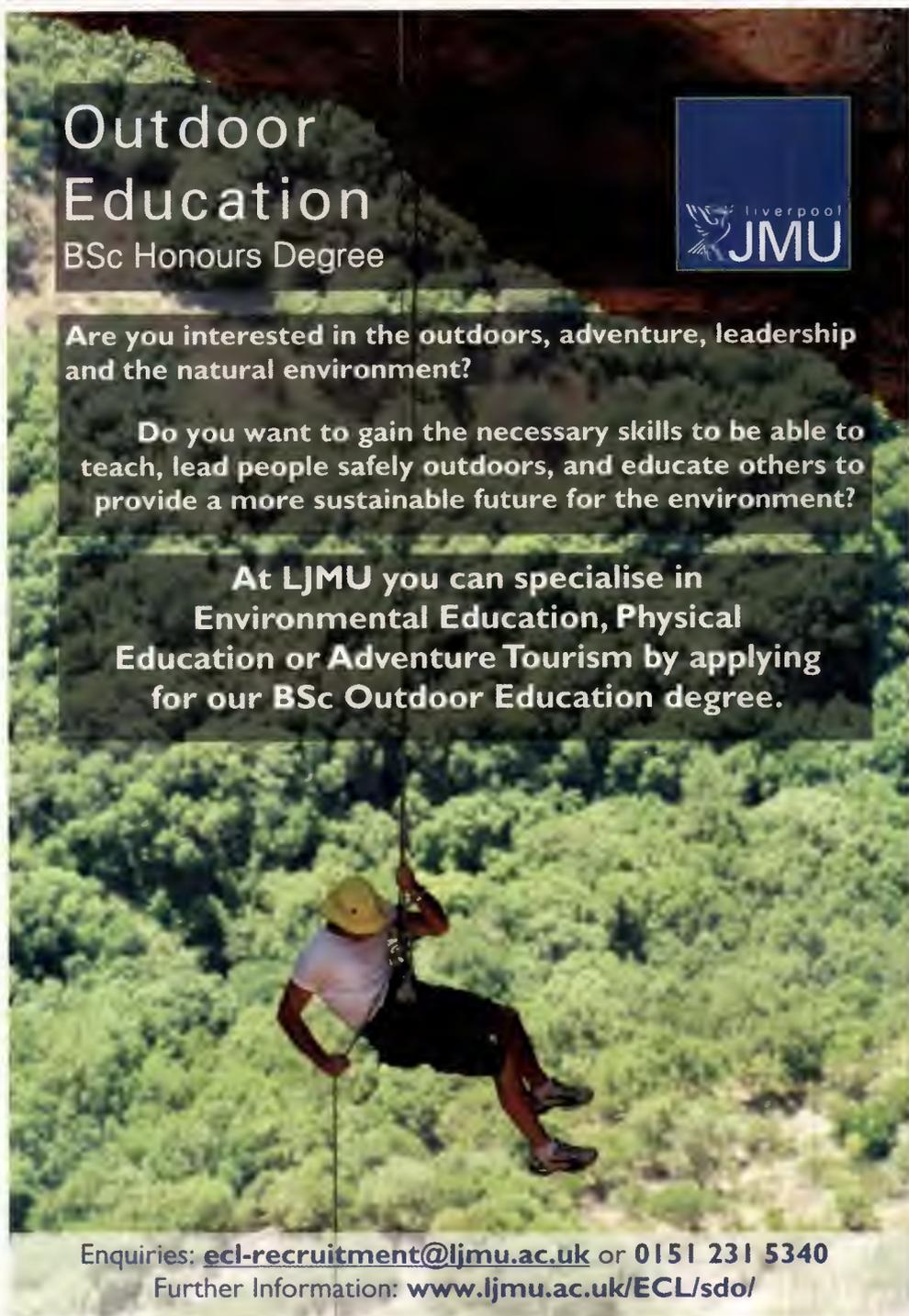
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# Red card to red tape

The 22nd March saw the launch of a Sport and Recreation Alliance Review named 'Red Card to Red Tape – how sports clubs want to break free from bureaucracy, a report into the regulatory burden on sport and recreation clubs'. The review was commissioned by the Minister for Sport and the Olympics, Hugh Robertson MP and will feed into the government's wider review of regulation being conducted by the Cabinet Office. Part of the review covers access to inland waters which, as we all know, the lack of clarity and certainty of access acts as a barrier for greater participation in watersports.

The review recommends that, "DEFRA should consider ways of moving towards a system where there is a general statutory right of access to inland water for recreational purposes. If greater sustainable access is given to our waterways, participation levels of water recreation will undoubtedly increase as over 90% of the population live within two miles of a waterway and will therefore be able to reach waterways easily. Any system should be

founded in the context of user groups sharing space and adopting 'Best of Both Worlds' principles, respecting needs of land managers and underpinned by good environmental practice."

This is the rights and responsibilities for all owners and users as per the Scottish Outdoor Access Code that we have been asking for... [www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/22-03-2011/red-card-red-tape-launched](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/22-03-2011/red-card-red-tape-launched)

## A new era for the waterways

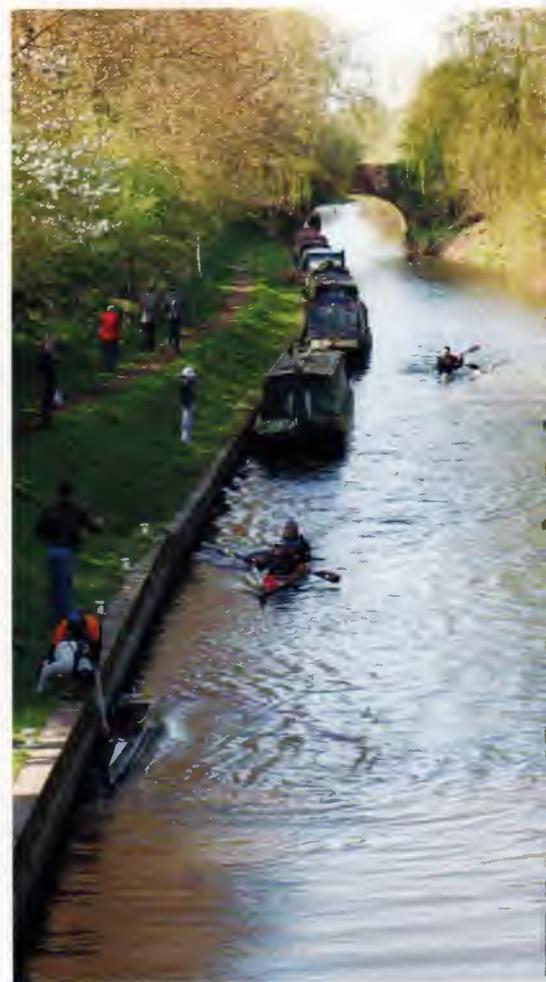
We have regularly reported in Canoe Focus about the planned changes to British Waterways (BW). Plans to create one of Britain's biggest charities to secure the future of more than 4,000 kilometres of canals and rivers in England and Wales have been set out.

The government announced last year that the publicly owned inland waterways, currently managed by BW and the Environment Agency (EA), should in future be managed by a new charity.

This would secure the waterway's long-term, sustainable financial future by enabling the new body to access new sources of income and greater public support and give local people a greater say in their upkeep.

Names for the new charity are under discussion but whatever name is chosen, it needs to be representative of what it actually is. The old name of British Waterways is in fact not right as it does not cover all the British Waterways, as there are the EA navigations as well as other navigation authorities such as the Broad Authority, Middle Levels and other privately owned canal organisations. The new charity will not include the current BW network in Scotland, as they will remain in public ownership under the Scottish government.

The consultation document is published at [www.defra.gov.uk/consult/waterways-1103/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/waterways-1103/) Do have a look and reply to it too.



Having this in a document initiated by the government is a great step forward. Please write to your MP asking them to support the document as it is necessary to offer them something practical to do, something which they can make a difference to. Here are two suggestions:

- 1) The review is with DCMS who are considering which recommendations to prioritise. Ask your MP to write to the Minister for Sport, Hugh Robertson to highlight the access recommendation as important to their constituents.
- 2) Caroline Spelman (DEFRA Secretary of State) shows little sympathy for access issues and will not meet with us to discuss them. Ask your MP to write to Caroline Spelman to ask her to meet with the Sport and Recreation Alliance to discuss issues on improving access to inland water as recommended in 'Red Card to Red Tape'.

Additional guidance about lobbying your MP can be found at [www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/lobbying-and-campaigning/campaigns/regulatory-burden-review/lobbying-your-mp](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/lobbying-and-campaigning/campaigns/regulatory-burden-review/lobbying-your-mp)

The more letters you send, the more the profile of the report and the access issue is raised. Do it today, do not put it off! Find details for your MP at: [www.writetothem.com/](http://www.writetothem.com/)

# Replies from DEFRA

We have been contacted by a few of you who have received a standard reply from DEFRA who are stating:

We believe that access agreements have in fact worked. Our pilot studies showed that access agreements could:

- Ensure canoeing is well managed and fits in with other activities such as fishing and boating and that everyone is clear about their rights and responsibilities.
- Help make canoeing safer by installing signs and structures, such as access or exit points, along agreed access routes and setting out conditions for their inspection, repair and maintenance.
- Protect the water environment because each agreement is tailor-made, taking into account the specific conditions of the river and the requirements of local landowners.
- Spark regeneration of urban waterways and boost local economies.



You may remember the much-heralded Brighton University work after concerns about recreational access to inland waters for members of the public in England have been evident for many years.

This resulted in three research projects undertaken on behalf of DEFRA by the Environment Agency (EA) who in turn have used Brighton University to undertake the research work and negotiations.

- Water-Based Sport and Recreation: The Facts. Published 2000/2001.
- Water-Based Sport and Recreation – Improving Access for Canoeing on Inland Waterways – A Study of the Feasibility of Access Agreements. Published 2004.
- Improving Access for Canoeing on Inland Waterways implementing the findings of second piece of work. The final report was titled: Putting Voluntary Canoe Access Agreements In Place. Published 2006.

The EA stated publicly that something like the Public Access to Inland Waters 2007 Ten Minute Rule Bill, which was presented by former MP Des Turner, would enable them to meet their statutory duty of promoting recreation on and around inland waters. In addition, and saying as the RAC have said for years that access agreements do not work, Neil Ravenscroft (Brighton University working for the Environment Agency on the latest Project – Putting Voluntary Access Agreements in Place) gave a presentation at the Outdoors Show in March 2006 and stated that, “negotiating voluntary access agreements is an expensive and resource rich exercise.”

Even the EA was unable to contact all the riparian owners concerning the rivers they were working on trying to achieve agreements, so where they were unable to gain permission they assumed a right of access. This illustrates the need for greater clarity, which the Bill aimed to provide.

## What did the final study of 2006 actually achieve?

Very little. 72kms (45 miles) has been negotiated for paddlers, but in reality there was already agreement and acceptance for canoeing to take place on much of the area of study (the EA had sponsored a canoeists guide on the River Waveney). So in two years a meagre 20 miles of access have been gained with some of that being highly restrictive and complicated.

## Just a few reasons why the study is flawed

- On approximately half of the rivers addressed in this study, access was already in place or not contested.
- Rather than finding an innovative solution this study fuelled the angling versus canoeing debate.
- In the light of the CRoW and the Scottish Land Reform Act and following example from other European countries, canoeists are right to expect a more realistic approach to access.

# Take action for access

Doug Dew from [www.songofthepaddle.co.uk](http://www.songofthepaddle.co.uk) describes how forum members are campaigning for access.

If we paddlers want access to the thousands of miles of rivers allegedly forbidden to us, we are going to have to fight for it. There are 41,000 miles of rivers and we have access to less than 4%.

**England and Wales are the only countries in world, apart from Iraq, where landowners think they have the power to forbid us access to the river. This is wrong, wrong, wrong. Why on earth do we put up with it?**

When you read posts in forums and Facebook about the access situation for paddlers it easy to get downhearted. Usually it is someone else's fault: the anglers, the landowners, the BCU, the politicians etc. We poor paddlers are victims; we are going to have tantrums until 'they' give us what we want.

This attitude is wrong. If you feel like a victim, start taking action. You will feel much better. I have to admit to feeling that way myself. I hate being told where I can and cannot paddle. I believe with a passion that rivers should open to us like public footpaths. So much of England's beauty is forbidden to us to enjoy and share. It seems to me like the last remnant of the Feudal system, where our lords and masters roam freely and we are confined to what little space they leave us.

I went to the BCU Annual General Meeting where I met Tamsin Phipps and Paul Owen and asked questions about access. Since then I have been in frequent contact and received help with the campaign and also learnt a lot about the realities of dealing with government.

This topic was often discussed on my favourite website: [www.songofthepaddle.co.uk](http://www.songofthepaddle.co.uk). There were people there who were just as frustrated as me; I suggested to Magikelly, the owner of the site, that we start an access campaign forum. The fundamental idea is that we need do this for ourselves, not moan on the sidelines waiting for others. Magikelly agreed and the forum started on 8th March 2011. You will find the access forum here: [www.songofthepaddle.co.uk/forum](http://www.songofthepaddle.co.uk/forum).

I am new to this cause... there are many others who have worked long and hard for years and I pay tribute to their persistence and energy.

The first thing we did was to encourage people to write to their MPs. It is easy on the Internet to find out who your MP is. You can even use a special web site to create an email in the correct format and send it. We gave ideas on what to write, but asked that people compose their own

letter. We have written to about 40 MPs so far and capturing their responses whilst building a database of who are our friends and who are not.

### 38 Degrees

Do you know about '38 Degrees'? They campaign on issues raised by their members, using the same sort of Internet based strategies that President Obama used to get elected. If you want them to campaign, you put up an idea on their website and people vote for it. We got behind a campaign idea to create the same access rights to inland waterways in England as they have in Scotland. We pushed it from 430th position to sixth. It is the second most popular environmental idea for a campaign.

We contacted lots of people who might have an interest, to ask them to vote. We got a big response from the outdoor swimmers and from other canoe forums, contacting as many canoe clubs as we could. We do not know when or if 38 Degrees will get behind this idea, but we feel we have contributed by bringing our campaign to prominence, outside the paddling community. Check it out and vote:

<http://38degrees.uservoice.com/forums/78585-campaign-suggestions/suggestions/1265611-access-rights-in-england>.

### Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance (S&RA) represents national sporting and recreational bodies such as football, rugby, cycling, ramblers, anglers and the BCU. They investigate issues and make recommendations to government persuading them to adopt their recommendations. In late March they wrote a report for the Minister of Sport called 'Red Card to Red Tape'. It recommends that government make it much easier for sport and recreation to flourish, which includes some very special recommendations for inland waters. Needless to say, the BCU were involved in these. Here is what S&RA recommend, "DEFRA (Dept of Environment) should introduce a statutory right of access in England and Wales for unpowered craft to inland water for recreational purposes. This system of rights and responsibilities should be based on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code."



By a strange co-incidence this is exactly what we are campaigning for. The S&RA noticed that we were campaigning on this issue and contacted us. They asked us to tailor our letters to MPs to bring their attention to the recommendations above. They want the Minister of Sport to get behind this and work with the Department of the Environment to bring this about. We are happy to do our bit.

The ramblers have been campaigning for access to the countryside since the 1930s, when they held a famous mass trespass at Kinder Scout in 1932, which led to some of them being jailed. That is how committed they were. Nonetheless, it took 17 years after that to get the law changed and they are still campaigning now – just search 'Ramblers Campaign'. Not just by demonstrations and trespasses but also by letter writing, petitions, lobbying, making contacts inside government and so on.

We can learn from the ramblers' experience:

- Don't wait for others. Get involved yourself.
- This is a long haul. It won't happen overnight!
- Imagine the day when we can enjoy our beautiful rivers in freedom.
- Be committed and make it happen!

Now we are thinking about what to do next. We still have hundreds of MPs to contact and we need to develop our web strategy further, to receive more exposure in the press, stage public events etc.

Please check out our forum, we hope you join us and take action. If the 30,000 BCU members got behind this, we could move mountains... and rivers!

## River Wensum — access notes

**Richard Brooks is the new Local River Advisor. Email: [kayakrich1@hotmail.com](mailto:kayakrich1@hotmail.com), or phone: 07920 091084.**

Information on changes for where to access the river at Ringland and the portage arrangements recently agreed with Anglian Water for Taverham Mill are posted on the Eastern region website - [www.paddlesporteast.org/](http://www.paddlesporteast.org/).

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Southwater Country Park, Cripplegate Lane, Southwater RH13 9UN

# Stop the spread

A 'Stop the Spread' campaign has been launched. The campaign aims to counter the threat to Britain's economy and wildlife posed by the spread of invasive non-native species such as the 'killer shrimp'.

**The campaign is aimed at all those that use the water for recreation and sport who can unwittingly spread non-native invasive species as they move between different bodies of water such as rowing lakes. Individual organisms, eggs, larvae and plant fragments can be carried on equipment, clothing and footwear.**

Richard Benyon MP DEFRA Minister said, "Aggressive species from across the world have the potential to reach Britain and cause real damage and even wipe out some of our native wildlife.

"We all have a duty to stop this from happening, and all those that use the water for recreation and sport can do their bit by heeding the advice to check, clean and dry their boats and gear. Just a few moments care can mean the difference between keeping our rivers and lakes healthy or infecting them with the likes of a killer shrimp or invasive non-native plants."

## What are aquatic invasive species?

Animals and plants that have been introduced by human actions to parts of the world outside their natural range are known as non-native species. Most of these animals and plants do not cause any problems in Great Britain.

However, a few species can cause serious and permanent problems by harming ecosystems. They can be bigger, faster growing or more aggressive than native species, and may also

have fewer natural predators to control their numbers. As a result, native species are often unable to compete and the non-native species are able to take over. These species are called invasive non-native species. Aquatic invasive species are non-native plants and animals that have been introduced into British waters.

## Why should we be concerned about aquatic invasive species?

These species can devastate populations of native species and change whole ecosystems for example by competing with and displacing native species, spreading disease, altering the local ecology and physically clogging waterways.

This can adversely affect recreational facilities, for example, by reducing the population of fish, restricting navigation through waterways and affecting the quality of our rivers.

## Examples of the costs of managing invasive aquatic species:

- American signal crayfish is estimated to be costing GB over £2.6m per year in terms of management to protect the native white-clawed crayfish; river bank restoration; angling impacts and research.
- Floating pennywort is estimated to be costing GB over £25m per year in terms of control and costs to leisure and recreation such as angling and boating.



## How are aquatic invasive species usually spread?

Water users can unknowingly assist the spread of these species from one water body to another by accidentally carrying individuals, eggs, larvae and viable plant fragments on their equipment, shoes, clothing and other damp places. For example, new research from the Environment Agency has shown that a killer shrimp can survive in the moist fold of a wader for up to 15 days.

## What are some of the worst aquatic invasive species?

Five of the worst aquatic invasive species include

- 'Killer Shrimp' (*Dikerogammarus villosus*);
- Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*);
- Water Primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*); Zebra
- Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and Quagga
- Mussel (*Dreissena rostriformis*).

## What can we do to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species?

By following three simple steps when leaving the water, we can help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species.

- CHECK** Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect
- CLEAN** Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.
- DRY** Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

For more information visit [www.direct.gov.uk/checkcleandry](http://www.direct.gov.uk/checkcleandry) also see [www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/environment/](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/environment/).



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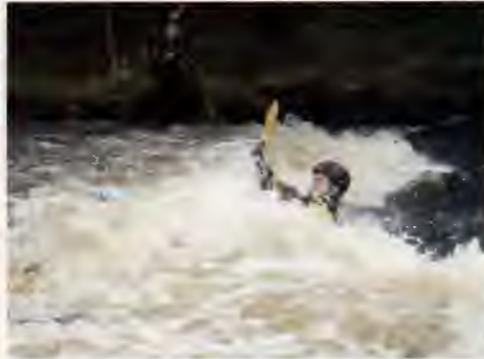
More information, along with the terms and conditions are available at [www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/photo-competition](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/photo-competition). The winners are announced on page 10.



**Above:** Andrew Hargraves – April Adult Winner – Gailey Hasler Marathon Race.



**Above:** Ralph Hughes – Bridgewater Canal, Warrington.



**Above:** Ben Holden – Upper Tryweryn.



**Above:** Grant Underwood – April U18 Winner – River Dee



**Above:** Ian Whitehead – Clacton on Sea.



**Above:** Debbie Stitt – Saint-Clement-Sur-Durance.



**Above:** Pauline Marsh – River Tryweryn.



**Above:** Robert Deller - March Adult Winner – Dart Loop.



**Above:** Leyla Edwards – Littlehampton.



**Above:** Oscar McBurney – Upper Perthshire Garry.



**Above:** Richard Moore – North Wales.



**Above:** Chris Sizer – Serpents Tail, River Dee.



**Above:** Jane Willett – River Soca.

# Remote, beau



**Feature by:**  
Alice Courvoisier.

## A two-week journey along the Finnish-Swedish border rivers.

**Paddlers:**  
Alice Courvoisier and  
Ruth Cantrell.

It began to rain as Ruth and I launched into Lake Kilpisjärvi in late June. I had hoped to go only a short distance that afternoon and camp with a view of Saana Fell, a mountain sacred to the Sami people but the weather deteriorated and a strong tailwind pushed us onwards. Besides, a vegetation of low bushes and dwarf birches stretched out to the lakeshore, so that places suitable for camping were rare.

**Below:** Alice.

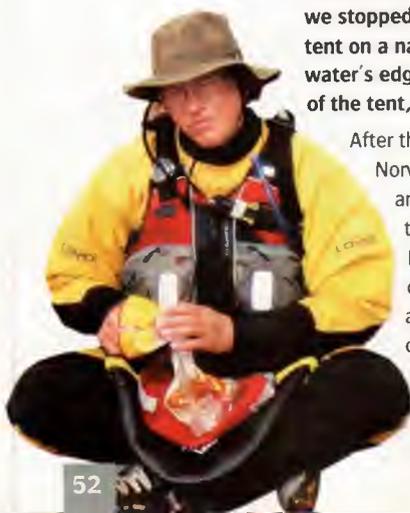
**The lake was stirred into a choppy expanse of grey waters and we had our skegs down to limit weather-cocking. Eventually, we stopped at the head of the Könkämä River and pitched the tent on a narrow stretch of grass, a few feet away from the water's edge. That night, as wind and rain battered the sides of the tent, we felt very isolated in this foreign countryside.**

After three months spent by the sea, we had finally left Norwegian waters and hired a taxi to transport our kayaks and us over the 50 kilometres separating Skibbotn, on the Lyngenfjord, from Kilpisjärvi in Finnish Lapland. From there, we intended to paddle 537 kilometres down the longest free-flowing river system in Europe, along the Könkämä, Muonio and Tornio Rivers to the city of Tornio, on the Gulf of Bothnia. This waterway has formed the Finnish-Swedish border for just over 200 years and hosted the Arctic Canoe Race, which ran between 1983 and 2000.

Ruth had completed this challenging canoe marathon with her K2 partner Liz Young back in 1995 and had always wanted to return to Lapland. The destination equally appealed to me, it was close enough that it could be reached overland, yet far enough to feel adventurous. To guide us on our journey, we had the annotated maps of the rivers that Liz had used at the time of the race. They included a description of the main rapids, with grades ranging from I to V, explained the camping laws in Finland and Sweden and mentioned places worth visiting along the way.

### Effortless paddle

Our first morning by the river was windy and sunny, ideal conditions to dry a few items as we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast of coffee and sweet porridge. The details of the first rapid were hidden by an island, so we put safety first and carried the kayaks, equipment and food along a 500 metre portion of snowmobile track. In the afternoon, the current and tail wind made for an



# tiful Lapland



effortless paddle. We travelled across small lakes and along narrow river stretches snaking through sparse woodlands. Higher fells were visible in the distance, their tops often treeless with patches of snow. Occasionally, we spotted small settlements, isolated cabins partly hidden amongst the trees, and a few motor vehicles, reminding us that the E8 followed the river on the Finnish side.

Avian life was thriving, we saw geese, swans, birds of prey hovering far above, ducks, black throated divers and sand martins. At the end of the day, we reached a rapid named Peerakoski. Inspection revealed that it was short and we convinced ourselves that it didn't look too difficult, so we put our helmets on and launched into the waves. Ruth was buzzing after leading the rapid, whereas my excitement was tempered by how difficult it had been to control my heavily laden sea kayak in a white water environment.

The next day was overcast, with a cold wind blowing from the north. Around noon, we encountered Lammaskoski, the next major set of rapids, a 3.5 km stretch of white water including two Grade V rapids. This time however, the entry rapid looked more daunting than Peerakoski, all we could see from the rocky bank were wave trains disappearing around a bend of the river and we decided against paddling. Portaging however wasn't a pleasant alternative; it would be a gruesome struggle against the vegetation, along an overgrown, rock-strewn, windy footpath. In addition, we didn't know how many of the Lammaskoski rapids we would deem safe to run and were reluctant to risk walking the full stretch. The remaining option was to return to a settlement

“We travelled across small lakes and along narrow river stretches snaking through sparse woodlands. Higher fells were visible in the distance, their tops often treeless with patches of snow”

**Above left:** Ruth. **Above:** Sunrise over Torneä.

we had seen four kilometres upstream and try to hitch a lift along the road in Finland, so we slowly paddled and lined our kayaks back the way we came, against wind and current.

We landed on the Finnish side and spotted a car with a trailer parked by the river. There was a dark red, wooden house and a few other buildings nearby but the place was otherwise deserted. We decided to try our luck in Sweden and knocked on the door of what seemed to be the main house. A sign indicated that it was a first aid outpost and, as we discovered, a family lived there. After hearing us, the husband decided to phone the owner of the car, a reindeer herder, who kindly agreed to help. A few minutes later, the Sami man appeared in his motor canoe, helped load the kayaks on his trailer and drove us a few kilometres south. After thanking him, we launched straight into the exit rapid of Lammaskoski, an easy Grade III, still stunned by how selflessly helpful the locals had been.

The next day we portaged Pättikkäkurkkio, the 'most difficult rapid on this border-river' according to the map and reached Rautukkurkkio and Vesipola, two Grade IV rapids, in the afternoon. We donned our midge nets to scout from the mosquito infested riverside forest, then returned to the kayaks, each accompanied by her private swarm of insects that she could only shake off by running the rapids. The weather had turned lovely by then, with the annoying consequence that mosquitoes and

“We discovered shades of green that we never knew existed. There was the tender green of bursting buds, the bright green of birch foliage, the darker green of pine needles, and the silvery green of the grey willow leaves”



**Top:** First campsite. **Above:** The 'River lady'.

midges were out in force, so we worked out strategies to elude the blood-thirsty insects. Whilst at camp, we wore trousers tucked into socks, long sleeve tops and occasionally midge-nets, and we covered our faces and hands with an effective locally bought repellent, and cooked over smoky fires. On warm evenings, we took turns to bathe in the cold river water and quickly dressed up again while the other, armed with a towel, chased the mosquitoes away.

The scenery changed as we paddled south along calmer waters. The birches grew taller; pines appeared on the banks, gradually followed by alders, aspens, cedars, firs and spruces. When the sun was out, we discovered shades of green that we never knew existed. There was the tender green of bursting buds, the bright green of birch foliage, the darker green of pine needles, and the silvery green of the grey willow leaves. Their intensity varied through the day and with the flutter of the wind; once the evening arrived, they all donned golden tones.

In northern Lapland, we had travelled past temporary fishing camps, isolated cabins and settlements that slowly increased in size, until we reached the first twin towns, Karesuando in Sweden and Kaaresuvanto in Finland, linked by a bridge over the river. As we carried on south, habitations increased in number and variety, from small houses, to working farms and riverside villas surrounded by well-kept lawns and gardens. Some days later we resupplied at the town of Kolari and returned to the river just in time to watch a water plane land.

One evening, as I sat outside amidst tall grass, I suddenly noticed a strange silhouette on the water. It resembled a giant wedding dress, maybe three metres high, with a dancing woman at its top.



**Top:** Kukkulankoski. **Above:** Typical view.

Using binoculars, I could see that this strange contraption floated on empty plastic bottles. We caught up with the 'River Lady' the following day. Its crew was part of an art project involving local communities on both sides of the border. As we chatted, the dancer at the top brought out a small harp and started playing. This was grandiose, I would have been perfectly happy just to drift by their side, listening to the pure sounds, enjoying the warmth of the sun, the coolness of the water and the gorgeous landscape.

## Crossing the Arctic Circle

After crossing the Arctic Circle, we decided to rest for a few days and booked a small cabin at a riverside campsite in Overtorneä. We were tired after 11 days of travel on the river and both had upset stomachs. We had been drinking filtered river water until recently, but now suspected that we had pushed our luck too far south. Whilst recuperating, we visited the 16th century wooden church as well as a restored 19th century farmstead, which was also a repository for ancient, painted furniture. After three relaxing days, we felt ready to tackle the final 75 kilometres to Tornio. The river widened as we neared the Gulf of Bothnia. It was warm and the atmosphere had a definite holiday feel to it: people were enjoying the weather, swam and played in the river, or sunbathed on low, reddish sandbanks that they had reached by boat.

On the second day after leaving Overtorneä, we battled a strong headwind for hours before reaching Kukkulankoski, the last Grade IV. Traditional, wooden fishing jetties jutted out towards a confused mass of sunlit waves. After portaging, we settled at a bar terrace to enjoy a glass of local lager, celebrating the never failing evening light and our last night in the tent. The next morning, a short, enjoyable paddle brought us to Tornio and concluded our river journey. Over the past two weeks, the current had gradually taken us through pristine countryside, from the cold, remote plateaux of northern Lapland, via salmon fishing territory, down to the Gulf of Bothnia, now bustling with activity and tourists. An adventure we would both happily take on again. ♡

## Notes

Maps of the Finnish-Swedish border-rivers are available at [www.arcticcanoeraid.com/](http://www.arcticcanoeraid.com/). Our choice was to be 'self-supported' and wild-camp. However, there is a road following the river from Kilpisjärvi to Tornio on the Finnish side, allowing for the use of a support vehicle, and there are numerous campsites with cabins and saunas along the way. The first 150 km to Kaaresuvanto are remote though.

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## WATERWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGER



Canoe England is seeking to recruit a motivated and committed individual to lead our Waterways and Environment department within the English Development Team.

Key responsibilities will be to manage and support the Waterways & Environment staff and volunteers. To provide information and support relating to access to our waterways and coastline together with relating environmental issues. To develop and implement the English strategy for the waterways and environment and to establish effective systems leading to improved/increased places to paddle across England.

The successful candidate will possess strong analytical and negotiating skills with the ability to think strategically. They will be a skilled communicator who can persuade and influence together with the ability to be clear and concise in writing and verbally. A background in the law or the environment would be an advantage and a good understanding of canoeing activities is important.

The successful candidate will be expected to be based in our Bingham Office or the Midlands area. This is a full time role, 37 hours per week.

Salary - £30,000 per annum, plus pension scheme.

For further details please visit our website. To apply, please send a covering letter and CV detailing how you meet the above criteria to: Kate Clark, HR Manager, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham NG13 8AP, or e-mail at [kate.clark@bcu.org.uk](mailto:kate.clark@bcu.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications: 4th July 2011**

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- Excellent communication and motivational skills
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- Willing, enthusiastic and energetic!

Salary - £22,000 per annum, plus pension scheme.

To apply, please send a covering letter and CV detailing how you meet the above criteria to: Kate Clark, HR Manager, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham NG13 8AP, or e-mail at [kate.clark@bcu.org.uk](mailto:kate.clark@bcu.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications: 4th July 2011**

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## GO CANOEING LEAD DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Canoe England is looking for a motivated and dynamic individual to join the Development Team as the Lead officer responsible for our expanding 'Go Canoeing' programme.

Your responsibilities will include, developing IT and data capture tools, developing the annual programme or events and supporting volunteers/staff involved in the Go Canoeing programme. In addition, working to develop partnerships with a range of national, regional and local agencies to increase participation in Canoeing.

For this exciting opportunity the ideal candidate will have a background in development and excel in all forms of IT. The successful candidate will have excellent interpersonal, time management, leadership and delegation skills, and experience of working with a wide range of professional staff and volunteers. You should have a good understanding of Sport England market segmentation tool and Canoe England's programmes. The successful candidate will be expected to be based in our Bingham Office. This is a full time role, 37 hours per week.

Salary - £24,000 per annum, plus pension scheme.

To apply, please send a covering letter and CV detailing how you meet the above criteria to: Kate Clark, HR Manager, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham NG13 8AP, or e-mail at [kate.clark@bcu.org.uk](mailto:kate.clark@bcu.org.uk)

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For further details go to the school website at [www.kefw.bham.sch.uk/our\\_school/vacancies](http://www.kefw.bham.sch.uk/our_school/vacancies) or email Jamie Bartlam (Head of OE) at [jbartlam@kefw.bham.sch.uk](mailto:jbartlam@kefw.bham.sch.uk)

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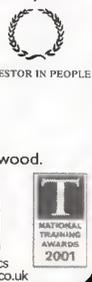
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## ENGLISH COACHING MANAGER



We are seeking a motivated individual to join the English Development Team as our English Coaching Manager. The person appointed will take responsibility for the management and support of the staff and volunteers of the English Coaching team, together with all matters relating to the communication of Coaching policy and practice.

Other key responsibilities include the management of the Canoe England awarding body 'Delivery Centre' function and of BCU coaching courses and coach development in England. This will include managing the processes for Internal Verification and Quality Assurance of BCU Coaching courses, our deliverers and centres. In addition management of the workforce development programme, and course manager for Canoe England administered coaching courses.

We are looking for someone with a sound understanding of the roles of National Awarding bodies and delivery centres including experience of delivery and administration of nationally recognised qualifications. Canoe qualifications are not essential but a background in sport would be preferred. Successful candidates will possess strong organisational and administration skills; have the ability to work on their own initiative and work as part of the English Coaching Team. The post will be based at our Bingham office.

Salary - based on £30,000 per annum plus pension scheme  
For further details go to the vacancy section of our website.  
Interested applicants should send a CV detailing how you meet the criteria in the job description to: Kate Clark, HR Manager  
email: [kate.clark@bcu.org.uk](mailto:kate.clark@bcu.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications: 4th July 2011**

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# Behind the scenes

## An interview with Anne Hounslow, Chair of the Canoe Slalom Committee

**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 Chair of the Canoe Slalom Committee. Can you describe your role in just three words?**

Rewarding, frustrating, fun.

**And now, with a bit more detail...**

The slalom committee is responsible for overseeing the running of slalom in Great Britain. This includes managing the national ranking system, organise the annual calendar of events, ensure every event has the necessary timing system, encouraging and supporting all volunteers to become involved in the running of slaloms at all levels, supporting the coaching system and running races including GB team selection. We are also always looking at ways of increasing participation; improving how slalom is run and ensuring all competitors get the best experience possible.

We work closely with Canoe England, Canoe Wales and the Scottish Canoe Association. I as chair am a member of the English Council, the World Class management group and the international panel.

**How did you first become involved with canoeing?**

I first became involved whilst still at school with a ranger/venture scout unit in Harrow. This was lead mainly by the late Ed Ecclestone so I have some very fond memories. Through our regular trips to the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base in Hendon I met Andy my husband.

**Your son, Richard, is part of the GB canoe slalom team? Do you or any other members of your family canoe, also?**

Our oldest son James was the first to have a go, he was eight and Richard followed not too long after that. Both Andy and myself continued doing some competing until the boys' needs became all consuming! I did

start training for the Devizes to Westminster in 1990, and then discovered I was pregnant so that was the end of that! James raced until about five years ago before calling it a day.

**You will have, no doubt, experienced some memorable moments since you and your family first became involved with canoeing. Do any stand out as being particularly special and why?**

James being selected for the Junior Worlds in 1995 and travelling to Lipno in the Czech Republic was the first major international we visited and was pretty special. Foz de Iguassu in Brazil was also pretty special – Richard had his best ever World Championship result being fourth. However, seeing Richard racing at the European Championships at Nottingham on home water was great and the gold team medal really topped that off – I stopped running down with them at the split as they were about two seconds down on the French so I thought it was all lost but they pulled off a magnificent bottom half to beat them!

**The Lee Valley White Water Centre officially opened in April. What do you think of the venue?**

The venue is absolutely fantastic – it is something we must ensure is a legacy to not just the elite athletes but for all. Having just held the GB selection race on it demonstrated what a world-class venue it is and to see so many spectators there was just amazing. I feel it is a venue that is second to none.

**How would you like to see canoe slalom benefit from the Games?**

This is where the legacy will be so important but it is vital we start now to ensure we already have a foothold, the Olympics is already big news and the venue is already open to the public and it must not be all about rafting! The local interest was very obvious at the selection race as over 5,000 people came through the gates to watch! We must build on that interest.

**London will be the host city for the Canoe Slalom World Championships in 2015! How will you and the committee be involved with helping the BCU to organise the championships?**

We are the first sport to secure a World Championship event at an Olympic site. It is going to be a big task, it involves a large

number of volunteers – co-ordinated through the Slalom Committee – but we hosted an amazing European Championships in Nottingham in 2009 so we can certainly do it again.

**And finally, what are you looking forward to this year?**

Well between now and the Olympics, Richard is in the GB team so quite a few races to attend including Olympic qualification at the Worlds in Slovakia, including the test event at Lee Valley. Alice celebrates her 21st early next year, James and Hannah get married Easter next year, followed a week later by Olympic selection. Alice graduates in June and then the Olympic Games. Pretty busy 12 months for the Hounslow family!

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

### Quickfire questions!

**I would describe my character as...**  
a bit impetuous but passionate about slalom

**Last book I read was...**  
Heavens Net is wide by Lian Hearn

**Last film I watched was...** Top Gun  
**My ultimate goal is...** to see Richard win two medals at the Olympics

**I relax by...** I like to read and to socialise with a glass of wine and good food with friends

**Favourite food is...** Chocolate

**Favourite drink is...** Champagne

**Favourite TV programme is...**  
Top Gear

**Favourite car is...** Aston Martin

**Favourite place in the world is...**  
looking out from the Mendips across the Somerset levels on a sunny day.

**Person I most admire is...** not one really but all athletes that have the determination and commitment to succeed.

**I get really angry about...**  
red tape and paper work

**In 10 years time I would like to be...** retired enjoying a quiet life playing with grandchildren!

**One thing you don't know about me is...** now that would be telling!



Above: Anne with Richard.



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