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canoe focus

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DW 2000

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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. Technical 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 AUGUST 2000. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the OCTOBER 2000 issue.

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COMMENT

input & ideas

Olympic Games - Sydney 2000

With the Olympic Games taking place in Sydney from September 15 to October 1 (Canoe Slalom September 17 to 20, Racing September 26 to October 1) may I take this opportunity to wish every success to the British Canoeing team.

Following the selection processes in Sprint Racing and Canoe Slalom the following names have been submitted to the British Olympic Association for consideration as part of the British Olympic Team - Team GB

Sprint Racing

Women's K1 500m	Anna Hemmings
Men's K1 500m	Ian Wynne
Men's K1 1000m	Tim Brabants
Men's K2 500m	Ross Sabberton & Paul Darby-Dowman
Men's K2 1000m	Ross Sabberton & Paul Darby-Dowman
Men's C1 1000m	Andy Train
Men's C2 1000m	Andy Train & Steve Train

Canoe Slalom

Women's K1	Laura Blakeman
Men's K1	Paul Ratcliffe
Men's C1	Stuart MacIntosh
Men's C2	Stuart Bowman & Nick Smith

Taking into account the results already experienced this season this represents one of Canoeing's strongest ever teams.

Marathon World Cup - Stockton On Tees

With Sponsorship and Support from Sports Lottery Fund, Stockton Borough Council, British Waterways and the Environment Agency the second Marathon World Cup event of 2000 took place on the River Tees in Stockton during July. With over twenty countries competing the event also enabled the organisation to prepare for the World Championships on the same course in 2001. Great Britain came out as top nation in both the Junior and Senior sections with Conor Holmes taking the blue riband Men's K1 event from six times World Champion Ivan Lawler with James Block taking 4th place.

Further British Medalists

Senior Men's K2 (Bronze) Paul Slater and Steve Harris

Junior Men's K1 (Silver) Simon Fennemore

Junior Men's K2 (Silver) Ed McKeever and Alaister Rosier

Junior Women's K2 (Bronze) Nicola Taylor and Jodie Barrell

The event was an all round success thanks to a superb venue and the hospitality of Stockton Borough Council not to mention the organising Skills of Championship Director David Enoch. Next years World Championships will take place on the same course from August 30 to September 2, lets hope for better weather and a few more local spectators.

Access assistance

The BCU is seeking assistance from anyone, preferably with basic access knowledge, with a few weeks to spare to assist Regional Access Officers in promoting urgent access activity with Local Access Officers and clubs. The brief is England-wide and involves unsociable hours, a temporary paid contract is available. If you could help, please contact **Carel Quaife, Access and Development Manager, at the BCU office: direct line 0115 969 6424 - email carel.quaife@bcu.org.uk**

Membership subscription

The following membership subscriptions will apply for all membership renewals for the year commencing November 1 2000.

Comprehensive Life	£460.00
Adult	£30.00
Youth (Under 18)	£15.00
Family	£14.00
Adult	£24.50
Youth (Under 18)	£12.25
Family	£11.25

Basic

Membership notice

Please note the following clarification on membership renewals:

The individual subscription or club affiliation fee shall be that ruling on the date on which the individual's subscription year or the club's affiliation year commences.

Facilities conference

A facilities conference is planned to take place on October 11 & 12 with one day targeted at Local Authorities, Statutory Authorities and other potential funding and construction partners. A second day will be aimed to assist clubs in the development of their own facilities.

The Foundation for Sport and the Arts Sports Club of the Year Awards 2000

Once again we are being invited to submit nominations for the Foundation for Sport and the Arts Sport Club of the Year.

Nominations should be made to the BCU Office by 22nd September and should include no more than three pages (A4) text although any accompanying promotional material or photographs may be submitted.

The BCU judging panel will consider all nominations from BCU affiliated clubs using the following criteria:

- Size, growth and spread of membership
- Range of activities offered by the club designed to increase participation levels
- Details of coach education programmes available to members
- Links with Schools and local Authorities
- Effectiveness of management
- Success in attracting grants and/or sponsorship
- Success of teams/individuals in competition

The BCU will submit one club to the Sports Club of the Year Judging Panel who will make the awards at an official reception during the CCPR Conference at the end of November.

With a first prize of £10,000, second prize of £4,000 and third prize £1,000.

International Canoe Exhibition

The next edition of the International Canoe Exhibition will take place at the NEC in Birmingham on February 24 and 25

Paddlefest

A reminder that this years paddlefest will take place on September 23 & 24 in Nottingham - see inside for further information.

and finally,

News just in from the Junior Canoe Slalom World Championships in Bratislava as we close for press Congratulations to Bronze Medal Women's K1 Fiona Pennie from Scotland, and to the Women's team of Fiona Penny, Sarah Kinder, Debbie Lomas who also took the Bronze Medal.

Good luck to all British teams in their competitions for the remainder of the summer.

Chief Executive
Paul Owen

MORE ACTIVITY

NOTICE BOARD news & info

More Access - Information

Change of Address
Colin Moore the local access officer for the Deben has moved. His new address is **24a St Johns Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1EB. Tel: 01394 382160**

64 Years On...



BCU President, Albert Woods, with John Dudderidge (left) and Cor Wijdekop at the Sprint World Cup in Mechelen in May 2000. John and Cor were both competitors in the 10,000m folding doubles (F2) class at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin where Cor won a bronze medal for the Netherlands.
Photo by W. Wijdekop

Sawston Boys Brigade get new Boats

The 1st Sawston Boys Brigade (near Cambridge) have just successfully obtained a grant from the Awards for All committee for £4116 to replace old, worn out kayaks. The money was applied for specifically to provide a fleet of 12 Dancer Pro kayaks, Paddles, Spraydecks and Buoyancy Bags.

In the months leading up to this, the Sawston Brigades also raised money for new Buoyancy Aids, and three of the Brigade Officers qualified as BCU Level 2 Coaches. Some of the older members of the Brigade are currently building a trailer for these new kayaks, as part of their Skills section for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for Expeditions and Physical sections.

To apply for an Awards for All Grant, call 084 6002040 for an application form, and be prepared for lots of paperwork.

Internet Fever

Internet fever has slowly been affecting the canoeing world with a steady increase in the number of on-line resources available to canoeists. www.GetOutCanoeing.co.uk is a recent website launching of dedicated canoeing community and Catalogue. GetOutCanoeing.co.uk is provided for all of Britain's canoeists from white water paddlers to sea kayakers. Mark Burch, the

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founder of the site explains that he wanted the site to be interactive and informative. Check it out!

The Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowships –

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- Science and Technology
- Sport and Adventure
- One Fellowship only is offered in each of the following: Canoeing; a project in the field of History and Leadership and Communication in Industry.

For further information send SAE to **The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 15 Queens Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PR** Tel: 02075849315 Closing date for completed application forms: 24 October 2000

Southern Region

The Southern Region has been running without a secretary for two years and a vice chair for the past year. It is now necessary for the Chair to retire at the AGM. I am appealing to all you canoeists in the South to support the Region and propose members willing to fill these posts. The Region AGM is on Thursday 9th November at 8pm at Reading Canoe Club. Please help to support canoeing throughout your Region by finding some new enthusiastic team members.

Nominations to Jean Boatman, Rosemead, Tidmarsh, Reading, RG8 8HA, or E-mail to Boatman@btinternet.com by 19th October.

A New Way for Slalom

With the new Millennium comes a new way of running Slaloms. The Club Series has been introduced to enable all Club Members to attend the same event. Entry fees are lower at £5 for the weekend. Coaching can be achieved and newcomers introduced to the sport with ease. The Club Series caters for all paddlers those who take it seriously and those who enjoy it for its sociability. There are six events scheduled for this year, two events scheduled for this year, two events taking place on three weekends. The first pair were at Fairlee and at Manchester Canoe Club's site at Marple.

Slalom is probably the canoeing sport for allowing non-canoeists to enjoy watching the achievements of the competitors and to become part of the canoeing fraternity. The Marple site is a little gem on the outskirts of Stockport where the Club supporters can see practically the whole of the course from where they are sitting and lend vocal support to their members. During practise the newcomers were being coached in the basics of Slalom, and the more able were introduced to the intricacies


Access Permission required

Mrs Whitworth-Jones requires permission to portage her land at Boxted Mill on the Suffolk Stour. Please contact the **Regional Access Officer Lesley Quinlan for access details on 01255 815093** or by e-mail at lesleyquinlan@hotmail.com



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of Team Paddling. Team events have almost disappeared in recent years and this was one of the main features of bringing in the Club Series.

Clubs enter Teams of three boats from any class in Divisions 2 to 4. Each Team also provides one Official which is where the Prem's and Div. 1's can take part; these have their own Officials events. Non paddling Officials are also welcome and each Club provides a Team event results on the Saturday and the Individual event Results on the Sunday. For the Individual Class winners there are vouchers entitling them to a free entry in their relevant Ranking Event.

Whitewater Tourists –

An Interactive World Tour!

Chris Pottinger, Mark Rainsley and Simon Wiles are the 'Whitewater Tourists'. To live up to this name, they are going to put their Careers on 'hold' for eight months from August to chase a dream...to tour around the best Whitewater rivers in the World. They will be paddling in India, Nepal, Sikkim, New Zealand, Chile, Peru and Ecuador. Their chief objective during the trip (as always!) will be to enjoy themselves and to avoid useful employment. They hope to demonstrate how a high profile, challenging trip like this can be undertaken by average experienced paddlers. It's also an 'interactive' trip! Up to date info about the trip is available at www.go.to/guidebook. You can hear what they are up to with regular updates and pictures. Details and reviews of their gear can also be found on the website. You can even email them; ask questions, chat, send them some advice! They could do with the support and they might even manage to send you a postcard! The



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Photo appeal

I am writing to you to ask for some help. In 1997, I had a book published in the series Britain in old photographs, entitled 'Along the Thames.' This came about because both my father and grandfather were lock keepers on the River Thames, in fact, my grandfather started as a ferryman at Keen Edge ferry near Shillingford in 1925. Recently, I have been approached by my publishers to write a second volume with the emphasis on the 'Forgotten Thames' and to this end I am seeking some new material. I am very interested in old black and white photos of the Thames, especially views that have changed or vanished. To be specific, old locks, weirs, ferries, riverside pubs, wharves, bridges, boats and people, or newsworthy material (i.e. anything unusual and interesting.) Please help if you can by sending photocopies of anything you think might be of use, you never know, it could be just what I'm looking for!

Please send photos to: 37 Buckingham Street, Grandpont, Oxford OX14LH

Rivers and Wetlands –

Best Practice Guidelines

This is an excellent loose-leaf guide for anyone who is involved in restoring watercourses, thinking about improving access points or is just generally interested in the ecology, conservation and management of water courses and river structures. It provides design guidance and case studies on subjects from River Management to Protected Species. **The Guide is available from the Environment Agency – telephone the general Enquiry Line on 0645 333111 Price £5.**

A rescue hero

Chris Heaney, the BCU Northern Region Surf organiser, was having a bad weekend. A high pressure system over the country meant that the Surfing Competition he was organising at Tynemouth had had to be cancelled. However, 12 year old Michael Ellison has good reason to be thankful that event did not take place, as otherwise Chris would not have been driving past the seafront at Whitley Bay on Sunday May 7th when the lad was pulled out to sea by a wave and in danger of drowning. Alerted by Michael's friend, Chris stopped off and went in to the rescue. By the time he reached the boy, he was grey and 'looked like a rag doll'. Chris, who is preparing for his Coach Level 5 Surf assessment later this year, had no hesitation in starting mouth to mouth resuscitation, despite the difficulties of keeping his footing in the surf. The RNLI Inshore Rescue boat had been called out, and it picked them both up. Although in a serious condition, Michael made a good recovery. Chris was kept in hospital overnight, but was back at work next week at Northumberland College, having to put up with a certain amount of



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NOTICE BOARD

leg pulling after his description in the local papers as a Rescue Hero. He shouldn't fail his Coach Assessment on dealing with emergencies!

DW Race Organisation

At a recent meeting of the DW Race Organisation it was noted that on several occasions the race was nearly cancelled. On one occasion there was an outbreak of foot and mouth infection. If it had been declared just nothing would move in this area. A chemical pollution or a water borne virus occurred at a trout farm, which polluted part of the Kennet Canal only a few years ago. DW was nearly cancelled then, but luckily this was solved just before Easter. Other factors are the increasingly heavy spring showers that can release inches of rain in a matter of hours causing flash flooding and surge flows in river conditions

Health and safety and risk assessments have also become part of the equation. DW officials are continually updated before and during the race on all these issues from the respective agencies. For the future, a review begun two years ago has now been completed. Shortly, the structure should change to an Association style with a wider membership: the committee will become a group of teams to make better use of the three hundred volunteers who organise and staff the event.

A further meeting will shortly take place with the Environment Agency to resolve "the advice problem"; emergency plans will also change to establish DW first response; contingency plans will be drawn up for adverse weather conditions. The differing needs of "Challenge" paddlers and those wishing to race are also being reviewed.

Explorer launches major canoe challenge

World-famous explorer David Hempleman-Adams has launched The Mayan World Canoe Challenge, a major event to raise funds for The Royal Scottish Geographical Society's environmental research expeditions and in particular a major Antarctic expedition.

Those taking part in The Mayan World Canoe Challenge in April 2001 will raise funds for the RSGS by canoeing for eight days from Belize's Guatemalan border to the Caribbean Sea, on a 225 kilometre river journey through dense forest and remote villages, following in the wake of the ancient Maya.

Participants will receive training in jungle survival before setting off, and will be accompanied by expert guides throughout. They will be facing a tough challenge, paddling for up to 8 hours each day, and in the evening they will work in teams to create a campsite in the jungle.

Canoeists over 18 with a reasonable level of fitness can take part in this event - all you need is a sense for adventure and a determination to succeed. The Mayan World Canoe Challenge will give participants the chance to learn about Belize, its people, landscapes, wildlife and culture, and also about themselves. Participants will be helping a vital educational charity while exploring a unique ecosystem in a country known as The Adventure Coast.

Those interested in taking part should call the 24 hour hot-line on 0141 337 2566

BCU Millennium Paddler Awards -

A Special Award to recognise those who have developed canoeing at a local level

This award is about people who you feel need to be recognised for the help they have given to others to go canoeing over a number of years. It can be you or someone else.

The person might have, on a voluntary basis

- Coached at a local club, school or group
- Been an official or administrator
- Raised money to help canoeists
- Organised an event or race
- Introduced young people to canoeing

Whatever your or their involvement in canoeing has been, we want you to write and tell us about it.

We want to recognise at least 2000 years of voluntary work in the year 2000. So if you know of someone who has, over five or more years helped canoeists, tell us so we can recognise that work.

Tell us in no more than 150 words how the person has helped canoeing and also complete the application below.

Please write clearly and explain:

- What they did
- How long they have helped
- Who they helped
- What inspired them
- Any special achievements

Application Form - To be completed by a reference

Please now list the name, address and telephone number of the person who the award is for.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:.....

To ensure the information is true, please get a BCU member to sign below.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:.....

I confirm that the information overleaf is true.

Please sign.....

BCU number.....

Please return your application to:

British Canoe Union

Adbolton Lane

West Bridgford

Nottingham

NG2 5AS

For more information / Rules for the award please contact the BCU Headquarters on 0115 9821100.

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Once again tickets are limited !!

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PO BOX 77
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Find us on the Web :
www.tynetour.org.uk

Contact us for your information pack and tickets, enclosing a large stamped addressed envelope

Please send cheques made payable to BCU Northern Region



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PLAY THE RIVER

news & info

Bradford on Avon Race Weekend - 19/20 Aug

This year's races are over the weekend of 19/20 August. On the Saturday starting at 1pm is the Classic Bath to Bradford race. This event over 12 miles, takes competitors upstream from the picturesque Roman city of Bath on the River Avon to the town of Bradford, with 5 demanding portages. There are 2 Senior K1 and K2 classes (split by division), as well as classes in K1 and K2 for Jun, Vet and Ladies.

On the Sunday is the final 2000 South West Hasler qualifying race, where there are events over 4, 8 and 12 miles according to division. This event starts and finishes at Bradford on Avon Canoe Club, with the 4 mile course starting at 11 am and the 8 and 12 mile course at 12:15 pm.

Entries for both events taken on the day at £4 per seat which include refreshments. For those wishing to make a weekend of it camping with toilets and hot showers is available at Bradford Canoe Club. (please advise if camping required)

For further information please contact the race organiser **Mike Smith on 01747 840647** or club chairman **Andy Phillips on 01225 812626**.

Open Canoe Symposium – Glenmore Lodge 9th-10th September 2000

This is the second Scottish Open Canoe Symposium and will build on the success of the first one in 1998. This BI – annual event alternates with the Welsh Open Canoe Symposium.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet other open boaters, to try out new boats, take part in practical workshops, buy equipment from trade stands and work with experienced coaches. An evening programme featuring guest speakers and videos as well as a live band in the lodge Bar will support the practical programme. For more information / accommodation please contact Steve Macdonald by emailing stephen@beyondadventure.co.uk

Attention all Sea Kayakers - Here is the canoeing forecast for the next few months:-

The BCU Sea Touring Committee is promoting a number of events during September and October -

Sept 1-3 Sea Kayaking Festival - Cwm Pennant Mountain Centre, North Wales.

Contact: David Evans Tel: 01766 530682
E-mail: cpennant@hillingdon.gov.uk
Website: www.cwmpennant.com

Oct 6-8 Sea Kayaking Symposium and Sea Touring Committee AGM - East Barnby, North Yorkshire.

Contact: Simon Derham Tel: 01947 893333

Oct 14-15 Sea Kayaking Seminar - Woodmill Outdoor Centre, Southampton.

Contact: Fiona Whitehead Tel: 02380 555993

All the events incorporate 'come and try it' sessions with demo sea kayaks available from the major manufacturers,

together with a full programme of lectures, workshops and lots of paddling. Whether you are just starting out or are already an enthusiast there will be lots of like-minded paddlers to meet up with. Full details of these events can be obtained from the contact numbers or from the STC website at www.Bcu.Org.uk/sea

Paddlefest 2000 – The Paddlesport event of the year 23rd / 24th September

The objective of the weekend is to bring together as many paddlers, with a wide range of interests as possible so as to create a fun, multidiscipline event, featuring elements of competition, coaching sessions and clinics, have a go sessions, presentation and lectures, doing your own thing, along with the car boot sale and of course the Paddlefest party!

For more information please contact the BCU Coaching department 0115 9821100.

Hasler 2000 – The Final

On Sunday 24th September at the National Water Sports Centre Nottingham. For details please contact the race organiser **Peter Davey, 41 Old Claygate Lane, Claygate, Surrey KT10 0ER. Tel: 01372 464472**

Student Canoe Coaching Courses – Safety and Good Practice Seminar Nottingham 21st/22nd October

Aimed at Students who are responsible for club events and trips. The programme for the weekend will be a mix of presentations, discussion groups and practical sessions run over the weekend covering, the legal responsibilities within the club structure, care, maintenance and monitoring of pooled equipment, event planning, intergrating novices into a club, White water safety and Leadership and personal skills. Demo boats will be available throughout the weekend. The cost of the course may be paid for by your sports / athletic unions safety budget.

Please apply / more details at the BCU coaching department on 0115 9821100. ●

The Scottish Paddlesports Festival & Exhibition

14-15 Oct 2000

Dewars Centre, Perth

Scotland is firmly on the international recreational paddling map with a well-deserved reputation for clean white water and world class touring on sea, loch and river. Every year we get more participants from home and abroad. There is no doubt that the publication of a brand new Scottish Rivers Guide this autumn is going to enhance Scotland's profile even further.

In line with the development of paddlesport the annual Scottish Canoe Exhibition is changing too. It's going to change its name, its venue and its nature.

The name change reflects a broader based event catering for all aspects of paddlesports from sea boat to play boat from beginner to expert. It also reflects our desire to make this event a friendly and fun festival where the music and the ceilidh are as important as the paddling and the gear.

The Dewars Centre in Perth is an exciting new venue providing twice the exhibition space than previous events so that more manufacturers, suppliers and service providers than ever before will cram the hall with everything that's new and developing in the paddlesports industry. The event will have much more of an emphasis on doing as well as seeing.

There will be a weekend paddling bonanza centred on the exhibition providing lots of opportunities to take part in coaching workshops, fun races, and master classes. Visitors will be able to sample products, take in talks and slide shows and attend the biggest ever paddling party on Saturday night.

The Big Paddle Ceilidh will feature live bands and the draw of the Paddle Raffle with lots of prizes donated by the event's sponsors.

The event aims to pull in a number of celebrity guests from the paddling world who will be running workshops and master classes in their specialist areas as well as giving lecture talks. The event has already secured Paul Mason, cartoonist, author of 'Thrill of the Paddle' and son of Bill as its star guest celebrity.



Dewars Centre,
Perth

More and more paddlers are travelling North to paddle these days and Scotland will be extending a warm welcome to its English, Welsh and other European neighbours to attend this event.

The Scottish Paddlesports Festival & Exhibition is set to become an un-missable event in paddling calendar starting with the year 2000. It will be important to book ahead for this event so that you can register in advance for your choice of workshops, events and to secure your ceilidh tickets. So get these dates in your diary and we'll see you there.

The Scottish Canoe Association have appointed event organisers Adventure Scotland Ltd to manage the event.
info@adventure-scotland.com

A full programme of events and booking form are available by contacting:

The Scottish Canoe Association
Caledonia House, South Gyle
Edinburgh EH 12 9DG
Tel: 0131 317 7314
Fax: 0131 317 7319
e-mail: scaadmin@dircon.co.uk

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MORE ACTIVITY

Paddlefest 2000

The
Paddlesport
event of the
year
23/24 Sept
2000

Bell Boats, Lightning K1,s, Peak Challenges, Coaching "psychology" excellence clinics, floodlight paddling, live music

Yes - It's Paddlefest time again
Running earlier then previous events

The objective of the weekend is to bring together as many paddlers, with as wide a range of interests as possible so as to create a fun, multi-discipline event, featuring elements of competition, coaching sessions and clinics, have a go / try a boat sessions, presentations and lectures, doing your own thing, along with a car boot sale and of course a paddlefest party.

Seasoned competitor, Rodeo die hard, recreational pick and mixer, novice or convert Paddlefest 2000 will provide five full programmes of activity and numerous add on attractions, providing wide ranging and varied activity from which you can choose, mix and match and create your own itinerary. Come

along and view, or come along and be fully involved. Come alone or come with friends or why not bring the family. Come for one day or come for both, the choice is yours. There will be lots to do whatever your interests. A great time is assured.

"Paddlefest" Peak White Water Challenge

The Paddlefest Peak White water Challenge is about fun, mass participation and lots of paddling. Last years event attracted both slalom and Rodeo World Champions, however, because of the format and style of the event many less accomplished paddlers found themselves paddling along side them and in some instances winning prizes. So there's no excuse, get stuck in and give it a go.

The event format combines the following disciplines to find an overall whitewater champion. All participants must use the same chosen canoe or kayak in all three disciplines; demonstrate their ability to perform various moves, not just one move over and over.

- Head to Head Downriver - two boats at a time race against the clock down a 600m section of white water.
- Freestyle / Rodeo - utilising a river section rather than just one hole.
- Paddlers must demonstrate as wide a range of freestyle moves as possible.
- Extreme Slalom - a 300m course of upstream and downstream gates, hand target number boards, a vertical hole move and a horizontal wave move. An against the clock event with penalties awarded for missed obstacles only.

Overall points will be calculated and equipment prizes awarded in mens, ladies, Canadian and junior categories.

The £20 entry fee will include a cool event memento such as a shirt, sweat or baseball cap, unlimited water access over the weekend and entry to the Paddlefest party. Not bad value!!! A maximum of 180 entries will be taken for the event. Entries will be taken on the day if space permits however to be sure of your place return the accompanying booking form.

Full event details will be sent on entry.

Additional Competition at Paddlefest 2000

Again this year we have a number of stand alone competitions - On Saturday we have a round of the National K 4 Championships being held, the first National Bell Boat Championships, a Div B W.W. Race, a mini polo Competition and a Junior Lightning K1 competition. On Sunday Paddlefest is host to the Hasler finals as well as Junior/novice slalom events.

All there for you to watch and support or to participate in.

"Paddlefest" Paddle-Ability Event

"Paddle-Ability" is a term and concept developed by the BCU to address the issue of participation in Canoesport for people with disabilities.

The BCU is working to promote and develop Paddle-Ability in terms of participation in both recreational and competitive canoeing, through local clubs, Regional and National development plans and activities.

Paddle-Ability Competition is currently centred on sprint racing in canoeing, using standard and non standard racing boats adapted to meet the paddlers special needs.

The "Paddlefest" Paddle-ability event will provide an additional calendar event in the Paddle-Ability programme. Contact us for further details.

Paddlefest 2000

23 - 24th September 2000 Booking Form

Please tick as appropriate

- I wish to attend the Coaching Symposium and associated programme only and enclose the £20 fee (£12 per day)
- We wish to take advantage of the family price, available on the Coaching Symposium entry only, to families holding BCU family membership. £35
- If booking one day only please indicate which day Sat Sun
- I wish to attend the Peak Challenge Competition Programme only and enclose the £20 fee.
- I wish to attend both the Competition and the Coaching and associated programme and enclose the £30 fee.

Bookings for the National Bell boat Regatta to: **The National Youth Officer, The British Canoe Union, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS.**

For further details on:

River Race/K4/Div4 Slalom /Young peoples programme/National Bell Boat Championships/Peak challenge contact Diane Woods at the BCU Office on 01159 821100.

Pre - Registration. (essential to avoid disappointment)

Please reserve a place for me on the following workshops.

	Excellence Clinics	Personal Performance Workshops
Sat am		
Sat pm		
Sun am		
Sun pm		

Please reserve me a place on the following day-long workshop(see Programme)

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____ Tel No _____

Date of Birth _____ Signed _____

Membership No _____

Please make cheques payable to the British Canoe Union and return with booking form to Paddlefest 2000, BCU, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS

"Paddlefest" Coaching Symposium

The "Paddlefest" Coaching Symposium will provide Key note speakers along with a mix of indoor and outdoor sessions covering topical aspects of coaching development, along the theme of "Coaching for Performance". An "excellence" programme will provide opportunities to join in on coaching sessions, run by experienced coaches covering all areas of skill / technique development and paddlesport psychology.

The Coaching Symposium programme will repeat itself on both days so that you will be able to select the appropriate times and clinics to fit in with participation in the whitewater challenge, casual paddling, lectures etc.

Opportunities are provided to take part in daylong workshops that will provide endorsements to your coaching / assessor status.

The programme is aimed at all coaches at all levels so don't feel that its

not aimed at you - our maxim "Coaching for Performance" is relevant to us all, as better coaches make better paddlers.

"Paddlefest" Personal Performance Clinics

Numerous half-day clinics will also be available to anyone who wishes to improve performance or try out another aspect of paddlesport...

Open Canoe / Open Canoe Sailing / Slalom / Sprint / Rodeo / Land locked Sea paddling and Surf to mention just a few.

"Paddlefest" Young paddlers Programme

The "Paddlefest" 2000 programme again includes the National Bell boat Championships on the Saturday and a lightning K1 mini competition on the Sunday. Other activities aim to introduce youngsters to the sport as well as providing opportunities to improve skills and experience new and different aspects of paddlesport. Opportunities exist for young paddlers to join one of more of the sessions advertised and progress and experience new very different aspects of paddling throughout the weekend.

"Paddlefest" - "Get in Touch" / "Stay in Touch Programme

Saturday evenings question time will provide the now traditional opportunity to "Get in Touch / Stay in Touch" with both current and development initiatives. Members of BCU Board and Executive will provide an insight into current developments within the BCU, developments

towards an English Canoe Association, communication, access and facilities strategy and the BCU Performance Plan. This is your opportunity to ask questions or make your own views heard.

"Paddlesport" Question Time.

A panel of BCU serving Officers assembled around a "Question Time" style table ready to be asked those questions that you have always wanted to ask, but have never been able to.

"Paddlefest" Demo / Retail

The "paddlefest" Manufacturers Trade fair is, I am afraid, only open to the Trade, however, many of the manufacturers will also be having outside Demonstration stands so that you will be able to demo that new boat you've been thinking of buying and many of them may well be retailing items over the weekend as well.

"Paddlefest" Admin

Peak White Water Challenge - Entry for the event is £20 for the whole schedule, including a limited edition T-Shirt and the "paddlefest party". The aim of the event is to find an all-round and worthy champion! For an entry number (limited to 180) and full details of the event timings etc please return the completed form.

The Coaching Symposium and all other events - The symposium fee, which covers entry to all other aspects of the weekend, except the competition is £20 per person (£8 per day).

Inclusive in these costs are entry to any and all aspects of the coaching programme and clinics / the personal performance clinics / the young Paddler programme and of course the party.

Family entry to the Coaching Symposium and associated programme is available to holders of BCU family membership at £35. (Advance booking required)

Pre-registration is recommended for all advertised clinics and workshops as indicated, as places will be limited. Pre-registration will also ease administration on the day and make life easier and admittance to the sessions pain free.

The Symposium and Competition fees do not

include accommodation and food. Limited accommodation at The National Watersports Centre will be available. The Holme Pierrepont Campsite will be open for the weekend. Should you wish we would be able to provide an accommodation list for alternative options. Visitors to Paddlefest will need to make their own accommodation arrangements.

Admission to the "Paddlefest" party is free to competition and symposium delegates. Food and drink will be available for purchase.

"Paddlefest" 2000 provides two full days of paddlesport activity so that you can balance your own day / weekend programme between indoor and outdoor sessions / competition and coaching sessions, doing your own thing. If that's not enough to either encourage you to join us or to make you feel that there would be enough to keep you entertained then consider the "Paddlefest" party on Saturday evening - the paddlesport social event of the year.

Access to Workshops and clinics may well be limited! So early booking is recommended!!

The spirit of "Paddlefest" lies within its multi-paddlesport appeal. Visitors should attend in that spirit. Access to the slalom course is not as per casual weekends - programme requirements restrict access and the course at times within the weekend - (see programme for guidance)

Please return the enclosed booking form as soon as possible to assure yourself of your place in the event and sessions of your choice. We look forward to seeing you there!



PADDLEFEST 2000

Paddlefest 2000 (Provisional) Programme Of Events Saturday 23rd September 2000

Coaching Symposium	Workshops	Young Paddlers	Competition	Trade	Demo/Retail
<p>Opening Address: 09.30</p> <p>Coaching Excellence Clinics: 10.00 - 12.00</p> <p>Motor Skill Aquisition / Improving Technique Inner Game Coaching / Improving Technique Imagery Training Motivation and Building Self Confidence Coaching Young People Coaching Disabled Paddlers Analysing Performance Analysing Your Own Coaching Performance Paddler Profiling Injury Prevention Use Of Video In Coaching Coaching and the Law</p> <p>Keynote Speech: 12.30 - 13.30</p> <p>Personal Performance Clinics: 14.30 - 18.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Throw Line Workshop *White Water Safety Workshop *Freestyle / Playboat Clinic *4 Star Skills *Leadership Training for Intermediate Paddlers *5 Star Skills *Surt Clinic *Open Canoe Master Class Whatever Your Aspirations Coaches available to provide you with expert guidance *Squirt Clinic *The Placid Water Scheme *Slalom Coaching Workshops *Sprint / Marathon Coaching Workshops *Polo Coaching Workshop *Intro To WW Racing *Intro To Canoe Polo *Intro To Slalom *Fitness and training Workshop *Fuelling Paddlers / performers *Warm Up / Warm down 	<p>09.30 - 17.50</p> <p>Pre-registration is essential on these full day workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquatic First Aid Trainer - 8 Places Available Aquatic First Aid Course - 8 Places Available Child Protection Workshop - 12 Places Available Injury Prevention in Paddlesport - 12 Places Available Assessor Training Day 12 Places Available. 	<p>Bell Boat Regatta</p> <p>Junior K4 Race</p> <p>Lightning K1 Coaching</p> <p>Junior Boat Evaluation</p> <p>Polo Coaching / Mini Polo Competition</p> <p>Ergo Challenge</p>	<p>Main Lake (Timings Provisional)</p> <p>10.00 - 11.00 Bell Boat Regatta (Heats) 250m-finish</p> <p>10.45 - 11.15 Peak Challenge 250m-Finish</p> <p>11.15 - 12.00 K4 Race (Juniors and Ladies) 1000m-Finish</p> <p>12.15 - 15.30 Bell Boat regatta (Heats / Semi's and Finals)</p> <p>15.30 - 17.00 K4 Race (Seniors A&B) 1000m-Finish</p> <p>Bell Boat Registration: Marquee Centre Lawn K4 Race Registration: Marquee Centre Lawn</p> <p>Slalom Course (Timings Provisional)</p> <p>Prior to 11am Free paddling / Coaching Clinics - Full Course Raft Guide Training (1 Raft)</p> <p>11.00 - 11.20 Peak Challenge - Full Course</p> <p>11.30 - 12.30 W.W. Race - Practice - Full Course</p> <p>12.30 - 14.30 W.W. Race Individual Runs - Full Course</p> <p>14.30 - 17.30 Free Paddling and Skills Workshops</p> <p>17.30 - 20.45 Peak Challenge - Mid Course Bridge to 2nd Island</p> <p>WWR Race: Registration at Riverside Carpark Peak Challenge: Registration - Mid Course Control</p> <p>Winfield Pool (See Performance Clinic Times)</p>	Manufacturers Trade Fair - Open to members Of Trade Only	Manufacturers Demo Stands - Open All Day Demo Boats Available with retail options
Evening	19.00 BCU Question Time		Paddlefest Paddlesport Dinner - (To-be Confirmed) Pre-booking Essential 20.30 Onwards - Paddlefest Party and Live band		

Paddlefest 2000 (Provisional) Programme Of Events Sunday 24th September 2000

Coaching Symposium	Workshops	Young Paddlers	Competition	River Trips	Trade	Demo/Retail
<p>Opening Address: 09.30</p> <p>Coaching Excellence Clinics: 10.00 - 12.00</p> <p>Motor Skill Aquisition / Improving Technique Inner Game Coaching / Improving Technique Imagery Training Motivation and Building Self Confidence Coaching Young People Coaching Disabled Paddlers Analysing Performance Analysing Your Own Coaching Performance Paddler Profiling Injury Prevention Use Of Video In Coaching</p> <p>Personal Performance Clinics 13.00 - 16.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Throw Line Workshop *White Water Safety Workshop *Freestyle / Playboat Clinic *4 Star Skills - Kayak *Leadership Training for Intermediate Paddlers - Kayak *5 Star Skills - Kayak *Surt Clinic *Open Canoe Master Class Whatever Your Aspirations Coaches available to provide you with expert guidance *Squirt Clinic *The Placid Water Scheme *Bell Boat-Helm Training *Slalom Coaching Workshops *Sprint / Marathon Coaching Workshops *Polo Coaching Workshop *Intro To WW Racing / Canoe Polo / *Intro To Slalom *Fitness and training Workshop *Fuelling Paddlers / performers *Warm Up / Warm down 	<p>09.30 - 17.50</p> <p>Pre-registration is essential on these full day workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paddle Power Workshop - 12 Places Available. Aquatic First Aid Trainer - 8 Places Available Aquatic First Aid Course - 8 Places Available Child Protection Workshops - 12 Places Available Injury Prevention in Paddlesport (Risk Assess & Safe Handling) 12 Places Available. Assessor Training Day 12 Places Available. 	<p>Junior Boat Evaluation</p> <p>Polo Coaching</p> <p>Lightning K1 Coaching</p> <p>Lightning Mini Regatta</p> <p>Mini Polo Competition</p> <p>Diamond Slalom</p>	<p>Main Lake</p> <p>Start - 2000</p> <p>09.00 - 17.00 Hasler Final</p> <p>Boathouse Area</p> <p>09.00 - 17.00 Junior Programme</p> <p>10.00 - 15.00 Peak Polo Competition</p> <p>Slalom Course</p> <p>Prior to 11.00 Free paddling / Courses</p> <p>11.00 - 1.00pm Peak Challenge (to middle bridge)</p> <p>1.15 - Dusk Free Paddling / Courses</p> <p>Raft Guide Training (2) Rafts</p> <p>10.00 - 3pm Div 4 Slalom (Second Island to Daleks)</p> <p>Winfield Pool (as per performance clinic times)</p>	Open Canoe / Kayak Journeys - Trent bridge / Nottingham Loop	Manufacturers Trade Fair - Open to members Of Trade Only	Manufacturers Demo Stands - Open All Day Demo Boats Available with retail options



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DW yea

After all the rain, the forecast promised even more, fortunately it never arrived which enabled DW2000 to get underway. The event is always well attended and it was great to see quite a few military chaps as well, no RAF though?

The DW event has been established for 53 years and is recognised as one of the world's top classic marathon events. It is certainly the most gruelling, for the senior doubles that paddle through the day or night, their buzz is like running four London marathons one after the other. The DW is a most demanding event both physically and mentally. It's an adventure and challenge demanding skill, endurance, navigation and a will to conquer all that is thrown at you, to battle against the elements and not to give in "The Canoeists Everest." Its not for the cotton wool society which we seem to be generating, its for generating leadership qualities and judgement, precise team work and planning between the paddlers and their support crews. If its well organised it should work like clock work. If it doesn't, then you bug the DW information centre. When adverse weather conditions appear and the river is running wild it is entirely up to the individual paddler to make up their mind if they themselves have the ability and judgement to continue, remember, the DW is the ultimate challenge. With DW you do not necessarily have to break records, it's a great personal achievement just to finish. Planning and strategy are also vital parts of the exercise, where to stop at portaging sections for food and water as well as checking ahead for your next portage or the next one beyond that. There is no room for complacency.

This event is surely an ingredient that all corporations up and down the country should be looking at? "Team Builders" If you need a challenge for 2001 for your high flyers, or for building a perfect team, here is an event for you and one you will never forget.

Throughout the history of this event it has been entirely run by volunteers, enthusiasts and helpers who have given more than just hours and weekends of their free time unselfishly and without financial gain of any description, probably the opposite. The enthusiasts are not all ex canoeists by a long chalk, they are in many cases professional people who come and apply their existing professional skills and knowledge to this whole operation and for the love of it. Like everything else, it has its critics, some for, some against, and some are just hells bent, just out to destroy the whole thing for some political, egotistical, selfish reason. It is true to say that over the years the entry numbers have been dropping, on the opposite side costs have risen and at this moment the whole future of DW is held in the balance. Months ahead of the event thousands of pounds are paid out to acquire services and facilities long before a penny has been received from a competitor. The DW Organisation Ltd has an awful lot of expertise that can be applied to any marathon race on the Thames. (A first ever Dragon Boat Marathon has been suggested to run along side of DW but wholly on the Thames.) All these events involve countless people all giving up their whole Easter for it year in and year out, we also make regular appeals for additional helpers from canoe clubs up and down the river but most volunteers come from out side of canoeing. It's a challenge to all the DW staff to keep this whole thing going, with its ever-growing bureaucracy from external agencies.

Regardless, next years event is being organised. It would be extremely encouraging to find a sincere commercial backer who could help to guarantee this world famous event from year to year. Our media coverage alone should make it an interesting package. It takes fourteen months to prepare for the following years event.

We need new volunteers with or without qualified disciplines, with enthusiasm who could ghost our safety and communications networks with a possibility of taking over these functions in due course or help with general administration, marketing and PR. We would like to see an increase in competitors to take up the challenge and for all to make early bookings. You as competitors would like DW to come up with a policy

"That DW will never cancel the race regardless of what happens". It is a fact of life that some expeditions that climb mount Everest with all their preparation and expertise have on occasions abort their mission, they too loose men over board and a very good reason why this must always be an open option, is safety.

Charity

Since DW came into existence well over a million miles has been paddled collectively by its competitors. Every year canoeists are responsible for

raising tens of thousands of pounds for a wide and varied selection of charities. This year DW nominated a charity Sports Aid. (The charity for sport) Their PR officer Beth Morgan worked extremely hard with DW and organised many interviews over radio and TV, which went out live. Beth also said that she would like to try DW herself next year and hopes to start training with a London based club, probably Richmond. She thought DW was a most fascinating and challenging event ever, a real challenge for everyone.

Canoeing

Canoeing is like crossing a road. It's

dangerous if you don't know how. Canoeists do all sorts of things, they shoot weirs, roll boats, shoot rapids, half submerge boats, and, yes, even fall out, it's not uncommon. Some fell out only a few hundred yards from the start line on Friday morning and a senior double thought the ideal place was the tunnel. They were rescued by another crew passing by.

Needless to say the capsized crew got back in and continued. But would these same crews be capable of paddling on the Thames in its rather wild state? The ultimate decision undoubtedly rests with the captain of the craft, it is theirs and theirs alone or for the team leaders. It's not for the EA to decide or any of the other external agencies to make that decision, they have no knowledge or experience at canoeing.

The Environmental Agency did receive a lot of phone calls about the condition of the river Thames. Red boards worn of a strong stream and craft are advised not to navigate because it can be dangerous. These very conditions are ideal for the DW canoeists. This is the testing time for their accumulated skills and judgement. It is very wrong for such an agency to tell people that it is too dangerous. These remarks had an adverse effect on DW this year, certainly the junior race was wiped out because of it. To get things in perspective, the



r 2000

competitiveness was lost through the protracted incident at Old Windsor and that many other paddlers had been hanging around for many hours at checkpoints in wet and cold conditions.

The juniors had got off to a cracking start at Devizes and arrived at Newbury in times that would suggest that this was the year for new records all round. Later that evening there was a meeting of all the schools team leaders. Some had carried out inspections of the weirs further down the course and also being heavily influenced by the EA remarks they communally agreed to withdraw from this year's event, thus bringing the whole of the junior race to a grinding halt.

DW Control

This year, the DW information and control centre was based at Windsor Canoe Club. The centre is manned continually 24 hrs a day throughout the event and sleep is a rare commodity. Over the years the whole of the entry, timing, location and results system has been computerised. Data is collected from check points along the course and is continually down loaded to the main information centre throughout the day and night. Any boat therefore can be located by its speed from the last check point. Whizzing through darkness of Friday night Saturday morning are the senior doubles trying to catch the high tide at Teddington. This year Four to six people were active in the centre during the night, the duty safety officer and his assistant, information handlers, result secretary checking all the times and the PR man preparing stories for national press networks, radio and TV. During the early hours Saturday morning at approx. 0245 we received several calls about an incident.

Incident.

The incident has been blown up out of all proportions and people have just let their imaginations go wild. Yes, canoeists do get things wrong from time to time but these fellows knew that they had taken the wrong direction. Quick thinking, they all made well planned ditches just like a pilot in an aircraft that has lost its engine. Hence two K2s ditched approx. 50 metres before the weir on the island, another K2 had over shot and aimed its self at the safety barrier knowing that they would be secure if nothing else. At no time were any of these chaps in any danger.

Initially there was a lot of concern as to the correct location. The information centre having received three calls from three different groups of supporters each group giving a similar combination of facts, but different locations. This gave the impression that there were two, or perhaps three different incidences? One group said it was Bell Weir, another group said Romney and the latter Old Windsor. Within minutes the DW Marshal's soon located the correct location. As per the DW emergency rescue plan the local fire brigade were called to the scene and rescued the canoeists from the weir followed by the other four from the island.

We wish to convey our thanks to everyone who participated in this difficult rescue. Difficult, purely because of its tricky location so close to the weir. Our own rescue craft were alerted and deployed as a back up but were never used. During the rescue a part of the safety barrier from the weir had to be removed. While this incident was in progress it was obvious that any other canoeists entering the rescue area would only hamper the situation and it was decided to stop all the competitors at checkpoints.

There were many ingredients involved in making the decision to abandon this year's event after its early morning suspension during the rescue. Some competitors who DW has the greatest respect for ripped off their numbers when the race had been stopped and continued their battle against the clock. As predicted, records were broken but unfortunately these recorded times will remain unofficial.

Over the past half century The DW Organisation has done a tremendous amount for canoeing in this country. Because of the race the Kennet and Avon Trust was formed and the rebuilding of the canal was undertaken otherwise it would have been closed. It was the DW that set the scene for potential marathon racers and as a prelude to DW the Riverside and Thames side events were born. The first race of the year is The Frank Luzmore Race from Elmsbridge



canoeist is the only person to make this decision.

Conditions

The conditions for DW this year were possibly the best they have been for a year. The canal levels were down on 1998 and so was the Thames. Rebecca Stephenson (The first woman to climb Mount Everest) and Steve Seaton (Editor of runners world) who paddled DW together that year. Rebecca stated in an article she wrote for the Times. "The Thames was running so high that, at times, we didn't know if we were on the river its self or in some flooded meadow." This year the Thames was not in such a



state as that, but the water was moving quite fast and was absolutely prime for record breaking. Competitors were making excellent times to Teddington arriving well in advance of their own predictions ready for the high tide at 0548hrs. It was unfortunate for these crews who had done so well to be confronted with the news that the race had been suspended because of an incident at Old Windsor. Both our safety boats were there. Shortly after this it was announced that the race was to be abandoned on the grounds that all

to Richmond, an annual event in remembrance of Frank who was the founder member of Richmond Canoe Club and one of the founder organisers of DW. There has always been a strong link between Richmond and the DW. The DW has always seen great rivalry with the military, The Royal Engineers, Marines, The Paras and our friends from The Hertfordshire Flour Mills. Even the Police, RAF and Scouts have always had a participation. Our world marathon champions Ivan Lawler and Steve Harris, paddled DW when juniors. Other noted names, Robin Knox Johnston, Chay Blyth, Paddy Ashdown competed DW as a Marine in 1965. Recently Sir Ranulph Fiennes has paddled DW twice and Rebecca Stephenson paddled DW with only three weeks training. Every Easter DW gives entertainment to millions of TV viewers world-wide. National and local radio stations follow the event with great interest, likewise newspapers and magazines. The DW organisation has been responsible for helping to promote Devizes globally through this event and also for keeping the local scouts good name in the fore. The DW event involves perhaps nearly two thousand people, the canoeists, support crews, the staff and all the wonderful helpers, local authorities, the lock keepers, PLA and police, the list is endless. We wish to say a THANK YOU to every one who helped, without your support there would be no race or challenge.

DW Chairman Peter Begent

Unselfishly for the past 50 years, Peter Begent the chairman of DW, has now been involved with the organisation since the age of fourteen when Frank Luzmore, founder of Richmond Canoe Club and founder member of DW got hold of his ear and dragged him onto the DW scene. Peters flair, undoubtedly, was organising races up and down the Thames, which he did for many years long before the PLA and other bodies were born. He was not a very good canoeist but a good organiser. Peter has a natural instinct regarding the Thames and is aware what canoeists can achieve under all



types of conditions.

DW for Peter has been a passion for which he has worked relentlessly nursing DW through all sorts of crisis and bureaucratic mine fields. Some of his judgements could well be controversial but he has always been proven right. A great believer of hands on, Peter with another group of keen lads built six eight man canoes out of planked timber. To day only one is left in existence housed in Richmonds Canoe Club of which Peter is a life member. On behalf of all the competitors that

have participated in DW over the years, your associates and committee members say "Congratulations" Peter, and thank you for all your hard work. "Apologies about the gold watch".

The Forum DW future.

The forum was held at Reading University on the 17th June and was chaired by David Gent Chairman of the BCU. Many canoeists had travelled great distances to be present at this meeting, thank you for that Eighty five people attended this meeting and there was a lot of passion and thought in what various people had to say. It was more constructive than all the nonsense that had been originated on the internet which in many cases has been extremely detrimental to the DW organisation and canoeing in general. This will need a lot of rebuilding, hopefully by the same people who registered the damaging statements. When these very people were met face to face it is found that they do have something to offer, their issues were presented in a positive manner which have all been taken on board.

Paul Fitzpatrick representing the Royal Marines and Navy stated that the DW was the hardest thing he has ever done over the last fourteen years and that they do it purely for the challenge. The challenge to them is a mental and physical one. They need to complete the course regardless of the conditions and in one foul swoop. He raised the issue that so called dangerous areas should be portaged or some indication laid out at the beginning of the race of

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these areas. From their point of view there was no dangerous areas because their training would have taken all these things on board.

Other voices stated that more education about the route and race should be made available and stating more fully what actually is involved.

Paul Ralph went right back to basics and stated that the challenge can be stretched over four days just as the scouts had done over a half a century ago. But the most important thing is to let the check point marshal or the information centre where they are, the time stopped and to notify them again when they have re start. He further stated that the race was a secondary issue and that the prime issue was the challenge and the achievement. Records were only achievable with water conditions similar as this year which placed the challenge higher on the list.

Another voiced pointed out that every paddler should make their own decisions about their own capabilities and not to over estimate them selves. They were to be responsible for them selves and must not hold the committee responsible.

A representative from Kimbolton School stated that they started training for DW in January and in his assessment most of his canoeists could have finished the course this year but the pressure of the EA placing red boards out and stating that the river was closed had a most detrimental effect on parents who's concern added additional pressure on them as team leaders. He hastened to add that full representation should be made via DW or BCU or jointly to readdress this situation. Closed to navigate but NOT CLOSED TO PADDLERS (This is currently being sorted with EA by BCU and DW) Another school representative from Dawntsey School stated that the team leaders are aware of the weak paddlers and should make the decision to take the weak ones out when adverse conditions exist and it was not for the DW committee to do this.

Another person paid tribute to the amount of professionalism and



organising skills the DW Committee had but they needed to out line the race in a more educational manner as part of there marketing strategy and much earlier, perhaps early autumn of each year.

At the end of the meeting many fringe meetings took place and there looks as if there will be many changes certainly for the better. There was also some concern about personality clashes, these issues must be brushed to one side.

Many of the existing DW committee are very professional at what they do purely because it's an extension of there existing professional life, and its free. DW has actually depended on their expertise over the years, without it DW would not exist. Those who are about to join the committee to take on different tasks will need to take this on board before cutting off legs.

There are a few issues, which were not mentioned, (A.) That DW needs to have the first line of rescue and contingency plans thereafter to restart the race. (This issue has already been looked at and will be solved) (B) No one ever mentioned about the good work paddlers have done for charity over the years. (Many tens of thousands of pounds have been raised by paddlers for wide and varied mixture of charities). As a result of all these meetings many new ideas have emerged which will allow smaller teams to look after different functions of the challenge, certainly in the field of communications and safety, they take effect immediately.

DW is a challenge of personal achievement, good citizenship and self reliance. As Maureen Purchase from Pangbourne said "It was the proudest thing I have done in my life". Well Maureen, no one can take that wonderful achievement away from you, there are hundreds if not thousands of people that have completed DW say just that, even the supporters state that they have had a wonderful Easter.

DW 2001 is on its way, Please book early. Thank you everyone for your constructive input and thank you for coming. ●

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MORE MEDALS

COMPETITION Peak UK Whitewater Challenge

River Tryweryn

Bala April
2000

Thanx to all the competitors, volunteers for helping to keep it flowing, Loel at Canolfan Tryweryn for putting up with the late night 70's fever and the event sponsors – Rob at Clif for a healthy supply of energy bars, The Cotswolds Crew for staffing, tents and generator power, and Bill at Five Ten footwear for the sticky rubber!

The PeakUK Challenge set off into the year with the first event at the Tryweryn in North Wales. The first event of the weekend was the X – Slalom. Number boards, gates and freestyle moves were scattered around the river, planned out by Bleddyn. A tricky section around the bridge in the middle caught a lot of folk out! It was a race for the Welsh – the fastest fella on the river was Skinny Jones, followed by Doug Tavener and Bleddyn Lloyd. The ladies placings were Louise Fothergill in 3rd, Fiona Jarvie in 2nd and Tree Stephens in 1st so far!

The gruelling Head 2 Head Downriver course ran from the stilling basin eddy down to the grave yard splat rock. Competitors raced four at a time against the clock. Luckily, all the racers were pretty well spread out by the time they had to go through the gap in the Chipper! Bleddyn came through with the fastest time overall trailed by Skinny and Dave Bradshaw 3rd. The Ladies was won by Louise Fothergill with Lyndsey Evans and Tree 2nd and 3rd.

To help all the competitors relax in the evening, we staged a 70's Disco Party with some drinks and funky tunes. Tunes were compiled by Cheesy, Skinny, Snowboy and DJ Jim. Some awesome outfits came out the cupboards, with notable efforts from Mike Birkbeck in his wedding suit complete with kipper tie and Bob Campbell in deep, unrecognisable porn star / pimp disguise!!!

All this left the Freestyle section for a relaxing Sunday. We ran groups of ten in number order, or whoever was on the water! Some pretty hectic scoring was held in the top runs, Juniors included Mark Birkbeck knocking out some real high scores every time. Each competitor got two runs to strut in the top hole. We came down to a final of the top ten freestyle runs. After lots of number crunching, 3rd place went to Tom the Sprout, 2nd to Cheesy and first to Pete Astles (aka the boss!) Third in the ladies was Lynsey Evans, 2nd Fiona Jarvie and 1st Paula Floyd.



Prizes were given for all the above places, as well as Juniors, spot prizes and Overall Rankings Ladies overall was a tie between Tree and Fiona, with a third place tie between Lynsey and Louise. Third in the Men's overall was Bledd, 2nd was Skinny and first was Doug Travener. Top Junior of the Weekend was Richard Chrimes and Dino Rock was top Junior Lady. Well Done to everyone! ●

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MORE MEDALS

Peak UK Whitewater Challenge

Tees Side
Splashout May
2000

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www.peakuk.com

The X - Slalom started just after 11am, after everyone had time to either wake up or even get on and warm up for a while. The course was set between the inlet wave and the cruncher hole, with some really tight sections especially in the middle. The tight moves proved tricky and really split paddlers up, although the top three men all had clear runs. Stu Morris in 2nd place was paddling C1 - he had a clean run and finished just 1 second being Pete Astles in first. Treena Stephens placed first in the ladies, with Peak Challenge rival Louise Fothergill in 2nd.

Yet again we managed to organise chaos with the downriver race. Paddlers lined up on the Polo pitch above the course, and all set off on the signal of co-ordinator Len Smith. Getting away quickly was essential here and the paddlers out the front at the start pretty much fought it out for the finish two laps later! The portage over the steps for the second lap proved crucial as always. Some paddlers trying to get on the water and put their decks on whilst going down the course - not that clever as they found out! Pete put his deck on and seal launched past all the flailing arms wrestling with decks, some even suffering swims! Simon Jackson did well to hold third place taking a fall on the portage, and Simon Askew coming 2nd after Pete in first. Louise Fothergill and Lynsey Evans both took places above Treena this time round!

We had planned a surf mission to Saltburn for the afternoon. The sea being flat, things diverted to Toys R Us in the search for costume extras for the Riot Superstar party in the evening! With a



good spread of nosh put on by the Four Seasons staff, tunes pumping from DJ Jims1 sound system, Challengers arrived in various guises from the Flintstones, half the cast Star Wars, various superheroes and even the paddling world's infamous 'Clithero Four'!

Sunday dawned bright, so the sunnies came out to protect those fragile eyes and the Freestyle was on! This year we had a freestyle down the rapid, using the same section as in the X Slalom. There were lots of eddylines and waves to choose from - each different feature used gained more variety points and technical was scored in each place. Pete Astles charged down with a plan in mind, getting the biggest variety of the day and taking first in front of Tom the Sprout and Dan Heyworth taking third place. Treena placed first lady for her variation in front of Lorna Williamson and Lynsey in third.

Prizes went to all the winners courtesy of Peak UK, Five Ten footwear, Clif Bar, freestyle prizes from Pyranha, and Tees Side Whitewater course. Thanx to all the sponsors, challengers and volunteers for your invaluable help. ●



MARATHON Marathon World Cup I: Dillingen, Germany

RESULTS

Mens K1

1st	Edwin De Nijs	NED	2:46:53.26
2nd	James Block	GBR	2:46:53.92
3rd	Magnus Silverbrant	SWE	2:46:54.36
6th	Greg Slater	GBR	2:49:03.18
8th	Danny Golder	GBR	2:49:09.33

Womens K1

1st	Kornelia Szonda	HUN	2:56:04.45
2nd	Beata Bencze	HUN	2:59:11.93
3rd	Sara Remete	HUN	2:59:15.50
5th	Aby Cattle	GBR	3:04:05.26
9th	Lucy Hardy	GBR	3:08:09.11

Junior Men K1

1st	Andrew Kelly	GBR	1:35:45.95
2nd	Balazs Barina	HUN	1:36:06.77
3rd	Falk Zimmermann	GER	1:36:21.50
4th	Ben Farrell	GBR	1:36:21.99
5th	Tim Sowry	GBR	1:37:34.77

Jun. Women K1

1st	Jenny Spencer	GBR	1:49:11.91
2nd	Nikolett Bartha	HUN	1:50:16.24
3rd	Ed Isa	SWE	1:50:29.42
6th	Zara Dale	GBR	1:52:19.01

Junior C1

1st	David Weide	GER	1:55:31.60
2nd	Christian Mahn	GER	1:59:30.83
3rd	Matthew Lawrence	GBR	2:03:09.12

Men K2

1st	Victor Szakaly, Attila Jambor	HUN	2:32:11.78
2nd	Paul Slater, Steve Harris	GBR	2:32:12.60
3rd	Thomas Christiansen, Karsten Solgard	DEN	2:33:38.51
8th	Simon Dark, Dave Coulson	GBR	2:37:43.29
12th	Joel Wilson, Chris Bland	GBR	2:38:42.45

Womens K2

1st	Kornelia Szonda, Edit Javorszky	HUN	2:52:14.23
2nd	Barbara Przybylska, Marzena Michalak	POL	2:52:17.96
3rd	Andrea Dalloway, Helen Gilby	GBR	2:52:24.83
6th	Allison Thorogood, Jo Bates	GBR	3:05:03.49

Junior Men K2

1st	Andrew Kelly, Tim Sowry	GBR	1:38:12.90
2nd	Balazs Barina, Alpar Limp	HUN	1:38:13.50
3rd	Kristian Kovacs, Viktor Inger	HUN	1:38:14.43
4th	Ed McKeever, Ali Rosier	GBR	1:38:14.82

Junior Women K2

1st	Nicolett Bartha, Diana Bartha	HUN	1:45:55.20
2nd	Claire Hannon, Clare Gillbe	GBR	1:46:01.08
3rd	Krisztina Schmidt, Nikoletta Inger	HUN	1:46:13.33
5th	Nicky Taylor, Jodie Barell	GBR	1:52:02.36

The leading Mens K1 group with James Block and Gary Mawer of Ireland tracking Dolph to Linde of the Netherlands



Andrew Kelly - winner in both Junior K1 and Junior K2



James Block's second place was his best ever World Cup result



Jenny Spencer - never in trouble winning the Junior K1 race by over a minute

Andrea Dalloway and Helen Gilby mix it with the Hungarian winners, Szonda and Bencze



British team manager, Jim Rossiter with the cup for Best Nation

Dancing W

By James Heward

Preconceptions are an essential part of planning a trip – sometimes they can be misleading. On a six-day adrenaline pumping white water rafting trip on the upper Zambezi between Victoria Falls and Lake Kariba, I got the idea that it would be good to do a more leisurely canoe trip. What better place than a placid journey through the calmer waters that flow between the Kariba dam and the international border between Zimbabwe and Mosambique? A picture formed in my mind of gliding between riverbanks, lined with some of the best game viewing in the world, all seen from the safety of a canoe separated from danger by a stretch of water.

At least I was correct in part. Certainly steering a Canadian style two-person canoe is more placid than white water rafting. It is wonderful to sit in comfortable seats and let the flow of the Zambezi do the work as you slip downstream past a plethora of bird life, not to mention frequent sightings of kudu, impala and crocodiles basking on sandbanks. Less frequently we saw wild buffalo and elephant coming to the waters edge to cool off with a mid-day shower. At night as we



camped on sandy beaches the sounds of lion and hyena were frequently heard, fortunately safely in the distance.

The journey started at a bleary 0500 hrs in Harare. After being introduced to fellow paddlers we loaded into a mini bus for the seven-hour journey to the river at Chirundu, the site of one of the very few bridges between Zimbabwe and Zambia. Here, enormous road-train trucks wait several days to cross; a severe speed restriction is in place because only one vehicle at a time is allowed on the bridge. At this point we met up with our guides for the first four-day leg of our journey. Mike headed the team, an experienced guide with a wealth of knowledge about the river and it's wildlife. He was supported by Livingstone, generally known as Doctor who was in the final stages of qualifying as a guide having taken his written exams and waiting for the results. Doctor was at pains to point out that the river is his office, no city life for him.

Gauntlet of crocodiles

For the next four days, Mike and Doctor guided the group, made camp and provided hearty meals. Even before getting into the canoes Mike's safety briefing was so thorough that I began to wonder why I had come. It was made clear that if a

hippopotamus does not tip you

out, then you will have to run the gauntlet of crocodiles or submerged tree stumps. Having survived all of this there is the possibility of camp thefts from Zambian villagers who have been known to paddle across the river at the dead of night in dug-out canoes to steal from canoeist camps set-up on the Zimbabwean shore.

At last we were off, on the start of a 204-km canoe journey through some of the finest river scenery in Southern Africa. After a couple of hours, Mike announced that we would camp on a sandy isle, like pitching tents at the seaside. A quick demo showed how easy the tents were to manage, each being equipped with enormous pegs to fix into the sand. Dinner was illuminated by a magnificent sunset followed by night, alive to the sound of wildlife under a galaxy of Southern stars and moonlight. That was the pattern for the next six nights.

We had been told at the start that the biggest danger was from hippos. It is common knowledge that to get on the wrong side of these creatures poses the largest single risk in African river travel. Hippos live in families called pods or schools. With skins that can become sunburned and very pink, they wallow in water for most of the day and come out to graze, mainly at night. When threatened, hippos will hide under water, they have the natural ability to stay under for up to seven or eight minutes at a time and they can move fast. The rules are to steer your canoe so that you avoid coming between a hippo and deep water, they feel safe so long as they have free access to the deeps. The same applies if ever you encounter them

ith Hippos

on land, always give the animals free access to the water. Sometimes it is difficult to see where the pods are. Hippos spend most of their time either under the water or with just their ears and eyes showing.

On each of our seven canoeing days we experienced a morning upstream wind against the flow of the river causing small waves, similar to the wind-over-tide condition known to coastal sailors. Visibility was made more difficult in the mornings with a low sun in the eastern sky glistening on the ripples. Caution and constant alertness for signs of danger now replaced the acute excitement of white water rafting. Usually hippos can hear the splashing of paddles from a distance. As an added precaution when the wind was in the wrong direction the guides advised banging the sides of the canoe with our paddles. On hearing our approach, a pod of hippos will usually poke their heads out of the water, sometimes briefly, to have a look and perhaps honk a warning. This gives their position making it possible to find a safe route. After a week of hippo dancing we soon got used to the sound of honks. This was often a cowardly bark; many did not make any sound until after we had gone by, only shouting at us when we were clearly out of their way. Sunday the first full day on the river set our daily routine. By dawn the guides were making tea and coffee, served with biscuits as the eye opener. After quickly packing up the camp and distributing the load between the six canoes we were off for more paddling, gliding past sacred ibis, kingfishers and a couple of Goliath herons whose wing span exceeds 2.5 metres. Two hours later we were resting on another beach while the guides cooked a full English breakfast, which we consumed in a leisurely style under the

early morning sun. Then off again for another two hours, this time stopping for a cold lunch and a rest under the shade of trees. Finally the last run of the day, usually less than two hours, to our final camp on an island or sandy bank. At all times we were alert, nerves straining as we wove our way between ever increasing numbers of hippos as we got nearer to the Mana Pools National Park area where wildlife is heavily protected.

Sudden CRUNCH

Monday started in the same way as Sunday, after tea and biscuits we made an early start. Then sudden CRUNCH and a scream as a submerged hippo startled by being canoed over lurched from the depths to take a bite out of a canoe crewed by two unfortunate Swiss students, Maria and Anna. Maria, a strong swimmer was thrown into the water, fortunately the canoe stayed upright saving Anna. Equally fortunately the hippo did not return for a second attack (they rarely do). Mike the chief guide who was bringing up the rear quickly helped haul Maria aboard in spite of her extreme shock and a flesh wound in her thigh. We quickly paddled to the safety of nearby shallows and within minutes Mike was pouring iodine into the wound. As so often happens just when these things are most needed the emergency radio would not work. We were too remote and out of range. Fortunately it was possible to revert to the old technology of waving towels and shouting HELP to workers at a safari lodge on the distant Zambian side of the river. After what seemed an eternity, they

launched their powerboat and were soon on the scene to take the injured and Mike to the mainland. As this lodge had no communications that worked, the

party was taken by speedboat several miles downstream to the next habitation, Vundu Lodge on the Zimbabwean side of the river. From there Maria was transferred by Land Rover to the Mana Pools park headquarters where within three hours of the accident she was stitched and receiving expert medical attention.

The guides had acted magnificently not just by taking rapid emergency action and keeping up the spirits of those of us who remained. With Mike away on his emergency mission it was left to Doctor to guide us to Vundu Lodge while towing the broken canoe. After a rest and drinks the crew started feeling better and the journey continued with one canoe short. That afternoon everyone was hyper-cautious. Even the most macho wore life jackets; I for one missed the best photo opportunity of the trip having put my cameras away, not feeling up to taking pictures. Without warning the best sighting of elephant of the whole week treated us to a close up of a family bathing – the photo opportunity that got away! Spirits further improved with generous sundowners as we camped on a hilly wooded island guarded by Mad Max a well-known hippo loner that everyone knows to steer clear of. The island provided a scenic resting-place with a reassuring stretch of water between us and the mainland where the orchestra of hyenas, the occasional lions' roar and the grunts of Mad Max and his many relatives lulled us to sleep.



Courageous, or mad

By Tuesday we had arrived at the main base at Mana Pools. This was decision time for those of us who had arranged to stay the whole week and continue a further 128Km downstream to Kanyemba, the border town with Mozambique. Would we return to Harare or continue, as planned? The others that we had been with were returning to Harare. The transport coming to collect them would also bring out new clients and different guides. The decision took my wife, Christine and I all of 10 seconds – we would continue despite the hippo problems. We later discovered that the guides were quite surprised at this seeming courageous, or mad, decision whichever way you look at it.

We never regretted the decision, the new guides Peter and Morgan soon gave the safety briefing to the new crew members and we were off for a gentle two hour cruise to the first camping beach that our new colleagues would experience. The next four days were filled with plenty of hippo dodging including a place where we needed to get out and drag the canoes over a sandbank as the safest avoidance tactic. We were treated to lots of birdlife and several families of elephant as we progressed downstream.

One morning, Sally - a Zimbabwean from Harare was fishing. Suddenly great excitement as she started to haul in what seemed would be an enormous tiger fish. Sadly, a turtle had taken the bait and the hook was securely lodged in the creature's mouth. After several attempts the only thing to do was to cut it loose, complete with hook. After this sad incident there was very little if any fishing for the remainder of the trip.



By Thursday the hippo population had decreased and the river was speeding up through narrower channels. Previously where the river was wide and more sluggish, we had been keeping to the shallow water at the sides. Peter had now changed tactics, he was now guiding us down the centre deep channel of the river avoiding the hippo pods that were still occasionally in evidence near to the banks. By Friday the channels had become even narrower and we were treated to 40 Km of silent rapid flowing river in the Mupata gorge. Here we were told leopards are sometimes sighted, although we were not lucky enough to see these we did see rare samanga monkeys on the Zambian bank. A memorable paddle completed the day as we slid past red rock cliffs set alight in brilliant sunset reflected by the water.

Fellow travellers on the Zambezi journey were a truly international bunch of people of all ages. The youngest, Kirin eleven-year-old white Zimbabwean from a tobacco farming family was escaping the horrors of possible

occupation and eviction in Zimbabwe's political climate. At the upper end of the age range were several sixty something's including a former American veteran Vietnam fighter pilot and a semi-retired German professor with his wife.

Finally on the last morning, seven days after our start only an hour's canoeing remained as we cruised past villages on the Zambian side of the river. These are remote and populated by people who rely heavily on fishing and subsistence farming. In the early morning sun women were at

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work tilling the fields by hand with several joining the men fishing. Villagers wanting any remains of bread or other food that we could spare approached us in a dugout canoe. It was pitiful that we had eaten everything, only an hour beforehand before packing up camp. The guides, who pass by every week, promised that they would be better prepared next time.

As close to nature as you can get

Did the journey live up to expectations of a placid journey? Well not exactly placid when every nerve ending had been strained with apprehension not knowing what would be beyond the next paddle stroke. For seven days we lived about as close to nature as you can get, we had steered our way past riverbanks and islands alive with birds from tiny kingfishers to mighty goliath herons. We had experienced the best of both worlds being close to nature and at the same time camping in luxury and being served good food and wine by attentive guides.

The journey had taken us through placid waters, in places close to a mile wide and on other days we were carried rapidly downstream through narrows. We had glided past elephant drinking and showering themselves at the waters edge in the heat of the mid-day sun. Every evening we had witnessed a breath-taking galaxy of stars as we lay under the heavens with the only sounds being distant hyena and grunts from hippo, much closer to home – but unseen.

The acid test is would I recommend it to my best friend? Yes, to anyone with a true sense of adventure who regards a moderate degree of



danger as a challenge. Above all a sense of humour is an essential! It is true we were travelling in Zimbabwe at the time of political trouble with the world media focussed on the country. On the river you are about as far away as is possible from these realities, the only people you are likely to meet are your fellow travellers and occasional villagers fishing from dugouts. Animal dangers are more real, yet incidents from these are few and far between. Our safari operator, Goliath Safaris boast they have been in business for fourteen years and over that time have taken over 700 people. In all of that time there has never been a life threatening or fatal injury and only two people have suffered injury as serious as the one on this trip. That's good enough for me – given the chance I would jump at going again. ●

James and Christine Heward travelled with Goliath Safaris of Harare, Zimbabwe. Web site www.goliathsafaris.com
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WORLD CLASS competition



John Anderson
BCU
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World Class Potential

Following the June issue of Canoe Focus we are pleased to confirm that the British Canoe Union's application for World Class Potential funding has been secured.

The BCU World Class Potential plan was submitted to the Sport England Lottery Panel on 1 December 1999. After 3 months of consultation and responses to queries raised, the British Canoe Union was awarded approximately £500k for the first 7 months (Apr 00 – end Oct 00) and £750,000 (excluding grants to athletes) for the period Nov 2000 – end October 2001 to put the programme in place. The Sport England Lottery Panel has made a further commitment in principle to fund the programme through to 2003. Canoeing is the first sport in England to receive this level of commitment.

The Programme

The World Class Potential programme is a brand new programme (Interim funding has now ceased). As the development arm of the World Class Performance Programme it is aimed at a broader range of athletes – from aspiring Junior World medallists to athletes knocking on the door of Performance.

The majority of the funding will be used to:

- employ coaches to provide the nominated athletes with quality enhanced coaching support
- Provide a quality domestic & international training and competition programme

Whilst the amount awarded was less than the BCU originally requested, practically no cuts have been made to the programmes.

The Athletes

There are 50 athletes nominated within the World Class Potential programme (22 Slalomists and 28 Racing athletes). Whilst we have appointed coaches on a temporary basis, full time roles were advertised in the June issue of Canoe Focus and interviews will be taking place at the end of August 2000.

International Competition 2000

The International Season is now well underway and we are already seeing some encouraging results from our Performance and Potential programme athletes.

Slalom World Cup 1 – Penrith, Australia

The 29-30 March 2000 introduced the first high profile event of the season with World Cup 1 Slalom being held on the Olympic Course in Penrith, Australia. A number of our World Class Performance athletes attended with the following results being achieved.

In the Men's K1 class Paul Ratcliffe took first place. Rachel Crosbee in the Women's K1 class had caused concern earlier in the week when she picked up a back injury; however, Rachel qualified for the final and produced an excellent 6th place. Stu MacIntosh put in a personal best performance in the C1 final finishing in 4th place, with the C2 of Smith and Bowman finishing in 7th place in their final.

Sprint Racing World Cup 2 – Hazewinkel Belgium, 6/7 May 2000

Richard Darby-Dowman



Paul Darby-Dowman with Ross Sabberton



outstanding weekend taking gold in the Junior K1 1000m and 500m events. Whilst his brother Paul, paddling with Ross Sabberton in the Senior K2 500m event took the silver medal. The final medal winners of the weekend were Rebecca and Rachel Train taking the bronze in the Women's K2 200m event.

Sprint Racing World Cup 3 – Szeged Hungary

36 Nations took part in the third World Cup sprint event of the year over the weekend of 26-28 May 2000. 12 athletes from the UK competed in 9 of the 26 events, 5 boats reaching the finals, 4 of them in the Olympic distance events.

The best result over the weekend coming from Andrew and Stephen Train in the C2 1000m event taking the Gold medal almost 2 seconds clear of the Mexican Silver medallists.

Marathon World Cup 1 – Dillingen Germany

The weekend of 3-4 June 2000 saw the first major international event for our World Class Programme marathon athletes.

Strong performances from our senior and junior paddlers secured 7 medals. Paul Slater and Steve Harris took silver in the K2 senior men's class over the 36km course. Nottingham's James Block also secured a silver medal in the senior K1 men's 36k event. In the senior women's K2 competition over the same distance Andrea Dallaway and Helen Gilby took the bronze medal for Great Britain. In the junior competitions Andrew Kelly won the gold in the junior K1 21km event and Jenny Spencer in the junior women's class racing over the same distance also took home the gold. Andrew then raced on Sunday in the junior K2 race with his partner Tim Sowry to bring home another gold. With Clare Gillbe and Claire Hannon securing the silver medal in the junior k2 women's class.

A number of our World Class Potential athletes also took part in a sprint racing development event in Bosbaan, Holland on 20-21 May 2000 with some very encouraging results.

Sprint Racing performance athletes also competed in their first international event of the year, winning 4 medals over the weekend in Belgium. 45 nations took part in the event and the team made 13 of the finals, 7 of which were in Olympic distance events. World Class Potential athlete Richard Darby-Dowman had an

Olympic Games 2000

This edition of Canoe Focus is the final issue before our athletes leave to represent Great Britain at the Olympic Games in Penrith, Australia.

The following athletes have been selected to represent our country and our sport in Penrith in September 2000.

Canoe Slalom

Paul Ratcliffe – Men's K1
 Laura Blakeman – Women's K1
 Stuart MacIntosh – C1
 Nick Smith and Stuart Bowman – C2

Sprint Racing

Tim Brabants – K1 Men 1000m
 Ian Wynne – K1 Men 500m
 Ross Sabberton & Paul Darby-Dowman – K2 Men 1000m & 500m
 Andrew and Stephen Train – C2 Men 1000m

The women's K1 500m place is to be confirmed.

We wish our athletes every success for the Olympic Games in Sydney. This is undoubtedly one of the highest quality and best prepared Olympic teams that we have ever sent to the Games and we hope that they all achieve their personal goals and ambitions. ●



Paul Ratcliffe –
Men's K1



Tim Brabants – K1
Men 1000m

Nick Smith and Stuart Bowman – C2



YOUNG PEOPLE
news & info

Young Peoples' Paddlefest 2000

West Yorkshire

Saturday the 10th of June 2000 saw the third annual West Yorkshire Paddlefest being organised by the West Yorkshire Canoe Association (WYCA).

This year the venue was Roundhay Park in Leeds - the home of White Rose Canoe Club, who carried out a large part of the organisation of the event. Together with other clubs from the WYCA, a wide variety of canoeing activities were provided, from Sprint & Marathon using Lightnings, Polypippins, K1s and K2s, and Slalom in Foxes, to Open Canoeing, Canoe Sailing, and Sea Kayaks. Also available were Topolino Duos, Polo bats, play boats and various GP kayaks.

At first it looked as if the 26 coaches (from White Rose, Leeds, Pennine, West Yorkshire Canoe Clubs, West Yorkshire Scouts, and Open Canoe-Sailing Associations), and the boats would out-number the participants...

...and then they arrived!

Young people from all over the West Yorkshire area attended. Many came with families, and some with friends. In total, 84 young people took part, mostly under 15 years of age, some from minority ethnic communities, all enthusiastic. For three hours the coaches didn't rest, and no boat was left empty.



Parents enjoyed the chance to watch their children try something new, and many were interested in finding out more about canoeing, both for their children, and as a family.

At 6 o'clock as the last paddler was gently 'coaxed' off the water, the coaches started to load up boats onto trailers. They all looked exhausted, but they were all still smiling.

As for the West Yorkshire Paddlefest 2001... Watch this space!

...Marathon Goes from Strength to Strength in Yorkshire...

The Annual York Marathon organised by Kingston Kayak Club, was held on the River Ouse on Saturday the 18th of June 2000. This year, the event attracted a large number of young paddlers from clubs all over Yorkshire, and many of them took part in the fun race. Other young competitors included James Oldham aged 16 who came first in Div 8, having only been promoted from Div 9 earlier this month, and Sam Dilai aged 15 who came first in the Div 9 Junior section in his first competitive race. The Mike Jones Memorial Trophy was won by Pennine Canoe Club.

London

The London Youth Games Regatta.

The fateful date arrived, the 11th June 2000! The London Youth Games Paddlesport regatta was geared up and ready to start. The venue for the event as in 1999 was the Docklands Sailing Centre, located on the Isle of Dogs. A spectacular venue for what was expected to be a spectacular event. In the shadow of Canary Wharf, two hundred 10-18 year olds would battle it out to find out which London Borough had the best Paddlesport Team.

Events in the regatta are mainly geared towards the racing side of paddlesport and allow for children across London from all walks of life, to experience paddling in a big event. With three separate age categories in both the male and female classes everyone was catered for which is great unless you're the race organiser, faced with the grim task of slotting seven days events all into one. Luckily Robin Barwick from the Docklands Sailing Centre managed the task with ease and all the events were set to run smoothly.

The events comprise of K1 sprints, K2 sprint, mini K1 sprint (for the 10-13 year olds), Bell Boat sprints, Dragon boat sprints and just for a bit of variety a few short distance events as well. But that's not all, as well as the multitude of races that were set to take place throughout the day there were also dry land competitions and non-competitive activities to get involved in.

An ergo challenge ran throughout the day on the balcony of the centre with children in all age groups racing on the machines to see who could complete the most distance in a minute and with prizes on offer this was as fiercely contested as the events on the water. The ergo challenge was supported by GB paddlers Ian Wynn (who will be representing us in the sprint event at this year's Olympics) plus James Clarke and Ken van Sommeran. Thanks must go to them for all the coaching tips and time they gave to the children.

Back on the water Perception were on hand with a whole fleet of demo boats for the children to try out in between races. The boats ranged from the conventional to the extreme with

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every form of playboat, sit on top and general boat available for use, in fact many would have believed that this was in fact the fiercest competition around with children all over jockeying for position to try their preferred craft!

The events on the water were as fiercely contested as those off the water. Barking and Dagenham seemed to be at one stage attempting a clean sweep of the sprint and distance events, until Nicky Taylor of Redbridge won several races to prevent a white wash - the only irony being that Nicky Paddles for Barking and Dagenham Canoe Club. Whilst in the Bell Boat event saw a solid victory from Islington and valiant effort from by far the Loudest team Wandsworth.

The day ended as always with a huge prize giving, which was delayed for a short while when the children found out that Shaun Baker would be presenting the prizes, who cares about prizes when you can get the autograph of Shaun Baker, so 200 signed hats, 200 signed shirts and 200 signed posters later Shaun was eventually allowed to present some prizes. The winning Borough as in most previous years was Barking and Dagenham.

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This event would not run without the support of so many people so a final word of thanks must go to the following people, without whom the event would not have been a success: Docklands Sailing centre and all its staff, Barking and Dagenham CC, Andre and Andy from Perception, all the boys from the GB sprint team, Shaun Baker and anyone else that gave there time and energy into making this years regatta an overwhelming success. Thank you all!

Jon Smith

NB The second Paddlesport event for the London Youth Games is the slalom held at Crystal Palace – taking place as we go to print – details of this and other events in the next issue.



Millennium Awards for all

The West London Youth Paddlesport Development Group just recently joined many other successful clubs in being awarded a Millennium Awards for All grant for £4,830. The award is to help with their programme of youth events in the London area and together with coaching courses for the club leaders and helpers.

Membership to the group is open to any BCU affiliated Club/Centre in the West London area and details of the programme can be obtained from Andrea Bagnall on 020 8940 1462 email ambagnall@yahoo.com

The British Canoe Union presents:

The National Bellboat Championships



Saturday 23rd September
Part of Paddlefest 2000

Just to remind you we are running the second National Championships over the Paddlefest weekend. Here are some details:

EVENT GUIDELINES

Teams - Mixed teams (4 boys and 4 girls) are encouraged. Helms will be provided if necessary.

Age groups - Teams can be entered for either U12, U14, or U18 (by 1 September) category.

Distance - 200 metres

Entry Fee - £30 per team*

*(this includes entry to all Paddlesport events over the weekend)

Plus special VIP race - see our World Champions in action.

There is lots for everyone to do over the whole weekend - the Youth Programme includes an Ergo paddling machine challenge, Come and try different boats, a Lightning Regatta and Diamond Slalom Challenge.

There's also a prize for the best picture/drawing by a competitor or team of their Bellboat experiences.

Don't delay places are limited! For an application form contact the BCU Head Office.

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news & info

RFERACs

Yet another awful acronym! This one stands Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee; there is one in each Environment Agency region. For the first time there are members, who are also canoeists, on every single one. All are on email and a system is in place where briefing information is sent out to them before their meetings and the feed back from those meetings can be relayed to canoeists on the other RFERACs. The most recent round of meetings has concerned itself especially on the report of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review and its 195 recommendations.

Environment Panel

After many years service Dr John Thompson has stepped down from the Chairmanship of the BCU Environment Panel. We are most grateful for all his work and very glad that he will still be available for advice. Darren Male, the present co-ordinator, has taken over the chair; he is now taking stock of the various environmental projects and determining the next priorities for the panel. The 1988 Environment Policy is being brought up to date. He is looking for a few more people to become involved in the work of the panel; do contact him at 6 Brick Kiln Lane, Hurley, Atherstone, CV9 2LU.

Changes in the Access Team

David Cosstick, who was considering becoming Yorkshire Regional Access Officer, has decided against it; we apologise to him for putting his name prematurely in June Canoe Focus. Until an appointment is made please refer queries to Local Access Officers or to the Regional Chairman, Ian Needham.

Countryside and Rights of Way Bill 2000

A lot has happened since the June issue of Focus went to press. We were unsuccessful at the Committee stage of the Bill in persuading an MP member of the Committee to propose the BCU amendment. The amendment was designed to give the Secretary of State power by Order to amend the definition of "open country" so as to include a reference to waterways. However, what was perhaps even better, Andrew Miller MP agreed to put down our amendment for debate on the floor of the House of Commons at the Report Stage of the Bill. There was still no guarantee that the amendment would be called by the Speaker.

In the event, on 13 June, Andrew Miller was called to propose our amendment. The full debate on the amendment is in Hansard for 13 June, Column 832. It can be downloaded from the Internet on www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansard/.../00613-17.ht. We knew that the amendment was unlikely to succeed, but what is important is the statement by the Minister, Michael Meacher MP, to explain why the Government was opposed to the amendment. Michael Meacher's words were as follows.

"The principle underlying the amendments—better access to waterways—is one that I wholeheartedly support. However, I am not convinced that it warrants a place in this Bill.

We thought hard about what access provisions to include in the Bill. Our first priority was to meet the clear demand for more access for walkers. We took advice from the Countryside Agency and from the Countryside Council for Wales on what other areas to include. Both recommended a more vigorous use of existing mechanisms, such as voluntary agreements, to extend access to land adjoining canals and waterways. We expect much to be achieved by a similar approach to access to water, although I hear what my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Thomas) says: it is one thing to reach an agreement, but it is another to get it delivered.

We have tabled amendments to the Bill, which we will come to later, which will retain on the statute book part V of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which will allow for access agreements and orders to continue to be made on waterways and the waterside. Such agreements can make specific provision for access for users of canoes.

We recognise, however, that obtaining voluntary access to waterways can be far from straightforward. That is why, in March, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin), met the British Canoe Union to listen to its concerns. As a result of that discussion, at the end of last month officials in my Department held a meeting with a range of interest groups, including boaters, anglers and landowners. We are considering the conclusions of that meeting, but the general feeling of all present was that there were not enough hard facts on the availability of waterways, the scope for new access and the scale and nature of unmet demand. That points to the need for detailed, independent research into access to water. As I say, we are looking at that carefully and will make an announcement shortly.

In the meantime, we have already started promoting voluntary access in a number of areas. The Environment Agency has published a guide to developing voluntary agreements. The booklet, which was produced in conjunction with the angling and canoeing liaison group, provides information for all parties who are seeking to achieve new access for canoeists.

In addition, we have recently issued an updated code of practice on conservation, access and recreation for the Environment Agency and for water and sewerage companies. The code gives practical guidance to those bodies on their access and recreation

duties, including the availability of water for recreational pursuits such as canoeing.

I realise that that is only a start. There is much more to do to ensure that voluntary measures work. However, I want to assure my hon. Friend the Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston (Mr. Miller) that we are determined to do all that we can to ensure that the goal of greater voluntary access to waterways does become a reality. "

Meeting with the DETR

The first meeting promised by the Minister took place on 25 May. The meeting was chaired by Susan Carter, Head of the Countryside Division DETR. Organisations present were BCU, WCA, RYA, CLA, NFU, Sport England, Environment Agency, MAFF, British Waterways, Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, DETR, DCMS, Salmon and Trout Association, National Federation of Anglers, National Association of Fisheries and Angling Consultatives, Angling Trades Association. The following two paragraphs are extracted from the minutes of the meeting.

"It was agreed that the next step was for DETR, DCMS and MAFF to report to Ministers on the meeting. The consensus of the meeting was that further investigation was required. An impartial, fact finding exercise should be set up. It would need to be pro-active in order to do so. An audit was needed to establish the current state of access, and the potential demand should also be teased out. Traditional disputes were only part of the issue - social inclusion also needed to be considered."

"Having established the facts, the key issues should be identified along with mechanisms for moving forward. DETR would talk again to groups with an interest at that stage. It was agreed that the first step - to establish the facts, should be moved forward quickly. Interested groups would be kept in touch with progress."

The input from canoeing to this initial fact finding operation is likely to prove crucial. There is a form on the BCU website for anyone to use if they encounter an access problem or have details of past problems not yet resolved; please use these forms and send them to the BCU office so that we can prove that we are not exaggerating over access difficulties.

We have already sent a questionnaire to clubs to find out details of what access they have to pay for; a similar questionnaire for individual canoeists is on the BCU website. Regional Access Officers have been asked to identify what access is needed now and in the future; clubs and individual canoeists are urged to pass their access needs to their RAO without delay. Please watch the BCU website for future requests for information.

Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review

Many thanks to those members and clubs who responded to the report of the above review, as set out in the June issue of Canoe Focus; the deadline was 31 July. The BCU response was sent on 16 June, along the lines of the information placed on the BCU website; we have also written to Kate Hoey MP, Minister for Sport.

A typical reply from MAFF has been to say that "They are grateful for detailed comments on concerns for equitable access to water for canoeists, and support for access for all water based sports and recreations. They regret that they cannot respond directly at this stage of the public consultation. They give assurance that the comments will be carefully considered in the official Government response to the report, which is due to be issued in November this year."

If any of you reading this brief report have not sent in a response, it is still worth writing to your local Members of Parliament to urge them to add their support to the responses sent by the BCU to MAFF

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A Canadian wilderness c

The prospect of a multi-day river trip in an unpopulated area is the dream of many canoeists. The canoeing scenes depicted in the videos featuring Bill Mason present an attractive picture. There are some excellent historical accounts of the voyageurs, the men who guided and paddled the canoes of explorers and fur traders during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who were experts at traversing the treacherous rapids and endured physically demanding portages. And by paddling the same waters one can appreciate their achievements much more.

Canada has more wilderness rivers than one could paddle in a lifetime. Canoe tripping especially in wilderness areas is highly developed and we hoped to learn about and enjoy the richness of the culture.

Early in the year I telephoned a canoeing friend with whom I have shared several sea and inland trips in remote areas and asked whether he would like to paddle in Canada this summer, after a pause the idea took hold and then the research, planning and preparation began.

In Canada many who want to do an extended trip will use an outfitter who can suggest trip plans, provide a canoe, camping gear, food, shuttle service and accommodation. After enquiring from outfitters suggested by a friend in the States and searching the internet we chose one that advertised in Canoe Focus, Smoothwater Outfitters who were able to offer a choice of rivers with varying characteristics. We chose a remote river with modest whitewater grade 2 and described as a continuous wilderness canoe trip that was very scenic but rugged with some physically challenging portages, 18 in total ranging from 100 to 945 metres in length. Trip duration 6 days.

In late April or early May the Spring break up usually occurs and one has to be prepared for snow showers or cold weather. Our trip was in late May with few, if any other canoeists around.

Though we were both the wrong side of forty we thought we could cope with the portages but the bears and flies were another matter!

We left home a little before breakfast and arrived in time for an evening meal at the outfitters in Temagami the same day after travelling about 4000 miles for a 50-mile canoe trip expected to take 6 days. We were picked up from the airport by one of the proprietors Francis who provided some general information about the area.

We were going to paddle on the Lady Evelyn River in a wilderness park in Temagami Country about 100 miles north east of Lake Huron and over an hours drive from North Bay airport.

The early inhabitants were the Temagami Indians who lived by hunting, fishing and gathering and evidence of their occupation such as rock paintings can still be seen. Some place names like Devil Mountain are testimony to their beliefs in good and evil spirits. There are 300 traditional routes connecting with hundreds of lakes and wild rivers with breath taking scenery. Due to the difficulty of getting through the forest and the extent of rivers and lakes the waterways were the main communication routes and portages were developed to enable canoeists to negotiate on foot, waterfalls, rapids and fast currents, up and downstream.

Our first night in Canada was at the outfitters place, a lovely location by the side of a lake with picture postcard scenes. We were given an excellent dinner and heard about the adventures of other canoeists. Later we were issued with our gear and food chosen from a menu supplied earlier by Mark who was exceptionally helpful and knowledgeable. It soon became apparent that canoeing techniques differed from those practised in the UK. Canoe trippers tend to paddle in pairs, solo was unusual but acceptable, gear is loaded without tying in, as a capsized canoe in a situation when canoe with gear can easily be retrieved and open lake crossings tend to be avoided as canoes don't have air bags. In such a vast undeveloped region one must be properly equipped to deal with any needs and be able to cope with the weight when portaging. They also practice the concept of "no trace camping", thus leaving no mark on the campsite. Food is kept in

a dream and the reality



a bear proof container or tied up out of reach in a tree.

We had a canoe route planning map showing the rapids to paddle and others to portage. Of these some comprising waterfalls we had no doubt about, others after careful inspection and consideration we paddled.

After a two-hour drive from the Outfitters with one hour on forest tracks the moment of reckoning arrived when we were dropped off at Lake Gamble on the Evelyn River in the wilderness and faced with the prospect of relying completely on canoeing to get out. We both had new Old Town Appalachian canoes with which we were very pleased as they performed very much like our own Prospectors. The outside of the Appalachian hull has no concave surfaces whilst the Prospector has a concave surface on each side near the ends which facilitates easier paddling on its edge. We decided to paddle solo though had we elected to share a canoe, the shuttle would have been cheaper by a seaplane!

One of the hardest aspects was not knowing the extent of any difficulties and having to suppress the negative thoughts that came into mind which could be overwhelming. It was far better to be thankful for the opportunity to experience a new dimension to canoeing and life. The Sun and beautiful blue skies raised our spirits. For hour after hour we paddled through a scene of banks lined with pine trees and punctuated by the occasional bird and stretches of fast moving water. The monotony was broken when we came to a portage, the first of four close together. On inspection from the bank the rapids with a drop of three feet appeared to have a good line down providing one was correctly positioned at the start to avoid nasty looking rocks and below was a series of standing waves that curved past a back eddy and boil. We portaged our kit stuffed into two bags each and enjoyed the exhilaration of paddling through rough water with bank support. The next falls were a stretch of fast moving water through a rock garden and on one side was a tight negotiable line, which we took in similar fashion. The next falls was a stretch of fast flowing water like on the Tryweryn except near the end there was a low overhanging



canoe trip:



branch which could easily be avoided by a proficient kayaker but as it was impossible to provide safety cover we decided to portage. As it was getting late we then found a place to camp. The Blackflies were numerous and very persistent. I was surprised at the effectiveness of appropriate clothing and chemical warfare with the use of insect repellents. Jim disagreed, as his bites are testimony. Others say your diet can stop the bugs biting. While having dinner we were entertained by a beautiful swimmer in the river pool, a beaver. After a cold night the early morning was insect free and generally once on the water the breeze kept the bugs away. We did not paddle the next falls, as one had to go through a stopper, which would have swamped the canoe. At lunchtime on the second day we realised that the trip could be very tiring due to portaging. The 525 metre portage was

strenuous, demanding and time consuming. We elected to carry lighter loads and do more trips to reduce the risk of injury. Anyone who requires help is advised to stay put and display distress signs, objects or fires in groups of three, until someone else arrives which could easily be two days or more. As usual we made an effort to find an exposed campsite to get relief from the flies.

In the evening a long and careful study of the canoe route guide book offered considerable encouragement as many of the next long portages could be paddled in part by experienced canoeists.

The next morning we had breakfast, packed up and were on the water by eight to continue through the South Channel one of the most popular routes in the district. Here the high and steep valley sides, the gloom, the mist and roar of waters cascading over falls was awesome and with its portages cause one to spend more time in this memorable place. The next portage of 345 yards was avoided by lifting the canoes over some boulders and paddling down a sidestream past the edge of the falls to a steep portage of 80 yards to the bottom of the falls. Thereafter the completion of a very rugged portage was rewarded by the sight of Bridal Veil Falls which were very spectacular and said to be one of the most beautiful falls in the district. We paddled more rapids to avoid the 945 yard portage but had to negotiate a fallen tree by pushing the canoes under its trunk while standing on top and on the bottom rapid just avoided getting trapped between two rocks by making a powerful well timed correction stroke.

Although we got off the water at four we desired a change the next day to recover from our exertions and decided weather permitting to sail the next section from Willow lake, north to Sucker Gut and on round to Lady Evelyn Lake hoping to avoid two long portages. In the evening sitting around our usual campfire we discussed plans and designs for a sailing catamaran. About 50 yards from our campsite was a small cove filled with tree trunks bleached by the sun and ideal for spars. In the morning we completed the sailing rig with Jim's expertise as a builder and with a favourable wind sailed about 11 miles in beautiful conditions until the afternoon when it rained with thunder. The next morning we were astonished that the wind had completely changed direction to assist us on the next leg after our prayers.

After the first day we estimated and planned our progress for the journey. Having saved many hours by avoiding the portages we now had two spare days providing the weather remained favourable. We decided to go South to Devil Mountain and do a hike. Navigating through Lady Evelyn Lake required a lot of concentration as there are no man made or outstanding natural features and therefore we constantly checked each other's estimated position. Although the paddling was virtually routine we were rewarded by coming very close to a Moose and calf. Just as we were about to shoot and capture it on film it moved behind a bush and out of sight. By this time on our fifth day we were used to spending about six hours paddling a day and still feeling relaxed. We thought about spending another week in the area but our food was running out. The days were easily filled with living, travel and canoeing tasks but with more time to sharpen ones senses and notice other things.

After paddling about 60 miles and doing far fewer than 18 portages we made our rendezvous with the Outfitter who took us back to Temagami for an excellent meal and to get ready for our return home the following day. Prior to leaving we had time to visit the Temagami Canoe company and were shown the manufacturing process for the Prospector covered with canvas a beautiful looking canoe.

And Jim's last comment, "It was a canoeing experience of a lifetime, I will have to go again!"

The reality proved to be better than the dream. Much more could be added but far better is to go and experience it for yourself.

Michael Brown, Jim Padfield. Members of the Association of Christian Canoeists. ●



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PADDLER'S GEAR reviews

Millennium Design Award Winning Product Opens Up New Opportunities in Water Sports for People With Disabilities.

A typical Bank Holiday in North Wales saw the launch of a significant piece of enabling equipment, hailed by many as a real breakthrough in the provision of Water Sports Activities for all in this new millennium. The exhilaration and enthusiasm of the National White Water Centre in Bala N.Wales provided an exciting backdrop for the launch of the AQUABAC, a unique modular postural support system for use in Canoeing, Kayaking, White Water Rafting, Sailing, Rowing, as well as the exciting world of adventure sport and scientific exploration.

The AQUABAC is a modular award winning postural support system that provides complementary support for people with severe disabilities, extreme postural requirements and for those with additional balance needs in water-sports. The AQUABAC features include; support through a combination of structural stiffeners and modular padding, which is located in a flat-packed highly adjustable body constructed from a foam and fabric laminate. The system also includes a low profile skin protection system. The AQUABAC can be used with a unique white water harness, developed at the National Water Sports Centre, to provide support in white water rafts for people with disabilities.

This lightweight innovative seating system is easily fitted to any craft, and has won a coveted Millennium Design Award from the Design Council. Recently featured on the BBC's Tomorrows World Program whilst being used by Mike Browne the British Paralympic 2.4 Sailing competitor and national champion in his class, who has spinal cord injury.

The AQUABAC Postural Support has been tested on a challenging five month integrated expedition, down the River Ganges by Open Canoe, as part of the final stages of a three-year development project by the Adventure Designs Team at Brunel University's not-for profit, self funding Design for Life Centre. This pioneering design team has led the development of adventure sport equipment for disabled people over the past five years. A people centred design ethic has won the Design for Life Centre at Brunel University three millennium design awards for their work in enhancing opportunities in outdoor sport, adventurous activities and

scientific exploration for people with disabilities. "The challenge now is to ensure that the teams hard work and the input from all of the charities involved over the past three years is able to reach those who so desperately need the Aquabac", said Professor Isherwood Head of Brunel University's department of design. "Consequently, we have joined forces with White Water Consultancy International Ltd., an organisation specialising in water sports equipment who will be manufacturing the Aquabac to exacting standards to ensure that the equipment is bought to those who need it"

Welcomed by disabled athletes: Tanni Grey Thompson OBE and Paralympic Gold Medallist.

"Posture provides the key to good performance. Good posture makes it possible for athletes to perform to their best. There has long been a need for an active support system in water sports for people with complimentary balance needs. The Aquabac meets the need, representing a significant move forward in the provision of barrier-free outdoor adventure and sports equipment for athletes and enthusiasts of all ages and abilities".

For more information about the Aquabac please contact;
**Linda Coote at
White Water
Consultancy on Tel:
01267 223555 Fax:
01267 223666 E.Mail
sales@wwc.co.uk**

For more information about the Design for Life Centre –
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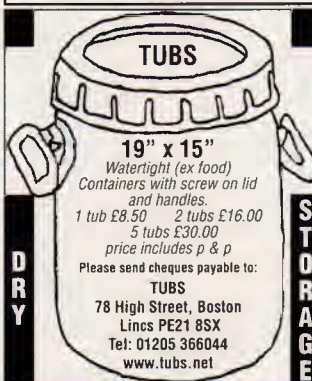
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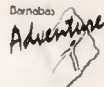
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New products from Endless River

Canoe couch

With so many uses, our canoe couch is a must for all canoe tourers' and centres. Made from heavy-duty cordura with fibreglass stiffeners, the seat will keep you comfortable for hours on end. It features adjustable side straps that allow you to find your best position, additional padding in the seat area, and a large mesh pocket on the back to keep all those handy items in. Underneath there is a strap system that allows the couch to be attached to most open canoe seats. This makes the canoe couch ideal for disabled or for people who require back support when paddling. When not in use in your canoe it provides an excellent comfortable seat for sitting round the camp.

Canoe couch £35.00

Allround cags

A basic cag ideal for centres and groups. Made from 4oz P.U. nylon it features an adjustable neoprene collar, neoprene cuffs and an elasticated waist. We have also introduced a colour coding system on the cags, so you can find the size you want straight away. Available in Junior, small, medium, large and extra large sizes.

All-round cag £28 .00

Karabiners

Good quality, high performance karabiners at affordable prices. All of our karabiners are anodised to give a better feel whilst providing durability and protection from the elements. The RESCUE and the STANDARD both feature a bent gate and are EC certified to climbing standards (unlike most other rescue karabiners). The mini D is ideal for securing equipment in your boat or as a key ring.

Rescue £8.00
Standard £5.00
Mini D £3.50



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A novel new floatation device has just hit the market, catering for the open canoe sector. No more punctured air bags hoorah! Made by Gnu Expedition Systems, the BFD Boat floatation Device or Big Friendly Dairy lee's, made from a

tailored block of high density polystyrene inside a very durable and well made PVC and Cordura 1000 cover equipped with a lashing strap and accessory bungies. Fitting is easy with the addition of a 'D' ring on the hull of the canoe about 20 cm back from the end of the bag. This has the effect of holding down and pulling the bag into the end of the canoe. The fit in my Prospector is snug, effective and fairly aesthetic. Each bag is rated as having 500N of floatation giving a good margin of error enabling you to still paddle a swamped boat and the possibility of bailing out more effectively. The System fits a wide range of sub 17 foot boats and a slightly bigger BFD2 is on the way. Gnu are willing to make custom modifications to the basic design such as the addition of pockets. The system has a Life time guarantee, you don't get that with an air bag!! An excellent product for a few quid more than

a quality air bag system, retailing at £59.99 a must for any hard user. Reviewed by Dave Luke



Contact: GNU on 01539 822223
www.gnuexpeditions.co.uk

Britain North to South

The question forced itself into our minds yet again as we posed for some final publicity photographs before setting off for Scotland and the realisation of a journey that we had first thought of four years earlier. Was it possible for two complete beginners to link the North coast of Scotland with the South coast of England in a kayak via inland waterways, and in doing so raise as much money and awareness as possible for the nationwide charity NCH Action For Children?

By the day of our departure we had tried to answer as many questions as we could. Yes, we were fitter than either of us had probably ever been. Yes, we had secured a double kayak and a spare (one, an Explorer 515, very generously lent by A.C. Canoe Products of Chester) as well as paddles, other equipment and a back-up van. Yes we had spent most of our spare time over the last few months trying to master - from scratch - kayaking techniques for all the varying water conditions we expected to encounter. Yes, we had finally mapped out what we felt was the best possible route from North to South. And yes, we had about £40,000 raised already, some of which depended on our completion of the trip.

Motivation was not a problem. A visit to just a handful of NCH Action For Children's 400 projects had shown us what excellent work they were doing and how well the money we raised would be spent. NCHAF's projects are spread up and down the country. They help underprivileged and needy children in all sorts of ways, always at a localised, grass roots level. Thus the publicity we sought was to alert people who might be in need of help as well as potential donors. But there were plenty of questions still unanswered; no one had ever attempted this particular adventure before. Was it actually possible? Would we have the stamina? Was the equipment up to it? Was it the right equipment? Would we end up loathing each other? Would we be chased off by the Loch Ness monster?

Our launch felt a little surreal. On a rocky outcrop jutting in to the North Sea, not far from the Kyle of Tongue, Sutherland, in solitude other than a few wheeling gulls. It was a cool, damp morning. In one direction lay the open sea, in the other there was almost a thousand miles of inland waterways to navigate. We donned our spray-decks, posed for a wonky self-timed photograph, shook hands and then gingerly climbed aboard our kayak as it rose and fell in the rather alarming swell. Neither of us had paddled a kayak in the sea previously and there were a few wobbles before we rounded the corner leading into the river mouth, under the stoical gaze of the local policeman who had kindly agreed to officially witness the start of our trip.

I wondered what other sights he had witnessed as custodian of Britain's most northerly cop shop. There is of course no single waterway that leads from the North coast to the South coast of Britain. Our route would take us up-river, down-river, along lochs, firths, lakes, navigations, canals and even a boating basin. However that was not all. There was a feature of the trip that we had not talked about too much during preparation. Something that was unavoidable whatever route we chose. The correct kayaking term that we had been taught for it was portage. Carrying one's kayak from water

course to water course where it was impossible to paddle. Not the best fun in the world. The pledge

we had made to our donors was that the whole trip would be undertaken by man power alone, with no help from anyone else at all. Unfortunately our first portage came after about 3/4 of a mile.

Shouldering our kayak, we had a short walk to the nearest inland loch. The rest of that day went by in a blur. Loch, portage, loch, portage, and finally - there was the back-up van. Parked in the designated place and visible from several miles away, it was a sight for sore eyes (and limbs). An important part of our planning and preparation was to meticulously ensure that we didn't put a foot or paddle anywhere that might be illegal, cause offence or any ill will at all. It was very time consuming writing endless letters to landowners but we felt it was imperative. We certainly didn't want to compromise the charity or the kayaking community in any way.

Thus it was a surprise on Day Two to be chased up a loch by a pair of fishermen in a motorised boat. Despite having spoken to the gamekeeper a few days earlier, we feared the worst. When they finally caught up with us we noticed something dangling from one of their fishing lines. It was a £20 note. They had heard about our endeavour in the pub the night before and were trying to give us some money. We got to our first town - Lairg - with few mishaps. One capsize in rough conditions and a relentless cross wind on Loch Shin but nothing serious. Danger tapped us on the shoulder on Day 6 as we made our way out from the Beaulieu River and into the Moray Firth. It was a choppy day and the tide was drawing us seaward with pace when our rudder broke.

We had been admiring a colony of seals loafing about on the sand banks when suddenly we lost our dirigibility and ended up taking stock on the very same stretch of sand. The only thing for it was to continue as best we could and we eventually climbed onto land at the sea lock that signified the start of the Caledonian Canal. Because of the incessant wind we decided



South - The hard way

Was it possible?

to tackle Loch Ness at 4.30 am, when all was dead calm. At that time the loch was wreathed in mist. If ever there was a moment for legend to surge into life, it was then. But the water was only disturbed by our paddle strokes and we continued alone, making good time. Next day we worked our way down to Fort William and beyond.

Our confidence was gaining daily. The boats could handle it, we could handle it. We were interviewed by the local radio station and it was strange hearing ourselves later - on a news bulletin - sounding very naive and keen. Yet it was a great boost to our confidence that people were taking us seriously, and being enthusiastic about our endeavour - despite our slot being mentioned at the very end of the show, after the lost moggy report...

Dragging our kayak across Rannoch Moor, high above Kinlochleven (Day 12), was probably our most difficult hurdle so far. It was 1500 feet up and extremely

rough going. It is known as one of the most barren places in Britain and we felt very isolated there. Yet despite continued rain we got to Loch Lomond in just a few days, using whatever lochs we could along the way, and then onto the River Clyde which we tackled upstream; through Glasgow and on as far as we could. They have an expression up there - "Do you think I came up the Clyde in a canoe?" meaning do you think I was born yesterday. Well, that is exactly what we did.

Thereafter we had a longer portage to get us to Moffat and the River Annan (reached on Day 21). At last we found a use for the sun block cream that we had so hopefully packed. It served as an excellent lubricant for the wheels on the Kayak Carrier Systems trolley. The Annan flows out into the Solway Firth which we had to cross to get to England. We feared its infamous currents yet, having learnt much about tidal movements over the last weeks, we managed it with much effort but no real problems. We eventually got to the River Eden and again paddled upstream as far as we could go. The Eden and the Annan are both renowned fishing rivers and special permission from every single riparian owner along our route was sought - and got. The fact that we were only one craft - and that it was a charity run - was definitely in our favour. Thereafter our route took us through the Lake District (yet more permission required for Ullswater, Windermere and the River Kent) to Kendal. Just South of Kendal lies the start

of the Lancaster Canal. Once upon a time the canal system of England was so impressive that you could take a narrow boat from Kendal to the English Channel. Not any more.

Nevertheless our maps told us that our tough portages were at an end. Indeed, with the start of

the canals we realised we had answered most of the questions we had once been so unsure about. Now it was just a case of stamina. It had taken us exactly a month to get there, we estimated another three weeks (including stops to visit some of NCH Action For Children's projects) would get us to the South coast. Could we do it? Of course we could.

The weather changed completely. Suddenly we were paddling through a heat wave. Yet we were far fitter even than when we started out and the whole operation had become very slick. The back-up volunteers were, without exception, superb. The charity gave us a great deal of support. Money was still coming in. We had almost learnt to paddle in time with each other....Our route South from Kendal sounded like a canal enthusiasts itinerary - and I suppose it was. Leeds-Liverpool, Bridgewater, Ashton, Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Coventry, Birmingham and Fazeley, Oxford, Grand Union. The canals we used to get to London. We ate up the miles

with little to stop us. There was always something to look at, whether it was unspoilt country, industrial decay, urban regeneration or simply the beauty and sense of history one gets from the canals

themselves. By day 42 we had got to Braunston Junction of the Grand Union Canal where we saw a

signpost to London. Although there were still about 200 miles

between us and the South coast it felt like the finishing post was almost within reach. It was at this point that we actually took a slight detour. In order to publicise NCH

Action For Children a little more we branched off the main Grand Union Canal into central London.

Eventually we joined the Thames and headed upstream once more.

Powering our way under Tower Bridge, where some friends had gathered to cheer us on, we felt like conquering heroes. That is until the Harbour Master appeared and moved us along. On we went to Teddington where we stayed the night before joining the Wey Navigation down to Guildford. We then walked along the towpath of the Wey and Arun Canal which is mostly derelict despite the best efforts of the members of the Wey and Arun Canal Trust. It is known as the Lost Route to the Sea since once upon a time it linked London to the South coast. The final day, Day 51 was perfect clear blue skies and no wind. Our task was to paddle down the River Arun from Pallingham Quay (now just a field but once it was the wharf that joined the river to the canal) to Littlehampton.

The Arun is one of Britain's fastest flowing rivers and we completed our task by 1.30pm, to be greeted by a few friends, family members and NCH Action For Children representatives (whose support and enthusiasm had been a constant boon throughout the trip) as well as various radio and TV reporters. We had done it. 919 miles. Further than Lands End to John O Groats. The money pledged was secured. We had become the first people ever to link Britain's North and South coasts in this way. It was the most exhilarating feeling, one that, with the English Channel sparkling away in the sunshine as a back drop, we will never forget. ●



reviews

Birch Creek Canoes: The Birch Creek Canoe



Birch Creek technical spec

Length:	16ft
Max beam at water-line:	34"
Max beam at gunnel:	32.5"
Bow Height:	21"
Depth:	14"
Rocker:	Approx 2.5"
Materials:	Polyester resin and glass fibre
Fittings:	Hardwood gunnels, thwarts and decks Hardwood and webbing seats Stainless steel screws
Cost:	Standard fitting out - £700
Made by:	Birch Creek Canoes Cenarth Newcastle Emlyn Ceredigion, SA38 9JU Tel: 01239 710391
Special Likes:	Volume Ease of paddling Responsiveness Good looks Lightness Oh well - everything!
Special Dislikes:	None (and I hate not having a carping point to raise in a review!)
Final Comment:	My order is already in for my own Birch Creek (white with a blue interior, with an angled centre seat)



The Birch Creek Canoe is the latest, and ultimate, canoe to be designed and built by Alan Bridges. So pleased is Alan, one of Britain's premier canoe designers, that he is saying that he will never design another 16ft open canoe as he could never better this model.

Built from polyester resin and biaxial woven glass cloth with a Spheritex core, the Birch Creek combines Alan's skill and knowledge of laying up glass (a skill based on his background in surf-board construction and 10 years of canoe building) with modern materials. Add to this a superb design owing much to the North American Indian as well as traditional "Prospector" and "Peterborough" designs, top it all off with excellent hardwood fittings, all secured with stainless steel screws and, yes, you have a thoroughbred of a canoe that is almost faultless! Light, at around 56-58lbs, the Birch Creek is easy to portage, yet is so constructed, using a complex lay up of the layers of glass and Spheritex with a minimum of resin as to be very stiff, without any of the "wobble" you may expect from such a light canoe. Even when I sent the canoe darting through 3ft breaking chop on the Tivy estuary and through haystacks on a minor rapid, the floor of the canoe showed no sign of "oil canning" or flexing. The broad hull, combined with the fine V entry and excellent hollow bow shaping, gives a remarkable

performance. The Birch Creek slices through the water with the minimum of effort and responds to your strokes quickly and easily, but without being "twitchy". Stable and tracking well, this canoe also manoeuvres superbly and a whole repertoire of whitewater moves on our local river provided proof that stability does not have to mean sluggishness in the turns!

With graceful uncluttered lines, traditional but minimalistic fittings, the Birch Creek not only paddles beautifully, it looks beautiful too.

You can have the Birch Creek in any colour you fancy, but standard colours are dark green, red, blue and white, with various "optional extras" in fitting out available. Alan prefers purchasers to buy a white exterior with a coloured interior.

The standard £700 canoe (non standard colour is an extra £15) comes with two hardwood and webbing seats and a fixed centre thwart, while a third, "centre" seat for solo paddling and angled for kneeling or sitting (as well as taking a passenger if required) will cost an extra £40. A centre kneeling thwart will cost an extra £25.

With these options the centre thwart, shaped for portaging, is removable for clearance when using the centre position.

Built-in rigid air tanks at bow and stern will cost an extra £30 (half the price of air bags and much more durable and attractive).

Ideal for most canoeing needs from day trips on calm water through family paddling and canoe camping to moderate white water paddling, the Birch Creek is a joy and makes paddling much other canoes feel like paddling wash tubs. If you think glass canoes are only for calm water, then hone your skills so you can avoid rocks and try the joys of glass and white water!

I have long admired Alan Bridges' canoes and out of all my seven canoes, prefer his 16ft Classic for most work. Now I have a problem. Do I sell the Classic 16ft, or my wife, to raise the cash to buy a Birch Creek?

Reviewed by John Fenna

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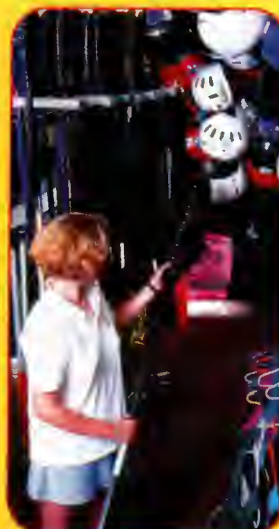
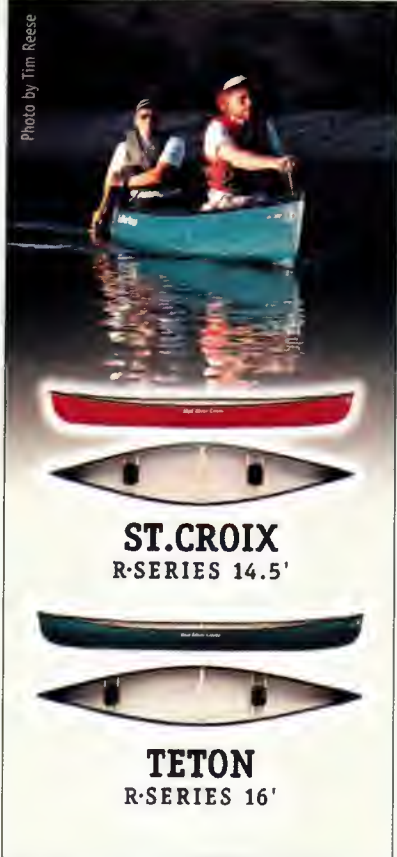


Photo by Tim Reese



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R-SERIES 16'

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Jimmy Blakeney throwing ends.



Photo by Dan Gavere



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Ken Whilling tripping on the Ottawa, Canada.



Photo by Tanva Shuman



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