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Above: Roger Fox receives his BCU Vice Presidency from Albert Woods. **Photo:** Antony Edmonds.

Hello and welcome to the August Canoe Focus



It's been a highly successful summer for canoeing so far, with over 15 medals already won and many more still up for grabs!

Special congratulations go to our new World Champions, James Bebbington and Claire O'Hara, who both won gold at the Canoe Freestyle World Championships in Germany; and also to our Canoe Sprint European Champions, Liam Heath and Jon Schofield, who retained their title in Serbia.

It was great, also, to see our Special Olympics team return from the World Summer Games in Athens with 10 medals. We have always known about the talent within Paddle-Ability, and it was great to be able to showcase this to a wider audience at the Games. Well done to everyone involved.

The last few months have not only been filled with medals, but also with awards.

Roger Fox, Stephen Graig, David Green and Alan Laws all received their BCU Vice Presidencies in May and we were pleased to award the BCU Award of Honour to former World Champion and GB Canoeing Performance Manager, Alan Williams, in June. Later that month we were delighted to hear that Eric Farrell, who coached Tim Brabants to canoeing's first Olympic gold medal in 2008, had been awarded a MBE by the Queen.

Between them all, they have and continue to, provide a wealth of services to our sport and it's great to see them get the recognition they deserve. Congratulations.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the magazine, along with the last few weeks of light nights and summer paddling.

Paul Owen, BCU Chief Executive

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Competition



	Start	Finish	Event	Discipline
August	05 Aug	07 Aug	World Championships - Junior - Brandenburg, GER	Canoe Sprint
	12 Aug	14 Aug	World Cup Final - Prague, CZE	Canoe Slalom
	18 Aug	22 Aug	World Championships - Szeged, HUN	Canoe Sprint
	26 Aug	28 Aug	ICF Masters Championships	Canoe Sprint
	27 Aug	28 Aug	National Championships - Worcester	Canoe Marathon
September	01 Sep	04 Sep	Olympic Test Event - Eton Dorney, GBR	Canoe Sprint
	07 Sep	11 Sep	World Championships - Bratislava, SVK	Canoe Slalom
	08 Sep	11 Sep	European Championships - Madrid, ESP	Canoe Polo
	09 Sep	11 Sep	European Championships - Belgrade, SCG	Canoe Sprint
	10 Sep	11 Sep	National Regatta - Nottingham - Open & National Championships	Canoe Sprint
	11 Sep		Club Championships, Holme Pierrepont	Canoe Freestyle
	16 Sep	18 Sep	European Club Championships - Helmond, NE	Canoe Polo
	17 Sep		Holme Peirrepont - Premier	Canoe Slalom
	28 Sep	02 Oct	World Championships - Outer Banks, North Carolina, USA	Surf
	02 Oct		Hasler Finals - Bedford	Canoe Marathon
October	08 Oct	09 Oct	GB Team Selection - Holme Pierrepong	Canoe Freestyle
	17 Oct	28 Oct	Olympic - Training - Lee Valley, GBR	Canoe Slalom
	21 Oct	23 Oct	World Championships - Singapore, SIN	Canoe Marathon
	22 Oct		Serpents Tail - Premier	Canoe Slalom
	29 Oct		Holme Pierrepont - Premeir	Canoe Slalom
30 Oct		Holme Pierrepont - British Open	Canoe Slalom	
Web	Canoe polo : www.canoepolo.org.uk			Marathon racing: www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk
	Canoe sailing: www.intcanoe.org.uk			Slalom: www.canoeslalom.co.uk
	Sprint: www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/sprint-racing			Surf: www.bcusurf.org.uk
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For details of how to claim the discounts log in to the 'Members Area' of our website.

Go Canoeing Week in Afghanistan

Thirty men and women from five different countries took part in Canoe England's Go Canoeing Week last month, when a KayakPro Ergo machine was flown out to Afghanistan.

The indoor kayak machine, lent by Canoe England's participation team, arrived at the Morale, Welfare and Activity Gym at the Kabul International Airport Camp at the beginning of May.

It was put through its paces over the next few days by participants from the US, Italy, Belgium and the UK.

Amongst those having a go were Italy's

Captain David Misano, formerly an international sprint canoeist and now a C130 pilot for the Italian Air Force and the Italian Deputy Commander of the HQ ISAF Joint Command Major General Riccardo Marchio. There was a close fought contest too, for the 500m title, between Amy Allis of the US Marines and Wayne Miller from the British Army; Amy won the final battle, with a time of 2.16 minutes.

After its stint in Kabul the Ergo was taken, by an RAF C130 Hercules, down to Camp Bastion and was set up in the UK-run No 1 Gymnasium, where it continued to be popular amongst the troops. Captain Needs, a Freestyle paddler in his spare time, and Captain Hinds, a BCU Level 3 Coach, both relished the opportunity for some training, after giving up hope of being able to paddle whilst out in Afghanistan for their six month tour.

Over the course of the three days, the KayakPro Ergo machine was used by three different armies, two air forces, two marine corps and two contractor companies.



Above: Marco Cerruti, Paul Carroll and David Misano.

KayakPro is a leading manufacturer of kayaks and kayak training equipments and supplied Kayak Ergometers to both the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

They have just released 'Virtual Race' which enables anyone with a KayakPro Speedstroke Gym Ergometer to join live, online internet races – and race anyone, anywhere in the world. The 3d hi-resolution graphics and paddling simulation brings the internet age to paddling.

The software also has the capability to race up to 31 other programmable kayaking avatars by speed, power and past performances – and it also has a unique 'Ultra Rabbit' pacer avatar that bases its performance on the real-time live performance of the user. KayakPro is also working on canoe, outrigger and dragonboat and skiing avatars, to complete the stable of interactive participants. Find out more at www.kayakpro.com

It just shows that you don't always need water to go canoeing!

Celebrate 75 years of canoeing



The BCU are celebrating their 75th anniversary later this year and, to help the celebrations go with

a splash, they're producing a commemorative DVD, looking back at 75 great years of canoeing - and they need your help!

Do you have any canoeing images or video footage, taken during the last 75 years, which you think should appear in the DVD?

If so, please send it in, along with a short description, your name, email address and telephone number to: Karen Bagshaw, British

Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire NG13 8AP or email Karen at : info@bcu.org.uk putting 'BCU 75th anniversary' as the subject.

All submissions must be received by Friday 16th September 2011.

If your material is selected you'll receive a copy of the DVD, which will be played at the BCU's 75th anniversary awards dinner and sold on the BCU E-Shop; all profits will be donated to the Canoe Foundation.

Please note. If you'd like your images and video footage returning to you, please include a self addressed envelope.

Trevor Bailey

September sees the twentieth anniversary of the tragic death of former director of the BCU, Trevor Bailey. He was drowned in an accident on Holme Pierrepont's Regatta Course, whilst in training for what had become an annual charity paddle. To mark the occasion, Trevor's wife, sons and grandchildren are attending a slalom event on 17th September, at which a trophy will be awarded in Trevor's name. In addition, Trevor's son Simon is using the regatta course as the starting point for a charity challenge on 10th September. Simon is hoping to cycle five circuits of the Robin Hood marathon course to raise money for the Royal Derby Neonatal Unit.

Changes to Canoe England membership



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We, at Canoe England, are always looking to improve our services and, as part of this, we've made a few changes to our

membership. We've dropped the basic and comprehensive types and replaced them with adult, youth and a new young persons category. Life membership is still available. We also have a new family membership option, with a reduced cost for children.

You still get all the same great benefits as before, including a licence to paddle on 5,000km of Britain's waterways, civil liability insurance up to £10 million and six editions of Canoe Focus magazine.

We've changed the waterways licences too. The boat sticker is no longer required; your membership card is sufficient, just make sure you carry it with you on licensed waterways.

NorthShore Watersports

NorthShore Watersports is the latest paddle sport equipment online store where you can buy all of the latest equipment, gadgets and accessories from all of the top watersports brands.

Based at the new Tees Barrage International White Water Centre they are an authorised demo centre where you can try out the large fleet of kayaks and canoes.

Photo competition winners

We are pleased to announce that the adult winner for May is Stuart Dalziel and Emily Hewitt won the U18. For June, the adult winner is Michael Barnett whilst William Ash won the U18 category. Turn to page 50 to see all the photos.

Knockout bullying

World Champion freestyle kayaker James Reeves has recently accepted the honour of becoming an ambassador for a new charity appeal – the Knockout Bullying campaign. This campaign is being run by the charity Kidscape in partnership with Spiked magazine.

The intention is to raise awareness of the problem of bullying in the UK and take the campaign into schools to actively help children to deal with the effects of bullying. In order to do this on a scale that will have an impact nationally they need to raise some money.

Please donate whatever you can afford through www.justgiving.com/spikedknockoutbullying. Information on the campaign and Kidscape can be found at: www.getspiked.co.uk/anti-bullying, www.kidscape.org.uk and www.jamesreeves.net.

New IOC member

The BCU were delighted to hear the great news that the ICF President José Perurena López has been elected as one of the new IOC members and would like to congratulate him, and wish him all the best, for his new position. Mr. Perurena 66, has been President of the ICF since 2008 and has spent the past three years anchoring the relatively small International Federation to some hard won successes – most recently he led the successful campaign to include Paracanoe into the Rio 2016 Sport Programme and has made it possible for canoeing fans to watch live TV coverage of ICF events.

2011 River Usk canoe race

Everyone welcome!

Sunday 2nd October 2011 start: Newbridge on Usk. Start time: 11.30am and finish at St. Julian's Hotel, Newport. Distance: 8 miles. For details contact: Alan Baker 20, Larkfield Close, Caerleon, S. Wales. NP18 3EX. Tel: 01633 421629. E-mail uskrace@croesycaoe.co.uk www.croesycaoe.co.uk

Rainforest rivers of Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan beaches are a well-known destination for surfers and surf kayakers, but despite the countries white water potential there have only been a small handful of previous expeditions. This is largely due to a civil war, which ended in 2009 but the majority of Sri Lanka is now stable and ready for exploration.

A team of kayakers aim to explore the rivers of the mountain ranges in southern and central Sri Lanka, paddling some known sections and finding first descents. A major part of their trip is to help to boost awareness of Sri Lanka as a tourist and particularly a kayaking destination by publicising their trip and leaving river guides for future kayakers via their website.

Visit www.kayaksrilanka.co.uk to follow how Dave Burne and team get on with their expedition.

Loughborough University Sportsman of the Year

Wild Water paddler Michael Sims created history by becoming the first Loughborough University Sportsman of the Year. With over 50 other nominations, from all sports, Michael received his award in front of 550 guests, from sports presenter John Inverdale at the Loughborough Athletics Union's Annual Ball.

During his three years at Loughborough studying for a BSc in Applied Sports Science, International Wild Water paddler Michael has won 22 medals in the British Universities Championships, competed

in wild water racing, canoe slalom and canoe polo, helping the university canoe club maintain their position at the top of British universities and college events. Stepping back from the international scene to concentrate on the final year of his degree Michael is cited in his nomination as, "being an absolute stalwart in the canoe club – a great leader and widely respected - he also dedicates significant amounts of time to coaching others whilst at the same time pursuing his studies."



Above: Michael Sims receives his award from John Inverdale.

Mike Dodd

The BCU was saddened to hear about the death of Mike Dodd on June 14th aged 58.

Mike was a key figure and founder member of Sudbury CC, helping to inspire hundreds of paddlers of all ages and abilities to take up canoeing. During his time at the club, he served for many years as chairman of the committee and was always on hand to offer advice and encouragement to his fellow paddlers. In addition to his work with SCC he also led expeditions and competed for the RAF. He moved to Tanzania in April to work as a volunteer at the School of St Judes and quickly established himself as a popular member of the community.

Our deepest sympathies go to his family and friends.



Paul Warrender

The BCU was saddened to hear that Paul Warrender, a Canoe England member for many years, died on 25th December 2010, aged 63.

Paul encouraged his wife, Jude, to join him on his canoeing expeditions from their early 50s and they enjoyed their last outdoor holiday to the Venise Verte in France in September. Despite his illness, Paul was keen to share his trip with other canoeing enthusiasts and, on his return from France, penned together a short article about his expedition. Greenwater Paddling in the Venise Verte is available to read on the Canoe England website.

Our deepest sympathies go to Paul's wife, Jude, his family and friends.



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Neave starts the 2011 medal haul for the slalom team

The idyllic mountain town of La Seu d'Urgell in the Spanish Pyrenees played host to the 2011 Canoe Slalom European Championships, marking the start of the international season for the British team.

Medals were soon on the cards, with both Lizzie Neave and Laura Blakeman qualifying through to the finals of the Women's K1. With fond memories of racing in La Seu d'Urgell following her bronze medal at the 2009 World Championships, Lizzie Neave was the last women on the start line after qualifying through to the final as favourite, with eyes set firmly on paddling away with a medal.

Racing was spectacularly tight and Neave knew she had to pull out all the stops in order to be on the podium. With some early mistakes, she showed true determination and fighting spirit to keep herself in the running at the half way split, digging deep through the last part of the course she crossed the finish line in a time of 106.76 seconds, to claim the bronze medal, in one of the tightest fought women's finals ever.

Lizzie Neave said, "It is one of my favourite courses, my final run didn't get off to a very good start and I didn't think I had done enough to medal, but when I crossed the line and saw I was third I was really happy."

Laura Blakeman also put in a strong performance in the final, but didn't quite have the podium pace, finishing in seventh place.

In the canoe doubles, David Florence and Richard Hounslow, European bronze medallist from last year, were focused on making it a podium finish two years running. Off first after just sneaking in to the final in tenth position, the pairing work together well powering themselves through the course with flair and skill, laying down the time to beat of 108.77 seconds. The duo watched through squinted eyes as the following nine boats made

their way down the course, finishing in fourth less than 0.2 seconds off a medal.

Hounslow found himself excruciatingly close to another medal in the Men's K1 final but a couple of small time losses kept him in sight but just off the podium, finishing in fifth. A controversial judging decision in the semi-final saw Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh and Huw Swetnam left outside of the top 10.

David Florence commented, "I just wasn't quite good enough" after his C1 final run where he made some mistakes and picked up a time penalty, leaving him in 10th. Young Mark Proctor demonstrated his potential with a solid performance, finishing ninth.

John Anderson, Performance Director, commented, "I'm really happy for Lizzie Neave and her bronze medal in the women's kayak; it's been a solid weekend for the GB canoe slalom team with a third, fourth and fifth place in Olympic events."



Above: Women's K1 bronze for Lizzie Neave. Photo: James Cummings.



Above: Lizzie Neave. Photo: James Cummings.



Above: Laura Blakeman. Photo: James Cummings.

GB's golden racing duo

Following last year's phenomenal success, which saw four new European champions born, the 2011 European Championships had a lot to live up to.

With their bags laden with medals collected throughout the world cup series, the British sprint team arrived to the blistering heat of Belgrade, Serbia confident in their abilities to challenge for medals.

Racing got off to a great start for the British with Miklos Simon and Trevor Hunter's women squad continuing to demonstrate their growing force, qualifying all four boats straight from the heats to finals. But GB had to wait for the third and final day of racing before medals were on the cards.

There were three titles on the table to defend for GB and it wasn't long before the speedy pairing of Liam Heath and Jon Schofield stormed to victory in the K2 200m by demolishing a high quality field to retain their European crown.

Following a shaky start in the heats, where Schofield's blade slipped on his first stroke, the pairing re-focused ready to battle it out to defend their title. Blasting away from the start Heath and Schofield worked fluidly together taking an early lead, leaving the rest of the field in chase. They crossed the finish line clearly ahead of the 2007 World Champions from Belarus to take the gold medal and the European crown for the second year running.

Liam Heath said, "I'm feeling really good right now, we went out there today and nailed it. Our preparations up to the race have been flawless; we just stayed focused and relaxed and delivered what we have practiced a million times."

Undeclared for the last year, Ed McKeever showed no intention of letting his title go, annihilating the field in his heat but failing to get his usual fast



Above: Women's K4 team. Photo: Antony Edmonds

start in the final. He left himself with a lot to do but demonstrated champion traits to power back into the race and win the bronze medal.

Ed McKeever commented, "I'm obviously disappointed to not come away with the win, but there is no shame in losing to people of that calibre, and there is no better motivation than being beaten."

With four Olympic discipline finals for the women's team a medal seemed on the cards but with tough competition it wasn't to be GB's day. Following a poor start in the K1 500m, Rachel Cawthorn struggled to get her boat up and running, leaving her chasing the field all the way to the line, finishing in ninth place. It was a similar story for the K2 pairing of Lani Belcher and Angela Hannah, who also finished in ninth. With the intensity and calibre of competition increased, the K4 of Abigail Edmonds, Jessica Walker, Hayleigh Mason and Louisa Sawers had their work cut out to pull themselves into the race after a slow start, but grafted hard together to cross the line in sixth. With one race already under her belt Jessica Walker was back on the start line for the K1 200m final, in a tight race she fought hard to finish in eighth.

In the women's K1 5000m event, Lani Belcher went out to defend her European title, but with an outstanding performance from the Belarusian paddler, Belcher had to settle for the silver, bringing in the third and final medal of the championships for GB Canoeing.

Talking about the day's racing, Brendan Purcell, Head Coach, said, "Unbelievable racing from the K2 (Heath and Schofield) they dominated from the start leaving the field in chase. Ed underlined his champion qualities following his poor start to stay in the race and win the bronze."



Above: Women's K2 Angela Hannah and Lani Belcher (front). Photo: Antony Edmonds.



Above: Ed McKeever. Photo: Antony Edmonds



Above: Lani Belcher. Photo: Antony Edmonds

On Saturday 26th June in the small Bavarian town of Plattling, the North Americans dominance of freestyle kayaking was shattered by Claire O'Hara and James (Pringle) Bebbington.

Pringle fought off stiff competition from Stephen Wright of the USA and Peter Csonka of Slovakia to become the Men's World Champion – the first Brit ever and the only European since 1995. In a best-of-three ride final, Pringle put in an amazing 1020 point second ride and then improved further with a 1053 point third ride.

It seemed like it was in the bag for Pringle but Csonka should never be underestimated and he pulled out all the stops for his last ride coming within just 33 points of Pringle's top score and just missing a final tricky whu started just after the final buzzer. The entire GB team and supporters, who had been holding their breath for 45 seconds, could breathe again. The reigning World Champion, USA's Nick Troutman, had to settle for 4th place.

Claire took the lead from the reigning Women's World Champion Emily Jackson, with a great second ride, which Jackson was unable to match and comfortably took her second gold and the Women's World Champion title. Earlier in the day, Claire had dominated the women's squirt finals as she had through out the prelims, to win her first gold and retain her 2009 World Championship.

There were more successes in the men's squirt, where Jamie Austen took the silver medal, just beaten to the gold by some amazing 'downtime' from Dane Jackson of the USA. In the junior men's



Above: Supporters. Photo: Katya Riverzoo.eu.

GB freestyle on top of the world!



Above: Pringle. Photo: Matt Rodgers.



Above: Pringle (middle). Photo: Katya Riverzoo.eu

K1 Bren Orton won the bronze against the stiffest of competition from the inimitable Dane Jackson and European Champion Quim Fontane, with James Bennis coming in fifth. Gabby Bates also took home a bronze in the junior women's K1 with Kim Aldred a slender three points behind in fourth place.

As an added bonus, junior men reserve Sam Stephenson won the 'king of the wave' competition. This was a crazy fun competition where all the paddlers raced onto the wave at the same time and attempted to grab a fish being dangled on a stick from a raft moored upstream. He had to endure a fusillade of dumplings and sauerkraut being hurled from the raft while avoiding being 'nobbled' by the other competitors.

Earlier in the week the notoriously fickle water levels in Plattling caused the organisers some headaches. The level started around the minimum possible for competition after weeks of dry hot weather only to rise rapidly after torrential rain threatening to reach the maximum levels and flood the campsite. In an attempt to beat the floods, two days of prelims and semis were compressed into a long Thursday starting at 7:00am and finishing at 11:30pm under floodlights. The levels then dropped rapidly again for the finals threatening to damage the fragile carbon boats.

The organisation and professionalism of the GB team was the envy of the other 25 competing nations. Team managers Dave Newport and Tim Ward oiled the wheels, Sally Montgomery the team physio fixed them when they were broken and coaches Sam Ward, Dennis Newton and Ben White made sure they turned in the right direction.

This is the most successful year so far for GB freestyle and with the talented paddlers coming through the Youth Freestyle series, they are looking forward to continued success in the European Championships in Austria next year and the next World Championships in Nantahala, USA in 2013.



Above and main photo: Claire O'Hara performing a massive loop. Photo: Michael Neumann.



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GB raft teams need you!

Having won British selection at Lee Valley White Water Centre earlier this year, GB raft teams are another step closer to the forthcoming World Championships being held in Costa Rica this October. Despite the fact that they are an amateur team who receive no funding, they have managed to achieve great success in the past few years and are current World Champions in the sprint discipline, often gaining medals in each of the four events.

Being a self-funded organisation both teams are constantly seeking funding and looking for team sponsors. If you would like to be a part of this opportunity please contact georgina_p@hotmail.com or www.britishraftteam.co.uk. This support goes a long way to increasing the standard at which the GB teams can compete at international level and is hugely appreciated.



Icon Classic Ski Race 2011

The second year of the Icon Classic Ski Race from Woolacombe to Combe Martin proved to be an outstanding event for Britain's top ski paddlers. The sea conditions didn't disappoint and tested everyone's ability to the maximum. Cornwall's Glen Eldridge, fought off Portugal's Andre Santos to win with fellow Cornishman Dan Latham in third. For the women, Cornwall's Jenna Hawkey took first place whilst second and third places went to Chloe Bunnett and Jess Hanafin.

As ever Morte Point tested everyone's skills, with its fast moving water pushing over the rocky ledge. This combined with the 15mph tail winds ensured that technical ocean skills would decide the final results. A classic example of this was the performance of local legend Colin (Biggles) Smith. At 58 years old he took sixth place and still continues to show the younger fitter paddlers how to read the ocean. As last year, every paddler came through the line looking like they had been truly challenged, but with huge grins on their faces.



WWR Europeans

Serbia is a long way away; even though Jamie and I flew out to Budapest we still had another six hours driving to get from the airport to Kraljevo and then a further 30km to drive up the valley, to the racecourse. The river winds its way through green valleys and has a huge amount of Grade 2-3 rapids along the entire length from the city and more above too.

We found a challenging course with fast sweeping bends, swirling boils and a couple of exceptionally fast chutes. Within a minute of the start was a slide of about six feet into three steep pressure waves in a narrow constriction bounded by black rocks. It was an extremely unpredictable rapid and tended to randomly spit boats out left and right towards the glossy black rocks. Emergence from the wave found boats endowed with incredible speed and a seemingly random new angle that was not always exactly downstream!

The British Team consisted of only one boat, myself and Jamie contesting the C2 class. We finished mid field, within sight of a top six place but awed by the consummate skill of the experienced Slovakian crew of Vala and Slucik, the classic winners.

It is a great shame that our team was so small, but the participation of Team GB reflects the ever decreasing numbers at domestic events with many of the top wild water racers in the world, including GB, making the switch to flat water to realise their Olympic ambitions. Who wouldn't?

But before the sport of wild water racing becomes any smaller, think about why you started canoeing in the first place. You will meet friendly athletes, experienced coaches and helpful people. Be part of a community with the purest, most undiluted passion for rivers and the nuances of speeding down

them with ease. Rediscover rivers you thought were easy and instead of drifting down them waiting for the good bits, hone the skill of nailing a fluid and seamless line that requires inch perfect judgement and a cool head.



Wildwater Racing British Championships

The Championships were held during the Tryweryn Festival over the 18-19th June. Different courses were used to ensure that all abilities were catered for from the main Classic Race that ran from the Chipper all the way down through Graveyard around the Café section down through the lower river and over Bala Mill to the finish line at Bala Road Bridge with a winning time of 26.5 minutes.

Ben Oakley took first place with Scott Finch and Alec Baker in second and third. Gemma Bishop won the ladies event with Stacey Jackson and Clare Brown in second and third. Thanks go to the organisers and staff at as well as all the competitors that took part in the races. The event will hopefully run again next year during the festival possibly including it into the ranking system of UK races.

U23 and Junior European Sprint Championships

Marton Simon stole the show for the GB team in Zargeb, Croatia when he won the bronze medal in the junior men's K1 500m. With a great race on the previous day in the men's K1 1000m, Marton demonstrated his natural racing ability finishing just outside the medals in fourth place. In the 500m there was no mistaking Marton meant business as he blasted out of the start and fought hard throughout the race to cross the finish line third and take the bronze medal, GB's first and only medal of the Championships.

There was exciting racing from the junior women's squad too, with Katherine Trotter and Rebbi Simon finishing fractions off a medal in fourth place in the K2 1000m. Trotter continued to show great form with a solid performance in the K1 500m where she finished sixth.

The U23 squad showed their strength in the 200m racing with representation in the men and women's K1 200m finals. Having competed in the senior World Cup series, Kristian Reeves was no stranger to a highly competitive start line; he paddled with determination in a tight race, but falling just short of the top three finishing in fifth place. In the women's, Hannah Brown showed her speed to finish in seventh place.

Brendan Purcell, Head Coach said, "As a whole the junior team have exceeded expectation and Marton's bronze medal was a great performance, demonstrating his natural racing ability. There were some solid performances from the U23 squad in the 200m. The racing this weekend has been exciting and has provided great experience for the junior squad ahead of the Junior World Championships later this month."

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Canoe England 24-hour child protection:

Email: childprotection@bcu.org.uk

Mobile: 0777 570 7364

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

BCU Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Harassment Lead Officer:

Mike Devlin: 0845 370 9514

Canoe England Child Protection Support Officer:

Nigel Timmins: 07740 820 113

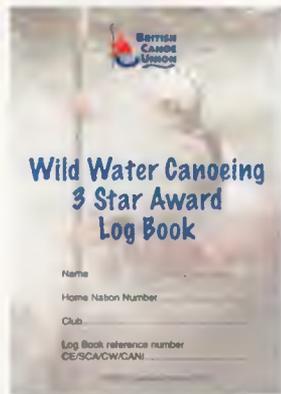
(For BCU individuals who have received an allegation against them with respect to child protection and require support).

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

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Childline: 0800 1111.

3 Star for wild water canoeing



Wild water racers can now complete star awards in the boat they are most familiar with as the first of the planned star awards for wild water canoeing is now available. Designed to test the skills of

paddlers in wild water racing boats, it will sit alongside the existing star awards and will have the same status in terms of being a pre-requisite for becoming a Level 2 Coach.

The award can be taken over a period of time and progress is recorded in a logbook obtainable from your home nation office. For more information see www.wildwater.org.uk, or contact: John Handyside, National Competition Development Coach john.handyside@canoe-england.org.uk

English Canoe Symposium

The English Canoe Symposium is confirmed for the 11-13th November to be held at YMCA Lakeside on the shores of Windermere. The tri-annual event along with the Scottish and Welsh symposium is the leading open canoe event in the country. Coaches from throughout the UK will be there to share their knowledge along with Becky Mason and Harry Rock. Details can be found on www.englishcanoesymposium.com.

Denise Lewis gives canoeing a go

Olympic gold medalist Denise Lewis was the star attraction, as Birmingham celebrated Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week in style.

Over 700 schoolchildren from all across Birmingham tried their hand at a range of Olympic and Paralympic sports, including canoeing, at The Ackers Centre in Birmingham. The event was one of a host of activities that have taken in a busy week, seeing four million youngsters participating from across Britain.

"Schools are where all sport starts for children, it is absolutely vital and it was great to see all the kids trying new sports," said Lewis.

"It was just a great opportunity for young people to get involved in Olympic and Paralympic sports and to focus on themselves and try to get a personal best.

"2012 is around the corner and yes we will be focusing on our elite athletes next year but National School Sport Week is a fantastic event and just as important in focusing on the youngsters now and getting them involved in sport."

Organiser of the sport-filled event in Birmingham was Golden Hillock Partnership Development Manager Anna Delargy – and she believes the sight of the torch will live long in the children's memories.

Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week uses the power of London 2012 to inspire children to try Olympic and Paralympic sports. Your local school could carry the Olympic Flame in the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay or win tickets to London 2012 at: www.lloydstsb.com/nationalschoolsportweek.



Above: Denise paddling with the school children at the Ackers centre.

Street paddler



Street Paddler is a canoeing initiative brought to you by a charity called CATS - Community Action Through Sport. They are a Cornish based organisation whose ethos is to promote and publicly recognise all young people who have contributed positively in the community by awarding them sports-based rewards that they may not have considered or afforded before. Street Paddler is an idea that was developed to create a long term volunteering opportunity for young people at risk. For more information on Community Action Through Sport, please log on to www.communityactionthroughsport.org.

Thanks to funding from the BIG Lottery and Lloyds TSB foundation for England and Wales, CATS are financially strong enough to see 13 Street Paddler projects developed in the UK over the next three years. We are a youth charity and need the skills of Canoe England coaches to help with delivering Street Paddler. If you are interested and think Street Paddler could benefit youngsters in your community, please contact CATS at: Community Action Through Sport, 10 Lansdown Road, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 8BH. Web: www.communityactionthroughsport.org. Email: info@communityactionthroughsport.org. Tel No: 01288 488086.

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In brief

OAG grand opening

On 28th May, the Outdoor Adventure Group in Fleetwood held the grand opening of their refurbished clubhouse. The club won £50,000 from the Big Lottery Fund in the Granada Television Peoples Millions competition last year. From this they have had the opportunity to refurbish their clubhouse, train coaches and paddlers and provide equipment and facilities for disabled paddlers. The club and members of the local council have put a huge amount of work into making sure this money is used to change the future of the club and their paddlers.

Safety and rescue course

During May, North West region ran a WWSR course for club members. The course subsidised by the region helped six club members develop new skills. As part of the subsidy the members have committed to supporting the Mersey Memory Paddle by providing weir safety cover.

Into the Olympic spirit

Paddlers raced in Lightnings, Luddocks and sea kayaks over a 1,000 metre course at Tyne Green Hexham while others took to the warmth of the swimming pool to take part in a pool slalom head to head sprint at Outer West Pool Newcastle. This was the first time that Newburn had ran such an event and dates are now set for follow up events later in the year.

Colne canoe facility opening

On the 2nd June the new access point at Colne Bridge Near Huddersfield was officially opened. The steps and access points give access above and below the weir on the river Colne and it is an easy paddle to the Calder.

Yorkshire marathon successes

Kingston Kayak junior paddlers have received the Yorkshire Region Lightning Trophy whilst Pennine Canoe Club won the Yorkshire Region Marathon Trophy. Points are accrued over a series of events. Congratulations to both.

Wavehopper double event

Tyne Valley and Carlisle Canoe clubs organised Wavehopper sprint races over a weekend of racing in May. Trailers full of boats travelled from as far away as Manchester to both events. Water levels were low but still offered a challenging course to the participants at Prudhoe and Sands Rapids venues. Coaching was offered in the morning followed by the races.

Mersey Descent

Macclesfield and District Canoe Club are running the Mersey Descent on Sunday 16th October. For the vigorous there is a nine mile race with classes for K2, K1, WWR, C2 and TC2, and for the relaxed a nine mile tour. Start at Burnage Rugby Club and finish at Trafford Metrovick Rugby Club. Visit www.madcc.co.uk for more information or email chcleaver@ntlworld.com.

A great day of fun

Kool Kayakers Canoe Club enjoyed a smashing day at the aptly named Blue Lagoon, Wombwell, South Yorks as part of the 'Canoe 2012' initiative. It was intended to be slalom and sprint based, however not having slalom gates easily available they focussed on sprint using different types of boat.

This was their recipe for a great day of fun. Ingredients: sunny weather, clear, clean water with beach, a variety of boat, a focus for the day's activity, enough instructors on the water, very supportive parents on the bank, participants who want to join in and their ever-friendly lagoon resident Jack Russell named Freddie.

The participants were divided into mixed teams of three and competed over a short 50m sprint course.

This was all mixed up with the two most important ingredients which are not listed above

as they cannot be provided to order – enthusiasm and laughter. These were spontaneously self-generated in abundance as people tried their skills in different boats, working out how to paddle them faster, turn them quicker and launch more effectively. Seeing a weighty adult running down the beach and leaping onto a floating sit on top to get a speedy start was most impressive.

To add even more variety Phil Scowcroft, Yorkshire Paddlesport Development Officer, brought some Luddocks for the more adventurous to have a taste of proper sprint racing and brought the ergo paddling machine to inflict on unwitting parents.

With such quality ingredients they could not fail to have yet another excellent club day of fun on the water. What about their friendly pooch, Freddie? He too excelled in trying all the craft, occasionally going solo!



Above: Freddie the dog hitching a lift.

Go Dales adventure day

Go Dales held a Go Canoeing day at Low Mill Outdoor Centre in Askrigg. The canoeing was part of a larger 'Adventure Day' event for youngsters across the North Yorkshire region.

The day was sunny but windy meaning the youngsters got to experience some challenging open canoeing, as the picturesque, but exposed location of Semerwater offered little shelter from the breeze. However, after some quality instruction and practice games on one part of the lake that was sheltered, they all managed to venture into the waves and make it back to the shore safely after a fun and exhilarating session.

As well as trying their hand at open canoeing all the visitors at the event got to compete on a kayak ergo machine with the chance to win a fantastic prize supplied by the Low Mill Outdoor Centre. The challenge was to complete 100m in

the fastest time and the winners in each category were entered into the final draw.

The eventual winner was Jess Townley who won the prize of a voucher for a coached paddlesport session for her and a group of friends at the Low Mill Outdoor Centre.



Above: Jess Townley receiving her prize from Terry Hailwood, Head of Low Mill Outdoor Centre.

Paddlesport 50 and 60+ programmes

Both the West Midland regional development team and Birmingham Canoe Club announced exciting new programmes for the summer... a series of introductory sessions for people who are aged 50 and 60+. The overall aims of both programmes were very similar, offering a three week introduction to canoeing and kayaking. Focusing the sessions on being enjoyable, allowing participants to learn the basic skills and experience the beauty and freedom of exploration on the water.

Royal Sutton Coldfield CC was chosen as the base for the Regional 50+ programme where 12 new people were introduced to the sport. Rob Shelton from Birmingham CC pursued his 60+ programme by successfully applying for a grant from the Birmingham and Black Country Community Foundation - Active at 60 Community Programme. The grant allowed the club to buy some new boats that participants would feel comfortable and safe to try including sit on tops, canoes, and suitable large kayaks. A number of the group have been awarded their Paddlesport Start awards with one member that has already progressed to take part in a recent club sea kayaking trip to Anglesey. He quoted, "As you approach retirement age the general perception is that it is time to take things easy but if you are blessed with reasonable



good health and fitness why not precipitate in something you are interested in which will keep you fit as well."

MP visit to Waveney Valley Canoe Club

On 2nd June, Peter Aldous MP for Waveney visited Waveney Valley Canoe Club, following an invitation from Canoe England after the election last year. Peter had responded positively to this invitation and the visit was duly arranged.

The visit started with introductions to committee members followed by a tour of the club facilities and boathouse. Then it was time to get on the water where Club Chairman, Rob Fisher, took Peter on a short canoe trip along the River Waveney through Bungay.

After the trip Peter discussed a variety of local issues affecting the club and its operation, before thanking members for

the opportunity to visit the club and accepted an offer to come again whenever he was available.



In brief

Regional coaching day

The East Midland regional coaching development day was a huge success with 64 participants in attendance. A whole range of opportunities to develop and learn new skills in canoeing and kayaking were offered along with a kayak ergo challenge which all proved popular. Many thanks to all the volunteers that helped make the day a success.

Celebrating 50 years

Viking Kayak Club is celebrating its 50th birthday this year and to celebrate this momentous achievement is holding a 50th anniversary ball on 19th November. This will be a formal celebration at the Swan hotel. If interested contact: Paul Dodson: events@vikingkayak.co.uk.

RSPB wild coast tour

When Richard Russell and his team met for the first time at the RSPB building, on a windswept Wallasea Island, Essex, they had no idea of how big this event would be. They estimated that they would get 30 paddlers at best. On the day 72 paddlers was the final total!

Initially the going was a bit tough, however, the conditions smoothed out for the passage through Paglesham Pool to the confluence of the river Roach. The flotilla split into two, for those that wanted to circumnavigate Potton Island and visit the seal sanctuary and those that just wanted to go the 10 miles around Wallasea.

They joined again at Wallasea Ness, where Hilary Hunter and her RSPB crew had brought what looked to be a mobile café. Thanks to the RSPB, Maldon and Dengie Canoe Club, and the RBYC, for organising and providing an excellent day.

Fundraising family fun day

The Nene fun day was organised by the Great British Squarerock raft team to raise funds so that they can represent GB at the World Championships in October.

Participants from the morning moved on to enter the day's grand finale raft race! The six teams that entered participated in a sprint, slalom and final head to head race to discover the overall winners. This 'Canoe 2012' competition was designed to show the fun that could be had with rafts. Each team did really well at all events with 'the Numpteys' team taking the overall title.

Thanks to Nene White Water Centre, Squarerock, Canoe Kayak Trader and all the helpers.

MCC's 60th Birthday

17-18th September

Starts 2pm on Saturday 17th. Fun and games on the water with evening BBQ and film shows by MCC members past and present. On the Sunday there is a Division 4 short course slalom event. Come and have a go as the event is open to anyone. For further information see:

www.midlandcanoeclub.com

In brief

Coaching bursary scheme has real benefits for SW clubs

Several clubs in the South West have received support for their coach development from the Regional Development Team (RDT). The RDT have allocated over £3,500 so far this year to clubs in the South West. One club to have benefited is Axe Vale Canoe Club, which now boasts 11 newly qualified Level 1 coaches.

The club chairman Tash Khan-Davis says, "We have already got them involved in running beginner courses! In terms of club development, this funding has ensured that we have a sustainable future and allows our Level 2 coaches to focus more on paddler development." The RDT is also supporting the club's surf weekend, which will be taking place this year on the 8-9th October and an inaugural K4 event to be held in Bristol on the 18th September.

Further details of these events will be available via the South West newsletter and website: www.canoe-southwest.org.uk

The Big Paddle 2011

**Saturday 1st October:
South West Canoe Show**

**Sunday 2nd October:
The Big Paddle**

Enjoy a weekend of fun at the biggest and best canoe show in the South West on the Saturday, followed by the The Big Paddle on Sunday. There will be a variety of paddles available ranging from a gentle paddle down the Exeter Canal to the more exciting paddle over Trews and St James Weir down into salmon pools and down the River Exe to Countess Weir. From there you will be able to portage across to the canal and paddle back to Exeter.

The event is open to paddlers of any ability, there will be guiding and boat hire and further historic and nature paddles also available. Further details available from AS Watersports and at www.thebigpaddle.com.



Triple Clubmark successes

Three canoe clubs in Oxford are making a splash after gaining prestigious Clubmark status.

Isis Canoe Club, Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club and the Oxford Canoe and Kayak Club (OCKC), all based at Donnington Bridge, are now accredited by Canoe England.

Roger Hiley, head of the Riverside Centre, where OCKC is based, said, "It is unusual to find three paddle-based clubs on the same stretch of river. That's a real feather in the cap for Oxford."

The clubs celebrated with a presentation evening on Saturday 26th May, organised by Penny Terry, Vice Chair of Isis Canoe Club, in which members and city councillor John Tanner, took to the water. There was then an official presentation of the award, which gives particular emphasis to the safety and standards of teaching to young people.

Mr. Hiley said, "This has taken a lot of work for each of the clubs. The accreditation process looks at how the clubs invest in people, their training programmes and how they work within the



Above: Members of the three clubs at the Riverside Centre with the head of the centre, Roger Hiley, third from left.

community. It is one of those sports where it doesn't matter what ability or age a person is, they can still take part."

Liz Murnahan, of Canoe England's Southern region development team, said, "It is a lot of paperwork and can be hard to keep on top of it all, so congratulations to all the clubs."



Above: Members of all three clubs taking to the water with city councillor John Tanner (front right) and Liz Murnahan (second row right).

Hampshire canoe trails



Hampshire canoe trails are part of the National Canoe England project to fulfil the purpose of the "Where can I go and paddle?" question that frequently gets asked.



There are five exciting new trails that have been

developed from tried and tested routes across the county including the Beaulieu River, the Saltwater Itchen, Portsmouth Harbour, the Hamble River and the Basingstoke Canal. All trails have been designed with new paddlers in mind, using a detailed map, suggested kit

checklist, difficulty rating and an informative guide of the local area.

Available for download from www.spothampshire.co.uk or a waterproof leaflet can be purchased for £2.50 from Hampshire information centres, canoe shops,



outdoor centres or by contacting Samantha.Jones@hants.gov.uk

Three New Forest trails will be available in the autumn and will include Calshot, Eling and Lymington.

The South West Canoe Show 2011



Saturday 1st October 10am-5pm
Canal Basin, The Quay, Exeter, Devon



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Group of adults lead the nomadic lifestyle on the River Wye for a week

Paddlesport can be an excellent therapeutic tool for those with varying conditions and disabilities.

In May the Nomads Outdoor Adventure Group undertook the challenge to descend the River Wye over the period of a week, camping overnight along the way.

The group, made up of nine men and women from the Nottingham area, was formed for individuals receiving support from Nottinghamshire Social Services. Nomads' main aim is to provide access to outdoor activities as a therapeutic tool to enhance their mental well-being. On a day-to-day basis, the participants experience a range of enduring mental health issues and taking part in such activities helps to build on their confidence and improve their self-esteem.

For many, this was their first journey by canoe and experience of camping. Prior to the trip, the group undertook 1 and 2 Star skills training at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre where the enthusiastic staff provided an informative, yet safe, learning environment.

Starting at Glaisbury, the low water levels required them to work as a team, to drag the boats into deeper water. The occasional capsizes; stunning scenery, wildlife and Symonds Yat rapids provided a rich and rewarding experience especially for those with a prior phobia to water.

The week would not have been possible without the support of Reg, Claire, Clive and Hammy who empathised with the needs of the group allowing them to flourish in this new and challenging environment.



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

Success for SOGB squad in Athens



Above: Stephen Benyon.

It might not be publicised as well as next year's London 2012 Olympics however, this summer's Special Olympics World Games has brought success to the GB canoe squad bringing back ten medals.

A total of 7,000 Special Olympics athletes from 180 nations competed in 22 Olympic sports. A team of 215 delegates, including 151 athletes, travelled to Athens as part of the Special Olympics Great Britain squad – with six taking part in canoeing. Held in Athens in June, the event was the 13th games of its type offering an opportunity to showcase the Special Olympics movement as well as celebrate the abilities of people with learning disabilities.

Supported by Head Coach Andrew Beynon and Southampton based coach Terri Hardcastle, the team took part in 200m and 500m K1 in a competition similar to the Paddle-Ability events in the National Sprint Regattas at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. This format sees athletes split into time bands allowing them to compete in divisions alongside other athletes of a similar ability.

Southampton Canoe Club's Neil Harley won gold in the 200m and bronze in the 500m whilst James Savoury of Special Olympics Wales won 500m gold and bronze in the 200m. Two more gold medals came from Special Olympics Wales when Robert Phibben, the youngest member of the team at 15 years of age, won the 500m Division 12 and Stephen Beynon paddled to victory in the 200m Division 18 categories.

Earlier in the competition the team came down with a stomach bug threatening to affect some of the performances. Talking about his win, Stephen commented, "I feel that I did well and was happy with my performance, the team spirit has been great despite the start to the week!"

Head coach, Andrew Beynon said, "The team's performance was absolutely outstanding; to come back from the whole team being unwell to winning so many medals was just brilliant!" He went on to say that both he and Terri were very proud of the team's achievements.

Other medal winners

200m K1:

Andrew Williams (Division 22: bronze), Robert Phibben (Division 25: bronze), Stella Jelly (Division 28: silver).

500m K1:

Neil Harley (Division 2: bronze), Andrew Williams (Division 7: bronze).

For more information on SOGB and to keep up to date with the team's progress visit: www.specialolympicsgbteam.org.uk/



Above: Stella Jelly.



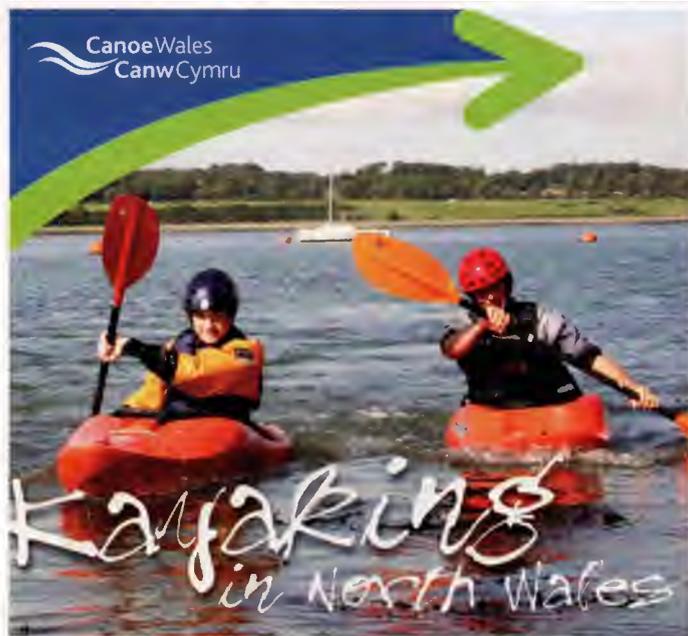
Above: Robert Phibben.



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In brief

Volunteer website – keep updated!

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

Volunteer coordinator pack

Clubs, centres and committees are reminded that a resource for volunteer coordinators is available. The resource is designed to provide support in your role and includes a number of templates, which may be useful. Focusing on recruitment, recognition and retaining your volunteers, the handy pack offers advice as well as useful documents.

Canoe England Long Service Award

The first round of nominations for the Long Service Award is now being considered by the Canoe England judging panels. Those awarded this summer will join the Roll of Honour and receive their award later this year.

Nominations are still being taken and will now be considered in the autumn. If you are a volunteer and have completed 25 years or more of volunteering in Paddlesport in England then this award is for you! For more information, take a look at the volunteers section of the website.

Regional awards

Thank you to everyone who made a nomination in the Canoe England Regional Volunteer and Recognition Awards! Nominations have now closed and the response was fantastic!

Congratulations to Teresa Russ who was picked at random to win £25 Cotswold vouchers, after entering her nomination in the awards.

Regional winners are now being selected to be put forward to the national awards. Watch this space to see who has been recognised in this years' awards!

Young volunteers

If you are under 21 and would like to be a part of the Youth Action Network then we would love to hear from you! You can make a real difference in the sport; email Julia Robertson to register your interest. Don't forget to join YAN on Facebook – the page is a secure online forum allowing you to have your say, find out about new initiatives and help YAN provide the voice of young people. If you would like to join the group, please email Julia Robertson or search for Canoe England Youth Action Network on Facebook.

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

Norwich volunteers

Norwich Day Services and Norwich Canoe Club have joined together to help develop leadership skills for disabled people.

For many disabled people, sport can provide a learning environment that is stimulating, motivating, inspirational and fun. For the individual, sport can encourage improvements in self-confidence, self esteem and skills but, more importantly, their involvement as a volunteer or participant can challenge peoples' perceptions of disability.

Norwich Canoe Club is just one example of how volunteers are working hard to develop opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. The group of volunteers have established a close partnership with Norwich Day Services to raise awareness of the sport and show others how accessible it can be for those with disabilities.

Coaches Dyson Pendle, Louise Linnell, Sally Rix and Jackie Kilbourn recently spent a morning at the centre working with a group of adults to develop their skills and technique on an ergo. In order to develop their leadership skills, this group were then provided with guidance and set the task to organise their own competition to race each other.

The group threw themselves into the activity and staff, including Jackie Kilbourn, employee at the centre and secretary at Norwich Canoe Club, noticed the enthusiasm of the group as they led the way. Funding has now been secured, by the centre, for a stable tor with an outrigger, to enable individuals at the centre to continue enjoying the sport.

Thank you to the volunteers at Norwich Canoe Club who provided this opportunity – a thank you letter and certificate is on its way to you!



Above: Dyson Pendle and Louise Linnell (bottom left) developing the skills of the participants.

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Top awards for two of canoe sprint's most influential characters

BCU Award of Honour Alan Williams QGM

On 4th June at the National Sprint Regatta, the BCU President Albert Woods presented Alan Williams with the BCU Award of Honour.

The award recognises Alan's considerable contribution to canoeing in Great Britain with highlights including, becoming World Champion in 1983, representing Great Britain at two Olympic Games as an athlete and coaching and managing the sprint canoe team at five Olympic Games.

Alan is Performance Manager for the GB canoeing sprint team currently preparing for London 2012

The early part of Alan's career was spent in the British Army during which time he started canoeing a couple of times a week in Dover Harbour. Alan was soon representing the Royal Engineers and after being selected for his first international in Norway in 1971 he was competing regularly in all sorts of national events; sprint, marathon, slalom and white water.

Alan left the forces in 1981 so that he could focus on his canoeing with the aim of winning the first ever Sprint World Championship medal at the World Championships due to be held at Nottingham. Alan was the stroke for the GBR K4 and finished third. A couple of years later Alan raced K2 10,000m at the World Championships in Tampere with Steve Jackson and took gold, which was the first ever World Championship gold medal in sprint racing for GB. Alan's paddling career lasted 18 years and covered three disciplines all at an international level. Alan retired from competitive canoeing in 1986.

In 1989 Alan began his coaching career, coaching part time at Royal Canoe Club and became Chief

National Coach for sprint and marathon in 1990. In 1994 Alan was appointed as Olympic Racing Squad Director And Chief National Coach – this job title changed to National Performance Manager in 2000. As National Performance Manager, Alan continues to work with the senior management team with the planning and reviewing of performance pathways. This includes: planning and co-ordination of training and competition programmes; forward planning; logistics and finance. Alan is the chair of the international panel, drafts selection policy and chairs the selection meetings. During regatta season Alan is also the team manager for major international events. Alan successfully fills his full-time role as National Performance Manager within GB Canoeing and the organisation and experience that he brings to the GB team ensures it continues to grow from strength to strength.

In 1997 through the introduction of lottery funding, the BCU was given the opportunity to bid for support for the World Class Programmes. Alan was instrumental in the creation of the bid, showing his adaptability to move from a non-funded voluntary structure to a whole new philosophy under the World Class Programmes. Alan has played a significant part in creating the programme that helped GB Canoeing move to its first Olympic medal (Tim Brabants) in 2000 and its first Olympic gold medal (Tim Brabants) in 2008.

In Alan's spare time he continues to serve on several committees as a volunteer including the marathon and sprint committees (16 years plus to date) and in the past was an elected member of the BCU Council. Alan is the link between the World



Class Programmes and the Sprint Racing Committee (SRC). As a volunteer on the SRC he is involved in all levels of committee work. His most crucial role is providing the integration and effective communication that supports a successful working partnership within the voluntary committees and the World Class Programmes. He is a key member of the SRC moving forward the development of the sport.

Alan also finds the time to carry out advisory roles for the BCU board and outside bodies (BOA and ICF) on policy issues relating to the national team.

During his career Alan has competed/coached or managed teams at 27 World Sprint Championships and seven Olympic Games. For outstanding service in a voluntary capacity for over 20 years Alan is nominated for the BCU Award of Honour as a thoroughly dedicated and committed individual to the sport of canoeing at all levels. This award is thoroughly deserved and will be just recognition for his outstanding work.

Eric Farrell MBE



Eric Farrell has been awarded an MBE for services to canoeing in the Queens Birthday Honour's list. Eric has been involved in canoeing since he took up the sport at Royal Canoe Club in 1969 he was a successful paddler and made the K2 500m final at the 1977 World Championship.

After finishing competing, Eric returned to the sport as a coach. He started coaching a group of young athletes at Elmbridge Canoe Club. Within two years he had lead Tim Brabants and Paul Darby-Dowman to GB's first Junior World Championship gold medal.

This was the beginning of a successful partnership with Tim that lead to GB Sprint

Canoeing's first ever Olympic medal in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and ultimately to GB Canoeing's first ever Olympic Champion when Tim won the K1 1,000m in Beijing. He also coached Ian Wynne to the K1 500m bronze medal at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Since that historic race in Beijing, Eric has been preparing Tim for perhaps the biggest challenge so far; to win gold at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Talking about the MBE, Eric said, "I feel very honoured and very proud to receive an MBE for canoeing. Canoeing is a fantastic sport and hopefully this award will raise the profile of the sport that I love so much."

An interview with Jessica Walker Canoe Sprint

Interview by Helen Reeves



Following her shining start to the 2011 season, I caught up with Jessica Walker to find out more about what makes her a top sprint kayaker and how she balances the challenges of competing in two events.

So what makes Jessica Walker a top sprint kayaker?

I work hard and I am very focused. I am also very passionate about my sport and I have good coaches and a really good team around me.

You have had a great start to the season with three medals under your belt, two in the K4 and one in your K1, what has made the difference to see you go from a finalist to a medallist?

I think I have grown up and learnt a lot. I am more experienced and more relaxed, which has helped prevent injury and illness which I have struggled

with in the past. Confidence has also played a big part. As a team we have learnt a lot from each other, we have all got faster and we have learnt to paddle well together over the last three years.

You paddle in a crew boat as well as in the individual, is it tough combining the two?

It is tough, especially as it is the 500m in the K4 and 200m in my K1, but they do complement each other. First of all I do my K4 and then I come off the water and have to switch focus, it's a bit like switching personalities. I like the fact that they are quite different – it's a good challenge.



Do you need different characteristics for the two events?

Yes. For crew boats you need to have the ability to work as a team, to concentrate on how your team mates are feeling, talk to each other, and then in the boat I have to be focused on following Abi's lead as the stroke. Then when I switch to my K1 200m, it's just about me and going for it, staying focused and not letting anything get in the way.

Having been on the podium in the K4 as well as the K1 do you have a preference?

I enjoy them both for different reasons. In the K4 it's nice to share the experience and then when it's just you in the K1 – it's great to know you accomplished it all on your own.

What are your ambitions for the next 13 months?

To carry on the pathway I am going and to continue getting better and better.

How does it make you feel knowing that London 2012 is only 13 months away?

Excited and really up for the challenge, whatever it might be!

What are you looking forward to most about London having the Olympics?

The atmosphere and how excited everyone will be, just seeing the nation getting behind the athletes and being inspired by what they achieve.

Why should people watch the sprint canoeing in 2012?

With the introduction of the 200m, the racing is very dynamic and exciting and GB is in with a great chance of taking home medals. It is also more exciting than rowing, we go forward!

In three words describe yourself?

Chatty, crazy, persistent.

Follow Jess' progress this season at:

www.gbcanoeing.org.uk
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Jess Walker

Multi World Cup medal winner

World Cup gold medallist

Olympian

Junior European Champion



Booms equal tro

By Chris Hawkesworth

Twenty-five years ago we had weirs and sluices without guard booms. Then in response to a series of incidents involving disabled power boats floating loose and a dreadful accident on the River Trent, whereby several army trainees drowned after missing the lock cut, there was a clamour to make our rivers safer and booms were seen as the solution.

The first boom I saw was installed at **Boroughbridge Weir on the Ure/Ouse Navigation** and thereafter they were installed all over the country.



Above: Signed gap.



Above: A canoe pass.



Above: Experimental EA boom with a gap at the bank.

The early designs consisted of a bank-to-bank chain anchored to piles driven into the river bed. Along the chain at intervals were what looked like 45 gallon drums threaded on to the chain like beads on a necklace and, like a necklace, the booms drooped into an arc, pushed downstream in the middle by the river current. The drums were firmly fixed stationary on to the chain and in such a manner that the combination not only caught errant boats, but also logs, trees, gas cylinders, dead cows and every other item of rubbish that gets into rivers. Needless to say, they also caught the odd unwary or over confident canoeists!

A design re-think was undertaken after a young member of the public drowned whilst trying to walk across rubbish, which had collected above the boom at Sprotbrough Weir on the River Don.

A mark two was specified, the main difference being that the drums were designed to rotate about the chain, such that rubbish floated under them and did not accumulate.

But no one took into account us canoeists. A bank-to-bank boom straight across a river with no means of getting out from the river is our equivalent of the Berlin Wall as some paddlers on the Severn at Diglis Weir recently found out.

If a strong stream is running on the river and on occasions the current can be running faster than a paddler can paddle up river against it, there is no way out and the paddler has to evacuate his craft and swim under the boom. Not nice.

I relate these issues to you to indicate that guard booms, which are installed for one perfectly proper purpose, can have totally unexpected consequences. However, can we have even better, safer designs that take us paddlers into account? After all, Canoe England members have licences to canoe on the canals and rivers of British Waterways (BW), the Environment Agency (EA) and several other navigations and non-powered licence payers now outnumber powered craft.

Of course, booms indicate trouble ahead but they also make trouble. So what can be done?

One solution may be gaps between the end pile(s) and the bank, wide enough for a canoe to pass through but narrow enough such that a powered craft cannot.



Above: River Medway.

able ahead

Another is to angle the boom such that powered craft are guided towards the lock cut or position the boom in a location such that canoeists and rowing boats can turn above them in such a way that powered craft and non-powered craft do not conflict with each other.

If a boom has to be bank-to-bank, can we have a signed 'take out' landing/steps above the boom, a 'put in' below the hazard with a portage path in between? The signs of course need to be visible both from the river and the land with the landing/steps positioned so paddlers transiting both upstream and downstream can use them.

Of course, below many booms there are unshootable sluices and other hazards that canoeists of sound mind and experience would never go anywhere near.

But there are many others that are shootable, produce play waves and are of interest to the experienced white water paddler. So, why not leave a gap for canoes in appropriate site specific booms?

All these have now started to happen and both the EA and BW have designed a 'U' or 'canoe gate' for inclusion in booms. The idea is that the 'U' is inserted into a boom in place of one barrel. If installed at the same time as the boom the cost is no more than a barrel.

But, do we sign these gaps or not?

An experienced paddler will scan the length of an approaching boom from his craft. If he spots a gap in the boom, or is able to paddle around the end he will make for that gap, knowing that there is a major hazard coming up just below the boom. He does not need signage to indicate the gap. He will find it for himself. He will instinctively evaluate the prevailing conditions, water level, current speed, water temperature, wind, and will take precautions by looking around for both a get out location and/or a location from which he can inspect the hazard.

But, with more canoe trails being advertised and with more canoeists taking to the water with little or no experience of sluices and weirs, let alone

booms, there is a school of argument that says that canoe gates or gaps should be signed. However, is this not an invitation for trouble and what should that signage say? Or should it be site specific?

Me? In this instance I am a 'non-signer'. What about you?

In conclusion, can I point out, that not all weirs and sluices have booms and some booms are made up of smaller diameter 'canoe' floats instead of the big plastic barrels. Please take great care around booms and river hazards. It's your decision to paddle and if in doubt – don't!

Hydro electric

Following on from my hydro electric articles in the last two issues of *Canoe Focus*, the EA have issued a fresh consultation and review of their 'Hydropower Good Practice Guidelines'.

You can have your say and they are available for you to view and comment between the following dates:

Start date: 01/07/11 11:30

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Women and Girls in Paddlesport



Scotland's first only paddle symposium

Intrigued by the difference between how men and women learn, Mags Duncan, one of only a handful of female coaches who have completed Level 5 training, decided to explore this topic further. Initially running a series of kayaking skills sessions specifically for an all female group, Mags saw firsthand, how much less intimidating and more supportive an all female coaching environment could be and that women tend to learn differently than men.

Article by:
Anne Murray



As with all good ideas... the idea grew...wouldn't it be fantastic to offer an event especially for women that could provide the supportive learning environment to enhance and develop confidence for female paddlers? With that thought, the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium group was formed!

Despite there being a limited pool of female coaches, the group had no trouble recruiting a 20 strong team of female coaches from across Scotland and northern England for the weekend. Together they were able to offer workshops in sea, river and surf kayaking as well as in Canadian canoeing.

There was an amazing response from Scotland's female paddlers and the event quickly became fully booked with over 60 participants taking part. The event was based in the picturesque coastal village of Findhorn, 30 miles east of Inverness. Findhorn Royal Yacht Club formed a fantastic

base providing easy access to both sea and rivers all within a short drive. Despite mixed weather the weekend had a fantastic buzz in the air with a friendly, chatty, relaxed and supportive atmosphere throughout.

Sea kayaking proved to be the most popular sessions with many women taking part in the moderate and advanced sessions. The Findhorn River provided a great venue for the moderate inland, freestyle and canoe sessions; the Garry River provided suitably fun and challenging for the advanced inland paddlers; and the surf conditions at Lossie provided the perfect venue for surf kayak sessions.

Detailed survey

After the weekend a detailed survey was sent to all participants to assess the value of holding such an event. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the participants really enjoying the

all female learning environment. Feedback showed that they liked the 'non-macho' nature of an all female group; they felt relaxed and comfortable and were happy to ask questions. They were also less worried about being the slowest on trips and found that everyone looked out for one another, encouraged each other to try things and praised each other. They also commented that they enjoyed not paddling with their husbands and boyfriends who, although they are sure they don't mean to be, can get a bit frustrated and be critical at times!

The event had fantastic support from sponsors H2O outdoors and Skyak Adventures as well as support from System X, Pyranha, Karitec, Palm, FreshFish and Stirling Canoes. Thanks to the goodies they provided, the organisers managed to save some money which will go towards plans to host another Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium next year.

women symposium



Be inspired at any age

Phyllis Collins (age 81)

Phyllis Collins started canoeing three years ago at the age of 78. She has always enjoyed taking her small rowing dinghy out on the River Avon and to the Lake District, but after her husband died she found it too heavy to launch on her own so decided to sell it.

This is when Phyllis discovered inflatable kayaks! She decided to have a lesson to see if it would be something she enjoyed. Although not realising how wet one gets compared to rowing a dinghy, she was undeterred and after a few more lessons decided to buy one of her own. The first inflatable she bought was a two-man Sevylor canoe kayak and used it on the River Avon and canals with friends, her grandson and sometimes on her own.

The following year Phyllis achieved her 1 Star Award and has since bought a single inflatable kayak, practised a capsize and rescue and completed a 7km paddle. This summer she intends to take an improvers course. Phyllis is a big fan of inflatables and says that, "although they may not be as challenging as conventional craft, you can still do a great deal with them."

Thanks to Phyllis for sharing her discovery of inflatable canoes and hopefully she has inspired you to try something new!

Robyn Craig (age 16)



Robyn Craig became one of the youngest UKCC Level 1 Paddlesport coaches at the age of just 16 years and two days. Robyn celebrated her birthday on day two of the course. She hopes that her story will help encourage other young girls to try different aspects of the sport and take their first steps into coaching.

Robyn enjoyed her first ever kayak session at the age of eight and has gradually increased her participation over the intervening years, working through all of the Paddlepower awards, 3 Star

kayak (both in the old and new schemes) and the Cadet Leader Award. She has also undertaken some great long-distance journeys by canoe and kayak, including the Caledonian Canal, the Spey and the Tweed and has enjoyed recreational paddling while on holiday in France, Turkey and Australia.

Robyn competes in slalom (currently ranked fifth in Div 2 K1 women), regional canoe polo, Wavehopper and sprint races. She was delighted when she achieved a hat-trick, winning the ladies prize at the Humbledon sprint races on each of the three occasions that she competed this year. Robyn's coaching experience includes several years of assisting on pool courses, working with different groups during river training sessions and helping to organise the youth polo team. She has often been called into service as a 'competent second' and it is only fitting that she has now qualified as a coach at the earliest possible opportunity.

Robyn makes an important, cheerful and enthusiastic contribution to the life of our club and I hope she will be an inspiration to other women and girls to try many different aspects of the sport and take those first steps into coaching.

Lindsay Craig



Female Level 1 coaching courses

The series of pilot female only Level 1 courses have been very successful and there has been great feedback from each course that has run so far. There are two courses still available this year:

North West: 18th September, 24-25th September and 8-9th October at PGL Winmarleigh, Garstang

London: 24-25th September, 30th September and 1-2nd October at Laburnum Boat Club, London.

For more information contact rachel.derry@canoe-england.org.uk



Above: Lunch stop.

Rockpo

East Greenland summer

Have you ever dreamt of visiting a far away land with a history and culture so very different from your own? I lived my dream of paddling amongst icebergs and visiting the place where kayaking began. Greenland is very accessible; we flew into Kulusuk international airport, which is a two-hour flight from Iceland.

Feature by: Immediately, I had a sense of being somewhere different; the cool breeze and clear bright sky giving a special feel. A short dusty walk from the airport to the waterfront and we were picked up by a local hunter and fisherman for the 40 minute boat ride to Tasiilaq which, with a population of approximately 2,000 people, is the main town in the Ammassalik region.

Dave Watson.

Our guide, Martin Rickard, had arranged for the kayaks to be shipped out from the UK via Denmark earlier in the season. He knew the container had arrived and so we headed for the harbour office to find them. Although some goods and supplies are flown into East Greenland most arrive by sea and somewhere amongst the hundreds of blue and red containers stacked on the quayside was ours!

Packed up and on the water four hours later and the adventure began. Tasiilaq is on the edge of the sheltered King Oscars fjord, surrounded by high mountains and valleys and which we had expected to have found covered in pack ice. However a month earlier the ice had 'gone south' taken by the wind and tide leaving open water with some very big icebergs bobbing about. This open water meant that the swell from the prevailing winds made it very lumpy at the mouth of the fjord which we needed to exit before rounding the tip of Ammassalik Island and heading north towards the Knud Rasmussen glacier area, travelling up the inside (west) of the outer islands which we hoped would provide shelter from the swell.

We decided to spend the first few days exploring the fjord and getting to know each other and our equipment. We were a group of eight and Martin's fleet of kayaks was predominately Rockpools with Valley and Nigel Dennis kayaks as well. Sue and I chose to paddle Rockpool Alaws; we are both quite tall so the raised front deck made for an excellent fit. We had food and camping

equipment for a self contained two weeks on the water; so, as you can imagine we had a lot of kit!

“ Searching amongst the rubbish tip we discovered Coca-Cola bottles emptied and discarded over 50 years ago ”



Day-to-day decision making

The essence of the trip was to develop our skills and experience the nature and culture of the region. Martin has travelled extensively around the coastal areas of East Greenland and was enthusiastic to pass on his knowledge. This was not like many of the adventure/wilderness expedition companies who provide clients with a wilderness experience but do everything for you including cooking and pitching the tents. Apart from the kayaks, we were expected to plan and provide our own equipment and food, joining in with day-to-day decision making for our trip. It was, however, always done under the watchful eye of Martin and with group safety always being paramount.

Over the following days as the trip progressed we saw different aspects of the life and culture of East Greenland. Our first camp, at a long abandoned whaling station and settlement, lived up to the historical promise we had hoped it would. The remains of the whalers' cabins and huts can easily be found on the headland, with a small lagoon, which dries at low tide, that had provided a perfect site for landing and harvesting the whale products. However, on closer inspection evidence of earlier settlements could be found including human remains buried under simple piles of granite slabs and blocks. The form of the graves stands out against the natural curves of the landscape, but not detached from it, or the community that

ols and icebergs



Above: Sangmilleq coastline.

used to live there. A few days later we visited another small settlement with four of five wooden houses, some in a terrible state of repair, but a couple which were still in use by visiting hunters and families. Again we found graves built next to and in amongst the buildings.

Cold war era

But not all of our historical finds came from the distant past; during the cold war era the US and Soviet Union established a number of secret military bases in the Arctic region. Bluie East 2 was one of the US bases; it was opened in the mid 1940s and closed about 15 years later. However, it still isn't shown on the modern maps even though the airstrip runs for over a kilometre in length and the thousands of 45-gallon fuel drums, which are scattered around the site, can be seen on the hillside as you approach from many kilometres away. All of the buildings have long since been flattened but there are still US military vehicles and machinery to climb on and explore in as you think of the GIs who used to serve here. Searching amongst the rubbish tip we discovered Coca-Cola bottles emptied and discarded over 50 years ago, together with lots of other items of kit, which are rotting and decaying as the environment takes control.



Above: Abandoned US base.



Above: Kulusuk international airport.

“We listened and watched the face of the glacier groaning and exploding before breaking off and smashing into the sea below”

Later that week we were able to use the small channel blasted by the GIs to link a couple of stretches of water near the township of Kuummiut. Hunting is still an occupation for many and a pastime for others, though the methods have changed with no sign of kayaks being used. The preference nowadays is for open boats with powerful outboards and rifles. During the trip, we saw whales which was fantastic however, our encounters with wildlife were limited and I felt the local population used the environment to provide for themselves where hunting, shooting and fishing is the norm.

Continuing our journey north, the temperature was dropping as we reached the Knud Rasmussen glacier and our turnaround point. According to the map, an area of nearly 5kms before the edge of the glacier should have been frozen water but it wasn't and we were able to get much closer than expected. We listened and watched the face of the glacier groaning and exploding before breaking off and smashing into the sea below, the water was a stream of icebergs and shards of ice as the tide came and went. Leaving our campsite opposite the west edge of the glacier it was time to head back to Tasiilaq; this had been by far the coldest of our camps.



Above: Sunset towards Angmagssalik.



Above: Sue checks out an iceberg.



Above: Fresh bread and cakes.

First hot shower in nearly a fortnight

Our next 'port' of call was the township of Kuummiut two days away. As we entered the small harbour and ran our boats up the beach we were greeted by a group of children eager to sit in the kayaks. Kuummiut is a small town with a population of approximately 300. There is a school, medical centre, general store and community centre. For one Kroner we had our first hot shower in nearly a fortnight and it was fantastic! Having cleaned up, the general store - an Aladdin's cave - awaited with fresh bread, steel toe capped wellies, needle, thread, firearms and ammunition, together with a good range of foodstuffs. The streets were rough and dusty but this didn't stop the children running around, playing football, riding bikes and all whilst eating ice cream!

chosen a headland overlooking the Ikasagtivaq channel which separates Ammassalik island from the mainland, and what a show we had that evening; two fin whales playing a short distance off shore before disappearing up the channel under a magnificent sky with the sun dipped below the skyline. The ground may have been hard but this was a truly magical campsite!

Continuing south with improving weather we decided to run with the wind and get around the headland and the safety of Tasiilaq bay before it broke again. As we entered the bay we were greeted with the sight of new icebergs that had been blown along the coast since our departure, together with the welcoming view of one of the coastal supply boats that are the lifeblood of the region. A month before our arrival the boats had been unable to sail due to the snow and ice, which had now all but disappeared until it returns with the darkness of winter. We had enjoyed our short visit to the area; the scenery, culture, warm welcome and wilderness experience amongst massive icebergs is waiting for you – go on live your dream!

For more information about visiting East Greenland visit www.eastgreenland.com for information about the region.

“Two fin whales playing a short distance off shore before disappearing up the channel and a magnificent sky as the sun dipped below the skyline”

Later that afternoon we had difficulty finding a suitable landing site and eventually hauled the kayaks off the water and up some granite slabs to set up camp. Granite and tent pegs don't mix! However, we had



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River Tay race

Last October, the Scottish Canoe Association ran a major new event on the Tay, which turned out to be an enormous success. The occasion was the 800th anniversary of the founding of the city of Perth and

The Tay Descent was just one of a wide variety of events organised throughout the year to celebrate.

Consequently, sponsorship was not too difficult to obtain and once the ball started to roll, a number of significant sponsors came up with financial packages, which helped the organisers.



Feature by: Andy Morton. **Over 400 hundred paddlers took to the water in all kinds of craft, much reminiscent of the world-famous annual Liffey Descent in Ireland. Three courses were offered: long, medium and short. As each provided water conditions commensurate with length, this ensured all tastes were catered for. You could take on anything from short and easy, to long and testing. What's more, you could cruise or race and any (safe) boat was accepted.**

The organisers did a superb job of arranging starts and transport to suit everyone, and to ensure that the vast majority of paddlers finished the race at a reasonable time of the day. To add to the quality of the whole event, the SCA Exhibition was held over the weekend at the Bell's Sports Centre, just 400 metres from the river and the prize giving arranged round a ceilidh on Saturday night. Those travelling from afar could enjoy a splendid paddle down the Tay, spend some time with friends at the exhibition in Perth and round off the day with wining, dining, singing and dancing into the wee small hours. Of course, this event, although unique, was certainly not the first to offer canoeists a chance to race down the Tay. There have been Tay races of all kinds for over 50 years, and I have been lucky enough to be involved with these, both as organiser and participant on many occasions. So here below, a wander down memory lane.

Crystal-clear water from loch to sea

You can't fail to be thrilled by the river, as you travel along the crystal-clear water from loch to sea. The scenery is spectacular, and the quality of the water suited to each and every paddlers'

skills and inclination: from gentle meanders through picturesque villages, glorious forests and green pastures, to raging torrents, dangerous enough to be lethal;

and sadly, they have been on more than one occasion, even quite recently.

I first took to the water in the mid-60s and was a little taken aback by the interest of a young girl of small stature, who offered me advice on how to paddle down Grandtully on my first attempt. I was standing on the rocks at the top fall, trying to pluck up some courage, when she engaged me in conversation. How could such a slight English girl be in a position to offer me advice on how to negotiate a raging torrent? Later I discovered she was Pauline Squires, the then British Slalom Champion and her advice was excellent.

I started racing in late 1967, and a long distance race (as they used to be called) on the Tay in 1968 was to be my second race. I paddled a fibre glass white water racer, called a Mendesta Coursier and won, much to my pleasure. Since then, I have paddled on the Tay in all kinds of racing kayaks for almost 45 years and I feel enormously lucky that I am still able to do so.

My next big event was the British Marathon Championships in 1969, a race for K1 and K2 paddlers, from Dunkeld to Perth. I bought a special 'Liffey' K1 for this and was happy enough to come 12th, paddling against many paddlers from abroad and

“I have paddled on the Tay in all kinds of racing kayaks for almost 45 years and I feel enormously lucky that I am still able to do so”

memories



'legends' such as Graham Mackereth, who later went on to set up Pyranha Kayaks. Norman Jackson won the event, paddling the 23 miles in a time of 2 hours and 39 minutes. Incidentally, Pauline Squires won the ladies event, placing her 4th overall against junior K1s.

Canoeist of the Year

Grandtully is a mecca for slalomists. The BCU and the SCA have developed the site considerably from the early days and it continues to be popular, but racing of all kinds has been in decline for many years. Now there are very few events held on the river. In Scotland, in the 70s, one could be racing almost every weekend, and I and many others did race regularly in slalom, river racing, marathon and sprint. So much so that points were awarded from these events to find out who was the best all-rounder of the year: an award called 'Canoeist of the Year'. Sadly those days have gone.

In the 80s I organised an annual race from Kenmore to Perth, down the whole length of the Tay. The distance was well over 50 miles and the competitors had two days in which to





complete the course. The British team stayed for a week and used it as a training camp and paddlers from Ireland and as far away as South Africa, attended the event regularly. The race was run in stages: Kenmore to Killin (14 miles) and Killin to Grandtully (11 miles) on Saturday. Then on Sunday, Grandtully to Dunkeld (11 miles) and Dunkeld to Perth (23 miles). Each stage was started at a particular time, so paddlers finishing early in the first leg had almost an hour to recover. Almost all paddled K1s and K2s and the event was a serious test of skill. Anyone taking a racing K1 through Grandtully rapids and from Campsie to Thistle, has to have complete mastery of these kayaks. Perhaps that was one of the reasons the

event eventually became untenable. Latterly, I found myself one of only two serious contenders from Scotland and if one checks the results of last year's Tay Descent, not one of the 400 entrants paddled a racing K1 from Dunkeld to Perth. Only 52 year-old John Ringwood from Ireland came close to that, but his K1 was specially designed for river paddling, with white water deck and cockpit.

A steep decline in interest

River racing too has seen a steep decline in interest, so that there are only two weekends of racing each year now – the Scottish Championships and the Tour d'Ecosse at the end of May. On the last occasion a ranking river race was organised from Stanley to Thistle in October, only three paddlers turned up. We used to have a whole winter series each year in Scotland on the Dee, Tay (three races), Awe, Clyde and Teith. Some events attracted over 100 competitors; I know because I have the results of most of the events I attended over the past 45 years.

Why has there been this decline? There are many reasons and many other sports are experiencing the same problem. It's certainly not anything to do with the infrastructure, the finance

or the good people who give of valuable their time to organise kayaking and canoeing in Scotland. The reasons are much more fundamental and systemic, and would demand a separate article devoted to the topic.

So I write this piece in the hope that the new Tay Descent breathes some life back into the racing scene in Scotland. Even if paddlers don't want to race, they cannot fail to revel in the joys of paddling down the glorious Tay, in all its moods.

Join us for the 2011 event will take place Saturday 22nd October. ♡

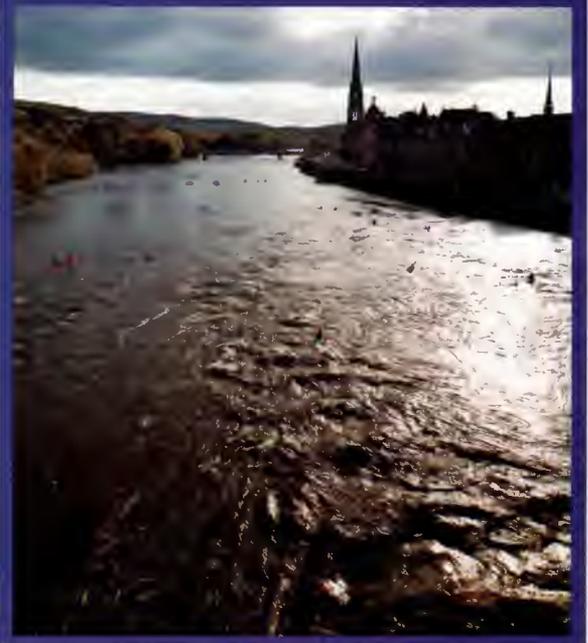
Tay Descent 2010 results

K2

1. Ian Tordoff / Alan Tordoff (2 hours, 1 minute)
2. Neil Chalmers / Colin McMorrin (+ 2 minutes)
3. Neil Blackman / Jamie Christie (+ 6 minutes)

K1

1. Grant Anderson – River Racer (2 hours, 7 minutes)
2. John Ringwood – K1 (+ 8 minutes)
3. Andy Morton – River Racer (+ 9 minutes)



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An interview with Philip Watson, Surf Kayaking



Hi Philip, thank you for taking the time to talk to us.

The Surf Kayak World Championships are coming up at the end of the month. However, we hear, you won't be in North Carolina, is that right?

Yes, I've really enjoyed being at every major competition since 2005. This year's Worlds will be the first one that I'll miss, which I'm gutted about – it coincides with the first two weeks of my final year at university, which I wouldn't be able to properly catch up on.

The England Surf Kayak team will be defending our title as World Champions, so I wish all the guys the best of luck.

For me, the big ones I'm really looking forward to are the World Cup Finals in Morocco next year and the 2013 World Championships in Australia.

So, which other GB competitors should we look out for at this year's major competition?

Chris Hobson (Northern Ireland), Sam Davenport (England) and Dave Speller (Jersey) are all riding really well. As for juniors, England's Aidan Brackenbury is flying and Jack Barker is ripping in a long boat.

How did you first get into canoeing and, in particular, what made you choose surf kayaking?

I grew up around Skern Lodge, an outdoor education centre in Devon as my dad works there. He got me into kayaking and all of the other experienced boaters around improved my paddling skills. I paddled the Dart and the Lyn quite a bit, but it was a natural progression into the surf as that was the environment that was on my doorstep.

You're currently studying Maths at Exeter University. Is it difficult fitting in surf kayak with your studies?

It can be hard but luckily home is only an hour train journey from university so whenever any local breaks are working I can head home at fairly short notice.

You've already had lots of success in surf kayak – which moments stand out as particularly special to you and why?

Winning the British Open Junior category in Northern Ireland was a really big moment because it was the first major event that I won but also because everything came into place and I surfed at my absolute best. For the same reason, winning the expression session at Ocean Spirit in Portugal was also amazing – so many people on the beach at a huge international wavesports festival. Although most of my favourite surf kayaking moments have been during free surfs.

Is there any off water training or conditioning work required to compete successfully in Surf Kayak?

I have previously worked to strength and conditioning programmes but find myself more motivated by being less structured with programmes. I also don't enjoy the gym environment but love doing similar exercise outside. I love playing all different sports, which help with my general fitness. I eat well and like healthy foods – I've never used a specific diet.

What else makes a good surf kayaker?

Good timing and the ability to read waves so that you know where you should be to use the wave's

Quickfire questions!

I would describe my character as... energetic

My ultimate goal is... enjoy myself, succeed and progress in all I do

I relax by... playing guitar

My favourite food is... Cajun chicken

My favourite drink is... cider/milk

My favourite place in the world is... my local secret spot! I can see it from my house.

On my iPod I'm listening to... Ben Howard, SBTRKT, Ghetts... quite a range!

I get really angry about... people that get angry about things!

The one thing I'd change about Surf is... a conveyor belt to paddle people out – like they've got on the Olympics course

If I hadn't got into Canoeing I'd be... breaking myself doing other sports

In 10 years time I'd like to be... somewhere interesting and unexpected (with great waves)!



Above: Philip Watson. Photos: cardelli.com

energy most effectively. Have a look at a new website to improve your skills: surfkayakskills.com

Have you ever had any scary experiences whilst out surfing?

Some – a rocky high tide session in big waves at a Cornish break that is considered not surfable at high tide springs to mind... it made for great photos though, you could pick out lots of places along most of the waves that were dried out, exposing rock! Other big wave sessions in Ireland and Portugal have also had me a bit nervous. It's often not solely the size of the wave, but how heavy it is that makes breaks more intimidating.

Do you get nervous before a competition – what do you do the night before?

I used to get fairly nervous but am more relaxed now. I surf better when I'm relaxed. I tend to just get an early night before a comp so that I'm fresh for the next day.

And finally! What's next for you – what are you looking forward to during the rest of the year? Hopefully some good summer swell! Visiting Peru in August. Recording my music and playing gigs.

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



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Waterways and Environment Charter

Principles and proposals for government action on access to and along inland waters for canoeists and other interested parties.

Over the last few months, we've been working to develop the Canoe England Waterways and Environment Charter, which we are now pleased to be able to publish here, in Canoe Focus. This Charter sets out the policy and beliefs of how Canoe England sees the wider public use of our waterways being progressed. If you have any questions about the charter please email access@canoe-england.org.uk

1.0 Background

This charter sets out the views of Canoe England concerning the legal situation and environmental use of the waterways of England.

Canoe England is the representative body for over 1,800,000 canoeists in England and it protects the freedoms and promotes the interests of all canoeists from the recreational participant through to the international athlete.

Our activities bring significant benefits to the countryside, users, local communities and society in general. It calls on political parties to develop an integrated package of measures that will further secure and enhance sustainable public use of the waterways.

For over 50 years Canoe England (BCU) has tried to secure sustainable use of inland waterways in ways that do not threaten their natural beauty or wildlife. It has also lobbied for changes to, and implementation of, primary legislation in order to ensure permanent use of inland waterways as well as the English coastal waters.

The canoe is a traditional craft used throughout the world for exploring wilderness areas and quietly

observing wildlife and flora. It causes no erosion, noise or pollution, and leaves no trace of its passing. Canoeing at appropriate water levels is an environmentally benign activity and causes no damage to fish stocks.

Canoe England acknowledges responsibility to take reasonable measures to safeguard the environment for both the present and future generations.

Canoe England as a landowner and manager, with responsibilities for Symonds Yat in the Wye Valley and other recreational land and water spaces has expertise in environmentally sensitive land management practices, and development of portages and fish passes which are increasingly being placed on navigation authorities, private landowners, communities and other organisations.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of people canoeing and canoeing remains the most popular watersport.¹

Yet today we continue to be faced with a lack of clarity and uncertainty about being able to use inland waters. Under 4% of our rivers have undisputed public rights². New challenges threaten the use of some of our publicly owned areas.

2.0 Introduction

Over the last 60 years there have been several pieces of legislation which should have, if the powers had been enacted appropriately, provided the opportunity or greater use of the routes to and along the inland waterways and coastal waters.

- 1949 National Parks Act
- 1968 Transport Act
- 1991 Utilities Act
- 1995 Environment Act
- 2000 CRoW Act
- 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

With the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA), provision for recreational use of the countryside has changed significantly in the last 10 years.

Despite these welcome changes in primary legislation with provisions to use non-tidal waters, the situation is unchanged. Where rights are not recognised and disputed, government promotes a policy for voluntary access agreements³ that has proved not to work and meet a demand.

3.0 Core principles

Canoe England has agreed a set of core principles for use, which should guide future policy and legislative proposals.

3.1 Recognition of the importance of the use of inland waterways

Being able to reach the waters' edge, as well as being able to canoe along inland waters has wide reaching benefits – from greater recreational opportunities and a better understanding of the natural environment, to increased well being and benefiting the rural economy.

3.2 Use of waterways and right of access

The use of the waterways by non-powered craft for quiet, informal recreation (where environmentally appropriate) should be a basic right to be enjoyed by all.

We fundamentally believe there should be a right to use all rivers with local management measures covering environmental conditions and the rights of other user interests to be respected.

3.3 Responsible use

All who use the inland and coastal waters including the surrounding countryside must



respect these environments, the interests of those who live and work in the area; as well as all other users.

Canoe England has produced leaflets 'You, Your Canoe and the Environment'⁴ as well as 'Canoeing on the Sea' which provide guidance for all canoeists when enjoying their sport.

3.4 Paying for use

Recreational visitors should not be required to pay to use the inland waters other than is currently undertaken on 'managed' navigations e.g. River Thames and the canal network

3.5 Liability

Landowners or occupiers should not incur any liability to protect visitors from personal injury from informal recreation on their land or the waterway.

3.6 Public betterment

Large sums of public money are invested in the waterways to improve them. Where public money is used, including Grant in Aid then the public should have a right of access/use. Public money should be used for public betterment.

3.7 Freedom to take risks

Canoeing is accepted as an assumed risk sport and the freedom to take risks and personal responsibility for one's own safety is an integral part of recreation and adventure sport and must be upheld.

Canoe England recognises that canoeing potentially is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in canoeing should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions. The decision whether or not to canoe a waterway is an intentional act and rests with the individual.

4.0 Action for government

Canoe England calls on the government and its agencies to develop an integrated package of measures to remove restrictive policies and practices by considering the following actions:

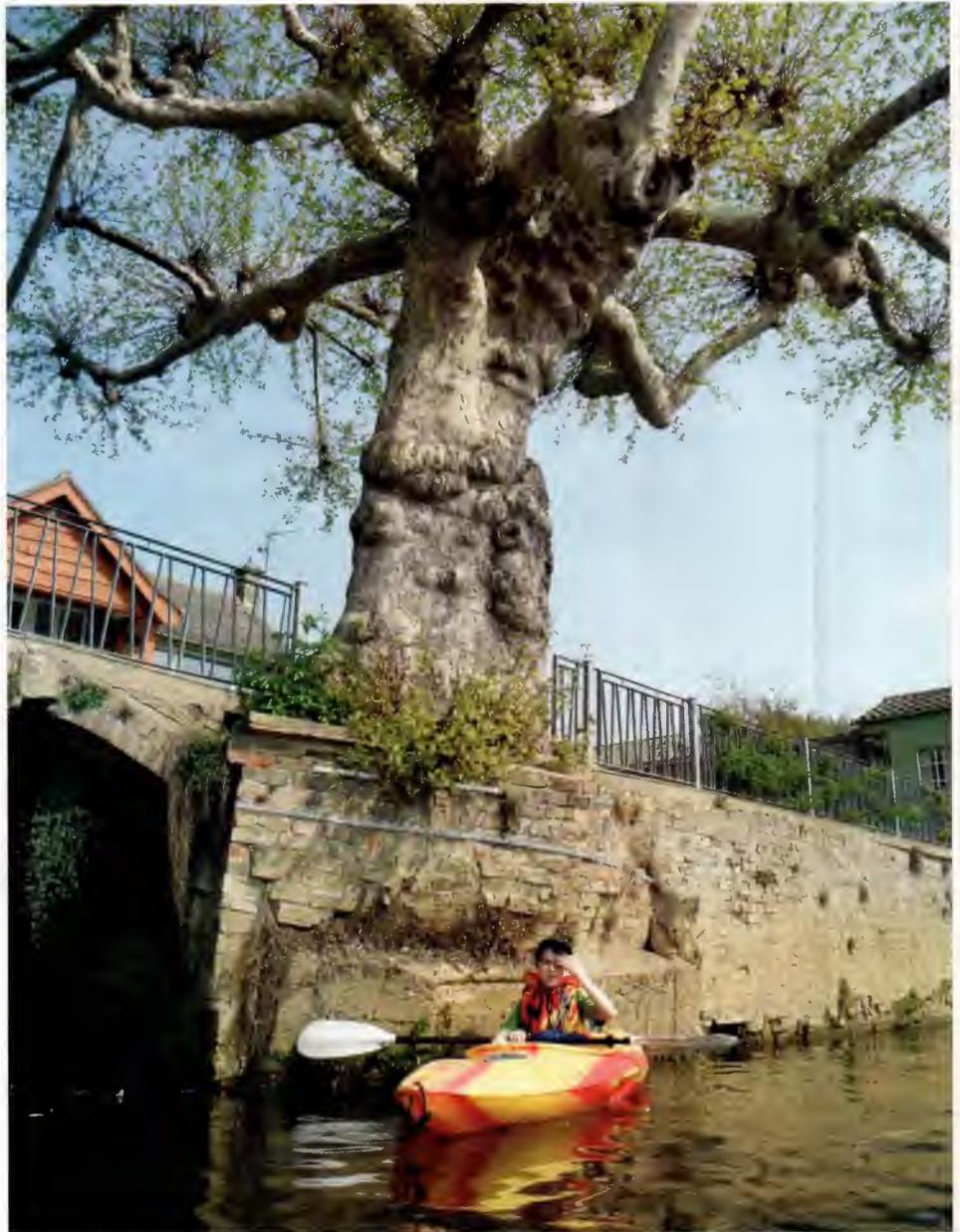
4.1 Dedicate water to create permanent use rights

Where there are no recognised public rights on non-maintained and usable waterways.

In March 2011 the 'Sport and Recreation Alliance Review – Red Card to Red Tape' included access to inland waters stating "the lack of clarity and certainty of access acts as a barrier for greater participation in watersports."⁵

Where there are currently 'no legal rights' to use publicly owned water, the government must ensure the right to use is in existence before any watercourses changes ownership.

In the meantime, and in addition, private landowners should be encouraged to use Section 16 of CROW as an appropriate and existing mechanism to safeguard public use and reduce occupiers' liability.



4.2 To investigate both the existence, and seek the restoration of, historic rights of navigation and access to the water's edge where they exist

Canoe England does not subscribe to the present assumption, by some, of the law that unregulated rivers (where there is no active navigation authority) and usable by boats are private. Magna Carta and the strength of the latest historical research on the law the www.caffynonrivers.co.uk are further grounds for a presumption in favour of access and public rights to inland waters that are physically useable.⁶

Government must investigate and then implement the access rights.

4.3 Support existing bodies in the delivery of public use and recreational opportunities

In transferring delivery of use and engagement related work to civil society, the government must utilise the expertise of voluntary organisations like Canoe England who are already encouraging appropriate use, and enhance effective partnerships which avoid duplication and encourage partnership working.

4.4 Recognise the importance and value of canoeing and water based outdoor recreation in any new planning and landscape designations

There must be an ongoing commitment that new and existing policies, practices and environmental designations for waterways, aimed at protecting England's natural assets, take account of the importance of recreation within the natural environment. They should not hinder opportunities for use or be improperly applied.

4.5 Ensure no loss of public amenity or the conservation value of inland waterways and their banks through sale or transfer

Where public waterways and/or their banks are being considered for disposal, there must be a clear commitment under any new management to secure them for future generations. The waterways must be maintained in a way that continues to provide and protect natural value and the public interest.

4.6 Ensure use and outdoor recreation remain a priority for local authorities

There is a need to ensure the footpaths and rights of way are maintained as many of these are the



means by which canoeists and others access the water. This is in addition to the great use made of them by walkers and other users.

4.7 Understand personal risk in outdoor recreation and occupiers liability

Visitors when using the outdoors should exercise responsibility for themselves. Therefore it is essential that government policy initiatives are based on the need to encourage people to participate in outdoor activity and to gain a sense of freedom and adventure, rather than imposing restrictions for fear of liability. Health and safety requirements should be proportionate and practical.

4.8 Support greater use of agricultural subsidies to secure opportunities for use

Where public funding is used to support land management there should be greater public access opportunities. E.g. where public money is used to enhance a waterway and/or the surrounding area the waterway should be made available for public use.

Public funding equals public use.

5.0 Additional Information

- 1 Watersports and Leisure Participation Survey 2010.** Canoeing continues to be the most popular watersport with over 1.8 million adult and children participating. Regular monthly participation has shown significant increases in England from 122,000 to 150,000 in the last two years (Active People Survey 5/2).

- 2 Water-based Sport and Recreation: The Facts 2001.** A report commissioned by Department Food Rural Affairs and prepared by the University of Brighton. Note. As the figure of under 4% of rivers have undisputed rights is important it is confirmed this is derived from WBSR the facts were:

Table 4.1

Inland water resource: rivers and canal lengths (km) England

Major rivers	Minor rivers	Total
14,862	42,740	59,909

Rivers with public navigation rights 2,001km

Canals are not this equation.

$2,001/59,909 = 3.4\%$

- 3 Putting Pilot Voluntary Access Agreements in Place, final report 2006, University of Brighton.** Produced for Department Food Rural Affairs and Environment Agency.

Enjoying Water – Strategic Priorities for Water Related Recreation in London and South East England, February 2011.

Produced for the Environment Agency by the University of Brighton, (www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation).

Canoe England Position Statement - Access Arrangements and the use of non-tidal waters by manually powered craft.

Note adding the Enjoying Water for L&SE and CE statement illustrates the restrictive policies and positions taken against water recreation.

- 4 Copies of You, Your Canoe and the Environment** along with further environmental information can be found on the Canoe England website www.canoe-england.org.uk
- 5** 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."
- 6** Historical research has concluded:
 - All rivers, which were physically usable were legally usable.
 - There is a high probability that each section of a river, which is now physically usable was usable by small boats in the period 1189-1600.
 - On the balance of probabilities each section of a river, which is now physically usable was used during that period.
 - There is, therefore, a public right of navigation on all unregulated rivers that are physically usable.

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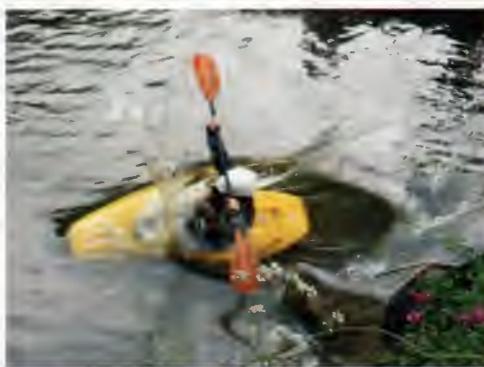
More information, along with the terms and conditions are available at www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/photo-competition. The winners are announced on page 9.



Above: Adult June winner Michael Barnett – Lee Valley White Water Centre.



Above: U18 June winner William Ash – La Torche, Brittany.



Above: Fergus Wilkie – Symonds Yat East.



Above: Pauline Marsh – Bala Falls, River Tryweryn.



Above: davidfirthphotographics.co.uk – Llyn Tegid.



Above: Adult May winner Stuart Dalziel – River Great Ouse.

tion



Above: U18 May winner Emily Hewitt – Basingstoke Canal Hasler 2011.



Above: Linda Desmond – Antarctica.



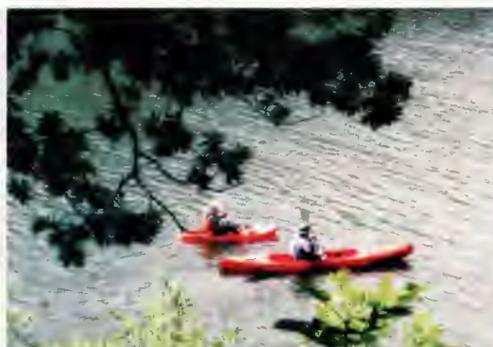
Above: U18 Jacob Brown – The French Alps.



Above: Paul Simmonds – Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre.



Above: Mark Harding – River Dee.



Above: Emily Donoghue – Rudyard Lake, near Leek.



Above: Maxine Berry – South Devon coast.

The Weser an

Two of the biggest rivers in northern Germany.

Not many Britons are to be found paddling on the big rivers of northern Germany, which is a shame since they are both paddler friendly and offer an attractive way to explore the area.

Feature by:
Richard Simpson.

www.outdoorinitiatives.co.uk

On the River Weser you are deep in rural Germany in an area that has well-presented towns and varied and interesting countryside running along the western edge of the Harz Mountains. Paddling is a delight. At all times of the year, the Weser is a fast moving though flat river passing through wonderful towns such as Rinteln (twinned with Kendal) and Hameln (Hamblin) where the medieval character has been preserved and new developments lie behind facades that enrich the town rather than add only function.

It would be easy to underestimate these rivers: they are essentially flat water but their speed means that things happen quickly and that swimming or pinning hazards have a potential for high risk. It also means that river ferries are able to ferry glide across the river – an eye-opener for British paddlers.

There may be quite a bit of commercial and recreational river traffic, which mainly operates from dugout harbours or backwaters since the speed of the rivers and shortage of sizeable eddies mean that moorings are not readily available.

The Weser is formed at Hann Munden close to Kassel at the confluence of the Werra and the Fulda. It is then 440km to Bremerhaven on the coast, though few paddlers would want to mix it with the commercial shipping at Bremerhaven. In true German fashion, a radweg or cycle path follows the river all the way. Using that and rail access up, down and across the valley means that access and shuttles, as well as exploring the surrounding area, is all reasonably straightforward.

A few key words will go a long way

Contrary to expectations, English is not as widely spoken as you might imagine. On a trip such as this you may well find somebody who speaks perfect English in the most unlikely of places and then have to practice your German when you would expect people to speak some English. As ever a few key words will go a long way. German trains run on time, often have machines on the platform or on the train from which to buy a ticket; on the face of it all easy to use but give yourself plenty of time if you are unfamiliar with the systems.

In Hameln, a weir and lock mean that a short portage is necessary. Camp left downstream of the town, then spend a day in the town following the story of the Pied Piper of Hameln.

At Rinteln the canoe club campsite is just above the town bridge, on the river right, handily placed next to the outdoor swimming pool. Rinteln is another lovely medieval German provincial town, well worth half a day spent wandering around and enjoying Kaffee und Kuchen.



“ In true German fashion, a radweg or cycle path follows the river all the way ”

d the Elbe



If you can manage to be near Hameln on the second weekend of December then the Rinteln Canoe Club's Eisfahrt is worth joining in with. This is the major winter social event for local paddlers and many others from all over northern Germany. There are often several hundred paddlers taking part with plenty of glühwein and würost at the halfway halt and beer, glühwein and pea soup at the clubhouse at Rinteln at the finish. For all the water is flat this is not an activity to be taken lightly – the speed and temperature of the water means that a swim would not be fun.

Camping is readily available along the Weser, sometimes on commercial sites, sometimes on small canoe club campsites equipped with a bar, clubroom and boat store and invariably with a steward on site.

The River Elbe is a much longer trip, rising in the Giant Mountains of the Czech Republic about 1200km to Hamburg with the added interest that much of the river lies in the former East Germany and whatever they say; you can tell when you are in the east! Dresden may well be a good place to start paddling though Magdeburg will give a worthwhile shorter trip of 4-5 days.

Once again the river takes you through delightful towns and villages with half-timbered buildings, paved squares and centuries of history and culture. At Wittenberg, Martin Luther hammered his 95 theses onto the castle door. Medieval Dresden was of course largely destroyed in WWII and has now

been rebuilt. Magdeburg was the preferred residence of Emperor Otto I and boasts over 1,200 years of history; there is a whole chunk of European history here that many Britons are unaware of.

Paddling on the Elbe feels quite remote; even within spitting distance of Hamburg, the wide flood plain and marshes mean that there is an unexpected wildness and variety of wildlife. It also means that wild camping is an option where it isn't always possible in farmed areas.

So what next after these two rivers? Well the Rhine is obviously the best known river of the region and is well documented. It's tributary, the Mosel, which I have explored from the radweg, probably provides a trip that is at least as interesting as the Rhine by virtue of landscape, level of development, culture and history; not least the profusion of vineyards with direct sales to the public. The Ems has potential that I have not explored, though I have a sense that it passes through less interesting areas. Then of course there is Mecklenberg, the huge area of interlinked lakes to the north and west of Berlin. The River Trave from Lübeck will give a couple of day's trip with the added bonus of a visit to this historic Hansa town and continuing to finish at the estuary at Travemünde on the Baltic. There is a small canoe club campsite on the water's edge at Travemünde from which the ships to Scandinavia look and feel like a block of flats moving past only a couple of hundred yards from your tent.

“There is a whole chunk of European history here that many Britons are unaware of”



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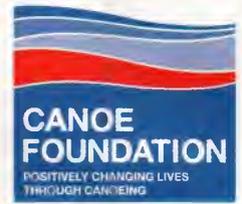
Further information can be found on the Canoe England website and CV's should be sent to Kate Clark, HR Manager, e-mail at kate.clark@bcu.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 12th September 2011

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Canoe Foundation

'positively changing lives through canoeing'



The principle functions of the Canoe Foundation are to raise money; inform and educate; and allocate funds, in line with the charity's mission statement: positively changing lives through canoeing.

Feature by: Simon Hitchcox.

In the last eight years the Canoe Foundation has awarded in excess of £110,000 worth of grants to more than 100 projects, which have in turn benefitted over 10,000 individuals. Applications and successful awards have increased considerably over the past few years, with over £25,000 awarded in the last financial year (up to 31st October 2010), and more than £20,000 already allocated in 2011.

Most grants are awarded through the charity's Small Grants Panel who meet four times a year, in March, June, September and December; while larger grants (anything above £2,500) are decided on by the charity's trustees in line with the charity's five key areas:

- Young people
- Places
- Heritage
- International
- Equity

These key areas are supported by two additional aspects; raising funds, which aims to increase the financial assets of the charity thus enabling it to broaden its activities and support in the future; and corporate governance, to ensure full compliance with charitable legal and financial obligations as well as those required by registered companies. The charity's Memorandum of

Articles; Memorandum of Associations; and accounts, can be accessed on the Charities Commission website (www.charity-commission.gov.uk) by searching our registered charity number (1121456)

Although the Canoe Foundation is a completely separate legal entity from the BCU and home nations, the charity has recently negotiated to become the 'Official Charity Partner' of the BCU and Canoe England. Further details of this agreement, as well as information about the charity, how you can support us, accessing grants, and case studies will be available on the Canoe Foundation website - www.canoe.foundation.org.uk - once launched in the autumn.

You can support the Canoe Foundation by giving online either as a one-off donation or setting up a regular direct debit contribution, both of which can be done on the charity's JustGiving page, www.justgiving.com/canoe.foundation. On here you can also set-up your own sponsorship page(s) for events which you are putting on as a club or individual.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Canoe Foundation Development Officer, Simon Hitchcox, if you have any questions about the charity; or ideas and suggestions for fund raising or promoting the work that has and continues to be supported. He can be contacted either on the address below; by e-mail to simon.hitchcox@canoe.foundation.org.uk or phone: 0845 370 9547.

The 'Canoe Foundation' is registered with Companies House in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee (Registered Company Number: 06194565). Registered Office: 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8AP. Registered Charity Number: 1121456. Incorporated on 30th May 2007.





Behind the scenes

Simon Hitchcox of the Canoe Foundation

An excellent team of people support and work with 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.

Simon first joined Canoe England in 2009 as Club Coach Administrator but in May this year, fancying a new challenge, he started as the Canoe Foundation's Development Officer. We chatted to Simon about the new role, and found out how it's all going!

You work as the Canoe Foundation Development Officer. Describe your role in just three words?

Exciting, challenging and rewarding.

And now, with a bit more detail...

Responsible to the Canoe Foundation's directors (and trustees) I am tasked with raising money; increasing awareness of the charity in terms of promoting who we are and what we do; and through my involvement with the Small Grants Panel allocate funds, in line with the charity's mission statement: 'positively changing lives through canoeing'.

I have a number of projects which I am working on at the present time, which include finalising the charity's development plan for the next three years; liaising and negotiating agreements with the BCU and home nations and producing a website to launch in the autumn.

It's a brand new role that was only developed this year. Can you tell us a bit about your aims and objectives for the coming months?

My main aim at the moment surrounds the promotion of the charity, and generally raising awareness. The Canoe Foundation website is central to this, and will be supported by a number of press releases, announcements, and leaflets; not to mention the use of social media through sites such as Facebook and Twitter – so spread the word!

Coupled with this is the importance to generate income through donations, sponsorship and other sources. The more

money raised means the more projects the charity can support. Now, in addition to methods which the Canoe Foundation has historically received support, i.e. one-off donations or monies relating to parts of an estate left in a will; anyone can donate online by a number of means including regular or one-off donations and sponsored events on JustGiving, or on the auction site eBay either through PayPal, or when listing items agreeing to donate a percentage or even all of the proceeds to the charity.

What challenges do you think you'll face in the months ahead, in particular, with fundraising – it must be difficult during tough economic times?

There are a number of challenges which are ahead, and the economic situation is certainly one aspect when, as a charity you are trying to generate income. The main issue though is that at the present time very few people are aware of the Canoe Foundation; who we are, and what we do – this understanding is fundamental before we can attract donations and support.

How did you first get involved with canoeing?

Like a lot of youngsters, I first paddled in the scouts on the canal close to where my parents live. Although I really enjoyed the sport, once I began studying for my degree and working I had to be more selective of the sports I participated in. After graduating from university I joined Rushden & Diamonds FC as Press Officer and Ticket Office Manager – a dream job considering it was the club I supported as a boy – and a fantastic place to work, where no two days were the same!

Having been approached by a local college to lecture for them on their business and sports courses I returned to university at Nottingham Trent to gain my PGCE. It was at this point after a long period away from the sport I joined the Student Canoe Club and got back on the water. The culmination of which ended up me moving back into sport in my role at Canoe England.

And do you paddle regularly?

At university I paddled regularly, playing lots of canoe polo as well as general river running, playboating and even surfing. Nowadays I rarely get in a boat, and instead tend to do more running, mountain biking and snowboarding; while more recently I tried wakeboarding for the first time!

So, what attracted you, from your job at Canoe England, to the role at the Canoe Foundation?

The biggest attraction of the job at the Canoe Foundation was that although the charity had been in existence for some time, being their first ever employee meant that I would be able to start from scratch. This 'blank canvas' meant that I would really be able to influence the future growth and success of the organisation.

Any plans for the rest of the summer? Or things you're looking forward to?

Having already been away in Scotland for two weeks at Easter, the summer will mainly consist of weekends out and about; and if the weather stays nice there will be plenty of BBQs.

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

Quickfire questions!

I would describe my character as...

fun, determined and outgoing

The last book I read was... George Best's autobiography

The last film I watched was... Senna

My ultimate goal is... to look back at life without any regrets.

I relax by... spending time with family and friends; or walking the dog

My favourite food is... Lamb Shank

My favourite drink is... Peroni

My favourite TV programme is... Grand Designs

My favourite car is... Audi R8

My favourite place in the world is... Monaco

On my iPod I'm listening to... Kasabian

The person I most admire is... Jose Mourinho for his strong, determined, but almost arrogant, approach to life which is undoubtedly the cornerstone to what he has achieved throughout his career.

I get really angry about... traffic jams, queuing and just generally waiting.

In 10 years time I'd like to be... living by the coast somewhere.

One thing you don't know about me is... my dog is named Trent – not after the river, but because of the rivalry between the two opposing universities in Nottingham that my wife and I were at when we first met.

Below: Simon and Trent on Ben Nevis.



pyranha



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