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Input & Ideas



News & Events



Features



Competition



Reviews

contents

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5 Comment
From Chief Executive Paul Owen.

20 Yakkety Yak
Letters page. Star letter wins a Yak buoyancy aid.



6 Noticeboard
Catch-up with what has been happening

16 Access
Save the Yat Rapids

34 Young Paddlers Programme
Paddlepower update

42 What's On
So much to do, so little time...

26 The NEC Canoe Exhibition
What happened, where and when



12 Daring to and fro
Natalie experiences her first Grade III rapid

14 Wilderness Paddling
Canadians in Canada

22 Mosel Tour
Meandering on the Mosel

30 Innishturk
Sea kayaking off the West coast of Ireland

36 Slalom, Been There, Seen It
Ian Raspin interviews Jimmy Jayes

40 Kayak Club - Gorazde
Re-building paddlesport in Gorazde

46 Wine, Baguettes and Whitewater
Paddling the Southern Alps

56 Caledonian Capers
Six go paddling in Scotland

58 In Search of Platypus
Paddling in Australia



38 Paddler's Gear
The latest gear

Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. Please don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. Essential information. Contributions are acceptable in clear handwriting or typed (double spaced). PC disks (3.5 or 5.25) can be read from most Word Processing programmes especially if saved as an ASCII file. Macintosh Files saved as DOS or ASCII can also be scanned. Photographic images are preferred on transparencies (colour slide). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and it's agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next Copy date is the 20th APRIL 1998. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the June 1998 issue.



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World Class Performance

There is a great deal of concern regarding the number of issues associated with the World Class Performance Plan, these issues include: Funding for disciplines not included in the interim plan, appointment of the Performance Director, the payment of National and Club Coaches, calculation of subsistence awards and also support for individual disciplines complete programmes and in particular the introduction and participation elements.

The Sports Council World Class Performance Programme is not designed as the method of financing disciplines plans from introduction through to excellence. It is a programme designed purely to finance elite excellence (the quest for medals). It is to be combined with other programmes in particular World Class Start and World Class Potential to provide funding for the complete continuum. A particular problem has been the delay in launching the other programmes which has caused some disciplines to think that their entire activity needs to be funded through World Class Performance. The idea of appointing a Performance Director is to ensure that the entire programme can be properly co-ordinated and administered, leaving coaches with the responsibility for coaching on the water. Once the Performance Director has consulted with section coaches it will be his/her job to complete the full World Class Performance Plan and submit it to the Sports Council Lottery Unit.

Agreement on stage two of the World Class Performance Plan will unlock the funds required to fund additional National Coaches. This final phase of the plan will be to cover the period leading up to the Olympic Games in 2004 giving stability to all of those involved. Wild Water Racing and Canoe Polo will be included in the BCU's phase two submission.

One year on from the original launch the Sports Council Lottery Unit are currently reviewing the World Class Performance Plan and in particular the method of allocating subsistence awards to athletes. The BCU will be contributing to the process and it is hoped that improvements can be made.

Hopefully, during the next few months the entire programme of support for our disciplines can be rolled out at which time I am sure many of the current concerns can be relieved.

BCU AGM

Following the nominations to BCU Council, I am pleased to welcome back onto Council our President Albert Woods and Treasurer Jerry Rogers together with councillor Graham Wardle and new councillors Ian Janes and Stephen Harris.

Sadly, the occasion of the Annual General Meeting saw the retirement of Alan Williams and Simon Dawson who have both contributed invaluable to the organisation of the British Canoe Union.

International Canoe Exhibition

Thanks to everyone who played a part in this years International Canoe Exhibition. As this years exhibition concluded the initial three year partnership with National Boat Caravan and Leisure Show a decision will be made before the summer concerning the organisation of future exhibitions.

If you have any views at all about the exhibition, format, location etc. please write c/o the BCU office.

Britain's Newest Canoeist

Congratulations to David and Clare Gent who gave birth to their second son Alistair Andrew on Saturday 28 February 1998.

Sports Councils

The United Kingdom and English Sports Councils have agreed an interim funding package of £385,000 with the BCU to cover year one of the new four year development plan.

Geoff Good

I am pleased to report that Geoff Good is continuing to make good progress and it was most pleasing that he was able to join us for a day at the International Canoe Exhibition.

Paul Owen -
Chief Executive





Slalom Babe

Kate and Jonathan Aston, both in Division 1 Slalom, are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter, Emily Kate Charlotte Aston on 20 December 1997, 7lb 6oz. Mum canoed up until one week before the birth and started again 6 weeks after. Emily is now a family member of Shepperton Slalom Canoe Club - the youngest ever!

Scottish Paddlers Get A Recreational Voice

As a result of the considerable 'grass-roots' response to the lack of direct representation and focus for recreational paddlers in Scotland, and following an unprecedented turn out at a Special General Meeting in the Autumn, there was a unanimous vote at the SCA AGM in November to endorse the formation of a new technical committee. The Recreational Rivers Committee was created to represent and meet the long-term interests of the increasing numbers of recreational paddlers in Scotland. The recent submission of a three year development plan stated the following aims:

- 1 To make the organisation more attractive to 'non-compulsory' members.
- 2 To improve the quality and availability of information to all recreational paddlers.
- 3 To support all bodies working towards a 'freedom to roam' policy.
- 4 To promote high standards at all levels of recreational paddling.

Members of the committee, under the chair of Fran Potheary, are all active paddlers with a committed interest to all issues relating to recreational canoeists and kayakers, paddling rivers and inland tidal races in Scotland. Discussion is already under way with the Coaching Committee and the Access Officer and his committee as to how the needs of this, the largest group of paddler in the country can best be met. All Scottish canoeists whether members or not, are encouraged to contact the SCA office with all matters relating to our sport, as it is only with an entirely united approach that an appropriate response can be co-ordinated.

Tel: 0131 317 7314 Fax: 0131 317 7319

Boat Licence Review

British Waterways and the Environment Agency today announced a package of measures to address the requirements for improved boat licensing arrangements as a result of lobbying the Inland Waterways Association. A joint BW/Environment Agency working group has been established to undertake a review of current arrangements for licensing. The review will focus on consultation with user groups on a number of issues including the possibility of a national licence, the BCU will be involving itself with these consultations. The results will be reported in the Autumn.

In the meantime, the Environment Agency and BW are reinstating the reciprocal licensing arrangements between the River Nene and the Grand Union Canal for 1998. The arrangements, which commence immediately, are for 60 miles either side of Beckett Park Junction, and permit boats from BW waters to navigate as far as Peterborough, with craft from the Environment Agency's waterways having access to the Grand Union Canal.



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The Soar Valley Resolution

This race is an annual event held on the first Sunday of the year, by the Soar Valley Canoe Club in Leicester. Generally, the course follows the Grand Union canal, from the SVCC clubhouse at Loughborough Rd, bridge, then onto the Soar to Cossington Mill, and from there, against the flow of the Wreake, up to the Grand Union junction, and back to the SVCC clubhouse. The weather has a major effect on this event, and this year the course was a straight run to Cossington and back, with the junior's turning around at Birstall Lock, due to extensive flooding on the Soar. The flooding combined with gale/hurricane force wind's with speeds of 55 to 95 mph! to increase the difficulty of an already tough event. There was a good mix of entrants, from a lone C2! To, fittingly for the conditions, a white water racing kayak. In the main race the K1's and K2's seemed quite well suited to the condition's but the TC2's struggled due to the wind, and the lack of cover from the bank caused by the very high water levels. In spite of the weather, the race was attempted in the traditional spirit and most of the K1's and K2's finished, but the TC'2 Jared less well, with only three out of the ten crews completing the course.

The course is usually a benign stretch of water, but the condition's turned it into something associated with a wilderness expedition, not a man made navigation, and made the exposed sections almost impossible. It would seem that this race is more of an ordeal than a contest, and in ideal conditions it is a good test of stamina and skill, but given the range of conditions that pertain at this time of year, the prospective entrant should adopt a 'see what it's like on the day' attitude. The event will be run next year, as usual, if nothing else, it's a good way to test one's resolution and lose some of the festive seasons residue. Thanks to all who took part in such challenging conditions on behalf of Soar Valley Canoe Club and look forward to seeing you all next year. Mick Gordon

Surf Canoeist to the Rescue

Mark Gatens from Harlow Outdoor Education Centre recently had to put his skills to test. Having recently completed his Surf SI L3 training, he had taken a group to Widemouth Bay in Cornwall. It was a perfect day, blue sky, clean 6-8ft surf with big rips just waiting to be played in.

A holiday maker reported two people being swept out to sea in one of the rips. Mark assessed the situation and had his gear on in seconds. Hazel, a colleague from Harlow, armed with throw lines assisted Mark from the beach. Although the emergency services had been notified and a Sea King was on its way from Chivenor, time was of the essence.

A swimmer and a board rider had been pulled into the impact zone and were being hammered by the surf. Mark skilfully paddled out to the swimmer, hauled him on to the back of his 'fly' canoe and carried him to shore. The board rider, still in trouble was assisted by Mark who shadowed him to safety. As the Sea King and the Coastguard arrived all was well. Sam Roberts who had run Mark's Surf course would like to congratulate Mark for keeping a level head and pulling off this difficult rescue.

Bournemouth Lifeguard Corps

The BCU is pleased to welcome the Bournemouth Lifeguard Corps back in to the BCU family. The corps is a voluntary organisation which has been patrolling the beach at Bournemouth for the past 30 years. Affiliated to the RLSS and BCU the club runs training courses on most weekends throughout the year. For more information contact the Secretary, Mrs Janet Taylor, Flat 4 Addiscombe, Cranborne Road, Bournemouth BH2 5BR Tel/Fax: 01202 314406

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Environment Agency Provides Launch Site

Stour Valley canoeists now have a specially built launch site thanks to a new wooden platform provided by the Environment Agency. The Agency have funded the new access to ensure canoeing can take place throughout the year and provide an ideal platform for teaching purposes. The club contacted the Agency for support as bank erosion was becoming a problem and £1140 was given to fund the platform built by Boyt Contractors of Sturminster Marshall.

Reading Canoe Clubs - new premises

Reading Canoe Club's new Lottery funded clubhouse, is due to be officially opened in May by Mr Derek Casey, Chief Executive of the English Sports Council. The club was awarded £395,653 by the National Lottery to build the club whilst the club members pledged another £10,000 through money raising events and personal pledges.



Above: The new canoeing clubhouse at Reading



Above: The old premises were less salubrious

Anti-Doping Rules - Ventolin Inhalers

If you are competing at a level which may render you liable to a drugs test, please note the following:- Use of Ventolin Inhalers - If you use a ventolin inhaler, which contains the banned substance Salbutamol, you need to register the fact. Please send sae to the BCU office for the notification form. Should you be subjected to a doping test, then you need to state on the form which you complete at the time of the test that you have asthma and that a Ventolin inhaler has been prescribed. Should Salbutamol be identified in quantities which are in keeping with the use of an inhaler, no further action will be required. Those paddlers who have registered for previous seasons will be sent a reminder shortly, for re-registering, if they are still using the inhaler, and are still likely to be drug tested.

Registering the use of a banned substance

If there is a possibility of you being drug tested during the current season, and you are taking a banned substance prescribed by your doctor, it is recommended that you register the fact. This will not prevent disciplinary procedures being invoked initially - this includes suspension from competition until the matter has been adjudicated - but if the amount of banned substance found is in keeping with quantities likely to result from the treatment prescribed, there is every possibility that the disciplinary panel will accept the declaration as mitigating evidence, and no penalty would be imposed. It is usually possible for alternative drugs to be used, not containing a banned substance, and with your permission the BCU's medical officer may contact your doctor in that respect. Standard Disciplinary Rules - A copy of the standard doping regulations is available upon receipt of a sae at the BCU office.

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National Championships and Paddle Sport Canoe Kayak Festival



For many years the National Championship for the sport was the central attraction of the International Canoe Exhibition held in mid February of each year at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. The event was in a knockout format with eliminating rounds held at pools around the country in the months leading to the event with the survivors going through to the playoffs and finals at Crystal Palace.

The relocation of the exhibition to the NEC in 1996, and the loss of the pool facility, has had a dramatic effect on the impact of the championships with subsequent venues at the international pools at Sheffield, and Leeds struggling to maintain the previous intense atmosphere of the event.

This is now changing. For 1998, with the very timely support of the Paddle Sport company the tournament has a brand new and superb outdoor venue and a completely new format. Set in an idyllic private country estate near Stratford On Avon, the event takes place over the long Bank Holiday weekend of May 23/24/25. The tournament will now feature continuous play over three full International size pitches and all the teams entered will play the qualifying games in a league style spread through the whole weekend. The top teams will succeed through the league structure, to playoffs and then to the final itself.

Alongside the National Championships will be a Paddle Sport Canoe Kayak Festival, a public event with activities to attract new and existing participants to the sport of canoeing.

It is hoped to have the support of local radio and television and the event is being well supported by many suppliers to the canoe kayak market, and also the Stratford On Avon District Council.

For further information please call the event director, Peter Howard at Paddle Sport on: - 01926 640573



Physio at Water Sports Centre

The country's top canoeists have had immediate access to a top physiotherapist during an event at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham. Maeve Collins has been appointed to provide physiotherapy cover for all the top events as part of the English Sports Council's £400,000 investment in sports science and medicine services and facilities at the National Water Sports Centre. As part of the enhanced service to elite competitors, a full-time physiologist is also currently being recruited for the National Water Sports Centre. For further information contact: Gail Brookes, English Sports Council Press Office 0171 273 1593/1555 or Brian Pluckrose, National Water Sports Centre Manager 0115 982 1212.

Wild Water Racing - Ansaphone

Please note that the telephone number for this service will soon be changing to 01483 824449. This service is provided so that paddlers may enquire about race cancellations and river levels prior to a race and for newcomers to the sport to make general enquiries. Would all race organisers please ensure that you contact the ansaphone on the Thursday evening prior to the race and give the following information.

1. If the race is on or off.
2. The predicted water level.
3. Where the organiser can be found at the event for late entries and enquiries.

Be a part of the VIP

Canoe clubs and individual volunteers are being urged to take part in the new look Volunteer Investment Programme (VIP) in 1998, which has just been unveiled.

The information pack contains a Good Practice Guide with top tips on ways to support volunteers, a Club Health Checklist and a separate VIP Recognition Award application form. Packs are available through the VIP Hotline on 0800 363 373. Gregory Dresser, English Sports Councils Development Officer, who will work with the BCU to develop a strategy, said: "Canoeing boasts 7,300 volunteers across the UK, who give up an average of six hours a week each to keep canoeing clubs and governing bodies to exist and thrive. The ESC will work with the BCU to make sure they make the most of this voluntary workforce and to ensure that those volunteers get the recognition they deserve."

In 1997 BCU South West Region won a Commendation for their volunteer management practice. 1998 VIP Recognition Award application forms and further details are available through the VIP hotline. Closing date for applications will be 31st July 1998.

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PHOTO: Bernd Sommer
River Ötz - Welfersbrücke
Paddler - Clay Wright



PHOTO: Dan Gavere
Great Falls, Washington D.C.
Paddler - Clay Wright



PHOTO: Bernd Sommer,
Rock Island - Tennessee
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Article by
Natalie Collins

Darting To

Thick fog swirled in the car's headlights accompanied by a heavy rain that created eerie images in my tired head.

Did you see that?" I squeaked from the passenger seat. My friend, Stan, who was my companion for the week was losing his patience. He warned me to be quiet for the hundredth time.

"Natalie, please!" Stan laboured. For a guy who has the patience of Mother Teresa in a herbal bath, I figured it was about time to keep my sightings of Exmoor Boggarts to myself.

It was 2.30am. We'd spent 5 hours in the car, having driven down from the Peak District for a few day's holiday. We'd missed a local Hostel by about 4 hours and the promised campsites seemed largely non-existent. A night folded in half in the car seemed to be a frank possibility.

The rain began to fall more heavily and Stan, strangely excited by this concept, seemed to wake from his grumpy weariness. A few fruit sherbets later and he was squealing unlike any man I've ever known... little did I know that we had come within 2 miles of the River Dart. Stan's old stomping ground. His friend. My feared enemy.

Rumble a warning to me

Soon we found ourselves parked up on the tiny bridge at the Loop's get out point. It was still raining hard, but over the noise of the windscreen wipers working overtime, I heard it. I heard the Dart rumble a warning to me. Fear and excitement intermingled in my novice mind and I got out of the car to join Stan, who was already waterproofed and peering over the edge of the bridge with utter glee.

"It's gonna be stonking!" he beamed proudly. I think I mustered the word "Great",



Right: Stan at his most charming

Stonking sounded big. It sounded like I should have learnt to roll and bought a dry suit.

Further up at the car park my anxiety increased. The noise of the Dart seemed incredible in the dark. The Derwent had never come close to this and certainly had never had this effect on Stan, who was currently bounding down some muddied steps like a crazed puppy.

The water looked brown. Churned mud and froth roared its way over the deepening rocks towards the sea. Privately, I prayed for the rain to cease as soon as possible.

Having found a campsite, by an apparent divine act of God, we pitched the tent and hatched a plan to down as much beer as

possible in half an hour. This idea was conceived with a view to an unpleasant night without carry mats and heads buzzing from a long period in the car. We began this terrible task, although unbeknown to me Stan had been pouring half of his cans outside the tent, for fear of appearing like a light-weight in front of a girl. It was alone that I awoke at 6am, gagging for some water.

Pies and pasties

We awoke late to find that the next day had been blessed with more rain, much to my secret horror. Stan needed pies and pasties, badly, and so we spent a lazy afternoon eating; Stan described the Dart in alarming detail. The 'Washing Machine' was mentioned on occasion and, needless to say, it stuck in my memory. We found our Hostel and drank more beer, having made arrangements to meet up with a friend next day.

We woke ritually late the next morning and arrived at the Dart to find Debs sitting in a steamy

windowed car with a placid grin, despite our tardiness. While Stan quested for a burger of some variety, I donned my wet suit and far from dry cag in an uncharacteristically quiet manner. At least it had stopped raining and the Dart had lost the intense roar of the last 2 days.

We carried our boats to the water and got on. Debs and Stan instantly happy; myself sitting unmoveable in an eddy. Gradually, I summoned the courage for some surprisingly easy ferry gliding and we moved on. I was amazed to find that my friends could playfully drop into any sized hole for some fun and antics. Personally, I found ferry gliding very satisfying. I began to relax and a little wry

and Fro

smile began to spread across my face.

My new found joy was soon extinguished when Stan mentioned the rocks.

"What rocks, mate"? I queried. This didn't sound like a joke.

"Just follow my line" Stan assured. And I was. The rapids were pleasantly manageable and allowed to me to practice my newly learned skills.

"Washing Machine"

We continued happily over bouncy water and plenty of rocks until I heard Stan mumbling to Debs. I was sure I heard him say "Washing Machine"... My brain burned and my tongue felt like a piece of playdoh.

"No way. I'm getting out" I announced. The name of the hole was enough for me to stand. Stan smiled with the sick pleasure of one who knows best and began the difficult task of quelling my nerves. His persuasive skills were amazing. Something about the fact that it wasn't a long swim to the next eddy seems to be memorable.

I insisted that Debs sat in the eddy below the hole and that Stan followed behind me. Breaking in from the right, all sound of crashing white water seemed to leave my ears. I felt alone and as near to the most horrific out of boat experience I've ever had. I took a strong line to the left and powered through the bubbling water with a strength only given to those who are truly petrified.



I was through. I sat in the eddy, just further down from Debs, trembling, with a ridiculous expression on my face. They had shown admirable powers of emotional restraint and I hoped that I would not have to put them through my whimpering again.

The next couple of sections had equally fear provoking names but seemed less tortuous than my latest experience. We negotiated the rocks of Lover's Leap with little problem and came upon the Triple Drop. The first completed, I was smug in my little boat and followed Debs down the next two that were closer together. Straight after the second, I saw Debs in an eddy and made a feeble

attempt to join her - which saw me sideways down the third. Remaining upright, I pretended, with little avail, that it had all been planned.

Spin Dryer

The final section was bouncy and fun, although I unwittingly ended up in the notorious Spin Dryer which must have only

been set on 'delicates; that particular day.

When we clambered up the bank to the car, I realised why people scoffed at kayaking; my legs felt like lead and my arms about as strong as cheap toilet roll. Nevertheless pride overwhelmed and I was a happy girl - my first grade 3 and no swimming.

The following day was even drier, particularly for me, as I sat in the car in a sensible manner - writing letters whilst my companions tackled the Loop one last time due to, I'm led to believe, a slight mental imbalance on their part. Incidentally, before you accuse me of being a part timer, I was back in my boat that afternoon, due to a crazy plan to surf a local spot. Despite the wind, cold and small waves we had a splendid time. I stayed put in my boat until the last minute, when in mid conversation with Stan, resulting in a short but thorough nasal douche.

The last day of our holiday arrived and it was spent walking the Lyn, a spectacular Grade 5 when in spate, which left me doubting the sensibilities of keen paddlers. Needless to say, Stan found us a tea and cake shop by an impressive waterfall enshrined by tourists and their cameras. We sat amongst the grannies, drank tea and began the inevitable planning of further water frolics.





Rivière Dumoine: the Accessible



In May, 1996 a group of six canoeists undertook a seven-day journey down the Dumoine, a tributary of the Ottawa River in eastern Canada. This article aims to share the experience and to encourage others to try wilderness tripping.

Getting it together

Having kayaked together for many years, we decided to try an unsupported "wilderness" trip - and where better than in the homeland of the open canoe? We researched the possibilities and were fortunate to be put in touch with Don Smith of Deep River, Ontario. Don runs a shop and equipment hire business and is very active in organising canoeing in the region. He directed us to exciting rivers in the upper Ottawa valley with an indispensable guide book - *Rivers of the Upper Ottawa Valley*, by Hap Wilson. The clear favourite was a river called the Dumoine.

Getting there

We decided on the last week in May as we thought it was early enough to give us reasonable water and (we hoped) a head start on the myriad insects which abound.

We hired boats and most of the equipment from Don, taking personal items.

We spent our first night in Don's bunkhouse - the aptly-named Eddy Inn. We allowed a day for fitting out, as we had to buy a week's food, organise tents, waterproof barrels, cooking pots and treat ourselves from Don's well-stocked shop. Among our best buys were head nets to keep insects at bay.

Before we left, Don briefed us on the parts that even detailed guides do not reach. Following a late thaw, the Dumoine was several feet up on normal levels, which promised a lively trip.

Grande chute: "Do not run"



The Dumoine flows south into the Ottawa. Our seven-day trip was 90 kilometres, during which the river drops 500 feet. There are 39 runnable rapids, all well detailed in Hap Wilson's guide. There are also a number of falls which he cautions against running in bold red type. Several of the rapids are Canadian Class 3, which, as we were to discover, represents the limit of possibility in an open canoe.

Don took us to the airbase on the Ottawa. The little floatplanes can take only one boat at a time, so we got to the Dumoine in three trips. The ride was bumpy over the undulating terrain and at one point the pilot pointed downwards: a massive, continuous rapid foamed for a good half mile beneath us. This was our first sight of the Dumoine. The plane dropped us off on Lac Dumoine, starting point for seven-day trips. We off-loaded our gear into the boats as the pilot cheerfully informed us "Well, that's your home for the next seven days". As the plane took off, we suddenly felt very alone.

Wilderness



Under way

We paddled off, but faced our first portage within a kilometre, as the river took the first of its many unrunnable steps down in a curving, boulder-studded torrent that we were told (in red) to avoid. We duly portaged. After a few hours we reached our first campsite at the curiously-named Alligator Point - derived from two steam engines which had been used in the heyday of logging on the Dumoine to tow rafts of logs. They now rust quietly away on the river bank. As we appeared to be the first trip in 1996, there was plenty of firewood for the stone fire circle. That first night's camp was unforgettable: as night fell, the sense of total isolation in a wilderness became almost overpowering.

Each boat carried a waterproof barrel of food and one or two large waterproof rucksacks with tents and personal gear. The Old Town Trippers proved comfortable, forgiving and tough. We wore wetsuits and helmets, especially for the "rough stuff". The water was still cold in the upper reaches,

though several days' sunshine warmed it up as we descended.

We quickly got into a regime of finding wood, pitching camp, cooking, eating and sleeping. We tended to turn in and rise with the sun. We lived on a simple diet featuring a large cooking-pot meal in the evening. It became a challenge for the "duty boat" to produce a variation on this theme.

The fun starts

It was on day 2 that we really began to take on the Dumoine: we ran our first serious rapids in the morning, but were then confronted with Triple Play - a sequence of three unrunnable falls and rapids which extended over a mile and had to be negotiated by what Hap Wilson calls the Grunt Portage. Unlike the other long portage trails on the Dumoine, this one is not tidy and landscaped. We spent two hours trudging to and fro in the heat, but learned some valuable lessons about long portages - take off all superfluous clothing and if the boat has a good portaging yoke - use it!

The river runs through pine forest with narrow sections (where the fun is found) opening out into medium to large lakes. With the river running high, the rapids were all significantly bigger than the guide suggested and some were partly washed out. However, standing waves and stoppers were more demanding and partial or total swamping accompanied by furious bailing became routine.

The big ones

A wolf howl woke us up on day 3. Other wildlife which intruded on our slumber included the loon and the most unbelievably loud woodpeckers which start work at dawn. We saw evidence of beaver activity and found a couple of lodges. The next four days took us down the best the Dumoine has to offer - exciting and challenging rapids, the best of them being the well-named Canoe Eater (which claimed the elders in the party), Little Steel (1000 metres of 2 - 3-foot waves and sheer exhilaration), Big Steel (a further 800 metres of ledges and big standing waves) Red Pine (a sequence of five grade 2 - 3 rapids with a campsite conveniently located between numbers 4 and 5 - provided you hit the breakout...) and Examination (the line between the two converging stoppers at the top is very fine, as one crew discovered). However, if (when?) you swim or swamp on the Dumoine, you are never far from an eddy, lake or flat patch to recover and even at high water level none of the rapids could be described as dangerous.

Winding down

The landscape changes from dense forest to more open lowland as the river descends. Day 5 brought us to the formidable Grande Chute, which had looked so daunting from the plane. The river powered its way down a gorge via a spectacular series of falls. We took the well-maintained portage trail through the woods. The river's lowland character was abruptly changed on day 6 by the upsurge of

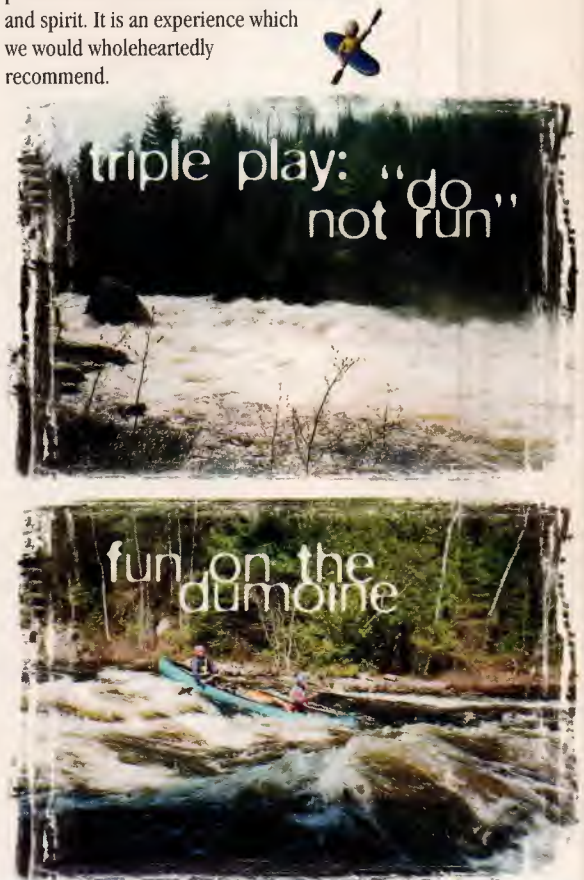
the 600-foot Bald Eagle Cliff. There is said to be a trail up it, but we failed to find it. We did, however, find the first human life for six days as we pitched camp for the last time at Bowman's Portage, the upper limit of navigation from the Ottawa: a Quebecois fisherman came to say hello.

The last real obstacle is the two-mile crossing of the Ottawa river. We had a long, calm crossing, but it can involve three-foot waves and take five hours!

Epilogue

We went for an adventure and we certainly found one. It had the authentic feel of the wilderness and we could not but feel in touch with the voyageurs of old, with the loggers and their "alligators" or with the Algonquins who had lived along and paddled the Dumoine long before the French aristocrat bestowed his name on it some three hundred years ago. We paddled out of the Dumoine richer in mind and spirit. It is an experience which we would wholeheartedly recommend.

The canoeists were
Dudley Courtman,
Sarah Green,
Gavin Gynn,
Steve Hall,
Eddie Helps and
Tony O'Sullivan.



The Dumoine can be paddled from mid-May to early Autumn. It will be crowded in July and August and the campsites will fill up, but many may appreciate the company. One note of warning: the insects are seriously hostile, so invest in the best protection you can find! Don Smith proved an excellent organiser and adviser. He can be contacted at Valley Ventures, Box 1115, Deep River, Ontario, K0J-1P0 (Tel 613-584-2577).

The Interesting Past

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River bed and banks are under constant threat from flood water and erosion

This short stretch of Rapids created by the sharp fall and narrowing of the river bed due to the island which runs down its length is primarily used by canoeists

AIMS: SYVRPG to manage and own
 BCU to promote
 Raise £ 1/2 million then free for all for ever

INTENTIONS:

- Provide proper portages and access including for disabilities
- Establish permanent jetties
- Slalom facilities

Walkers and casual visitors enjoy the spectacle of river paddlers on this fine flowing section of river

The top of the Rapids and the island create a deep water reservoir for tourist excursion boats

Wildlife abundant in this section of river, nesting terns, ducks, geese, herons, deer, woodpecker, kingfisher, all living in harmony with river water

Symonds Yat Rapids Preservation Group
 is a local group representing all Canoeists working with the National Governing Body through the South West Region of the B.C.U.

had enjoyed running BCU Slalom competition events since the early 1970's until last year. The Armed Forces have used the rapids for adventure training and competition events. This is an invaluable training ground for National and Olympic hopefuls.

There is a strong tourism industry in the Wye Valley which attracts many thousands of visitors each year. Many hire or paddle their own canoes down through the rapids in the Wye Valley. Scouts, Guides, Youth Clubs Schools and many other groups use the Rapids as part of their adventure and training programme. All have enjoyed uninterrupted use for many years.

Pounds from Paddlers Please

There is now a chance to buy Symonds Yat Rapids.

- A unique opportunity for canoeists to own these internationally renowned rapids.
- A National Lottery Sports Fund bid is being prepared.
- The Environment Agency and English Nature support us.
- Donations and support already received from local canoe clubs and businesses.

What We Need Please

- Donations - we need to raise £1/4 million.
 - Letters of Support
- Help us raise the vital partnership funding required for the Lottery bid to be successful

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We need YOU to help US

Cash, cheques and credit cards acceptable. Please quote: Visa/Access: Card Number and Expiry date.

Pounds from Paddlers Please

Donations to: **Symonds Yat Rapids Preservation Group, 33 Golden Vale, Churchdown, Gloucester GL3 2LU Tel/Fax: 01452 531218.**

The present day major use is by Canoeists who have adopted the Yat Rapids as a major coaching and leisure facility. The use of the site is of major significance as they are the only accessible rapids in the south of England in the spring and summer seasons.

Wydean canoe club has been using the area since they started in 1968. The club has a strong following and has produced some excellent competition champions, Olympic and International Expedition Canoeists. Gloucester Canoe Club

Halton Rapids - Urgent Information

Further to the article on Halton Rapids published in the February issue of Canoe Focus we have been informed that the anticipated access agreement has unfortunately foundered at the eleventh hour. There was a last minute objection from the fishing fraternity who already possess a licence for the river and the land owners backed off rather than upset the anglers. However, it was a great attempt by the combined North West Canoe Clubs and perhaps we will try again at some future stage. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Gerry McCusker - Halton Rapids Management Committee

Cumbria - Access News

R.Eden-Lazonby to Armathwaite The introduction of Open Days in the last few years has been a great benefit. However, they are threatening the whole agreement! Jim Wilson (LAO) reports that we will lose them unless we can sort out the parking problems. Armathwaite village should not be placed under siege on open days so parking should be up the hill away from the village. Where, the long egress route hits the road is 'coned' off with police no waiting cones. It is only a short walk up to the vehicles. The idea is not to move the cones bring the vehicle down and load up! This creates a road safety problem and the police are already under way with one prosecution. Please accept that this is a very sensitive issue and adopt some humility and consideration.

Great Langdale Beck

Tony Ball arranged access at the Dungeon Gill car park. Paddlers have been damaging fencing and walls to get on the river hereabouts. With the farmers agreement a small gate was installed giving access to the river from the car park via his field. All in a days work for an LAO - not quite! There are now problems downstream so if wanting to paddle Great Langdale Beck contact the LAO for latest details. **Tony Ball, Holme Farm Cottage, Willow Lane, Flookburgh, Cumbria, LA11 7LU Tel: 015395 33659**

Dorset Stour- New LAO

Mr Simon Redman, 50 Grosvenor Road, Stalbridge, Dorset, DT10 2PN Tel: 01963 363413



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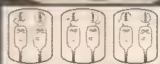
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NATIONAL CANOEING EXHIBITION



Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today

Worried about litter



Dear Canoe Focus

Two years ago I started canoeing, I had discovered how much fun the sport was. Now I am twelve years old, and I am worried about litter. Every year I go on canoeing and kayaking trips with the canoe camping club, they are great fun and we paddle quite a distance, but on some of the trips, I see a lemonade bottle floating along the river. Mostly where the lemonade bottles are floating there is a fine for dumping litter, WHY DO IT? When there is a simple solution, a bin. Although in built up parts of the river, e.g near public houses, there is not that much litter, but I presume people who do not use the river throw in the litter and watch it float down stream. No matter how many laws are in place people will still drop litter in rivers. I think that the BCU should start a campaign like 'Surfers Against Sewage' and every canoeist should have a car or boat sticker saying don't drop litter.
Chris Adams.

Dear Chris - It is good to see that you and your paddling companions are so environmentally aware. Your suggestions have been passed on to the BCU's Environment Panel for their consideration. Keep up the good work!



'Outdone' by men?

Dear Canoe Focus

Since attending an adventure week last summer I have become extremely interested in kayaking, so far I have gained my one star and am hoping to progress to two star.

Unfortunately it is difficult to find a club who are interested in taking on 16 year old girls, who do not have their own equipment. I would be willing to purchase second hand equipment but this also seems hard to come by. Anyone with any suggestions or any clubs looking for recruits?

Are girls in the minority in canoeing as we seem to be 'outdone' by men?

Sarah Noble

Eds Note

Sarah lives in Northern Ireland, if you are club that is willing to take her under your wing please contact her at 9 Derwent Drive, Bangor, N Ireland BT20 3NA.

Technological advancements

Dear Canoe Focus

I am currently undertaking a project concerning the technological advancements in numerous sports and how they have assisted the athlete in pushing back the limits of their associated sports. Unfortunately I am not well versed in the area of canoeing and kayaking, and this is why I ask for your help.

As stated my particular interest lies with the technological progression of the sport in terms of equipment (canoes, kayaks, paddles, clothing etc) that help the athlete break records in competitive situations. It would also be beneficial to gain statements from canoeists who have made use of the new equipment and found it advantageous.

If you could help me in any way I would be extremely grateful.

Trvelyn Morris - Please write direct to Mr T Morris, Flat 29 Romero Hall, Archers Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO15 2LT

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5 Day: 3-8/5, 25-30/10
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4 Day: 21-25/6
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5 Day: 5-10/7
 Fee: £285

Open Canoe Lochs and Mountains

5 Day: 13-18/9
 Fee: £285

Introductory North West Sea Kayaking

5 Day: 21-26/6, 9-14/8
 Fee: £285

Intermediate North Coast Sea Kayaking

5 Day: 5-10/7
 Fee: £285

North Coast Sea & Surf

5 Day: 10-15/5, 24-29/5, 20-25/9
 Fee: £285

Playboating Skills – Kayak

5 Day: 28/6-3/7, 13-18/9, 25-30/10, 8-13/11
 Fee: £285

Level Two Coach Training (Kayak and Open Canoe)

2 Day: Open Canoe; 15-17/5 & 4-6/9 Kayak; 22-24/5, 11-13/9
 Fee: £85

Level Two Coach Assessment (Open Canoe and Kayak)

1 Day: Open Canoe; 17/5, 6/9 Kayak; 24/5, 13/9
 Fee: tba

Level Three Coach Training (Open Canoe and Kayak)

2 Day: Open Canoe; 15-17/5, 4-6/9 Kayak; 22-24/5, 11-13/9
 Fee: £85

Level Three Coach Assessment (Open Canoe and Kayak)

2 Day: Open Canoe; 15-17/5, 4-6/9 Kayak; 22-24/5, 11-13/9
 Fee: £85

Five-Day Level Three Coach Assessment

5 Day: Inland Kayak; 4-9/10 Open Canoe; 8-13/11
 Fee: £285

Coaching Composite Course (Inland Kayak)

5 Day: 9-14/8
 Fee: £285

Level Five Coach Training

6 Day: 11-17/10
 Fee: £477

Coaching Processes Weekend

2 Day: 20-22/11 & tba
 Fee: £75

Assessor Training Day

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Students on courses leading to coaching awards should ensure that they meet the appropriate prerequisites of the award before applying. Please call for more information.

We have a minimum age on the majority of course courses of 18 but will consider accepting younger students. The Lodge is generally geared for running courses for adults and therefore we are not in a position to provide supervision during non-course times such as in the evening.

Alpine Kayaking in Austria

Our 1998 Alpine programme will be based in the picturesque village of Prutz on the banks of the River Inn.

Alpine Introductory

6 Day: 19-26/7, 26/7-2/8
 Fee: £250*

Alpine Advanced

6 Day: 2-9/8
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Alpine River Leader Training

6 Days: 19-26/7, 26/7-2/8
 Fee: £250*

***the fees include all kayaking equipment, self catering accommodation, in-course transport and transfer to and from Innsbruck Airport. NB the fees do not include travel to and from the UK, food and holiday insurance.**

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The 1997 International Mosel Tour

In August 1997 20 Brits, 3 Germans, 2 Belgians, a Dutchman and a Russian woman joined together to tour the Mosel and its tributaries the Saar and the Sauer. Note the spelling! The Moselle is its name in France and it becomes the Mosel when it enters Germany via Luxembourg and flows for about 250kms down to the Rhine.

Article by
Peter Minch

The two Germans Karl-Heinz and Monika Niesen organised the trip under the banner of the 'International Friends' group with our good friend Colin co-ordinating at the British end. Among the British contingent were 8 children from 4 to 14 years old. Now I know that children are not every crusty old campers cup of tea but in this case we were privileged to share our trip with 8 of the nicest young people you could hope to meet.

After the ferry crossing we had a long wet drive through Belgium and Germany to the first base camp at Konz on the banks of the Mosel. I had bought a new dome tent (very cheap from Millets) and discovered that you can't leave the door unzipped if its raining. However as there was a heat wave during the next two weeks this soon ceased to be a problem.

Our hosts soon arrived with a caravan, a huge trailer holding chairs, tables, bicycles etc and, to the amazement of us lightweight campers, a cast iron wood burning stove with an eight foot chimney. The Niesens generously provided cooked food for all that night and on many evenings cooking and eating was a joint if somewhat chaotic enterprise. A convivial evening was rounded off with music from Colin's accordion.

The first canoe trip was on the Saar around a big loop from Besseringen and only 10kms long to break us in. The Saar at this point is in a deep steep gorge with splendid views and no rapids due to the locks. The next day was much longer at 29kms on the Mosel itself. Generally the Mosel is in a winding valley with small mountains all around and is



steep on one side with a flood plain on the other. There is a cycle track down its whole length in Germany, mostly right by the water. Every square inch is covered in grape vines conveniently interspersed with camp sites and beautifully kept villages of timbered houses. Positively mediaeval.

Concrete trough

Day three started badly when I broke my flask scrambling for the car ferry and ended worse when I fell at the bottom of a bootsgasse. This is a concrete trough with a gate at the top for canoes to bypass the lock. No problem said the lock keeper but the gate dropped a metre and released an avalanche of water with me on the front of it. On top of this there was a good curve to the right at the bottom and a

boil of foam where I promptly turned over. To add insult to injury the rest of the group behind me got down intact. At least it was baking hot and only a few kms to the camp site.

The following day we descended the Sauer for 17kms back to the camp site. The Saar and the Sauer both meet the Mosel roughly at Konz, making it a convenient place to camp. This was a very pretty river with lots of heroic looking rapids. Only grade 1 I was assured by my expert friends and I guess it must have been so because I did not fall in. This part was especially pleasant as it is not used by commercial craft.

Back to the Saar to run the last 18kms down to Konz. We used the old loop, with good scenery and little rapids, which has now



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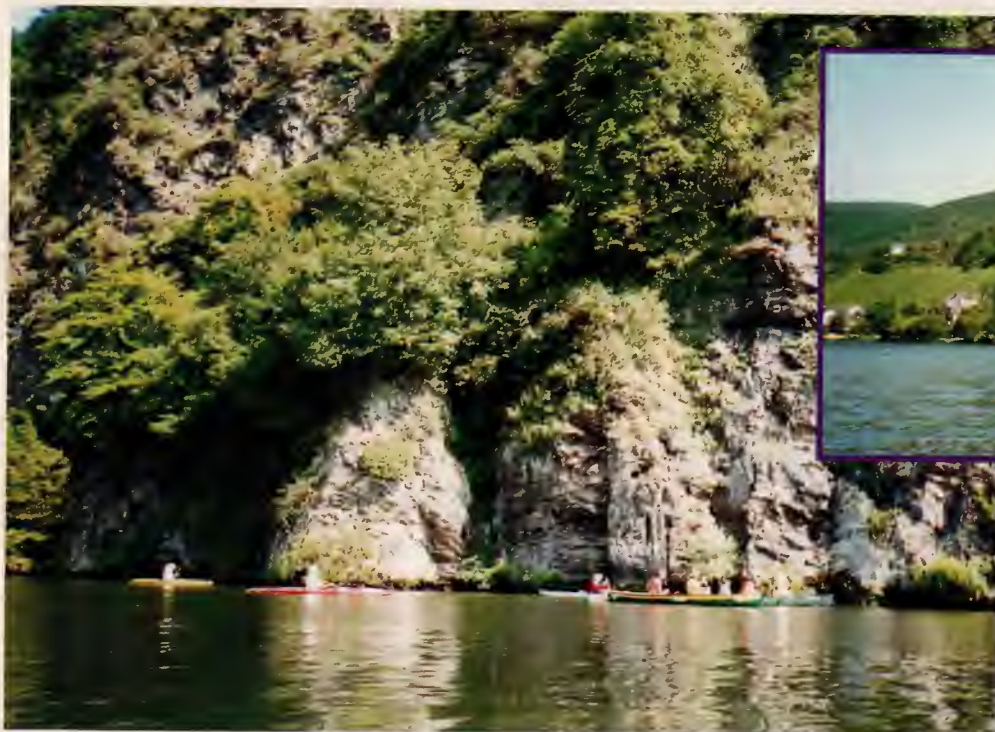
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In summer Karl-Heinz Kosyra trains on rivers, in winter he trains in the gym.



been bypassed by the commercial canal and lock. We stopped for lunch at Saarburg and paddled a few metres into the town to look at the water fall and the several mills and houses perched on the mini gorge it runs through.

No canoeing on the next day as we transferred our base camp to Trittenheim where the campsite was on the river in a vineyard with grapevines all around us. The town had a wine fest in progress with a big tent and traditional band with folk dancing and singing. This is not a good place for weight watchers. Reasonable wine costs less than £2 per litre in the supermarket and an

evening meal can be had for £7 with 'Germanic portions'.

Truly to be thanked for the facilities they provide

The next two days took us first above and below Trittenheim with the inevitable car ferries. This is the least attractive aspect of base camping for me. On one day the car ferry used up three hours and we did not get on the water until 1 o'clock. We covered the stretch from Schweich to Wittlig where there was another bootsgasse which I descended successfully this time. For the timid! (that's me) there is the alternative of a small sport boat lock alongside the massive commercial lock. The Mosel is heavily used by barges throughout its length into Luxembourg and beyond. The German authorities are truly to be thanked for the facilities they provide for us canoeists without charge.

Another rest day took us around the beautiful Vulkan Eifel region to see old castles and villages, a bell factory, a geyser driven by carbon dioxide gas rather than steam, a series of crater lakes for swimming and a fish farm.

For the next two nights we slept on the floor of a loft at the Traban-Trabach rowing club while we descended from Wittlig to the club in two stages via Bern-Kastel. This is a fairy tale town, even Disney can't build them better. The rowing club has a public restaurant attached to it which seems to be a common feature in Germany. Here we all ate Gulasch together and afterwards a relative of Karl-Heinz gave us an interesting talk about his vineyard with several of his wines to taste. Unfortunately this left us some scrabbling around in the dark at 11pm trying to get packed for the next day's critical car ferry.

Up at 6am for a 100km run to Koblenz. The last four days were undertaken as normal canoe camping with stops at Bulay, Bruttig-Frankel, Treis and Gondorf. Now the various family groups could leave and arrive at their

own pace but we tended to bunch up at locks and to meet for lunch and swimming. The sun was very hot and the river seemed reasonably clean and not at all cold for swimming. Unlike the Elbe (in my last report) there are almost no sandy beaches and the rocky edges caused a lot of damage to boat and paddle.

Sadly at the very last get out a wave from a passing barge spun my canoe round so I tripped over the end of it and landed face down on the wheels of my trolley. The pain of bruised ribs and pulled muscles was so excruciating that I must have passed out momentarily as the organisers insisted on taking me to the local doctor for a check up. You have probably got the impression that I was born clumsy and it could well be so. However a word of warning! My E111 was refused because it was dated 1989 and not 1997. Back in England the issuing office said it was perfectly valid indefinitely but both the French and the Germans have been refusing old ones this year. So I advise getting a new one each year regardless.

Despite the minor disasters, mostly of my own making, we had a great time and I would thoroughly recommend Germany as an outstanding place for canoe camping.



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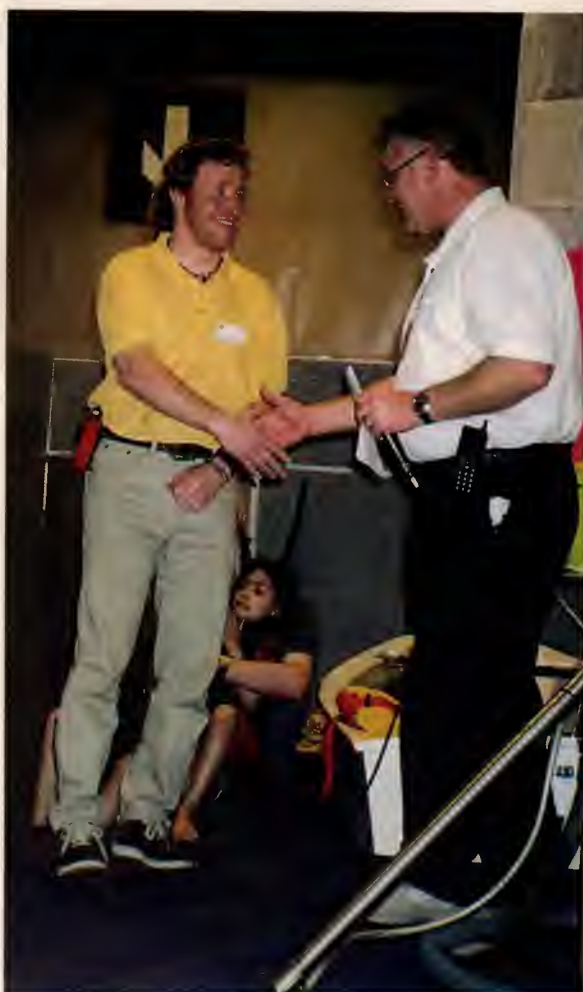
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Activities around the International

BCU Lifeguards Achievement Award Presentation

In 1996 the BCU Lifeguards Achievement Award was created. The Award is open to any BCU individual member or affiliated club and represents the recognition of an outstanding achievement by that individual or club. The award is governed by the BCU Lifeguards National Committee, nominations for the award being in writing through the Secretary.

This year the BCU Lifeguards National Committee bestowed the first award on Graham Beckram for an outstanding rescue that he performed in February 1997. The rescue occurred on the river Conwy, North Wales, during a university canoeing trip and involved an unexpected situation when one of the group members was pinned underwater for nearly ten minutes. The situation required quick thinking and skillful application of resuscitation techniques to restart his friend's heart and breathing.

The BCU Lifeguards National Committee recognised Graham's fast action, perseverance and utilisation of rescue skills during the incident. His actions almost

Left: Graham Beckram presented with BCU's Lifeguards Award for Endeavor presented by Mike Twigg

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Canoe Exhibition

certainly saved the life of one his university friends.

Graham has played a key role in the development of the Weymouth Canoe Lifeguards holding positions of responsibility within the club including unit captain and training officer. For the last three years Graham has chosen to represent Weymouth in the National Canoe Lifeguard Championships as senior team captain. During this time he has accumulated 4 gold and 2 silver medals and achieved national champion status on two separate occasions. He is a highly respected member of the BCU Lifeguards and since moving to Salford has taken on a new responsibility as North West Regional Lifeguards Representative.

Pendigo Mini Marathon- Sponsored by the National Boat Caravan and Leisure Show and the BCU

The Mini Marathon which took place on the Pendigo Lake over the weekend of the exhibition proved to be extremely popular with over 110 entries over the two days, it even became an international event with a visitor from Malta and a young lady from Southern Ireland. Competitors all had to use the same equipment which was provided by Aqualeisure Ltd, Crewsaver Ltd, Lendal Products Ltd, Mobile Adventure Ltd & Pyranha Mouldings Ltd. The race consisted of a mini slalom, which lead to a sprint to the portage which was made even more difficult by the cobble stones, around a buoy at the top of the lake and a final sprint to the finish buoy, quite some distance! Thanks must go to Solihull Canoe Club, assisted by members of the BCU West Midlands for braving the elements all weekend to organise such a successful event.

The winners were; Senior Mens Class- Damien Chapman in an outstanding 6 minutes 15 seconds. Junior Mens Class - Ashley Dalton in a time of 6 minutes 54 seconds. Womens Senior Class - Amanda Trollope in a time of 7 minutes 29 seconds and the Junior Womens Class-Faye Clarke in a time of 7 minutes 41 seconds. The slowest time of the day was 13 minutes 44 seconds which just goes to show the quality of the field. Congratulations to all those who took part, especially on Sunday with such a keen wind to chill the bones.



Above: Damien Chapman, Senior men's winner
Below: Ashley Dalton, Junior Men's winner David Shaw. National Boat, Caravan and Leisure Show organiser presents the cheques



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Young Paddlers - Competition

Winners of the Paddlepower Young Paddlers competition were presented with various prizes throughout the weekend. Samples of their artistic talents will be sampled throughout coming issues of Canoe Focus.



Chase The Champions

Inside the Pavilion the 'Chase The Champions' Ergo Challenge once again proved to be very popular, perhaps because it was that much warmer and there was no chance of getting your hair wet! Many well known paddlers competed against each other but the board was swept by the Wild Water Racing fraternity, which says something about their stamina! Saturday's winner was Mark Gray who took home a YAK sports bag as his prize, and Sunday's winner and overall winner was Neil Blackman who also took home a YAK sports bag and YAK fleece jacket. Other class winners took home T-shirts also kindly donated by YAK. Congratulations to all those taking part, get training ready for next year and knock that old man off the top of the board!

Best Canoe/Kayak of the Show

This year saw a new initiative in the Best Canoe/kayak of the Show Award, this was judged by Franco Ferrero, Head of Canoeing at Plas-Y-Brenin, Stuart Fisher, Canoeist Magazine, Nigel Timmins, BCU Coaching Service, Kellie Parsons, Paddles Magazine and Paul Ratcliffe, World Bronze Medallist in Slalom. The Award was presented to Peak for the Riot 'Glide' the revolutionary boat which prompted a rule change at the 1997 World Rodeo Championships because it made the moves too easy! (Soon to be reviewed in Canoe Focus).



Best Stand of the Show

This year was presented to Yak. For a very professional looking stand and a good range of new gear for use on and off the water. I must admit I was very tempted, but my husband had the cheque book! Maybe next year.

Thanks must go to all the exhibitors for supporting this years show which attracted crowds of paddlers and non-paddlers alike. With exhibitors and visitors from as far afield as France, Italy and Australia. Thanks also to all of the scout groups from around the Staffordshire area for their assistance throughout the weekend.



The World of Canoeing & Kayaking - Treasure Hunt

This event was held throughout the week and was open to anyone under 16. A Master Lite kayak sponsored by Pyranha was the overall prize which was won by Chloe Hyde, from Wednesbury in the West Midlands. Chloe and her family have been invited to visit the Pyranha factory for a guided tour and presentation.



Above: Draw for the Treasure Hunt. Peter Ingram with Bob Campbell and Jason Buxton from Pyranha

Catwalk Canoeists

Throughout the week the BCU, Mobile Adventure, Pyranha and West Midlands Canoe Centre had a presence at the National Boat Caravan and Leisure Show with their combined 'World of Canoeing and Kayaking' Stand. Entertainment was provided throughout the whole show by a bevy of beautiful models, male and female, modelling the latest in paddle wear, accompanied by demonstrations on rolling open canadian's and a short rodeo display, this proved to be a popular draw for the crowds, especially over the weekend.



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ESNIMO



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Ireland's West Coast

We'd set our minds to explore the area around Clare Island, Innisboffin and Innishturk on Irelands sun drenched west coast. Honest, it really was! A sunset paddle enticed us to venture out to Innishturk and wow what scenery! Close inshore were rocky, low lying islands that we manoeuvred between and measured our progress from. Sunny late afternoon shadows set the sea and surrounding hills ablaze. The sea state changed from a comfortable, glass like substance to gentle swells rolling in from the west. Tricks were played with wave top shadows, or is it rocks or, no its dolphins come to see us and the sunset, what

luck! Way, way off in the distance Clare Island peaks and Achill Islands outline formed a spectacular picture frame for the setting sun.

Waves increased in size, glancing towards Innisboffin I could only guess as to their source. Behind us, the mountains we'd scampered over the previous day were ablaze, bathed with dancing strobes of sunlight. Ahead the way seemed calm, I could almost taste the first pint of Guinness slipping down. I wiped the salt off my lips and checked up on my paddle happy partner. Teeth show up well in the dark! Torches were donned and discussions ensued as to our invisible landing spot.

Woah!, crikey, I'm going sideways or is that backwards or where am I and where's Brigit. Innishturk was definitely on the move with

a vengeance! Trying to stay close to each other was becoming tiresome. Must be a jet running off the tip of the island, now if we can just cross it without losing too much leeway we'll be hunky dory. "Paddle like stink", I shouted. No reply, I glanced back to note I was being slip streamed. Bleedin' typical! What seemed to last ages in fact was all over in a little over 10 minutes. Nerve racking it certainly was and more was in store. Discussions along the lines of, "will there be any more like that? and "that wasn't a surprise, I just didn't see it coming," and "well, it is dark." Respite, a chance of a breather allowed us to study the twinkling lights on Innishturk and calculate what we'd lost. Oh no, here we go again, this time close into shore and with much more power. Heads down lungs bursting and forearms pumping we held it together. Relief arrived in the shape of an unexpected

wee
beastie

eddy. Two tricky jets of water to play on in pitch darkness had really thrown down the gauntlet. Hugging the dark, sinister coastline we now searched out a spot for the night. Pretty darn difficult I can tell you in the pitch black ! Torches illuminated a nice beach that had a stream cascading down rocky slabs. Inspections of the high tide marks and an easy escape route sold it to us. Sorted out and armed with a Jameson bottle, we went in search of the locals.

A miserable failure on the bar front

The road lead to a sheep dog that tagged along with us. Winding and dipping and climbing we went until a cluster of lights took us down to a harbour and a few buildings. " Well there's the phone box, now where's the bar?" A miserable failure on the bar front we returned with the dog, which was glued to our heels, to our beach and gazed at the now blurry, blurry stars.

A sharp prod made me stir, a wake up call I quizzed grumpily? Yep a problem with lapping waters. A quick recce discovered pounding waters never mind the lapping sort! Our pooch was sat atop on the rocks watching over us. "Lets get outta here sharpish," grabbing the kayaks we hauled them up the cliff and onto a ledge, quickly followed by the tent intact. Lashing the kayaks down we demolished the tent and salvaged sleeping mats. Around us the sea was ferocious. Waves driven directly onto our beach off the mainland savaging the coast. Our new companion was drenched and we pulled him under the relative shelter of our ledge. Snug as

a bug was I and I dozed until sunrise. Wow now that's worth sleeping on a ledge for! Chinks of light split the storm clouds and the white capping waves that continually charged ashore. Brigit and the dog were awoken, gotta share this, not a lot of enthusiasm, I wonder why? Twas an awesome sunrise, spectacular scenery, wicked waves and spray to die for or should that read die in. Back on the beach by 6.00am, I was ravenous, nowt new about that. Brecky consisted of noodles and more noodles lashings of hot tea and I sneaked in a malt loaf. Not all for me , the dog got some too.

Sorted out we tentatively tested the water, wild, too wild was the verdict. Straight into the wind and waves we were soaked , a quick turn and back into hide in the harbour close by. Not a sole, no sign of life whatsoever. Sound asleep I ventured, well if I had a choice I'd choose a nice warm duvet every time! Shall we shan't we, stay that is. The weather looked pretty much set in. Exploration was still upmost in our minds and we were reluctant to put down roots. A local finally emerged, Brigit translated and I was informed about a Regatta which was to be held today on the island, the first in 50 years with curragh races. What, in this gale I mused. Another conversation left us permanently scarred, mistaken for Australian sea kayakers!

Daylight hadn't provided us with more clues to the islands thriving services. No signs, no shop but a restaurant, B+B and the telephone box . "Camp in our field if you like, you the Australians? Bush telegraph or what! Mind you, hospitality was second to none. The previous night had devastated two tents and their occupants were being sheltered

and impressively spoilt in the house. "You're the amazing Australian paddlers, you came across in that this morning?" O.K. we came clean and admitted our night paddle and jaws dropped further.

Yep we stayed

Innisturk International Regatta , curragh racing the first time in 50 years, a fishing boat slalom race, toss the bale of hay competition and a Ceilidh to round it all off with! Yep we stayed. Boats arrived from other islands, the mainland, fishing boats, sailing boats packed with folk. Acquaintances old and new were renewed, a right social occasion. People plastered the quayside and moved to gain vantage points to observe the goings on. Organised it was of sorts and the spirit was mischievous fun and so refreshing. Teams of rowers were cajoled and press-ganged to take part. Rowing out to sea around buoys bare chested was the order of the day, except for the ladies that partook! Twas a cross between a joust, where curraghs collided and a formula 1 grand prix, where the hazards to face included a capsise or smashing into rock

Regatta



sunset





Squeeze through, just!

faces. Squirring as we were approached partaking twas somehow avoided. Retiring to the islands social centre, discovered at last, a fine multi bar establishment, perfect view overlooking the races and a bar b q. was a fine move. Twas a very late night early morning affair to be sure.

Circumnavigating Innishturk all blurry eyed seemed like a good idea, it did? sure! Sunshine greeted us and we failed miserably to pay for the hospitality that we'd received. Fond farewells and some weird and wonderful fuzzy memories. Rocky serrated cliffs met our gaze, festooned with sea urchins the size of a grapefruit. Close inspection had us marvelling at their sensitive undercarriage. Top marine biologists tread no further or should that be sink no deeper! Only one beach was spotted with the falling tide and a couple of very dodgy rocky foreshores to land, possibly. The S.W. tip was soon reached, breaking waves, swells, and menacing cliffs had us fretting big time. Awesome views and solitude too. Progress was hampered, o.k. it was non existent. Time for another dodgy photo or two me thinks, "Brigit get over there, left a bit, right a bit, steady, I said STEADY! Must remember to get a decent model! Spectacular cliffs had been mentioned in the bar the previous night, well I think I translated it to be cliffs. What a treat, towering sun drenched cliffs, birds screeching and cavorting and being tossed this way and that.

My white-knuckle paddle grip had returned as nerves were tested in the irregular rising and falling swells. Glancing at the cliffs had me grimacing as waves pounded their base and sent jets of spray high up their faces. Ahead I could see no respite and I resigned myself for a bit of an epic. Brigit and I admitted to being intimidated by the exposure and the ferocity of the waves but more the sheer speed and irregularity of them. Nerves were well and truly frazzled.

Respite at last, banter returned and we could plan a landing if we could just find somewhere safe to park our wee craft. Liquids were consumed in vast quantities due to exertions of the previous night and that mornings roller coaster ride. I moved closer to the cliffs to establish more closely a likely site. Rock dodging ensued due to necessity as I was caught dawdling. A landslip provided us with a brief rocky breather.

Caher Island came into view and a decision to head straight out there was taken. The waters sparkled in the sunshine and we chilled out in the pleasant breeze. Cheesy grins all around as we made our way leisurely across... this was the source of our jets from the previous night I recalled. The mainland beckoned but we wanted to stay well out to use what little current there was to push us back to our estuarine target. Seals bobbed up as we left Caher. Id heard them or at least I thought I had but was concentrating on the breaking waves and the possibility of a surf.

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Innishturk

Noisily making their presence felt, heads popped up and tails slithered beneath the swirling waters. Sunbloc was daubed again and we pressed on. Slogging it out was a real

chore broken up at last by the low-lying islands that festooned the shelving bay. High amusement was had at my expense as my sunglasses went for an unexpected trip overboard, during a highly technical advanced technique of chocolate consumption! Brigit

declared "I can see them shining back at me". wonderful I thought as they spiraled away from my grasp. I considered a roll retrieval and quickly put that utterly ridiculous idea away. I mean this is a holiday!





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Young Peoples Programme

New Paddlesport Posts

In continuing to reach its target of Paddlesport officers in 8 priority areas of the country, the BCU are about to appoint the final 2 posts in East London & S. Essex and the West Ridings.

Interviews are being held during April with the intention of work commencing by 1 May at the latest.

New PDO Appointment in Berkshire area

Adrian Barker has started work as Paddlesport Development Officer in the above area.

A local recruit, he already has many ideas of how he will encourage more youngsters in the area to keep paddling! Adrian's paddling skills have led him

through to 'aspirant' Level 5 coach and he also holds a Slalom Competition coach award. As well as his coaching skills Adrian has a broad experience of taking part in many types of events.

Additionally Adrian brings other qualities such as enthusiasm and good communication skills to the job. We look forward to having him as part of the team

Paddlepower workshops started

As you will know from the last edition of Canoe Focus, Paddlepower workshops have already started. Workshops completed to date have been:

- 28 Feb - Chester
- 10 March - Leicester
- 16 March - Worcester
- 22 March - Nottingham
- 28 March - Manchester
- 28 March - W. London/ N. Surrey
- 01 April - W. London/ N. Surrey

Other planned dates are:

- 20 April - Teesside - contact Dave Hellawell (01642 651661)
- 25 April - Exeter - contact Richard Ward (01363 774841)

There will be other workshops in the New Paddlesport officer areas prior to the summer season. If you are interested, please contact your PDO. The course will be available in all areas of the country in 1999, so if you are not in this time, don't lose faith, and wait until the schedule of next years courses which should come out in the autumn.

Paddlesport Development Officers Contact Numbers

Chester, Manchester, Liverpool

Jonathon Davies 01244 390451

Teesside

Dave Hellawell 01642 651661

Weardale

Rory Corder 0191 488 4398

Worcs & Hereford

Graham Campbell 01386 870072

Nottingham, Derby, Leicester

Angela Hampton - 0116 2674428

Berkshire

Adrian Barker - 0118 9267806

W. London

Sue Hornby - 0181 941 2714

Events

Each PDO has endeavoured to expand the events calendar in their area in terms of number of low level events for young paddlers to take part in. These are now complete and available. If you live in, live near to, or are happy to travel to one of the Paddlesport areas, get in touch with the appropriate PDO and ask for a copy of their list.

Paddlepower Competition - International Canoe Exhibition

Many of you visited us at the Paddlepower stand at the International Canoe Exhibition, it was great to see so many of you there. A large proportion of you brought your paintings and competition entries with you and over the next few issues of Canoe Focus we will be featuring some of the winners and runners up.



Lucy Eland - aged 12 was the overall winner and took home a fleece jacket as her prize.



Luke Cafferty - aged 8 took home a T-shirt for his colourful entry.

Top Club & Junior Club Directories

Two more clubs have been accredited as TOP Community clubs. They are:

Burton on Trent CC

Matlock CC

Many congratulations to these clubs on all of the good work they are doing with young people which they have committed to develop even further over the next 2 years.

Each PDO has now pulled together a Junior Club directory for their area. If you would like a copy, please contact your PDO. All of these directories will be combined to create a national directory. Please complete the form below if you would like your club included and are not within a PDO area.

Name of club

Address

Junior Organiser Name

Address

Tel. No.

Sessions (please tick)

daily twice weekly weekly weekends only

summer only

Range of Paddlesport offered (please tick)

Canoe Sailing Marathon Polo Rodeo

Sea Slalom Sprint Surf Touring

Wild Water racing Paddlepower schemes

Star Schemes Duke of Edinburgh

Do you welcome people with a disability Yes No

Do you encourage parents to come along Yes No

Do you welcome volunteers Yes No



Been There,



Above and inset:
Jim Jayes in the
old days

Ex-national slalom team canoeist Jim Jayes talks to Ian Raspin about how the sport has changed in his views over the last 30 years and where it is going.

A potted history

Jimmy Jayes first introduction to canoeing was through a scout group aged 10 on the banks of the River Thames in 1968. Although thrilled by this new challenge, in search of yet more excitement Jimmy and his friends used to sneak off up river to test their skills on the white waters of one of the many Thames weirs. Ironically it wasn't for another 6 years that he competed on the white water through the slalom gates at Peterborough slalom. However, once introduced to the sport there was no stopping him. In 18 months he progressed through the divisions from Novice to Div 1 (the top division in those days). In 1985, he was selected to represent Great Britain and had a string of good performances including 1st and

4th at the Lofer International (Austria) and Liptosky International (Slovakia) respectively, before the days of the World Cup.

In 1987, aged 25, Jim decided to hang up his paddles as a serious competitor and turn his hand to coaching in the hope of passing on his knowledge and skills to others. Such was the demand for his services both nationally and internationally, that he established a business 'JJ Coaching and Rafting', which has now run successfully at Mile End Mill in Llangollen for 13 years.

What Attracted you to the Sport?

As a 16 year old teenager the 3 biggest attractions to the sport were, it's thrill and excitement, the competition and the social scene. In those days there was a big schools, youth club and club involvement which provided a great structure for good healthy competition, an enjoyable social scene and the opportunity to share costs in attending an event.

Did you make a conscious decision to channel your energies into slalom?

Not really. White water seemed the natural step for greater excitement. The canoes we learned in were fibreglass general purpose/slalom canoes, not plastic, which although adequate for gentle white water couldn't take the pounding of bigger water and playing in holes and stoppers etc. So as an alternative challenge, we used slalom poles/gates to test our skills in other ways and it progressed from there.

Has the development of the plastic canoe helped or hindered slalom?

More robust plastic canoes have meant that the sport is more accessible to a greater number of people, simply because of the fact that an individuals competence level isn't required to be as high, because in the event of a capsize the potential damage to the canoe has been greatly reduced. However, this has meant that where one day individuals turned to slalom for greater excitement and challenge, they are now looking for bigger and harder white water, because they know the canoes will take it.



Seen It, Done It

In the mid 80's slalom was at it's most popular with 5,000 active participants. Since then numbers have fallen away quite dramatically, why do you feel this is?

In my opinion there are a number of reasons for this, some I've already touched upon, like the plastic boat situation. I also mentioned earlier the importance I felt the school, youth club, scout and club system was. Ideally it would be nice again to get these organisation included, but this would be a major task. The club system would I feel be more addressable. In the past each individual raced for a club which created a sense of companionship and gave the younger paddlers role models to aspire to. Unfortunately, possibly due to the development of the purpose made slalom sites, many aspiring teenagers chose to move away from their local clubs to these sites, leaving their clubs without the role models and enthusiasm catalysts. If some of the smaller club based sites could be developed, then maybe clubs could hang onto these individuals and the support of their parents for longer. It may also help dispel this de-

motivating attitude that if you are not based at one of the major centres, you don't stand a chance in the sport.

You were recently elected to the Slalom Committee as Promotion and Marketing Officer. What is your motivation behind this appointment?

With the advances in technology, the number of leisure pursuits that individuals can chose to spend their disposable income on has become greater. Consequently, the potential customer base we as a sport are appealing to is much more competitive.

In the mid 80's our sport, through no strategic planning, had the best participation figures it has ever had. Unfortunately at that time nobody recognised the position we were in and with time those things that came hand in hand with high participation figures i.e. media interest, sponsors etc. started to decline as did the numbers. We as a sport missed the best chance we ever had to promote the sport. I feel if we are ever to get back to where we once were our attitude to promote and market our sport has to become much more professional. It was primarily for this reason that I chose to take on this position.

What have you done and what do you intend to do?

TV is the most effective promotional tool and at present I'm involved in a number of negotiations. One is with Sky in the hope of producing a programme/documentary based in some way around slalom. Mike Coyne who was heavily involved in the 'Iceland Breakthrough' documentary is helping me set this up. Also I've made initial enquiries with a TV company about producing another series

not dissimilar to 'Paddles Up'.

I've made a number of useful contact in the media world, who now seem more aware of our sport and are interested in covering other stories. I've also just completed the production of a poster which event organisers will be issued with as a promotional tool. The intent is to distribute these around leisure centres, clubs etc. in the hope of attracting potential future participants. The sport also has an Internet page giving results, event lists, club and contacts etc. thanks to Nick Penfold. One final initiative which isn't really promotion based, but more related to helping interested parties stay interested, is the 'coach link service'. This will be launched in the next couple of months and will provide a service by which any athlete interested in receiving coaching can contact active coaches within their area.

What do you think the future has in store for us?

Our sport is now entering a professional era thanks to the support of the Lottery Funded World Class Performance Initiative. Many of our top athletes as well as securing sponsorship arrangements with major companies are now in receipt of substantial Subsistence Grants, totalling in excess of over £200,000 across the Squads. This new influx of money means that Canoe Slalom has become a realistic and sustainable lifestyle for many of our top athletes. With this new support and the planned World Class Potential and World Class Start programmes these may encourage and provide for greater participation at all levels.

ian
raspin





New Spraydecks from Phoenix of Nottingham



Eskimo Performance Pack

Eskimo are now offering a Performance Pack for only £49.95 extra when you purchase an Eskimo boat. The pack brings an extended 2 year warranty, a spare parts and service kit and Shaun Baker's 'id' video showing you what not to do in your new boat. Ask for details at your nearest dealer or contact System X - Playboater on 01189 321 449

Contact Descent -

Phoenix of Nottingham, for your details of your nearest stockist
Tel: 0115 969 6149
Reviews by Damien Chapman

The neoprene spraydeck that will stand up to all water conditions that you can paddle. Consisting of a high waist tube, with adjustable braces and elasticated top for greater warmth, and helping to prevent water leakage. The new method used to attach the shockcord to the neoprene gives the best seal to the cockpit rim possible, letting no water creep under the edge when descent racing. £50 inc. VAT.

Sprint -

A low elasticated waist for maximum range of movement in the rotation at the waist. Manufactured in a 2mm neoprene for greater waterproof qualities. Without the extreme thermal properties of thicker neoprene but warm enough for the coldest of winters and still possible to wear it on warm summer days. £40 inc VAT.

Marathon -

The newest spraydeck in the range which incorporates all the features of the sprint deck with the new zip and elastic system. Once the zip is opened the elastic pulls the spraydeck to the side of the boat, making exiting and entering the boat in race conditions easier than in a nylon deck as it positions the spraydeck for you meaning that you don't end up sitting on it. £65 inc. VAT.



Porvair Int Ltd: Porelle Drys Waterproof Socks

Now I know many, if not most, open canoeists like kayakers wear wetsuit boots in their boats, but I, like a good number of others, prefer a more substantial footwear, especially if the day includes portaging.

Most footwear soft enough to be comfortable when kneeling, tends to lack water resistance and the result is cold wet feet.

Porelle have just launched Porelle Drys, a revolutionary new waterproof sock that could be the ideal open canoeist's sock - despite it being aimed mainly at walkers and cyclists.

Rather than an over-sock like most other waterproof socks, this is a true sock and can replace ordinary socks to reduce bulk inside your footwear.

Combining sock and breathable waterproof membrane technologies, Porelle have come up with a stretchy loop sock, complete with high density padding over the heel, toe and ball areas of the foot, and incorporating a hidden inner waterproof breathable layer.

Warm and cosy, with hollow core polyester in its thermal fibres, well fitting, thanks to the use of Lycra, these socks are 100% waterproof but also breathable so they reduce sweat build up.

Comfortable when portaging, comfortable and dry when in the boat, machine washable and tumble dryer proof to 40, the Porelle Drys have a lot to offer. They come in a full range of sizes for a superior fit, in many colours and cost around £29.99.

For more details contact Porelle Int Ltd, Unit C, Brackmills Business Park, Caswell Road, Northampton NN4 7PW Tel: 01604 766266 Fax: 01604 702333.



More Paddler's Gear on page 50

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What's On



Conwy Ascent '98

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Conwy Ascent. In that time, the event has developed to become one of the foremost racing and touring events in the paddling calendar, attracting over a hundred paddlers on a regular basis from across Britain. The success has been due to the consistent support of HSS and other sponsors and the stalwart efforts of members and friends of the Dyffryn

Conwy Paddlers and Colwyn canoe clubs. The paddling environment comprises



Above: T2 race start of the beautiful scenery of the Conwy Valley in North Wales and the varied but always challenging waters of the river. Combined with the genial atmosphere, generated by the enjoyment of those involved in the occasion and the sense of achievement people have from completing the course and these elements create a canoeing experience not to be missed.

The Conwy Ascent this year is on Saturday 30 May. Further details are available from Kevin Coleman (01492 513358)

Hasler Final at Windsor

The 1998 Hasler Final (the National Inter-Club and Inter-Region marathon championships) is to be held on Sunday 20 September on the Thames at Windsor.

Why not make a weekend of it? The Windsor Leisure Centre, next door to Windsor Canoe Club, is planning evening entertainment on the Saturday night, there is basic camping available on the island near the clubhouse as well as a wide range of local accommodation. Contact the Royal Windsor Information Centre's accommodation bureau on 01753 743907 or fax 01753 743911. Do book as soon as possible, as accommodation will be in great demand.

You could try out the course on Saturday, and send your family and supporters off to see Windsor Castle and the Great Park, swim in the Leisure Centre Pool, go for a boat trip on the Thames, or visit the local dungeons, gardens, manor houses, museums or Legoland. For tourist information on events and attractions, contact the Royal Windsor Information Centre on 01753 743900.

Even if you don't qualify for the event, come for the weekend anyway - it is too good to miss! The contact for race information is Debbie Carpenter 01252 877982 and for PR information Charles Hicks 01252 850657

The Celtic Watersports Festival

The Celtic Watersports Festival encompasses the many disciplines of sailing, canoeing and surfing in which teams representing the Celtic nations compete on an annual basis. Teams representing Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, The Isle of Man, Portugal and Northern Spain will this year battle it out in Bude, North Cornwall from August 9th to August 15th. For general information contact Julia Hobday on 01288 355716. In Cornwall the team managers and event organisers are: Sea Kayak, Colin Rule 01726 72901, Kayak Surfing Simon Hammond 01288 354039; Canoe Polo Ray Helmer 01209 210094; Marathon and Sprint canoeing James Asser 01726 815322. The surf team will consist of men, women and juniors and will be selected during a series of surfing days in May and June at Polzeath, Gwithian and Bude. So if you enjoy playing in the surf in your kayak get in touch with Simon on 01288 354039. The whole event is about having fun so don't worry if you're not the best in the world, you may be surprised.

Tyne Tour 1988

Following the resignation of Dean Maragh from his post as organiser the Tyne Tour will go on. Neil Cranston and Jim Russell hope to continue where Dean left off. The Tour will have a similar format to previous years and there is to be no increase in cost. Book these dates in your diary now, 6th, 7th and 8th November. Location: Hexham, Northumberland. There are limited tickets available so book early. Watch the canoeing press for details. Suitable for paddlers of all abilities.

Disability Awareness Training

The Calvert Trust in conjunction with the Northern Region are running Disability Awareness Training at Keswick on 3rd, 4th & 5th July. The cost of the course is £75 and Northern Region members will qualify for a £20 subsidy. The costs cover accommodation, food etc. Having attended courses at this venue I can highly recommend this weekend. Further details are available from the Calvert Trust Tel: 01768 772254. Jim Russell Disability Rep. N Region.

Cheshire Ring Canoe Race

The 1998 Cheshire Ring Race will be held on the weekend of the 27th and 28th June. This is the 21st year of the race which circles the Cheshire Ring of canals, starting near Poynton and passing through Marple, Ashton, Manchester, Lymm, Preston Brook, Northwich, Kildsgrove, Congleton and back to Poynton. There are 95 miles to be paddled, 92 locks and three tunnels to be carried around, some of it in the dark. The most popular class is the double touring kayak relay, there are also classes for K1 and K2 relay or non stop and anything else you fancy. For entry information send an A5 envelope to: Chris Cleaver, Macclesfield and District Canoe Club, 39 Cavendish Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HX.

Doggy Paddle - Sunday 19th April 1998

Charity event in aid of Guide Dogs for the Blind. 19 miles, 4 weirs, River Leam and River Avon. Open to all paddlers, this is the only opportunity to paddle this beautiful scenic stretch of water along the River Avon passing beneath Warwick Castle and through a National Trust deer park. Start at Edmundscote

who will again be providing the courtesy shuttle bus service. For an information pack and entry forms please send sae to Chris Perry: Kayak Control, Tower Farm, Long Bank, Bewdley Worcs DT12 2QY Tel/fax: 01299 402683

The West Cornwall Sea Kayak Experience

At Hayle on Sunday 24th May 1998. This event is being organised by Hayle Canoe Club. Entry forms are available from Doug Sims, 63 Mellanear Close, Hayle, TR27 4QU please send SAE.

Junior Paddlefest 98

Paddleplus presents the Junior Paddlefest 98 on 13 June 1998. Only £2.50 per paddler. At the National Water Sports Centre, Holme Pierrepont Country Park, Nottingham. A great day out for junior paddlers and families, including: A range of the latest specification boats, paddles and equipment for demonstration and use. Walking, Laser Clay Range, Cycling, Orienteering, Picnicing. Fun competitions/calm water slalom, Junior K1 Racing, Bell Boating, Placid Water Rodeo, Photographic and video opportunities. Attending manufacturers include Crewsaver, Dagger, Palm, Perception, Pyranha, Ainsworth, Dr D's, Lendal and Mobile Adventure. Sponsored by Desperate Measures, 39-41 Trent Boulevard, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5BB Tel: 0115 981 6815

Blue and White Nile - presentation

Leading expedition paddler Guy Baker will be giving a presentation on Thursday 23 April, commencing at 8pm on his first descent of the White Nile and his trips down the Blue Nile. The presentation will include slides, video and music and will take place at Whitewater the Canoe Centre's shop, Shepperton Marina, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex. Tickets in advance cost £3.50, for further details or booking call George or Jason on 01932 247978. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Transpennine Canoe Challenge

The Challenge is 127 miles long, and takes place on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, over the August bank holiday. This year the race starts from Liverpool on Saturday 29th August. You can either race over 24 hrs or enter the relay event. It can also be done in stages over three days, stopping off at campsites on the way. Novices are also

being offered the chance to have a go. There is a 15 miles and a 30 mile race for those who don't fancy the full monty. For an entry form and more detail contact Sharon Nicholson, Marketing Officer, British Waterways, Navigation Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1BH Tel: 01606 723800. All entries must be in by 30th June. Entry £15 per canoeist, cheque payable to British Waterways.

Bob Ottley's 155 mile Challenge

Bob Ottley who is an Open Canoe Level 3 Coach, will in July paddle solo the 155 miles from Brierley Hill, West Midlands to Taunton, Somerset, using an open canoe. The purpose of the journey is a personal challenge to regain fitness after major cancer surgery, to show there is a way forward after cancer, and to raise sponsorship/donation for equipment at the radiography department of Musgrove Park Hospital Taunton. Bob has a schedule of the places he will be visiting along the way, so if you would like to join him on any part of his journey he will be happy to see you there. For more detail or to send a donation contact Bob at 30 Lower Touches, Chard, Somerset TA20 1NY Tel: 01460 63812.

The Land Rover Canoe Rally - Sunday 14th June

In aid of Birmingham Children's Hospital, Solihull Hospital and Warren Pearl Hospice. 21 miles course, all craft welcome. For entry details or to make a donation contact T Masters Esq, 69 Kilmorie Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 6AY

Montgomery Meander and Dinghy Dawdle

Sunday 7th June, all craft welcome to paddle the Shropshire Union Canal. Full details from Colin Venus, Tel: 01974 272628 (eves) email: CJCVENUS@btinternet.com.

Devizes to Westminster - 10-13 April

This years nominated charity for the DW is the Cancer Research Campaign and is spear heading a national campaign on skin cancer. Every year the DW raises over £30,000 for a wide range of charities. To lead the field various members of the National Marathon and Sprint Squad have offered to paddle sections of the DW, but not as competitors, purely for raising funds for the campaign.

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Kajak Klub 'Buk' Gorazda

Article by
Geoff Smedley

At the end of November last year I was asked by the UK Sports Council to visit Gorazda in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and report back on the state of the sport for disabled people.



Gorazda's position on the River Drina had been crucial during the war in what had previously been Yugoslavia. The Drina had defined

the border between the Bosnian and the Serb forces. Gorazda had been under siege for most of the war and the Serb forces had tried to systematically destroy the town from their positions on the hills above it. Every building had been extremely damaged, some totally destroyed. Whilst under the siege the people had been forced to move about the town under fear of attack from shells and sniper fire. There are two bridges over the river. Underneath one had been constructed a pedestrian walkway which allowed the people to cross from one side of the town to the other under the shelter of the bridge.

Foreign aid had made some progress in the rebuilding of the town and most habitable houses had new roofs. Most public buildings were in use but the sports provisions were still in need of some major work.

The town has a population of 30,000. 1,200 are disabled and 300 of them are amputees. The majority of these are men. Injured women and children were evacuated to safety all around the world and they will not return to Gorazda until the houses are more fully restored.

Gorazda had a very good sporting record before the war. Teams and sportspeople from there had played in the major sport's leagues and had represented their country. This is especially true of the canoe club there Kajak

Klub 'Buk' Gorazda, which I visited. The club was 50 years old and the oldest sports club in Gorazda.

A fine facility before the war

I visited the ruins of their club. Built on two levels with direct access at the second storey level it had obviously been a fine facility before the war. In addition to the changing rooms and boat store, there had been refreshment's areas and a large terrace with views across the river for spectators or judges.

I was told that their boat store had held 60 craft before its destruction. Now the club had only 8 or 10 craft, all of GRP construction and in a poor state of repair.

Temporary storage for equipment had been found in the basement of a Primary school close to the river. However, the club had been given notice that by the end of 1997 they would have to move out since the school needed this area themselves.

The state of their ancillary equipment was similar although through links the club had formed with the Federazione Italiana Canoa Kayak, they had begun to acquire new paddles and buoyancy aids. A local rehabilitation industry had been contracted to make kayak spray decks for them.

The club was still trying to attend competitions, mainly in Bosnia with some trips to Italy. Opportunities beyond this were curtailed by costs.



AUCTION

Saturday April 25th, 1998

Viewing from 8 am Auction starts 10 am

(Orders by telephone accepted from 27th April, 1998,
Sorry, no telephone orders taken before the auction).

The P & H Company are holding an auction to sell off excess stock in order to help to fund new products. Below are examples of just some of the stock we have to auction off and the ridiculously low reserve prices we are prepared to accept.

30 Full expedition sea kayaks,
including Sirius, Orion, Icefloe, Outlander and Capella.

(Slight seconds or 1997 models).

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10 Schlegel Paddles

Normal prices £100 - 110 (Reserve price £35)

10 General Purpose

children's/light adults plastic

Slalom S1 kayaks

Normal price £199 (Reserve price £75)

10 Diolen/Kevlar/Carbon

Slalom kayaks (Reserve price £200)

These are only a few examples of what we have to auction off. Also included are various quantities of roof racks, wetsuits, buoyancy aids, spraydecks, sea paddles, Swiss army knives, torches and anything else we can get rid of!



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ish) Southampton.

Canoe Club Clearout Enigma pink plastic squirt boat, hardly used £175, Reflex plastic £150, Snipe fibreglass tourer. Hardly used but narrow seat so will fit child/anorexic adult £50. Horrible 15ft fibreglass open canoe. Offers Tel: Paul 01474 833071 Kent
Chinook by Perception 5 metres long, plastic and very stable. Esterley sea kayak, two large water tight hatches, hardly used, excellent condition Tel: 01634 856274 Kent
Club Clearance several cheap canoes for sale. One white water racer, three general purpose fibre glass boats. Please contact Dave Love 01903 713817 (Littlehampton)
Corsica S, full plate footrest, new buoyancy bags. Back rest, central buoyancy, purple/yellow £300. Buoyancy Aid, ribbed junior, green 30-32" chest £20. Tel: Oxfordshire 01235 525900

Dagger Reflection 15' Open Canoe, cane seats/ air bags. Used twice, V Good condition £550 Tel: 0181 644 2717 Surrey

Dagger Vortex and Freefall LT, both full ww spec, full plate footrest, back rest, both hardly used and stored indoors £350 and £300 respectively. Tel: 0498 883379 (Yorks)

Dancer 1993/4 edition. Teal Green, standard footrests, nose cone £250 the lot. Only a fool would miss it. Call Paul or Todd on 01233 812518 (Ashford Kent)

Dancer, red, VGC, neoprene spraydeck £175 Tel: 01778 570722 (Lincs)

Eurokayaks Trapper 500 open canoe. Green, Excellent condition £425 Tel: 01492 532923 (N Wales)

Folbot double folding canoe manufactured in the USA. Very robust construction and in good condition. Complete with paddles, seat cushions, rudder, leeboards, mast and sail. Straightforward assembly and dis-assembly, stows in two bags £290. Tel: Keith 01508 494401 Norfolk or e-mail kwebster@paston.co.uk.

Hurricane black alpine version, 4" contoured rear foam block, vgc £275 good home only! Midlands 0121 3211 258 or 01159 335719

Kirton Tiger Ki, fibreglass construction -royal blue clear deck, sea blue opaque hull. V Good condition, with seat, o/s rudder and u/s rudders, ss rudderwire. Prepared to travel pathway to complete sale £350 Tel: 01822 853601 (Plymouth) after 6pm

Kit for Sale Dri cags x 2 Wild Water size Med/large new seals £30. Dri cag same but damaged neck seal £10. Semi dry cag size small £10 Crewsaver B/aid size junior £15 Typhoon long john size med/large (zip front) £25

Ainsworth K100 paddle £25 various spray decks (nylon and neoprene) dri bags Tel: Keith on Camberley 01276 33021
Lance (stable Ki), o/s rudder, VGC £150 Tel: Sheffield 0114 2303738

M135 Sport, plastic kayak in excellent condition. With backrest and spraydeck. Very stable boat suitable for beginner to intermediate level whitewater paddler, surfs extremely well and would suit a taller paddler £80 ono - a bargain! Acrobat 300 in excellent condition. Superb surf, ww playboat. Inc backrest and fully padded out. Will suit ambitious intermediate/advanced paddler £250 ono Contact Steve Bissell on 01283 704956 (eves/w/e) or email stevebiss@aol.com. or 01332 247762 (days) Deryshire
Microbat 230, single, red £230 also Old Town Pathfinder 14ft Canadian double canoe with storage/floating tanks £475 Tel: 016974 78070

Nomad Extra kevlar, red, very little use and in excellent condition, ideal for slalom training or low level competition £135 includes neoprene spraydeck and backrest Tel: Lincoln 01522 532368

Nomad Mystere slalom Ki, black carbon/kevlar deck. Kevlar hull, adjustable footrest, in good condition £130 ono Tel: 01743 850722.

Nordkapp HS sea kayak in good condition complete with pump, compass and new hatch covers, all bulkheads are watertight £395 Bristol Tel: 01275 851057

One yellow Stuntbat, good condition, back rest, airbags Full ww spec £200. 1 Neoprene s/deck (Playboater) deck size B waist M. 1 Instructor Wildwater b/aid. 1 Dagger RPM, 4 months old, V good condition, full ww spec. airbags, and backrest included £450 Tel: James 014 2668473 Sale due to injury. Could deliver to Nottingham.

Open Canoe - Coleman Outback 16 Ram-X canoe with paddles VGC £290. Also M1370 Pro Croslink plastic slalom kayak with neoprene spraydeck, good condition Contact Mike or Marion on 01793 491541 (Swindon)

Open Canoe 'C' wing sailing rig, vgc, very fast & stable £200 ono Tel: 01598 710367 (N Devon) Shaun Hewlett.

Open Canoe, Peace River Cruiser, good condition, includes paddles & b/aids if required £500 ono. Also Skerray, sea kayak, good condition, yellow, plastic, fully fitted out £425 ono. Lendal Trix paddles £30, selection of WW b/aids £30-150 all in excellent condition. Tel: 0113 2687594 Leeds 0374 975823

P&H Baidarka Explorer little used, excellent condition, foot pump, front & rear hatches, retractable skeg, a full rig of deck lines, compass and light split paddles included £400 ono Tel: Robin 01280 704072 (Brackley)

P&H Phazer fibre glass kayak, glitter deck, diolen hull, excellent condition, full air bags, paddle and spray deck (both almost new) £85. ACE Swing plastic kayak (very little use from new) paddles and spraydeck £125. Both ideal for beginners/improvers Derby 01332 873789

P&H Revenge, polo kayak £100, also carbon/kevlar stunt bat £250 used but in good condition. Shoreline Fuego expedition sea kayak, excellent condition, hardly ever used, has to be seen, beautiful boat £850. Reflection 15' cream open canoe, average condition £450, fleet of 8 Pyranha Masters, plus trailer, 10 full sets of paddles, b/aids, helmets, decks and cags £750. Perception Whip-It, blue, excellent conifion £500 Ocoee, red, as new, full air bags, pedestal seat, double thigh straps etc £850 Tel: 01433 621584 (Derbyshire)

Perception Dancer, red, vgc, full plate footrest £150. Tel: Andy (Worcester 0421 341791 (mob)

Perception Pirouette super sport, excellent play & surf boat, good condition £310 ono Tel: Neil Thomas 01352 741439

Pirouette Super Sport, granite white, 2 yrs old, V Good condition, great first playboat. Tel: Martin 01200 424658 (Lancs)

Prijon Invader blue, good condition. Airbags front and rear. Full footplate. Backrest. Nose cone £260 ono. Ainsworth junior paddle spec 1. £20. Contact Jenny 01434 605118 (Newcastle area)

Prijon Invader x 2, ideal 1st/2nd boat for intermediate whitewater. £250 each Perception Pirouette Super Sport, classic play/surf boat £250 no offers. Contact Adrian on 01634 256064 evenings (Kent).

Pyranha 280 red, wwspec, slight repair but good condition (any trial can bring to H Pierrepont) Also B/aid, neoprene s/deck AP2000 helmet, £200 ono or will split 01623 743840

Pyranha Acrobat 270 yellow, vgc, backrest, hip pads, padded seat, just under 1 yr old £350 no offers. Also Valley Prodigy Squirt Boat, to suit paddler 11-12 stone £150 ono Tel: Phil 01257 423954

Pyranha Blade, red, 4 months old, excellent condition £450 ono. Tel: Fran 0114 2661231

Pyranha Micro 230 blue, 18 months old, ww spec, great fun boat, £230 Tel: Mike on 01793 611773 (North Wilts)

Sea Kayak sea King, fibreglass, orange with black trim, 2 very large watertight hatches fore and aft and all owing to stowage of even the bulkiest equipment with ease. Full decklines and pump knees thigh pads, rockered hull combined with effortless straight running adjustable footrest. A fast boat with high performance, superb condition, high quality expedition sea kayak, open to reasonable offers Tel: David 01233 85401 (Herts)

Seascape double sea kayak with rudder, spraydecks and paddles available Tel: 01704 574952 Southport

Single kayaks, adult Mirage (plastic), all the following are fibreglass. Asult Snipe: Adult Elite: Child Touring (8-11 yrs), Child Olymp Junior (8-11 yrs) Child small (6-8 yrs) Adult buoyancy aid: small adult b/aid, Buffalo mountain shirt size 44 as new. Tel: 01283 703576 (Derby)

Slalom Ki carbon/kevlar (Nomad Mystery) Hardly used suit around 9st paddler £350. Tel: Helen North Wales 01286 872075.

Slalom Ki Nomad Mystery £245 ono. Swift, medium volume competition boat. Suit youth to medium adult, optimum paddler weight estimated to be in the range 7 to 11 stone. Black deck with clear Kevlar/Carbon hull. A really nice, competitive boat. Bedford area close to Cardington

Artificial Slalom course. Can be seen 'test driven' by arrangement Tel: 01234 741 520 (Mike or his Dad)(Beds)
Slalom Ki Two touch 1 cutdown. Under 9 months old. Carbon kevlar foam construction, suit lighter paddler.

Good condition £220 ono. Slalom Ki Touch 1 cut down. 18 months old, carbon/foam would suit lighter paddler, good condition £170 ono. Tel: 01252 617445 (Hants)

Spraydeck Playboater (elephant sized) small waist, unused and still bagged. A wallet rendering snip at £25. Tel: Ian on 01708 455270 Essex

Stunt Bat, pink, airbags and backrest included, vgc, mainly used on flat water £250 Tel: 01279 303810 (Essex) can be delivered to Holme Pierrepont.

Topolino Spud, blue, good condition, £33000. Tel: Duncan 01707 661313 day, Hereford 01992 504742

Trailer purpose built to hold 12 kayaks. Spare wheel and storage box £375 ono Tel: 01695 575708 (Lancs) Ask for Jeff.

Trailer to carry 4 kayaks and one canadian canoe. With spare wheel £60. Stockport 01625 878838

Weekender touring kayak, made by Valley canoes, fitted out for sea trips £150. General purpose slalom boat £50 or £175 the pair, with 1 adult and 2 children's b/aids. Tel Nottingham 0115 9206550 or 0115 9486012 voice mail.

Yellow Acrobat 300, with air bags, complete with w.w spray deck, paddle, buoyancy vest and wetsuits. Buyer to collect £250 Tel: 01656 785321 (Bridgend)

Wanted

14/15ft Open Canoe anything considered, will collect Tel: Roger 01594 563979 Glos.

Canoe Club Seeks cheap plastic kayaks. Can you help? Tel: paul on 01474 833071 Kent

Dancer XS for small child, must be in reasonable condition, please contact 01275 851057 Bristol

Entry level Marathon Boat, suitable for novice paddler. Tel: Ruth Fletcher 0191 202 6200 (day) 01661 842026 eves (Northumberland)

Feathercraft or Klepper folding kayak Tel: 01782 617789

Nordkapp HM and Inuk in kevlar with rudders preferred Tel: Pete Dorset 01963 23546

Old K4, any condition considered. Will travel for the right boat Tel: Simon 015 982 5014 (Notts)

Perception Kiwi 2, contact Mike Tullberg, Tel: day 01442 231700 eve 01727 835106 St Albans

Roofrack for Vauxhall Cavalier, series 3 (new shape) Tel: Tim 01203 672584 (Coventry)

Sea Kayak please telephone Tel: 01642 865607 (Teesside)

Wavehopper in good condition for University club. Any reasonable offer considered. Contact Neil Dixon on 01373 473836 or email nd212@cam.ac.uk

Whitewater Open Playboat money waiting for right boat. Tel: office hours 01222 465993 eves 01222 793745 (Kevin) Cardiff

Whitewater Spec Kayaks required for small club in Purley. Must be available in South East and reasonably priced.

Tel: Adrian on 0181 406 3167.

Wild Water Boat in good condition- needed soon contact Steven at gil@tinet.ie

WWR C2, Flu preferred but anything considered Tel: 01332 873789 (Derby)

Lost, found stolen, misc

Lost & Found Delapre Slalom paddles, river Teme, Ludlow, 17 January. Found Ainsworth type black paddles, River Teme, Ludlow 17 January Contact Anne 01905 612725

Lost at Sutton Pools, River Thames 27 December. Pair of Dr D paddles, black with green Dr D motif on blades. If found please ring 01865 768424.

Stolen on 9th Feb, 2 kayaks, 1 Conquest, electric blue with black nose. 1 Mountain bat, bright yellow (old and holey but much loved) 2 paddles, 1 left handed, medium, red with green graphics on tips. Right handed paddle, small, yellow with black shaft. All stolen from Newcastle under Lyne on the above date. If you have seen or hear anything about them, please contact Will or Kathy Boyce on Tel: 01782 629529

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The success record of the club previously had been high and although they now had to rebuild everything, including their membership, there was a commitment to ensure an inclusive membership policy and of the 20 or so members at that time there were 4 with disabilities.

Although badly affected by the destruction of most of their boats the Canoe Club were competing in national and some international events. I was able to give the club a BCU banner and some coaching books and videos which I had taken.

The main reason for visiting Gorazda out of all the places in need of help in BiH was its isolation. Principle cities such as Sarajevo, being the first point of contact for anyone entering Bosnia tended to receive all the attention and this the majority of the help. My journey from Sarajevo to Gorazda was quite extraordinary.

I had been advised not to take the main road to Gorazda since there was a possibility that the sports equipment I had taken as gifts for the sports clubs would be confiscated by people manning 'un-official road-blocks'.

Piles of rubble

Therefore, having left Sarajevo on a major road, my hosts and I took a minor road which took us past the Sarajevo Winter Olympics area, now a sad desolate area where all the facilities and hotels had been reduced to piles of rubble. Alongside this road can be seen the remains of the gun emplacements from which Serb troops bombarded Sarajevo.

Thereafter the road was no more than a temporary track, in most places only wide enough for one car. It had been constructed simply by bulldozing a passage, roughly contouring the sides of the mountains. Upon this had been dumped rough hard core rocks, which had then been rolled and compressed.

Maximum speed possible on the track was 20 kph and since it ran for 80 km before reaching a main road again we were four hours on this stretch alone.

Midway on our journey the mountain road crossed the regular main road. At this point there was a checkpoint manned by French troops in full combat uniform. Details were given regarding the composition of the party and the purpose of the journey. The journey throughout was made more hazardous by the frequent lorries that passed in the opposite direction taking materials for additional road construction.

I was told that by next winter this track would be made into a full dual passage road with a metalled surface. Nevertheless, I was fortunate not to have arrived a week or so later when three feet of snow would cover the road. The frequency of tall snow poles beside the road confirmed the need to have the route clearly identified when it snowed.

Not safe to leave the road!

Some 65 kms from Gorazda we reached an area that had been their nearest point to meet the supply lorries during the war. A large area had been cleared by the track and a small shed constructed. To this point people from Gorazda had walked to collect supplies before walking back to the town. This round journey of 130kms, had been undertaken, 50 or 60 times by many of my hosts. They had travelled often under fire from the Serbian forces carrying up to 40 kilograms of food. We stopped at this point to stretch our legs. Camera in hand I walked to the side of the road to take a photograph - my hosts in alarm shouted for me to return to the car. They explained that not all the landmines had been cleared and it was not safe to leave the road!

We passed through several villages. Most of the houses had evidence of severe damage

and those inhabited had new roofs. However, there was evidence that houses had been totally destroyed and were unlikely to be inhabited again. It is situations like this that had created the influx of displaced people into the towns, exacerbating the housing problems there.

Eventually we reached the main road again at Foca and followed this, in parallel with the River Drina, until we reached Gorazda. The total journey of 140kms from Sarajevo to Gorazda had taken from 8.30am until mid afternoon on the Thursday!

The Gorazda people have a huge task ahead to restore the conditions that previously existed for sport and recreation. In doing so they will be aiming to also restore the world standing of BiH as a sporting nation. There is a commitment to inclusive policies and practice for disabled people and they have an organisational infrastructure to support and promote this. The canoe club were very interested in our plans for a Paddle-ability seminar in July this year and expressed a wish to be there. However, unless some support can be found for them they are unlikely to be able to come.

It is my hope that support will be found for the Kajak Club 'Buk' Gorazda. Their need is principally the money to buy new boats and equipment and pay for the costs of travelling. If you, or your club, feel that they can support this club in any way please contact me through the BCU.





'Wine, Baguettes

We left the port of Calais and proceeded to challenge ourselves to the French B roads, only to find that the famous Bonnie Tyler song "Lost in France" took on a whole new meaning. The budget of £150 per student was going to be tight, especially accounting for our fuelling stop at Eastenders supermarket - a touch of England on the edge of France.

Danny Tebay (blue helmet)
and
Dave Brown running the
Romanche Grade 4/5



& Water in the Southern Alps”

The night drive took us through Reims, Lyon and Grenoble. The tolls cost the equivalent of £55, cheaper than a rail journey but not as comfortable. As we left civilisation and entered the foothills of the Alps, which quickly turned into awe inspiring jagged mountains of the Ecrin National Park, we gazed and talked of the tumulus power of the grade#5 below us. Our S.I.'s however, Mr Danny 'Tebay Tours' and Dave 'middle-aged' Brown were buzzing with the prospect of impossible looking turns and drops. We "found" Briançon at approximately 1pm in the afternoon and quickly established base camp at a pleasant camp site called, "Le Cinq Vallee";

after finding our first choice campsite closed due to an outbreak of E-Coli !!

The first encounter with icy alpine rivers was the Durance racecourse at L'Argentiere. The Grey/Blue glacial alpine white water conservatively graded #2 was hardly inviting and extremely challenging but we were already for it. The first run of the course was a 'helter-skelter' affair as the boats with the aid of the water beneath us cut their own line down the course. We are not, and do not pretend to be, slalom paddlers and therefore missed all the gates accordingly. The stoppers became friendly play holes and any wave which could be caught, would be surfed; or attempted to surf in most cases.

Adrenaline fatigue, a feeling perfectly accompanied by those little French beers, set in that evening as we looked forward to the days ahead.

Day 2 brought with it the River Gyronde normally graded #3 but who the hell had

turned off the taps. Unperturbed we set our boats adrift for some bump and grind down this very steep river. In full flow this river would be an extremely fast, technical grade 4 but we had caught it at the wrong time and instead practised our broaching and rescue techniques and by the end of the day we had become self-recognised experts in geology. We finally joined the Durance and came across a hydro outlet which had formed a surge of standing waves culminating in a very surfable play wave before the entrance to the Durance white water course at Argentiere-La-Bessee.

Batman and Robin

The next tale in our adventure was to come from our two Senior Instructors who chose to test their wits against the rugged grade 5 of the Romanche river. Putting in at La Grave, making their way down river trying to use any eddy which came their way, the Batman and Robin of the group had at last found some classic Alpine white water. We followed the pioneering duo down, throw-lines at the ready. Water drenched them as the first section cut from right to left, into a bubbling stopper. Dave pumping hard through it to resist the towback. Another 50 metres through boiling masses of water and boulders and they broke free into a large eddy. Huge red, smiling faces said it all, and Danny then aired his love for the sport in colourful four letter words! Getting out at the barrage, knackered but exhilarated; the rest of us were disappointed that we weren't quite up to this standard yet. Maybe next year ??

Anyway it had to happen and like an awaiting Moses the rain came, during the day of the move to the next campsite at Embrun.

It was decided that we would pay the middle Durance a visit. The get in for this river was below the white water course at L'Argentiere, showing signs of increasing bravado we decided to extend the run to take into account the slalom course. Missing the gates again, the grade 2 river gives the opportunity for the less experienced members of the group an opportunity to paddle alpine rivers at their friendliest. The highlight of the river is found at the end when you approach the get out point at St Clement where some

Taken at "Five Valleys" campsite, Braignon



Article written by:
Greg Bastow &
Peter Packard



The
"Intrepid 10" De
Montfort University
(Bedford) white
water kayak club
members were:
Danny Tebay,
Greg Bastow,
Matt Davies,
David Packard,
Paul Barlow,
Dave Brown,
Adelaine Chandler,
Peter Packard,
Kate Wilkinson &
Veronica Hodgson.
If anyone wants
info. on the trip
then ring Greg or
Danny on
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boulders had been placed to create another slalom course but offered us the chance to try some surfing, pop outs and usual rodeo stuff. (We are not slalom paddlers or Rodeo paddlers and trying to do these tricks in Magic bats and mountain 300's is not easy!).

Getting more acquainted with the French access points we decided to try the Lower Durance. This river, as Danny and Dave had argued all week, is a true classic of the alpine region. The river level was low but undeterred the group set forth. After coming through the Chemin de Fer rapid (grade 3) we decided to spice up the day by taking in a spot of seal launching from a nearby rock face. A key to this is, as Peter found out to his cost, always grip the paddle tightly or else you get quite a good inspection of your paddle's brand name.

The river quickly picked up speed and the water was becoming whiter; we were heading closer to the Rabioux rapid. Head's turning to make sure everyone was following the right line Danny and Dave took the group through the eye of the Rabioux for the ride of a

lifetime. Well, all right then a few seconds!! The group decided to carry on downstream towards Embrun led by Greg, desperately trying to remember everything that he had learnt on his Instructors course about leading.

The eleventh day brought with it the river which most of us feared; through respect rather than terror. The Ubaye river race course is a technical, fast moving 6 km stretch of white water set in a deep gorge with outstanding scenery on either side, propelling both paddler and boat through a river ride of pure adrenaline. Getting in above the road bridge at Le Martinet the river immediately sends you into a rapid called "Salle a Manger". Excitedly we challenged the torrent, back paddling amidst rapid strokes to navigate the highly technical menage of rocks. Directly following Danny's line was Adelaine. Slightly nervous she weaved and dodged the ominous boulders. It came too fast and the up-stream edge quickly deemed her upside down and the dry look was over! The paddle escaped but was swiftly returned but a wet

sock somehow managed to disappear. This was the quickest river that most of us had encountered and before we knew it, we hit another big rapid called the "Champanastais". There was no rest on this river until we came across the entrance to the Ubaye gorge which was spanned by an old roman bridge. This amazingly quick 12km river with only 2 minor swims took the group safely to the get out point before the grade 5/6 stretch of the Ubaye gorge.

We decided to have a scenic drive from our base camp in Embrun to try the Upper Ubaye river; the grade 3 stretch between Champ Feleze to Jaussiers. Side tracked by Marmots running around the hills we eventually got to the river slightly later than expected. The river level was extremely low consequently the 'La Rapide des Parisens' and 'Pas de Gregoine' rapids weren't as frightening as expected. Finding a nice get out we gratefully used our boats as sun decks and enjoyed the afternoon sun, whilst Danny and Dave ran 10km back up the road. Thanks lads!!!

The culmination of our 'holiday' brought with it a play day on the infamous "Rabioux wave". In full flow this wave can be terrifying, but it was only partially over a half of its capacity but still took several attempts to tame. Making one last adjustment to that buoyancy jacket making sure it was well and truly fixed! Putting one's boat into the Rabioux is like watching your socks in the washing machine, on fast cycle but a great photo opportunity for anyone who has been there!!!

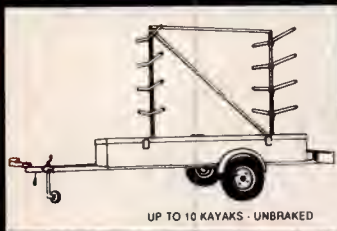
Needless to say the drive home was quicker than the journey out as we had pre-planned our motorways in advance. Everyone reflected on how their personal abilities had improved knowing full well that paddling British rivers would never be the same again.



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Club on Alpine
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the Rabioux

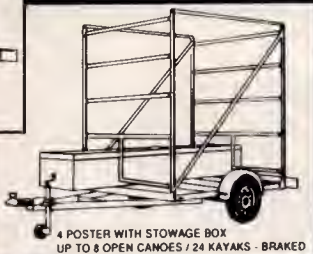


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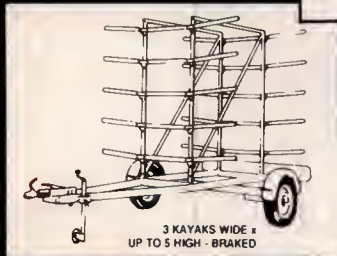
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RIM paddles have reaction injection moulded urethane blades for optimum balance of durability and resiliency. They are identified by red blades and aluminium shafts and are available in traditional kayak, canadian, polo, asymmetric, polo and ocean specifications. Prijon RIM paddles are ideal for the beginner or low budget paddler, scout group / club or outdoor centre. Prices start at £40.50 for canadian and £55.000 for kayak.

If you're looking for a higher specification paddle Prijons Hardfoam HS Paddles combine lightweight with stiffness for the most efficient conversion of paddle stroke



energy into forward propulsion. Hardfoam paddles utilise a carbon foam epoxy based blades with aluminium edging for strength and durability. Blades are mounted on pre-formed extruded aluminium shafts the ultimate in blade rigidity, retailing at £99.00.

White line paddles are the new range of paddles for 1998, featuring fibreglass epoxy laminate blades with aluminium edging, mounted on composite carbon shafts. Aluminium inserts in the tip of each blade decrease the amount of wear that can occur with normal fibreglass blades. White Line paddles offer superior durability and an ideal combination of stiffness and shock absorption. Kayak paddles are available in four blade shapes: asymmetric touring, traditional ocean, standard rodeo, asymmetric rodeo all priced at £99.00 and canadian paddles at £65 retail. All White Line paddles are available as kits.

For the Ultimate in lightweight performance and stiffness, try Prijon's top of the range Kevlar and carbon paddles available with symmetric or asymmetric rodeo blades on extruded aluminium or carbon-kevlar shafts. Prices start from £99.00 with an aluminium shaft and £145.00 with lightweight Carbon-kevlar shaft. All are available as kits.

For further details contact Prijon's Sole UK importer and distributor, Avoncraft on 01707 330000 or 881661. Alternatively email us.....sales@avoncraft.demon.co.uk

Voyager Dry Bags



To paraphrase the great man, "all dry bags are equal, but some are more equal than others" and the Voyager Dry Bags are a little more than the ordinary. Made from a supple PVC fabric with welded

seams, the Voyager Dry Bags come in two sizes: Large, which measures approx 14" x 26" (36cm x 66cm) and Extra Large, which measures approx 16" x 32" (40 x 81cm). They are tough enough, with extra strong bases, for some serious usage.

Obviously, coming in the sizes they do, these dry bags are not intended for use in low volume kayaks, but are ideal for open canoes, especially for tours when you want to carry everything with you in secure dryness.

The closure of the Voyager Dry Bags is the normal roll-down, strap-down type, but with added extras not found on most dry bags. The 'mouth' of the opening has a velcro tab to help initial alignment and closure and the whole of the opening is covered by a flap. Once the bag is rolled closed, straps with quick release buckles then hold it down tight, clipping securely to the side of the bag.

This holds the 'roll' tight in itself, but is backed by two top straps which help compress the load and also make extremely sure that the roll closure is held tightly closed to prevent water ingress.

For those awkward portages, the Voyager Dry Bags boast a simple but effective rucksack harness of two fully adjustable padded shoulder straps attached to reinforced patches on the bag itself. This allows you to carry your dry bag in comfort while you shoulder your canoe at the same time, cutting out some of the return trips on a portage. This rucksack system works well and I have used it on portages of up to one mile, which in effect saved me an extra two miles walking by obviating the need to return for the gear after carrying the canoe to the new put-in.

For short carries - car to bank etc - the dry bags feature a haul to loop above shoulder straps. Most are plain webbing, but the Voyager's haul loop is padded for a comfortable and secure grip.


Comfortable, capacious and durable, the American made Voyager Dry Bags are as watertight as you can get and are available in red and blue, costing £54.95 for the large model, £62.95 for the extra large.

For more details of the dry bags and all your open canoeing needs, contact White Water Consultancy, Bronwydd, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 6BE Tel: 01267 223444. Fax: 01267 223366 email: sales@wwc.co.uk. Order hotline: Freephone 0500 118051 Reviews and Photographs by John Fenna

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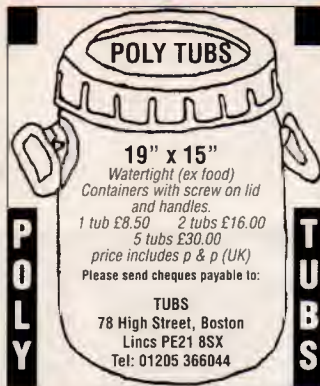
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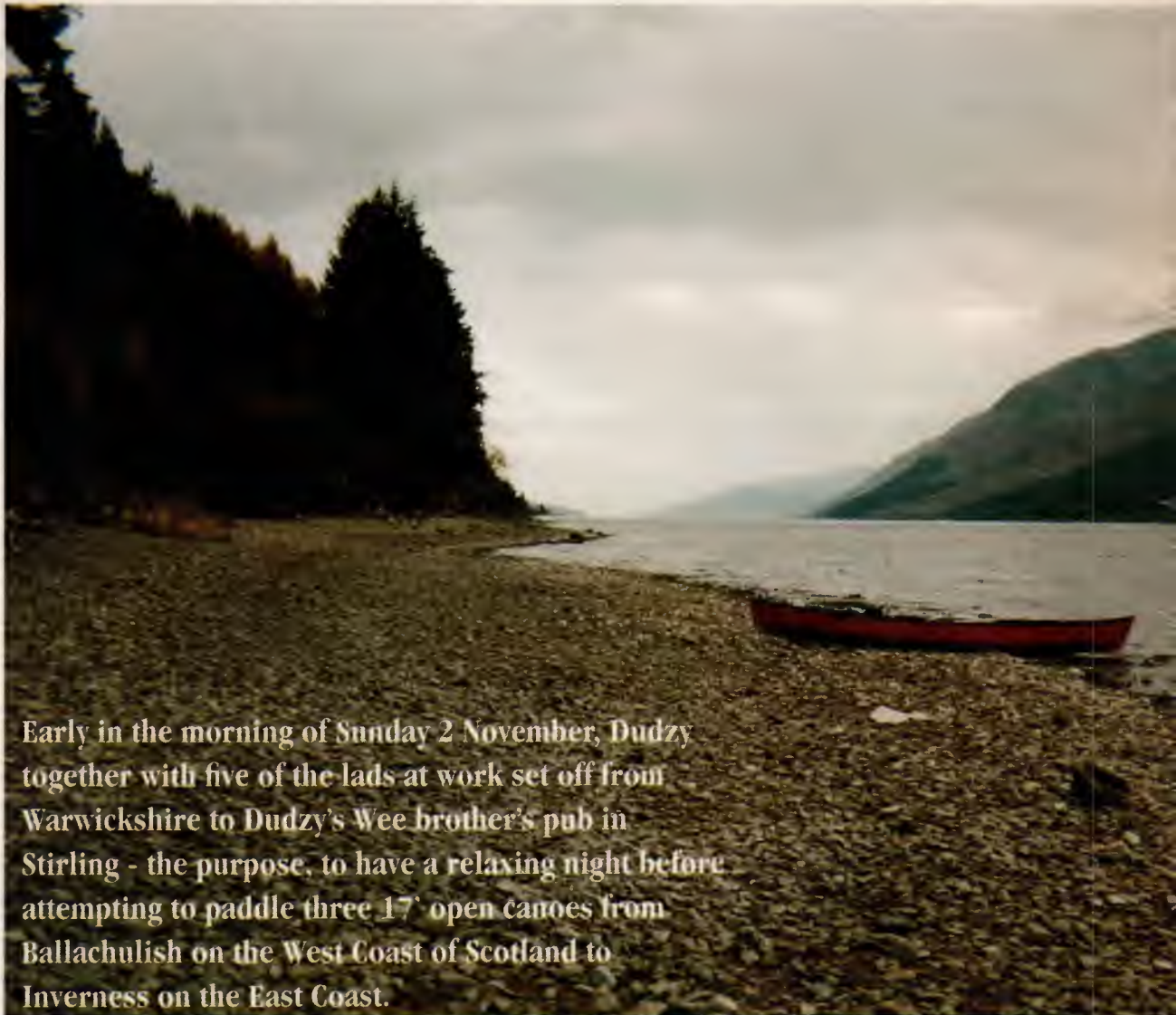
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Right: "I'm sure I packed that map!" Dudzy tries to find out where we are.



Early in the morning of Sunday 2 November, Dudzy together with five of the lads at work set off from Warwickshire to Dudzy's Wee brother's pub in Stirling - the purpose, to have a relaxing night before attempting to paddle three 17' open canoes from Ballachulish on the West Coast of Scotland to Inverness on the East Coast.

Arriving at Loch Leven by lunchtime on Monday, the lads found to their utter amazement that Dudzy's tidal calculations were smack on (there's a first time for everything!) and the three boats headed down Loch Leven with the tide and back up through the Corran Narrows with the changing tide towards Seal Island and the resident seals who obliged by following the merry band all the way to Fort William, some 17km further up Loch Linnhe. Because the expedition had to have some safety cover, one of the lads, Stevo, had to drive the minibus so Mac and Phil paddled one boat, Tenko and Crippsy paddled another whilst Dudzy trundled along on his own.

Camping for the trip was all bivvy and Night One was at the picnic site at Corpach sea locks. Three of the lads slept under the stars that night due to the mild, dry conditions, but then it was only November (for all those that haven't been to Scotland, it's the beginning of the summer.)

Day Two saw the happy chappies bumble along the Caledonian Canal towards Gairloch and into Loch Lochy with the wind (fortunately) behind them. Given the flat conditions of the water and the sheer distance, you could be forgiven for thinking that this was a boring part of the trip but far from it: all but one of Dudzy's companions had never been to Scotland and remained totally awe-struck throughout the day. Without being partisan, the beauty of Western Scotland

in autumn is breathtaking and even as a native, Dudzy was quite taken aback. Lunch was devoured at the Laggan Locks, the historic site of the Battle of the Shirts, where two clans fought each other one summer with nothing on but their kilts (Make sense?) The afternoon was spent covering Loch Oich, a section of the River Oich and the canal to Fort Augustus. Camping was by the beautifully lit lock staircase and evening entertainment was in the local liquid hosteleries.

Monster Watching on Loch Ness

The third day was spent Monster Watching on Loch Ness; it is handy to know that Tenko is petrified of water and in particular, deep water. It didn't help that Dudzy made it known at one point that although the group were over

Capers



Above: Corran narrows with the tide



Above: Tenko (left) supervises dinner

again despite Dudzy's assurances that they would be staying in Dores that night. Well, you'd need to be pretty daft to confuse 'in Dores' with 'indoors', wouldn't you?

At half past two on the morning of Day 4, and after many free-bee whiskies and several songs from the combined Gaelic singing talents of Christine and Dudzy, the less than sober intrepid explorers left the pub and went to bed 40m away from the pub door. The following morning, ignoring hangovers from hell, the cruising boozers climbed aboard and set off for Inverness. The final day had been left deliberately short - officially to enable the guys to make up any lost time - unofficially, to recover from what Dudzy knew was going to be a good night with people he'd never even

met before! By half past two on the afternoon of Thursday 6 November, the expedition ended in a drizzly mist at the old Black Isle Ferry slipway in the Beaully Firth, Inverness with yet another curious seal in tow. Within an hour, the boats were loaded onto the trailer, kit sorted and team showered and ready to celebrate an expedition which had gone like clockwork. After a hearty dinner, all six power paddlers headed for the bright lights of Inverness city and ultimately to a club. It might have been Tenko who decided that the way to get into the Nightclub for nothing was to tell the manager that he had the 'British International Placid Wild Water Surf Slalom Canoe Team' in town - you know, it worked! (Well, how could he know if we were or not, hardly anyone watches placid wild water surf canoe slalom!?)

Left: From l to r: Crippsy, Phil, Stevo and phil (photographer Tenko)

the deepest part of the loch, it was impossible to say how deep it is - because despite modern technology, we don't possess the technology to measure such depths yet.

The Loch Ness Monster spotting day ended in the tiny village of Dores (pronounced Doors) where the landlord and landlady at the Dores Inn, Dave and Christine Moffat were the most fabulous hosts. Not just do they control the flow of whisky but they also control the flow of hot and cold water to the public toilets! However, you can imagine the disappointment when the lads got to the village to find they were camping out once



Special thanks for helping us put together the Caledonian Caper: Sandy Roberts for his boats for training. Tony Bloor for his boats which made the distance, Bob West for his minibus (which will never be the same again!), Richard Sawicki and his colleagues from the Caledonian Canal (BWB) for all their advice and support and of course, Christine and Dave Moffat for the use of all their facilities.



Article by
Mike Hinson



In Search of Platypus

One hundred and fifty pounds to Sydney, Australia, that was the final push myself and a lady I'd known seven days, needed to pack our jobs in and go off to seek adventure. Some five hundred miles of tandem biking, north of Sydney, we were about to launch our rented canoe into the "Hastings River", for a three day trip, in search of Platypus.

There may be some barbed wire fences we don't usually paddle this section, but it's a good run" our Outfitter encouraged us before he jumped into his truck and disappeared into the 'outback'.

We were quickly off downstream, a gentle grade II rapid emptied into a pool, which in turn lead into another rapid, and the barbed wire, which thankfully we spotted and were able to duck under, this was our only encounter for the next three days.

Our river continued its pattern of pools followed by rapids, and this quickly gave us a rhythm for life. In each pool we'd stalk for the

illusive platypus, our outfitter, Neil had assured us of spotting them, "the last trip saw fourteen!". We heard plenty of 'plops' but no sightings.

Few signs of human habitation

The prospect of seeing them was a bonus and a great reason for a canoe trip. The river enters the sea at Port McQuare, mid-way between Sydney and Brisbane. It's surrounding countryside is green and lush, and noted for its Koala population. The rivers banks are generally farm land, but this is Australia, so there were very few signs of human habitation, just occasional cows, who

judging from their reaction had heard some terrible legends about canoes, as they all sprinted for cover at the sight of us.

We camped on the river banks and a river island, and drifted through pools of clear water, hoping for the illusive sighting. Then on our third day there he was, happily feasting on the morsels from the river bed, whilst bobbing on the surface. So happily he didn't notice the approaching sixteen foot canoe. We came silently within feet of him, his brown furry body, duck bill, beady eyes and webbed feet all on display, then 'plop!', gone, small trail of bubbles bid us farewell and we beamed at each other. The following miles went too quickly and the rivers flow evened out, the pools became washed out and we enjoyed the remaining miles of constant moving water. All of Australia's mammals are a little odd, but the oddest is probably the platypus, when it was first 'discovered' it was proclaimed a fake, but I can assure you it is as real as the Hastings River.





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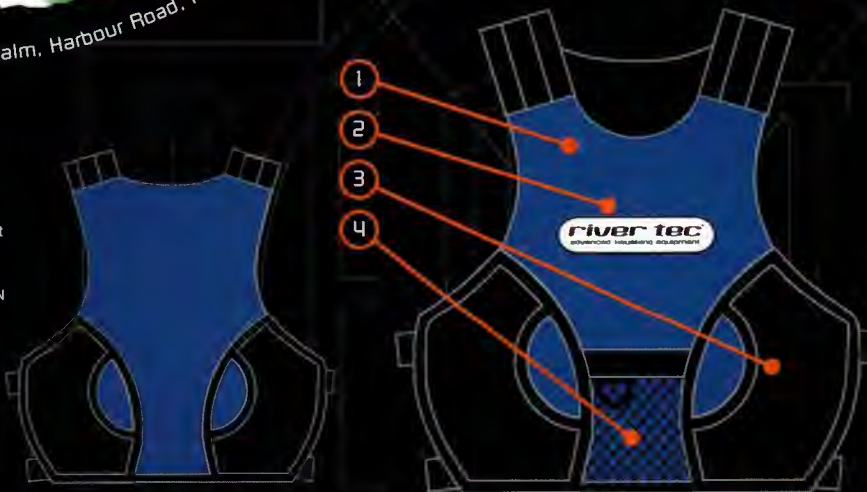


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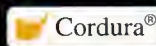
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