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Canoe Focus would like to thank the
following contributors for their articles and
photographs:

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John Fenna and of course, Mike Devlin
Good paddling to you all!

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COMMENT

Paul Owen
Chief Executive

Access

Forty MP's have signed Early Day Motion 978 "Access to Inland Water for water-based sports". Whilst, an Early Day Motion in itself will not bring about a change in the law it is a very important indication of which MP's are in support of our campaign so please, if you have not already done so contact your MP, even if you have already been in touch, write again drawing attention to the Early Day Motion 978.

BCU Officers have also been lobbying hard and meetings have taken place with Alun Michael the Government Minister responsible for Rural Affairs, Shadow Ministers Peter Ainsworth (DEFRA), John Greenway (Sport) and all of the national agencies involved.

We understand that the minister is discussing the situation with colleagues and interested departments to seek a way forward.

International Canoe Exhibition 2003

The International Canoe Exhibition will be moving in 2003 to be held alongside the Outdoor Show from March 14 to 16. The venue remains the National Exhibition Centre but it is anticipated that the link with the outdoor show will bring many more visitors and allow the exhibition to develop.

Particular enhancements include unprecedented investment in several new features, full details will appear in a future edition of *Canoe Focus*.

Sports Club of the Year

The Foundation for Sports and the Arts in association with The Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) have announced the 9th Sports Club of the Year Awards. Searching for clubs that encourage more people to take part in sport or recreation, setting standards in excellence that other clubs aspire to, perhaps working with schools, local authorities and other community organisations.

With prizes of :

£10,000 first place

£ 4,000 second place

£ 1,000 third place

This is a highly prestigious award and nomination forms

are available from Vera Whalley in the BCU office. They should be returned to Vera by 12th July.

Community Amateur Sports Clubs

We are pleased to inform members clubs that the governments approach to so called Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) has softened. In his budget speech, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced a package of tax reliefs to support clubs. This was immediately followed by revised guidance from the Charity Commission on their decision to recognise as charitable: "The promotion of community participation in healthy recreation by providing facilities for various sports".

After much lobbying by various sports bodies including the BCU, a package of tax reliefs has been introduced for sports clubs who fulfill certain criteria, but do not wish to apply for charitable status. These tax reliefs are not as attractive as those available for charities, notably the lack of 80% business rate relief, but nevertheless can provide financial benefits to the clubs.

To qualify as a CASC, the club must be open to the whole community, organised on an amateur basis and their main purpose must be to provide facilities for, and promote participation in an eligible sports including canoeing.

Clubs are advised to send a SAE to the BCU office to receive a briefing note on the current situation, although precise details on which route to take will not be available until the finance bill receives royal assent in July.

Modernisation

UK Sport recently launched a new initiative called UK Sport's – Modernisation Programme. This new project covers a wide range of potential areas that are primarily aimed at national governing bodies of sport who wish to review and update a specific area of their management practice. This is particularly important in 2002 with the introduction and impact of the Human Rights Act on sport in general.

The BCU has been fortunate enough to be given an award and are working with Mike Whittingham of Direction Sportive. The list below indicates the scope and nature of the project:

1. Selection & de-selection onto World Class Programmes
2. Selection onto international teams
3. Athlete agreement
4. Code of conduct
5. Anti doping policy & procedures
6. Disciplinary procedures
7. Appeals procedures
8. Complaints/grievance procedures

Although commencing with the disciplines receiving World Class funding, it is intended to use the review to assist all areas and disciplines of the BCU.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the Sprint Racing Team who achieved 23 final places at the first World Cup Regatta of the season in Mechlen, Belgium. Also, to the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race organisation for successfully getting the race back up and running this year.

Canoes & Kayaking goes yellow

White Water Consultancy International Ltd has been able to get Yellow Pages to give them a new section advertising what they do. Check out Canoes & Kayaking in their latest editions.

Fenland Activities

Is an innovative idea to promote touring in open canoes on the upland rivers running into the Fens and its watercourses. With the hundreds of miles of watercourses to choose from, pilot schemes will be arranged this season to access suitable routes of interest to explore this enigmatic land. "Adventurers" drained the Fens in the 16/17th century, we are looking for today's Adventurers to paddle these routes.

Interested?

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Action for Access 2002

Following on from years of quiet lobbying for more access to inland waters and culminating in the current lobby supported by many of our members, a team from the BCU and WCA led by the BCU Chief Executive met with the Rt. Hon. Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs and his DEFRA team, on Tuesday 26th March 2002.

The Minister who proved to be well aware of canoeists' problems, is now getting to grips with the obstacles to obtaining more access and stated that there is a real commitment to finding a solution. The Minister recognised that the many years of patient negotiation had not been effective. He would instigate further discussions where necessary within government departments. It was noted that the amalgamation of MAF into DETRA to form DEFRA gave opportunities for closer liaison between angling, navigation and other associated interests. Ways forward were discussed but it was emphasised that there was no short route to a satisfactory solution. He made it clear that we should not expect to obtain a speedy solution, as the government's current programme for legislation made it impossible to consider new legislation at this time but it should not be ruled out in the long run.

There will now need to be further discussions, at officer level, to press for actions on a series of possibly helpful interim measures. The BCU Access Management Committee will consider what further action should be initiated at its meeting in April and will make recommendations to the Board in due course. The access team thanks those canoeists who have given practical support to this campaign that has raised the profile of access to Ministerial level.

Paddling his way into history!

Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) supporter Richard Atkinson, from Billericay is planning to canoe the entire way around the British mainland. He will set out from the Scottish coastline in May and expects the 2000-mile journey to take around four months.

Richard's journey will take him anti-clockwise around Britain and along the way he will pass Portsmouth, St. Austell, Anglesey, Liverpool, Aberdeen and Skegness. He explains that some parts could be extremely dangerous, "Around the Pentland Firth, close to John O'Groats, the tides reach up to ten knots and the north coast of Cornwall will see me exposed to the Atlantic swells."

Along the way he will be carrying out important research

for WDCS as he records sightings of marine mammals. Richard is also keen to support the WDCS Active Seas programme: Richard says, "I want to be able to combine my trip with research highlighting the small numbers of whales still left, whose survival is in grave danger if we allow hunting to start again."

Richard began canoeing nearly 20 years ago and has held a qualified coaching badge with the British Canoe Union since he was 19 (he is now 32). He has worked as an instructor at an outdoor centre in Pembrokeshire and is currently a member of the Braintree Canoe Club polo team. But its always been his dream to undertake a major adventure. If you would like to sponsor **Richard's UK challenge please contact him on 07979 917635 alternatively, you can call Nicky at WDCS on 01249 449512**. If you would like to send sponsorship direct to WDCS please send it to **2002 Canoe Challenge, WDCS, Brookfield House, 38 St, Paul Street, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1LY**. www.wdcs.org

The suffering of orca whales

The Born Free Foundation is an international animal welfare and conservation charity dedicated to helping animals all around the world. One of our projects is our orca project in which we campaign for the alleviation of the suffering of orca whales in captivity and fund the vital research and work of experts to protect these magnificent creatures in the wild.

To try to raise funds desperately needed for this project, in June 2003 the Born Free Foundation are holding a Kayaking with the whales wildlife challenge where participants travel to Canada and take the challenge to kayak from Horseshoe bay, Vancouver Island around Hanson Island and back to Horseshoe bay. This challenge promises to be a once in a lifetime trip with opportunities to meet the experts who work tirelessly to protect the wild orca in the area and maybe spot some other local wildlife such as bears, coyotes, wolves and eagles. More details can be viewed by visiting www.bornfree.org.uk/holiday

I would like to ask you if you would help Born Free to promote this challenge either at your club by putting up a poster. Obviously, we would like to get as many people on the trip as possible because we would raise more funds for the orcas but if we could get 15 people that would be great. If you would like to help, I would love to hear from you. **Please give me a call on 01403-240170** or email me trisha@bornfree.org.uk

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location | Perth River
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Closed

Sea- Kayaker friendly campsite at Arduaine, 20 miles South of Oban has now closed permanently. The nearest sites now at Lochgilphead and Oban. It is the end of an era, following 17 years of special welcome and knowledgeable attention from the Rentoul Family who have built a particular bond with a generation of sea paddlers.

Photo credit:
Martin Tapley



Piece of history for sale

Our collection of old sea associated items has to be disbanded as they have lost the lease on the building and cannot find another. They are trying to find good homes for a lath and canvas folding canoe used by the commandos during the second world war and a Tyne canoe. I understand both are over 60 years old and have been looked after and loved. They are both usable but I think more suitable to be part of a collection. Are there any clubs or other groups who would be interested in either offering these items of living history a home or any advice on how to find them. They have to vacate the premises in the next few weeks, but I am willing to try and store them if I can.

Contact: Gill Barnsley
e-mail GillColin17@aol.com

New address

BCU NW Region Chair
Mr. Andy Noblett
'Brooklands'
61, Whalley Road, Langho,
Blackburn BB6 8EF
01254 248457

Teaming up



Team Perception paddlers on this year's Touch the Water Tour will be sporting the latest gear from Nookie as they strut their stuff around the UK and Europe. Andre Goldsmith says "The majority of our Team paddlers have been using Nookie kit for some time now. We're very pleased with the design and performance of the kit being used and were keen for it to be available to our remaining Team paddlers. With Nookie now being the official soft-wear supplier to Team Perception we will be able to offer paddlers the opportunity to find out more about this excellent range when they visit us at events on the Tour".

www.nookie.co.uk

Taking on the world

Team Perception paddlers Matt Tidy (paddling the Full Tilt) and Andy Stuart (paddling the Spin) will represent GB at this summer's Freestyle Pre-World Championships and the European

Championships. Both paddlers will also be amongst a number of Team Perception paddlers who will be participating in the prestigious Euro Cup series.

Stick a cork in it

Moulded foam bungs are now available to fit the self-bailers on the Perception Squirt, Freedom and Freedom 2 (Scooter and Gemini versions are scheduled for late summer availability). The specially shaped bungs are ideal for keeping your backside dry by preventing back flow through the bailers when the boat is being used for flat water paddling. The bungs are not however recommended for use on the sea where the self-bailers are required to prevent swamping of the seating area. The bungs are £2.50 per pair from Perception dealers. For further details call

Perception on 01825 765891 or email

sales@perception.co.uk

www.perception.co.uk

Busy weekend

Eighteen members of the Wensum Ospreys Canoe club who are based in Fakenham Norfolk spent a weekend in April involved in all kinds of adventure exercises based at The Dunton Adventure Centre near Fakenham. Friday evening saw a four mile night hike with tasks to complete on the way followed by supper and lights out at 2.00am.

On the Saturday the members and instructors all paddled seven miles down the River Wensum from Fakenham to Bintree Mill with a grand picnic lunch at Great Ryburgh and then paddled on through the wonderful scenery of Senowe Park. A fish and chip supper was followed by indoor games in the evening.

Sunday morning was spent decorating five of the clubs Canadian Canoes using only basic materials ready for the Dragon Boat races on the river at Fakenham. The races were carried out in three heats and a grand "no rules final race" saw most of the Dragon Boats and their paddlers ending up swimming in the river. Nigel Emmerson, one of the organisers said "the event had taken many months for the committee to prepare as we had to ensure that the weekend was filled with suitable activities for the ages of the children attending and to make sure that everyone had enough food and drink at the various events". Nigel also said it is very pleasing to see yet another way of using the Canadian canoes as these were partly funded by local charities.

Nigel Emmerson, club secretary 01328 864062.

Radnorshire youth service canoeing project

Up to 25 young people from Radnorshire will be taking to the water over the next few weeks as they work towards achieving their British Canoeing Association Star Awards. As part of a partnership project between Radnorshire Youth Service and Radnor Sports Development Group, introductory sessions will be held at Llyn Clywedog under the guidance of staff from the Staylittle Outdoor Centre. The assessment process will take place during a two day river trip along the River Severn, including an overnight camp.

In a new departure for the Youth Service, young people from other, existing youth support agencies have been referred onto the programme. Under the banner "Flexible Routes", links have been made with the Youth Offending Team and Careers Wales/Powys Youth. Gateway workers are to include young people who may, otherwise have not had the opportunity to involve themselves with the project.

Commenting on the project, Youth Link Worker for Mid Powys, Paul Rowe, said: "To be able to work in partnership with other agencies is a central part of the future for Youth Services in Powys. It is very positive to see organisations working in this way. Ultimately it is young people who will benefit" For further information on this and other project work, contact Radnorshire Youth Service at the area office, Rhayader YMCA, Tel: 01597 810792.

Big Move Competition

The BCU Surf Committee has decided to hold a competition this year for the best move in a surf kayak to be captured on film. There will be prizes of £50 for both the photographer and paddler in each of two categories - best photo and best video.

Rules:

- 1) Winners to be voted by the attendees at the BCU Surf Committee Annual Meeting. This is planned to be held on the 12th October 2002 at Bigbury-On-Sea, Devon.
- 2) Only photos and videos taken during this year's competitions will count.
- 3) The winning entries will then be submitted to the World Big Move contest.
- 4) All entrants agree as a condition of entry, that the BCU Surf Committee will have the right to use the winning entries to help promote the sport.

Andrew Hawker, Chair, BCU Surf Committee. Tel: (+44) 01202 695451. Fax: (+44) 0870 8318758
Email: ajh@ahawker.screaming.net

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Slalom statement

Andy Koszary BCU Slalom Committee Treasurer has resigned from the post because of personal reasons. He will remain in post until a replacement is found or the 2002 Slalom AGM. Although Andy is keen to relinquish the post as soon as possible, he will work with and give his support to who ever takes over the post.

The Slalom Executive Committee would like to put on record their sincere thanks to Andy for all his hard work, commitment and dedication over the last five years.

If any body would like to take over the position of Treasurer or be consider for election at the next Slalom AGM please contact:-

BCU Slalom Secretary
Irena Paxton: 01559 363137 Email irenapaxton@hotmail.com
Or the Slalom Administrator
01582 651615
Fax: 01582 708834
Email slalom.admin@bcu.org.uk

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A new policy, Primary Active, does just that, providing cover for a huge range of sports ranging from the thrilling to the seriously dangerous. It's just been

cancelled, normal medical and repatriation expenses, travel delay and personal liability.

You can't just leap in at the deep end on your holiday without considering the implications. If you don't have any travel insurance, you will end up paying for any medical expenses out of your own pocket and the same is true if your travel policy doesn't allow you to participate in your chosen activity. These expenses can run into thousands of pounds, so it really does pay to check out your situation before you travel.

All it takes is one call to Primary Direct to find out about the Primary Active policy. But, if you'd like to try and win our competition prize and receive free cover for the year ahead, just answer this question.

On what telephone number can you find out about Primary Active?

Send your answer, along with name, address and daytime telephone number, on a postcard to Sue Cowpe, Catapult PR, 19a-20a Marsh Mill Village, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 4JZ. Please also state where you intend travelling to and what sports you wish to participate in during the coming year. The first name drawn after the closing date of July 1st 2002 will win the policy.

launched on to the market and to celebrate this, we've linked up with its provider Primary Direct (0870 444 3434) to offer one lucky reader the change to win a year-long policy.

A Primary Active annual multi-trip policy, worth around £150 depending upon which sports you like to pursue, is up for grabs, giving you the liberty to do anything from scuba diving to surfing, and white water rafting to jet skiing, as many times a year as you like.

It won't only cover you for medical expenses or personal accident claims that you might have to make if you are injured, but will also cover your normal travel insurance requirements, such as baggage,

WILD web

In this crowded country it is often difficult to find a place void of people, where you can have a few quite private moments without interruption. A place to pitch the tent, light a small fire, and relax away from the pressures of the Human world. One form of paddling can offer some of this

freedom: sea kayaking. If you hanker for a sunset on a lonely beach then you need not look any further. Sea Kayaking, however, has its dangers. If you are thinking of trying sea kayaking seriously then the FAQ pages at <http://64.119.167.187/Kayak/sfaq/toc.html> deal with

every issue from buying a boat to deciding whether you're ready to go it alone.

The open sea is an unforgiving world, where man can survive only with the aid of his intelligence and his technology be that a read boat or a survival suit. At the heart of sea kayaking is your equipment.

www.gorp.com/gorp/gear/packlist_ky.htm gives a great tick list for those about to go on a trip. One critical item of

equipment is your compass. Without this you can easily become disorientated on the open sea, and a useful page with guidance for compass usage can be found here www.learn-orienteeing.org/old/. Interesting discussions on the type of bilge pump you carry and other issues can be found here

<http://users.senet.com.au/~pcharter/seakayak.html>

You can paddle a river without being able to roll, but at sea a competent rolling technique is a life saver. If you thought that rolling was just a matter of screwing around then check out

<http://members.rogers.com/michaeldaly2/kayakRollingXref.htm>. Here you will find brief descriptions of 51 rolling techniques. So you have no excuse, even if wearing a straight jacket.

If the bland statement that competent rolling technique is a life saver hasn't convinced you that you need to learn then check out this page on hypothermia www.enter.net/~skimmer/coldwater.html. Its effects on the body are literally shocking, with the gasping reflex meaning you can easily inhale water. Although you may feel warm when above the water your clothing needs to reflect the temperature of the water you are paddling over. Further advice on the treatment of hypothermia, as well as details of the equipment you need to carry is at www.marinerkayaks.com/mkhtml/Kyksaftw.html

Another key issue is your ability to paddle. Sea kayakers cover huge distances without the aid of a river flowing in their direction. Indeed, the sea currents and wind often actively work against you in the attempt to head in a generally forward direction. Paddling both efficiently and in a straight line are therefore essential, a topic discussed at www.paddles.com/library/straight.html. This article is a bit technical, so for five simple rules for paddling try www.usawildwater.com/tech/010102.htm in which Brent Reitz focuses on the role of the upper body in paddling.

There are plenty of other pages on this subject throughout the internet, not to mention people offering courses, so browse your way to a lonely beach at sunset.

Steve Howie

RAF paddle for charity



Sgt Justin Scholes (pictured front) with Corporal Tony French

Ten Royal Air Force physical training instructors – usually found urging their colleagues on to greater achievements in the gymnasium – will test their own fitness in a gruelling kayak paddle around the circumference of the Isle of Wight.

The instructors kept in touch after completing an RAF course in 1992. They arranged the sponsored maritime challenge for 19th May when they learned that one of them, Corporal David Ledger, had been

left almost completely paralysed following a freak kayaking accident in the summer of 2000.

David, 30, who is himself an accomplished canoeist and represented Great Britain in the sport, will be the guest of honour at the challenge, welcoming them over the finishing line. They are expected to complete the 65-mile course in eleven hours. The event co-ordinator is Sgt Justin Scholes, who said that they hoped to raise £5,000 from sponsorship which would buy an adjustable bed for David, who now lives in a specially adapted bungalow purchased for him by the RAF Benevolent Fund. Justin said they would circumnavigate the island anti-clockwise, starting and finishing the trip from Keyhaven on the UK mainland. "We will be using the tides to our advantage, taking it in turn so that it is a real team effort. The waters can be difficult and dangerous, and there will be easy, hard and rough legs to challenge us."

David's accident happened in Bratislava, Slovakia when he was coaching the Great Britain U23 Canoe Slalom team Canoeing nearly two years ago. Since then he has tried to live as independent a life as possible. He has enjoyed exceptional success in canoeing, a huge part of his life since he was eleven years old. He was a member of the Great Britain Junior Team and the U24 team, a member of the England team for many years, and was involved in coaching the Great Britain U23 team for a total of three years. Canoeing still continues to be an important part of his life. He works with the British Canoe Union as regional co-ordinator for Yorkshire, Humberside and Teeside U18 Paddlers, and is currently applying to Leeds University to study diet and nutrition. He said: "I was very touched that my friends wanted to take part in such a challenging event – just for me. I am sure with their effort and determination that they will succeed. The new bed will be a great bonus and make my life a lot more comfortable."

Contact: Sgt Justin Scholes on 07866 720555.

Take a break on the Thames

At last – messing about on the non-tidal Thames has just become a lot easier. Want to hire a rowing boat and laze in the backwaters? Go canoeing followed by a good pint? Contact www.visithames.co.uk

This website, set up by the Environment Agency which manages the non-tidal river, has just received a massive upgrade. It has a new interactive map so you can click on any part of it to discover where to hire and buy boats, where to go rowing, canoeing and sailing and fishing, where to eat, where to stay, what events are on, and much more. **The Agency also runs an Information Line 0845 601 5336 (local rates).**

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4-6 October

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Grade II.

Contact: **Neil Fuller, Sheran Cottage, Saxon Street, Lower Langford, BS40 5BP Somerset.** E-mail: enquiries@sacc.co.uk**Help wanted**

10th August

Cross - Mersey swim

This is a charity event international swim race, which cannot take place without safety cover from canoeists.

It is proposed to have 15 - 20 swimmers, ideally each having individual cover.

2.00 pm meeting to catch the tide.

Evening presentation in the 'Clipper' plus out of pocket expenses

(remember this is a charitable event).

For further details, please contact Dave McGarry on 0151 287 4644 e-mail d.mcgarry@blueyonder.co.uk**A 10th anniversary**

This year is the 10th anniversary of Cranfield canoe club in its present form. To celebrate this they are holding a re-union event at Cardington artificial slalom course over the weekend of 10/11th August. If you were once a member or had some connection with the club in the past ten years or have some connection with present members, then you are invited to come down and join the party.

Contact **Tim Pryor by phone at the University,** or e-mail at t.pryor@cranfield.ac.uk.

Cheshire Ring Race

June 29th - 30th June

Macclesfield & District Canoe Club are pleased to confirm this years race. Sadly last year's race was cancelled due to F&M. The first time in the club's history this popular event hasn't taken place. We hope the teams and individual paddlers from last year are eager to join us this year. We aim to make it a race to remember! The race is open to teams or individuals who like a challenge. The 96 mile race is run over 24 hours, includes tunnels, locks, town and country, and the night paddling.

Anyone who hasn't heard of this event and would like details please contact: **Pauline Bett, Tel: 01925 75 6728,** or email pauline@23madcc.fsnet.co.uk include full address and contact number.

Perception Wavehopper Challenge series

Saturday 1st & 29th June 2002

The Perception Wavehopper Challenge series is being held at the Burrs Activity Centre. This is a great opportunity for young people to experience another aspect of Paddlesport in a fun and challenging way.

The race will include coaching in Junior Whitewater Racing kayaks and prizes will be given to winners along with medals. The series will conclude with the final of the series held at Bala on the 20th July, where the overall winner will be taken from the best times achieved from two local events and Bala final.

If any readers would like to enter young people to the event this will help greatly with the planning and respective numbers. Readers could also let me know by email and payments can be made on the day of event.

Len Hartley, Paddlesport Development Officer, BCU Northwest

Hasler Final

22nd September 2002

If you had a mind to laying that scrunchy gravel driveway now is a good time. The 2002 Hasler Final - marathon racing's national inter-club final - is to be held at Eaton School's regatta course near Windsor. The host club is Wey Kayak Club. Confused? Well, our own patch of local water is a little narrow and sometimes makes for "interesting" starts; the 700 or so competitors coming to Eaton in September will be ensured of a fair and fast start. As is usual, there will be three race distances, of 20, 12 and 6km. The proposed long course will take in one lap of the lake a portage out on to the Thames a sprint to Boveney Lock, down to Windsor CC, back upstream over Boveney, around the hotel on Monkey Island and back into the regatta lake for a final lap. For the middle distance the river section will be shorter: up to Queen's Eyot and back. For paddlers in divisions 7, 8 and 9 this will be a race with a difference: a straightforward two laps around the regatta lake, where competitors will be ensured of a loud cheer from start to finish. Of course, this all depends on whether you do that drive before September because the full course hasn't been dug out yet - and there's a lot of gravel to be shifted!

Qualifying for the Hasler Final

Paddler's score points for their club by entering marathon races in held their region over the season. Points are awarded for entering, being well placed in the results and gaining promotion. The clubs with the most points are invited to compete in the Hasler Final together with the armed services clubs and the host club. To compete for their club, an

individual paddler must have entered at least three qualifying races during the season. A list of races can be found in the BCU yearbook, the Racing Handbook and <http://www.bcu.org.uk/marathon/calendar.html>

This is a year of anniversaries 50 years of marathon racing and 60 years since Major Hasler led the commando raid by canoe against enemy shipping in Bordeaux, so you wouldn't want to miss out would you?

5:10 Coaching Festival

7th/8th September 2002



It's back! The 5:10 Coaching Festival. Two days of back-to-back, boating workshops interrupted by an evening of slide shows and scoff and topped-off with a Team Freestyle competition. It's a weekend of boating Heaven. Whether you're an open-boater or kayaker, novice or advanced, freestyler or river-runner there's

guaranteed to be something that will edge your boat. The half-day workshops will be run by the UK's leading coaches and will cover almost every aspect of boating, from freestyle and river-running to safety & rescue, all offering awesome coaching at a reduced price. Off-water, 5:10 will be around to tempt your tooty-toes into their latest demo shoes along with a whole bank of other stores and manufacturers to drool over. Then, after dark, some of the world's top boaters will emerge from their cockpits to entertain you with tales of their latest epics and adventures. Finally, there's a chance to strut your stuff in the Tag-Team Rodeo on Sunday afternoon (not to be taken too seriously...). With workshops, evening events, a rodeo and a Tour to Bala, it's the 5:10 Coaching Festival: Better & Wetter in 2002.

Festival details and booking forms will be available in July. **To request your booking form contact the Canolfan Tryweryn Coaching Department on 01678 521083** or e-mail canolfan-tryweryn@virgin.net.

The Waterfront Festival

Saturday 29th - Sunday 30th June 2002

A weekend festival of watersports and entertainment from Brighton Marina to Hove Lagoon.

Now in its second year, this unique event will feature two days of exciting sea races, watersport demonstrations and tournaments, complemented by an on-shore programme with a music stage and exhibition spaces. Local businesses and organisations have joined forces to create a full and varied programme of events, with fun activities for the public to participate in and enjoy for free.

Hove Lagoon

National Windsurf Championships at Hove Lagoon. Hove Lagoon will play host to the National Windsurf championships. On Saturday, there will also be a major youth windsurfing event in association with The Royal Yachting Association.

Kite Surfing demonstration by Ocean Sports. Kite-surfing demonstrations and competitions with professional teams, including some of the top 10 world competitors, will be held on the beach near King Alfred Leisure Centre, and the public will also be invited to try their hand at kite-surfing.

Kite Flying demonstration by Air Born Kites. Air Born Kites



will be flying large-scale decorative kites on the beach as part of the festival.

Performance by Same Sky. Same Sky are planning to create a piece to be performed at intervals between dawn and dusk on Saturday 29 June between Hove Lagoon and Brighton Marina.

Brighton Marina

Zapcat National Race Series. A powerboat racing event as part of the 2002 National Race Series, will be held at Brighton Marina. The event will be covered by Sky Sports on 'Fastrax'.

Neilson Active Holidays Sailing Challenge. Local business and schools will team up for a fun sailing event where participants get the chance to learn basic sailing and yacht racing skills, culminating in a series of races.

Waterpolo by Brighton Swimming Club. A waterpolo sea tournament will be held in the inner harbour of the marina on Saturday, with regional teams competing.

Dragon Boat racing, made up of teams from local businesses will take place on Sunday.

Have-a-go at Brighton Marina. The Absolute from Hove Lagoon will be taking up to nine people at a time to 'have a go' at sailing. They will be taking people out on the large RIB and Mako powerboats.

Kids entertainment. There will be a bouncy slide and other free kids rides at the Marina on both days.

Event exhibition. There will be stands displaying water sport products, event information and information about our partner organisations and sponsors.

For more information contact Isabelle Boudaud at Zap Productions on 01273 821 588 or by email at isabelle@zapuk.com

BCU eastern region weekend 2002

Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th June

At Herts Young Mariners Base, Cheshunt, Herts

Coaching courses: revalidation, child protection, injury prevention, aquatic first aid, level 2 coach symposium, racing seminar, CST.

Meet your regional and local coaching organisers

Star tests, kayak and open boats, canoe sailing, come and try sessions, canoe safety, test training and assessments, aquatic first aid, rodeo clinic and young persons fun event

All courses are pre-bookable at £6.00 each

Camping available all weekend, trade stands, barbecue, illustrated lecture. For more details or to book courses contact Lesley and Terry Quinlan on 01255 815093.

E mail: lesleyquinlan@hotmail.com or quinlan@essex.ac.uk

Norfolk ranking freestyle event

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14th July 2002

Held at the Poreover weir in Hellesden, Norwich. the hole is a good size to be able to cartwheel, loop, and split. saturday will be a come and try freestyle day with demo boats available thanks to PeakUK and Sues Canoes. Camping will be available for saturday night and a party thanks to Aventis Crop Science, which is only 300m from the weir. Sunday is the main event which covers all classes. For more information please contact 01953 885569 or email richard@suescanoes

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Full-on a

Exhausted when we finished we felt no emotion, no sense of achievement, no savouring of the first descent, just relief. We had had too much adventure for one week but I think the three of us were aware that this had been a rare and extraordinary trip. It had been the most full-on, committing, enjoyable, scary, exhausting, rewarding trip of my life.

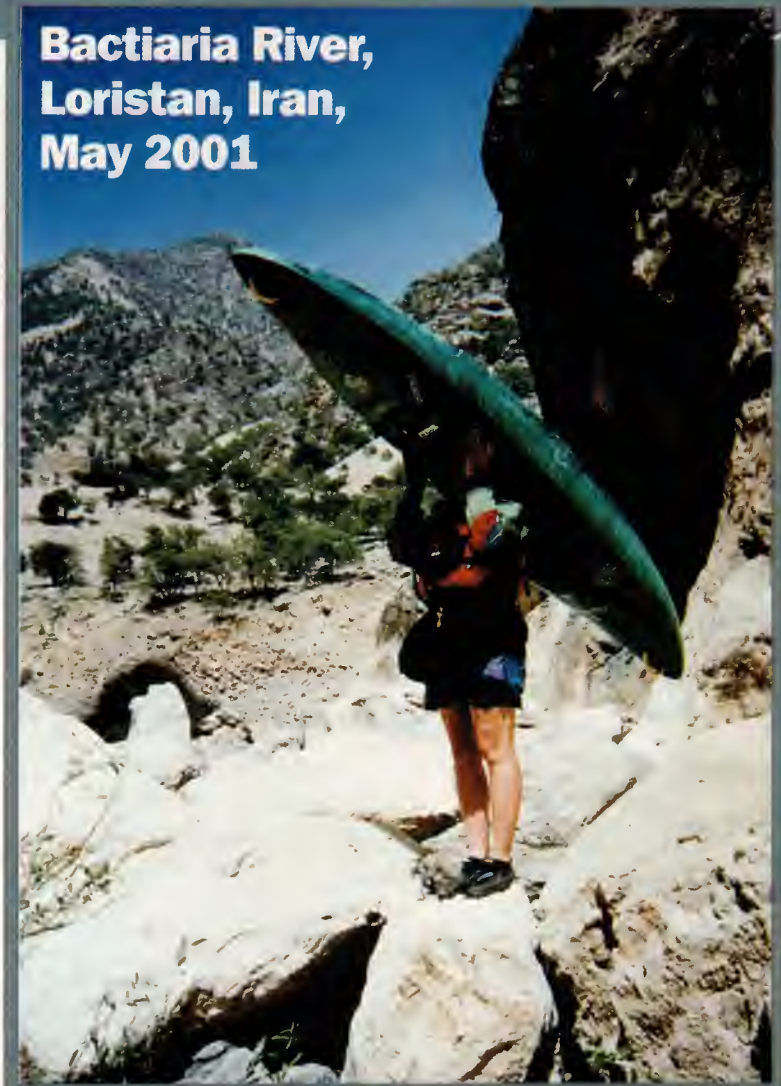
We had spotted the Bactiaria River the previous year when we had paddled the Sezar. In fact the Bactiaria is larger than the Sezar and looked well worth an investigation but that year we did not have time to paddle it. (The Dez River is formed at the confluence of the Sezar and Bactiaria.) So in May 2001 Bob, Debs and I arrived at the put in with our three H2 Zones. We had estimated that it would take at least four and probably five days to paddle the river and so we had bought six days food. This was to be a totally self-supported trip.

Our initial scout, had given us a couple of glimpses into the river – a tantalising view of a stretch of flat water some three hundred metres straight down below my feet, and then beyond a stretch obscured by cliffs the valley opening out slightly and the river winding on down through boulder garden rapids surrounded by stunning scenery. We had been unable to see any more of the river as the locals had advised us that, without a 4x4, we would not be able to get back if we went on down the road. In these situations local advice is a good thing. We knew that, once we set off down the river, the only practical way out was by paddling to the confluence. From here we could catch the train up the Sezar valley to Dorud and then by bus or taxi back to our Transit parked in Amir's House in Isfahan. The previous year when Bob, Guy and I had paddled the Sezar we had used the same H2 Zones and the three of us had been in universal agreement that they were superb boats for the job, giving a great combination of load carrying and comfort without sacrificing too much performance and fun - you can still flat spin a H2 Zone even when it is loaded.

After saying good-bye to a very confused Hillman Hunter taxi driver it was into this almost unknown that we paddled. Fortunately, but we did not know this at the time, it had 'got late' as we had done some impulse shopping and we had stopped in a café for lunch instead of a picnic so we crammed this extra food into the boats - Bob even had a watermelon between his legs. After a two-hour evening paddle and a night's camp we were back on the water and full of anticipation – we were about to enter the gorge I had stared into from the cliff top on our scout – ten to fifteen minutes later we were out of our boats scouting a portage. This was a definite portage; the river disappeared underground as it made its way through a huge rock fall. Eventually we arrived at the bottom of this rock fall, the portage had taken us three hours but the decision to eat the watermelon at the end of the portage was the correct one!

The next few days were glorious; grade II – III with the occasional grade IV rapids, warm sunshine though the evenings were chilly, side creeks adding volume and looking like possible alternative starts to avoid the opening portage. I began to think that I had found a river to replace

Bactiaria River, Loristan, Iran, May 2001



dventure



Above left to right: Rob Hastings, Dave Manby, John Liddell, Roger Huyton, Mick Hopkinson, five of the six remaining paddlers of the 1976 Everest expedition



We should have stopped, it is a way of life that is dying out; already many 'nomadic' families migrate by truck from the plains to the hills as the summer arrives.

Throwing rocks down on us

On day four we pulled into a beach to camp early, around 3.30 p.m. We were about to enter a gorge and felt it better to paddle it the following morning with no worries over daylight. Also if my distance calculations were correct we should be off the river the next day. Four local youths came into camp. More charades and showing off by them including blasting a rock to bits with their 12-bore shotgun. The locals invited us to their village; we refused, all our gear was unpacked and we did not want to re-pack it. Then they insisted and but we really just wanted to dry our gear, cook our evening meal and snooze in the evening sun before climbing into our sleeping bags for the night. They got more agitated and we refused again. It is normal to be offered hospitality three times before the refusal will be accepted. However by now a nasty undercurrent was obvious. Then they grabbed a couple of pairs of paddles and tried to get us to follow them into their village. We refused and they decided to extort money from us instead. Negotiations started; money was what was wanted but we were not offering any. They withdrew and resorted to throwing rocks down on us from the cliff top and we cowered under an overhanging rock. Every so often negotiations would restart, Debs offered a wristwatch but this was refused. It was getting decidedly unpleasant - time to leave. Debs packed up our belongings shoving them into the kayaks and putting together our three-way split Robson paddles whilst Bob and I had a final round of negotiations as a decoy. These failed and we started launching our H2's. The robbers suddenly realised that they were left with a couple of pairs of Robson blades, useless to them, and the digital watch and necklace, which had been on offer, were about to disappear into a gorge. One of them

reappeared and in TV hostage-drama style we exchanged the paddles for the watch and necklace. We paddled into the gorge in the dark. We came across a rapid, we have no idea if you could paddle it, we could not see it; we portaged it - so much for our cautious approach!

The following morning we were on the river at first light to get more distance between the robbers and us. At 11.00am we were presented with another portage. We were faced with an absolutely smooth-sided, stunning rock gorge. In the middle of this gorge was a drop that looked to be more than we wanted to take on and so there was no option but to carry around. 'Carry around' is not really the right way to describe this, up and over is a better description and the 'up' bit meant carrying the boats over one ridge and into the next dry side creek and then hauling the

the doomed Çoruh for my white water holidays. We came across a couple of shepherds herding unseen flocks who invited us in for tea and charades. These games of charades are always a lottery, and I have played them in many languages, as there is no way of telling if you have guessed the correct answer - sometimes you do not even know the topic of discussion. As we said good-bye, however, it appeared from the hand and arm movements that there was a big rapid coming up. They were right - another portage. This time it was not as taxing and Bob and I paddled the last third of the 300-metre rapid. If the rapid had not been in the middle of nowhere I might have been tempted to run more of it. Bob felt the whole rapid was 'on' but not in a loaded boat. Another day we passed a nomad camp that invited us in but we declined and paddled on.

loaded boats up four throw-bag lengths. After hauling them up we had to carry them across a slope where one slip and you would end up falling some hundred metres into the middle of the rapid we were trying to avoid. Safely across we still had to lower the boats and climb down to the river again. By this time we were out of water and energy. We dug out and devoured a pack of Halva, sesame seeds soaked in sugar solution, which, in my book beats any energy bar you can name. After lowering the boats a couple of lengths we switched to rigging static lines and sliding the boats down them. Suddenly one of the H2 Zones became unclipped and shot of down the steep slope performing barrel rolls and somersaults before scoring a perfect goal between two trees at the bottom. It was a classic demonstration of the dangers of karabiners 'double clipping' and so becoming unclipped. The boat - and the two of us it flew by - were unharmed and we made it safely down onto the riverbank. The portage had taken five hours through the heat of the day. We were exhausted, I did not want to move, but we knew we had to paddle on and find a campsite. We launched and around the next bend we found a spring; we drank and drank and then filled our water bottles and then drank again. Soon after we came to a huge beach protected by cliffs where we made camp. The almost unlimited firewood deposited by the spring high waters had obviously been there for years and so we knew we were well away from any other habitation and unlikely to be disturbed that night. Sleep of the just beckoned - the just knackered. However we could not help wonder where the dam site was, even though we had carried for five hours we had also paddled for five hours without having to scout and so making we should have covered a minimum of 25 kilometres and probably more like 40. There was no sign of the dam. We had seen dam related survey marks at the campsite we had fled from and the thieves had said 'baraj da kilometer' the dam ten kilometres. The next day would reveal all.

Amazing series of gorges

For the next two and a half days revealed the most amazing series of gorges I have paddle in the whole of my 30-year paddling career. Gorge followed gorge and rock face followed rock face; the scale was enormous. I felt privileged as I looked way up at spectacular ridges, walks waiting for dedicated hikers to enjoy, rock faces hundred of metres high with enough cracks and slabs for a climber never to have to repeat a route in his or her lifetime. But it was the gorges that were the star attraction. Smoothed by the centuries of erosion the curves wound their



For the next two and a half days revealed the most amazing series of gorges I have paddle in the whole of my 30-year paddling career.

way through the rocks leaving a gap like the negative of a Henry Moore sculpture of a reclining nude. But we got to hate the left-hand corners, every time the river turned left it became a vertical sided gorge and this had to be checked out before we could enter safely. One particular section we scouted and from the best vantage point available on the river right bank we could see water splashing up just as the gorge turned right again; we

could not see what caused this and so we had to check to see if it was an unrunnable drop. Bob volunteered to climb to the top of the gorge on river left and check the drop out. Meanwhile Debs and I cooked another tuna-pasta lunch, hiding in what shade we could find. By now we had dropped altitude and the chilly evenings had been substituted by raging hot days. We automatically dropped our Robson paddles in the river before grabbing them and, unless you wetted seats and thigh grips or turned your boat over, it was easy to burn your thighs even after a half hour stop despite Pyranha using light coloured plastic for thigh grips and seats. Bob returned and announced that if we were going to portage it was 'the mother of all portages' as far as he could see we would have haul our boats to the top of the gorge and then it was at least 4 kilometres till we might be able to get back down to the river. However the drop was a phantom drop; the boils surging against the cliff face were causing the splashing. We paddled through the gorge and on through many more similar gorges. We only paddle into one of these gorges 'blind'. Only once but once was enough, it was grade I water but grade VI stress as we edged around corners elongating our necks to see if the next stretch was safe.

Finally we rounded another corner and the dam construction site came into view. I have never been so pleased to see a dam construction site! We hauled our H2 Zones up to the railway tracks. They had taken an incredible abuse and performed superbly throughout, though I must admit that the play-boat design features were rather ignored towards the end of

the trip! It was midday on day eight when we finished; we had half a bag of pasta and a little tea left. We must have paddled at least 300 kilometres. Our 'mistake' was to estimate the length of the river at around 140 -160 kilometres from a 1:500,000 US Air force Tactical Pilotage chart - the best topo map we could find but the scale was too large to show the tortured path the river took - especially for the last three days - meandering through the rock strata. ■

Article by Dave Manby



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2003"**

A monster on our

"Big water and big sun" was forecast as competitors began to stream into the car parks for this year's SAS Thames Weir Freestyle competition – the world famous "Hurley Rodeo". With the support of SAS this event just gets bigger and bigger. Now into its 14th year, we knew we had a monster on our hands... By Saturday morning, a total of 176 paddlers from around the globe had turned up at the briefing point. Having queued for what must have felt like hours, the boaters apparently made the most of arriving at the front of the queue and entered as many classes as they could afford... This led to a total of 276 class entries – all vying for points and a place on the official UK Freestyle team. 2002 was going to be the biggest event yet!

For years now (about the full fourteen in fact) regular Hurley Weir paddlers have been dreaming of the rodeo-boating equivalent of "Big Wednesday"... the "mother of all formats"... the hole that leads to more paddlers spectating than paddling... "The Big 4". One week in advance we could see, that for the first time in the event's history it was actually going to happen. Unfortunately, all we got as feedback was "Can't we have it on 3?" There really is no pleasing some people... So anyway, true to form, good old Brian the lock-keeper squeezed it down to three for the start of things on the Friday, and wow what a pumping wave that was – the full power of the Thames in flood through a gap the length of just three boats!

Things kicked off on the Saturday morning with the usual free rodeo training session for newcomers and the more wobbly/nervous regulars. These two sessions are always over-subscribed and this was especially the case this year with such a huge wave. The sessions were led by Shaun Baker (the event organiser) with the help of Mark Birkbeck (former World Junior Champion) and John "Pies" Smith (fresh from his recent freestyle win in Iceland). The crowds were given a taste of things to come and the wobbly and nervous duly became less wobbly and actually pretty damn good by the end of things. Thanks boys.

By midday the event was underway for real and as entries kept pouring in though the morning we all started to become aware that not only were we going to be finishing in darkness (thanks BCU Lifeguards for the night cover) but that we would also have to push some of the finals across to the following morning (sorry again to the open boaters and duo bods).

Hurley is renowned as being an event almost overwhelmed with entries from first-timers. This year, with such a monstrous wave, we thought things might have been different. But oh no, there were still 68 Novices (not to mention the 53 Juniors). Though "In the end", as they say, "there can be only one" (Novice that is) - well three actually, but Tim Trew was number one, closely followed by Geraint Rowlands and Alan Ward. Super.



The Juniors never fail to impress, and even contending with semi-darkness and an event unusually split between two days these guys rocked. Superboy Mark Birkbeck won leaving the talented Richard Chrimes with 2nd, and the omnipresent Tom Emmison with 3rd.

A respectable turn out of 11 entries in the squirt class somehow voted (amongst themselves... well, most of themselves, I hear) to exhibit their skills on the sharper eddy lines of the side weir. This is a highly dangerous area to paddle and was conducted under the watchful eye of Brian the lockie and the BCU Lifeguards... A weir that is definitely not recommended and not to be tried at home. Well, Bob Campbell won again... Is there no end to this boy's career? Some sound slicey stuff and general good showmanship saw Adam White and Jamie Austen fill 2nd and 3rd.

The decked C1 contingent showed that half a paddle does not necessarily mean half the number of 70 degree to 110 degree vertical ends (or something like that)... Oly Castle 1st, Andy Nicholl 2nd and Matt Byham 3rd, was the order of the day. Nice one boys.

Having waited all afternoon for their chance to shine, the

hands...

poor open canoe lads and ladette finally got told that it was too dark to provide safety cover anymore. So Sunday morning it was to be, and along with the duos and some forlorn looking Juniors, they would all have to strut their stuff to some bleary-eyed judges in the haze of a pre-breakfast Thames morning.

Sunday morning did arrive, and some of us had to be up and boating by 08:30. Somehow points were scored (quite a lot actually) and the following deserved results were established: OC James Weir 1st, Rob Dixon 2nd Jamie Burbeck 3rd and Alison Collett 4th. Thank you to Pyranha, who supplied with the Spanish Fly trophies for the Open Canoe. The remainder of the Duo (fun event) was squeezed in and duly won by Brunel boys Jeff Hassel and Phil (the man with no name, well no surname anyway).

Back to the normal schedule of things, the ladies hit the water. With 20 competitors, and some wicked paddling, Deb Pinniger emerged once again on top, with Paula Floyd taking 2nd and Jo Lucas 3rd.

Finally, the big guns were

rolled out... The "Main Event". This class is actually open to anyone who feels they are up to it, so a lot of the usual suspects raised their heads once more: a mixture of those who had done really well on the first day and fancied their chances with the big boys and those with nothing to lose, who had done so badly that they could not possibly go home and admit it to their families. As a flotilla of 109 competitors drifted across the water towards the judging tower, chief judges Mike Birkbeck and Dave "the Hippy" anticipated the inevitable finish in total darkness... Fortunately things were not quite that bad and it was only the prize giving that was done in the dark. Almost like a lucky dip – you didn't know what you'd won till you got home and turned the lights on.

The level of boating in the final was superlative. California rolls, kickflips, super-clean-wheels and blunts flowed at the speed of, well, the Thames in flood. Mark Birkbeck stole the show (after also having won the juniors) and stood on the top of the podium, followed by Richard Chrimes with Tobias Bersch clinching 3rd place.

Prizes of allsorts had flowed for all the weekend's results. There were numerous cash prizes from SAS and stacks of goodies from Playboater/SystemX, Canoe&Kayak Magazine, Playboating Magazine, Whitewater The Canoe Centre and Looner Jewellery. As is now usually the case at Hurley, the big prizes are reserved for the highest placed (read "scoring") non-sponsored boaters. For "non-sponsored" at this event we adopt the approach of an honest declaration by the winning paddlers of both: "Not paid to paddle" and "Not in receipt of any main items of boating kit completely free". This sorted, the beautiful Liquid Logic Session kayak was awarded to Tom Emmison and a shiny new set of Werner Paddles went to the best non-sponsor Junior, who happened to be also Tom Emmison, so we didn't let him have them and instead they went to rising star and second in that category, Alan Ward.

Thanks all you boaters who turned up and made this event the unprecedented monster that it was... Marvellous. For next year, keep the dates of 1st – 9th March free, because if you thought 2002 was big, just wait till you see



what happens when you put up £10,000 prize money and invite team entries!! The event will be called the "Pro-Am World Cup" and will incorporate the UK Freestyle Team selections as usual, but then we are offering everyone the chance to compete for the money to get out to the World Championships to experience them for real.

For full details, click on the link from www.hurleyweir.com Full results from this year's event are also listed on-line.

We need to say thanks to all of you who made this event possible... SAS computer software, the Environment Agency and one of its star employees Brian the lock-keeper, Red Bull, Playboater/SystemX, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Car Parks, Harleyford Estate, Hurley Village Association, 1st Maidenhead Scouts, Simon Edwards ("scoring boy"), all the helpers and marshals, Hugh

Mannerings and the lads and ladettes from High Wycombe College, the super-judges and high-speed scribes and the "the punctual blokes with the whistle". Thanks also to DJ-boy Paul "Cheese" Robertson, the BCU Lifeguards, and all those other tireless individuals who helped so much over the weekend who we may have missed from this article. Nice one. ■

Article:
Marivi Garcia,
Hurley Weir
Events Desk

Photographs:
Darren Baker



National Student Rodeo

The National Student Rodeo 2002 was possibly the biggest and best ever. With around 250 competitors and spectators from over twenty universities, the event was pushing the Hurley Rodeo in terms of being the biggest UK freestyle event.



With trade stands from Pyranha, Perception, Reed Chill Cheater and Rasdex, the course at Nottingham was buzzing with people and plastic. The crowds cheered wildly for all the moves on display, from the cheesy pop outs to the swims and the top-notch expert stuff. The Extreme Slalom on Saturday morning gave every K1 competitor the chance to strut their stuff over the top half of the course. They were scored for spins and blunts whilst surfing the top wave, the ever popular hit the ball with the end of your boat move, throwing ends in the double wave, wavewheeling through the second pool wave train, and then the splat rock at the pyramid pool. Graeme Cowan from Glasgow University topped the men with an excellent 26 points whilst Hazel Wilson from Loughborough was the highest scoring woman.

The standard of paddling on display was very high, with the expert classes

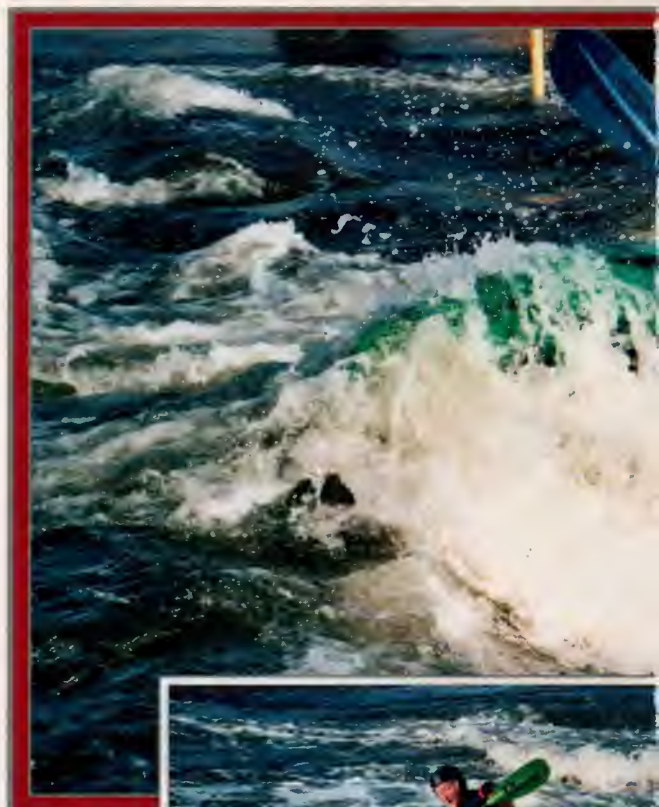
showing lots of stylish moves, Rich Yates from Birmingham hitting the highest scoring run of the day. In the womens experts, Naomi James from Bangor finished the heats in the lead.

Saturday night at all student events means only one thing - a party. The campsite at Calverton was the venue for the Affinity Events marquee, with over 200 people in attendance. The beer flowed and the DJ played some rather dodgy tunes.

Sunday morning dawned grey and painfully and the day began with the C1 and squirt events. The C1 event was run by the Shaggy Designs boys who provided boats for people to try out canoe paddling for the first time alongside the guys who do it for real. Some entertaining attempts at rolling (particularly from the organiser) were followed by many swims (particularly from the organiser) although some of the K1 competitors showed they were quite adaptable, with rides that would have given them respectable places in the main C1 event. Jamie Burbeck was the C1 winner by some way, throwing ends and spins with lots of style.

The squirt event was run down at the looping pool. Some impressive mystery moves and end sequences were on display, with the squirters looking for good down time and controlled moves. They moved down to the Muncher for some final spins and blunts with the standard of paddling again very high. Eventual winner was Ben White from Derby.

No student event would be complete without the Topo Duo event, and the competitors began to gather in the looping pool with all manner of strange costumes. Most of the entrants ended up swimming, but the ever-present safety crew were on hand to help them out. The final was held in the Muncher, with Loughborough boys James Reeves and Adam Parkes showing control and good teamwork with long rides and lots of spins to beat Bangor boys Paul Edlington and



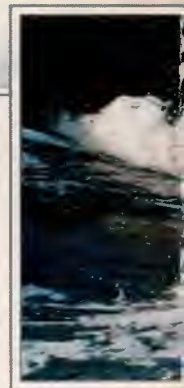
Jamie into second place.

This brought us to the exhibition event of the day, the Non Student

event. Open to all who cared to attend there were some big names on the entry sheet, alongside the regulation ex-students. Warrior Andy Phillips and Young Gun Dicky Chrimes were left to battle it out. Andy had consistently shown excellent rides, with long sequences of ends in the Plughole in both directions, many of them clean, followed by kickflips and loops in the Muncher to rack up the style points. Dicky's smooth end sequences had also scored big, but on this occasion it was Andy who took the crown, having wowed the crowd with loops in both directions.

It was now time for the Student finals to begin, the pressure on to score points for yourself and your university. The Mens Novice final was first on, at Double Wave, and the field was rapidly whittled down from sixteen to six, and then three. Lots of spins and pop outs were the order of the day, with paddle twirls, kisses and lots of other gestures for the benefit of crowd and judges. In the end it was Tom Lill from Leeds Uni who consistently hit big pop outs with lots of comedy value to take first place, although we're not sure this is what Corran Addison had in mind when he designed the Riot Trickster.

The womens K1 novice followed straight after, with more of the same, and even a few swims as well to add to the variety score. Top spot went to Claire Jones, all the way from Aberdeen.



deo 2002



The weather was now closing in with the first rain of the weekend falling for the last event at the double wave, the Mens K1 Intermediate, where the standard of paddling was still very high. All the finalists here were consistently getting



ends, as well as spins and the old school moves. Joe Kelly from Bath took the top spot with lots of cartwheels. Once again the water level was



increased for the expert finals in the Muncher, beginning with the expert women. The six finalists went into a straight knock out with runs through the Plughole and Muncher. Georgina Preston from Loughborough took fourth place, and then Hazel Wilson faltered to be eliminated in third. The two finalists, Rachel Clegg from Leeds and Molly McKenzie from Bristol, then tied on the deciding run, and so had to have one more run. Both had shown controlled spins in the Plughole and

Muncher, but ultimately it was Molly, who attempted a full front loop in the Plughole, who got the top spot.

The sun now reappeared for the final event of the day, the Mens Expert, But not before Bangor Uni unveiled their latest prototype boat, the "Pornstar" - made from the latest high quality tabloid efforts it was perhaps the moment of the weekend, although it soon got a little soggy. After much amusement, sixteen of the top student paddlers lined up for one minute in the Plughole and Muncher to prove they were worthy of going into the five-man knockout. With only one run to impress the judges, the pressure was on to go big. Those who made it went into the knockout, and the first round saw all five score well, but it was Andy McMurray from Nottingham Trent who was first to go, celebrated with a swim down the course, evading the safety on the way! Andy Milton from Cambridge was next to go, leaving Joe Boote from Leeds and two local lads, Robin Scott from Nottingham and Joe Andrews from Loughborough. All three had shown good variety of moves, but it was crowd favourite and Leeds boy Joe Boote who was first to go, having earlier thrown some excellent kickflip entry moves. The two finalists gathered themselves to go for the top spot, and both had already produced some outstanding rides, Robin's energetic style contrasting to the smooth ends Joe was consistently throwing down. In a close contest it was Joe who finished on top, claiming the student K1 crown.

The overall trophy, awarded on a Grand Prix-style scoring basis, went to event organisers Leeds University, who narrowly beat hot favourites Bangor by four points.

Overall it was a superb event, with everyone having lots of fun, regardless of their results. Thanks must go to Bertie Beckram and the safety team for being on the water all weekend, as ever doing an excellent job. Also to the judges, Pete Astles, Mike Fletcher, Martin du Toit, Gwyn Ashcroft, Stu Morris, Bob Campbell and Snakey, without whom there would have been no competition. A mention must go to the Leeds Uni boys and girls who set it all up, as well as the Affinity Events team who continue to do great things in aid of the River Legacy project. Final thanks to Bev Chrimes for helping with the water levels all weekend, and Mr. & Mrs. Burbeck for their marshalling abilities.

Hopefully the scale and success of this year's event will help to convince all sponsors that it is a worthwhile cause to support, and continue to help us provide a fun, relaxed event for the student paddlers out there. Obviously, without all the Universities who make the effort to come along, there would be no event, so the final say has to go to you guys, from those of you who live in Nottingham, to the Glasgow boys who left at midnight on Friday and met us for breakfast in Maccy

Ds seven hours later.

See you all at Dee Tour.

More info, scores, and pictures available at

www.nationalstudentrodeo.org.uk



The Graveyard

National championship series race 2



Report by Paul Ratcliffe. Pics by Keith Goddard

The Graveyard site situated in a dense wooded valley on the River Tryweryn near to Bala in North Wales hosted the second event of the National Championship series on 24th March. The tight, technical white water river full of sharp rocks and boulders makes negotiation alone difficult. Add to that 21 gates over a 95 second course and you have a spectacular and challenging race site.

Sunday's race required great energy and precision paddling. There were seven upstreams, a cross on the spectator section that sorted the men out from the boys, a fast upstream on mount Everest and a killer cross at the

Mac still a bit jet lagged after returning from Australia on the Friday pushed hard but picked up a couple of touches and placed second.

In the ladies event, Peak girl Laura Blakeman battled out with Heather Corrie to take first place. A few younger paddlers found the course quite challenging and some took nasty swims on the middle sections. There boats came off worst than them becoming wrapped on the lower part of the course, thus delaying the event for awhile. Thanks to the rescue man for a good days work!

Leading onto the men's race, Campbell Walsh took an early lead with a faultless clear run ahead of Neil Buckley. On second



bottom, just when the arms were starting to burn. It was a cool spring day, very mild with a hint of sunshine in the afternoon, almost summer for Bala but without the midges! Perfect race conditions.

The premier race, the second of the year and also a junior selection race commenced with the C1 category. The graveyard is particularly difficult for C1 competitors, the shallow break outs and numerous rocks make it easy to trip over a blade. A few did come unstuck on the spectator section where they tripped or caught an edge coming down the drop into gate 11. Bob Turner had no problems negotiating the course though and blitzed his way down with a time of 100 secs. He dodged his way down the offset sequences and wrapped himself around the ups to find the tightest lines. Stu



runs Neil kept it clean with another 96 to produce a great win and Campbell picked up two touches to place 2nd. I was fast with a 92 but a bit reckless in hitting the wood work 4 times to place fourth.

This was a class event, there was some fun and enjoyable paddling on a top quality race course. The new buildings at the Tryweryn have made a great improvement for running a race and with some planned changes to the Graveyard in the next few years we could look forward to some major internationally races coming back to Bala. ■

Wild Water Racing Selection 2002

By Mary Smith

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**18 - 21 July
2002**

Junior World Championships Wild Water Racing

Over the period of 15th to 21st July this year, the River Tryweryn and the town of Y Bala will be inundated with young people all taking part in Bala Festival of Watersports with the main attraction being the 8th Junior Wild Water Racing World Championships being held on Afon Tryweryn. This will be the first Wild Water Junior World Championships to be held within these shores and the first stand-alone Junior World Championships to be held in any discipline in the UK.

Saturday morning brings the start of the Junior 4.5km classic race which starts at the same point as the Seniors in 1995. The course will be test the Juniors over some of the most demanding sections of Britain's most exciting and challenging wild water resource. In addition to the Individual Classic Race, they will later the same day have to contest the same course in the team event, where all three boats have to remain within 30 seconds of each other for the duration of the race.

A few hours sleep and they will then be tested again over the International Sprint Course, which is 800 metres of pure speed over the toughest part of the course, starting at the top of the graveyard and finishing in the Fingers Rapid right outside Canolfan Tryweryn.

There are expected to be 120 athletes from 17 Nations taking part, with entries already received from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ukraine as well as the closer European Nations, some of whose Juniors are bound to dominate the proceedings. Britain's favourite for glory will be Johnnie Schofield, who magnificently won both the classic and sprint events a year earlier at the Pre-World Championship Events over the same courses.

Preceding the Junior Championships will be the first UK Master's International Wild Water Race, this will be on the afternoon of Friday 19th July and already has attracted interest from many of our past 'greats' including John Court and Jon Goodwin, who won a bronze medal in a Wild Water Racing World Championships as far back as 1971.

But the week is not only for the world class performers, In a project sponsored by the Environment Agency for Wales, young people from the local junior schools will have an opportunity to raft the river over the same course as the Junior Sprint Event and the secondary school students at Ysgol Berwyn

will be introduced to various other paddlesport activities such as Lightning K1's, bell boats, open canoes on Llyn Tegid as well as sessions in the swimming pool.

The Town of Y Bala is very supportive of the week, with the opening ceremony commencing with a parade down the high street, and local restaurants providing special menus and hosting functions during the period, Support is also coming from the Sports Council for Wales and Red Bull, so why not make Bala your venue for the start of the summer holidays and support the British team in the biggest event of their lives so far.

Wild Water Racing selection event 2002.

Selection for the 2002 Junior World Championships and the International Sprint Race was held on the weekend of the 18th and 19th May on the World Championships course the Canolfan Tryweryn, Bala, North Wales. This was the final selection race for the juniors and there were valuable points to be gained for selection.

Saturday saw the race for the sprint event with the race being the same course for the World Championships starting at the top of the graveyard and finishing below the fingers rapid.

The course was challenging for the young competitors and in true style Pre World Champion Jonnie Schofield won the event. Jonnie achieved a time that demonstrated to us all his high level of skill on the river; after his first run where he had a lead of 12 seconds over the rest of the field, he pulled all the stops out and won the race by a phenomenal 34 seconds and astounded onlookers. Second place went to the youngest athlete in the event Jaime Oughton who has been improving all season and he attacked the course with speed to secure his place in the team. Ben Fox took third place and fourth place went to Tim Lawrenson. Aneka Brewscar paddled the course well to win the ladies event and Colin Radmore won the C1 event.

The classic race was held on the Sunday with the race again being over the World Championships course with the competitors having everything to gain by performing well in this event tensions were running high as start times drew nearer. First and second places were identical to the sprint race with Jonnie Schofield and Jamie Oughton putting in solid runs to secure their places in the team. The battle for third and fourth place was highly contended with Ryan Ainsworth and Simon taking the places respectively. Aneka Brewscar stormed the course in preparation for the summer and produced a good result, which secured her place in the team, and Colin Radmore secured his place by winning the C1 race.

As the selection for the men's team was so competitive the results were considered for the entire selection series and the following teams were picked:

For the wild water classic event - MK1 - Jonnie Schofield, Jamie Oughton, Ryan Ainsworth and Ben Fox, WK1 - Aneka Brewsar, C1 - Colin Radmore.

For the wild water sprint event - Mk1 - Jonnie Schofield, Jamie Oughton and Ben Fox, Wk1 - Aneka Brewster, C1 - Colin Radmore.

We wish them the best of luck in their preparations for the summer.

Story by Mary-Jean Smith, photo: Trevor Chapman



Timetable of events

Monday 15th July

- 09:00 to 10:00 Free Training for Junior Competitors on full course
- 10:00 to 16:30 Training on Lower stretches of Course
- 10:00 to 15:00 Paddlesport Activities, Llyn Tegid
- 10:30 to 14:30 Rafting for Junior Schools, Canolfan Tryweryn

Tuesday 16th July

- 09:00 to 10:00 Free Training for Junior Competitors on full course
- 10:00 to 16:30 Training on Lower stretches of Course
- 10:00 to 15:00 Paddlesport Activities, Llyn Tegid
- 10:30 to 14:30 Rafting for Junior Schools, Canolfan Tryweryn
- 18:30 to 20:00 Raft building competition all teams, Llyn Tegid

Wednesday 17th July

- 09:00 to 10:00 Free Training for Junior Competitors on full course
- 10:00 to 16:30 Training on Lower stretches of Course
- 10:00 to 15:00 Paddlesport Activities, Llyn Tegid
- 10:30 to 14:30 Rafting for Junior Schools, Canolfan Tryweryn
- 18:30 to 21:00 BBQ, 10 pin Bowling, Climbing and Archery, all teams

Thursday 18th July

- 09:00 to 16:30 Free Training for Junior Competitors, whole River
- 18:30 to 20:00 Opening Ceremony, Y Bala and Ysgol Berwyn

Friday 19th July

- 10:00 to 12:30 Non-Stop Training
- 15:00 to 16:30 Masters International Wild Water Race

Saturday 20th July

- 10:00 to 12:30 Junior World Championships Individual Classic Race
- 14:00 to 15:00 Perception Wavehopper Race
- 16:00 to 17:00 Junior World Championships Team Classic Race

Sunday 21st July

- 09:30 to 13:30 Junior International and Commonwealth Sprint Championships
- 14:00 to 15:00 Medal Ceremonies and Closing Ceremony

Whew – what a race!

The 54th Devizes to Westminster

Two years ago, when I stood on Westminster Bridge and cried unashamedly for the crews that had completed the course and whose efforts would go unrecognised, I had no inkling of the joy that I would feel this Easter. Back then it seemed like a thankless task to question the system; everyone wanting to blame someone and yet, underneath all the turmoil, I could sense that there was a strong desire by paddlers to sort out the problems and set a wonderful race on course for a glorious future. It would be presumptuous of me to say that all the problems have been solved but, as I stood once again on that famous bridge waiting for the first crew to arrive, a huge wave of relief and satisfaction came rolling down on the early morning tide. And so fitting that it should be the Blackwells, father and son, who clambered up the steps for I grew up (in canoeing terms, I hasten to add) with Steve, and his family and mine share many DW memories.

So what can be said about the 54th Devizes to Westminster? Primarily that the race can be run effectively by a loosely knit group of people with a common aim – we were all elected by our canoeing friends and we did our best to give the paddlers what they wanted – a race run as simply as possible with as few restrictions as possible. But however good the organisation, one factor alone makes for a good DW and it is to the most diverse (and probably perverse!) group of paddlers that one could ever wish to meet that most thanks are due.

So who paddles DW? As publicity team leader, I set myself the task, back in January, to find out where our 'market' was and to learn about them. By the time Good Friday dawned I had spoken to many, turned my computer station into an e-mail chat room for aspiring paddlers and shaken my head in disbelief at some would-be entrants.

The Junior Doubles crews always give me great satisfaction and I know the crews from Dauntsey's School best of all because they live close by and my husband, Steve, helps train them. Over the years, we have helped train over 130 youngsters for DW and I am constantly amazed at the progress that so many novice paddlers make in three short months. It is true that the winning crews from Bryanston School had much more experience and are 'paddlers' in the true sense of the word having experienced marathon canoeing over a considerable length of time, but other schools have DW canoeing as a spring term option and for these novices there are huge mountains to climb in terms of their understanding.

The Senior Singles always attracts a particularly diverse group; from the polished teamwork of Leaside CC through the intrepid overseas adventurers to the lone Welshman in a sea kayak. Steffen Burkhardt's performance was stunning. I was personally grateful for the sunshine that allowed the fast singles to bask warmly as they waited interminably for their start times (we'll get it right next year, boys!). And I was proud to hang Scott Kemper's medal round his neck at last, for he was one of those frustrated crews in 2000 – a well deserved third place. And no report of the Senior Singles would be complete without mentioning Lynn Whitaker from Pangbourne CC – not only a superb record-breaking paddle for a lady veteran but also the first 'Master' (over -50) – and all this from a little lady who confided real fear of the Tideway.

But the real race is, and always will be, the Senior Doubles. The nature of a race that requires its contestants to choose their own start time, uncertain of the weather, the flow rates or even their own ability is bound to create excitement and tension amongst the crews and their supporters and this year was no exception. By early Easter week I was sworn to secrecy knowing the intended start times of six 'fast' crews (being married to a member of one support crew raised the stakes here!) and had planned TV coverage for both daylight

and night runners. But there were all the stalwart crews to set off first – Ranulph Fiennes and Steven Seaton training for another adventure racing season, Rob Owen and Spencer Jones with the World War II Klepper (I loved the compass!) and the dozens of other crews just keen to leave Devizes and set their course eastwards. I next caught up with them at Dreadnought Reach – imagine my dismay to find two of my hotly-tipped crews retiring through injury. James says, perhaps rightly, that we should all appreciate the downside of DW; the truth is that many don't make it to Westminster and, should the weather be unfavourable, retirements can be as high as fifty percent. Mick Wibrew and Sam Atkinson were also unexpected retirees but I understand that Mick's fall at Waterside D had given him a bruised set of ribs and he was in a great deal of pain despite good split times to Reading.

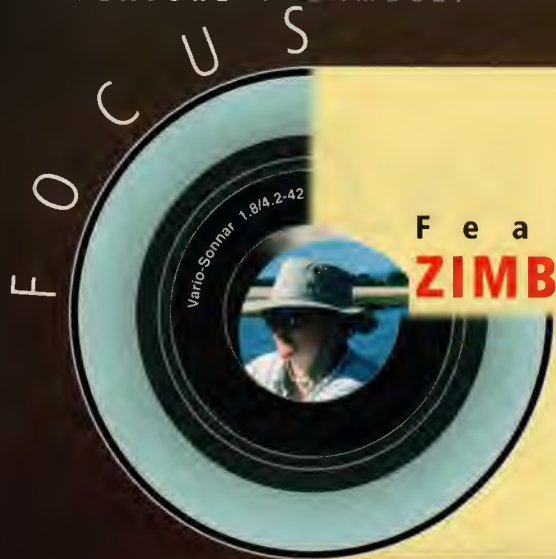
The updating communications from checkpoints was stunning and my allotted time for 'sleep' was relegated as I watched the crews slip inexorably eastwards on the screens in the Race Control at Wokingham Waterside Centre. Sadness too as we realised that our leaking Klepper crew were not going to make it to HQ where we had bicycle repair kits and hairdryers lined up to tackle the ancient craft's gaping wounds. And then, shortly after 3am, the race really hotted up – the South Africans had left Devizes, Phillips and Lewis left just after 3am and the Irish were still in the car park! By 4am I was on my way to Westminster to meet the first crews – amongst them Ollie Harding and Ian White and the Worcester crew of Jon Bird and Michael Fudger. Now it was to be a waiting game – played via the Internet in countries worldwide – as pundits realised that they too could calculate split times for crews that had finished and compare them to the moving feast on the water. By the time the three daylight crews hit Teddington there was less than twenty minutes between them with the Irish crew still reining them in. In truth, Jim Morrissey and Mick O'Meara had the race won down the long pound – the fifteen minutes gained was won there as they sped down that first fifteen miles with a weed-free bow.

And so we waited on Westminster Bridge – the expectation level rose, the presses of The Times paused – whose names would it be hitting the headlines in Monday's newspapers? And still they came, the tired and the thankful; crews that left Devizes on Saturday morning who had dreamed of this moment were not to be disappointed. And then we saw a light travelling faster and straighter than most and a cheer went up for the young South Africans as they were helped up the steps – Shane Price had given his all and a couple of hours in hospital were needed to rebalance his body. Ten minutes later, and The Times printers still holding, and Mark Phillips and Richard Lewis were home. No sooner had the assembled crowds given them due credit than the Irish flags were waving and the TV lights were blazing down as the winners, Jim and Mick, came in. The Times could go to print and the climax of the 54th Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race was over. But was it – for me the ultimate moment was the sight of Mark Phillips, only five minutes from a gruelling defeat, walking towards Jim and Mick with his hand outstretched and a smile on his face.

And still DW had more to offer – the wonderful stillness of high tide at Ham on Easter Monday morning and the thrill of seeing more than a hundred boats set off for Westminster. The results and medals are known but few will have appreciated the Endeavour of those sixteen senior crews who chose the 'slow road' to Westminster – each face told a story at Westminster and each epitomised the best of an event that is rightly called the Canoeist's Everest – this is an event where every paddler who climbs Westminster steps is a hero for a moment and deservedly so. ●

Information on DW 2003 can be found on our website at www.dwrace.org.uk

Article by Sally Peake, Publicity Team Leader



Feature
ZIMBABWE

Canoe on the mighty Zambezi

It was pitch black. The earth shook and there was a sound like thunder. Torches were quickly swung round, illuminating two giant hurtling shapes. Fifteen silhouetted figures were caught in petrified poses of fascinated horror. Disturbed by the lights, two bull hippos veered off into the river, narrowly missing the canoes. As the water heaved and splashed, there were gasps and the realization that Charlie was ready to draw his gun! No 'virtual' excitement here. This was real, and five nights into our adventure we stood in dark disarray with months of anticipated fear behind us, and five more days to go.

We were canoe/camping part of the Zambezi River on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with the help of our guide, Charles, and

Lower Zambezi Valley Zimbabwe 2001

Lloyd, an apprentice guide. That night we had set up camp on a sandy island. A row of green dome shaped tents and a semicircle of camp stools made 'home' around three metal tables, gas cookers, and an array of large sturdy buckets, boxes, pots, pans and kettles. The general bustle of transforming the flat packed cargo of nine canoes into a three dimensional village for the night had died down with the heat. Dinner and wine had relaxed everyone after the day's hard paddle. The red ball of sun had performed its magical rainbow trick in the sky and as fleeces were donned, we experienced the intense silence of one of Africa's remotest places, capped by a darkness pinpricked with graphic astronomy.

The charging hippos were a sharp reminder that we were trespassing in animal country. They were disputing territory, unaware until the last minute that we were in the way. It had always been impossible not to be aware that hippos would be a major feature in this adventure. For the first few days, lack of understanding on our part had turned every pod we



Camping

Zambezi river (part one)



encountered into a menacing terror. Before we set off, Charles had explained that we should always keep our canoes in single file behind him and be very quick if he ordered us to go to the bank or turn round! No one had queried that suggestion! The knowledge that hippos are vegetarian did nothing to dispel the fact that they could bite through the side of a canoe and tip you into a river occupied by crocodiles.

It was this kind of thing that kept several minds busy as we waited for our plane at Gatwick on Thursday 14th June 2001. We were a mixed bunch of canoeists, gathered together by the efforts of one man, from all around the country. Mark Feather had had the foresight to realize that the next solar eclipse zone of totality would be at Mana Pools on the Zambezi, and had turned into reality the idea of combining this event with a canoe safari. There were fifteen of us coming, some as strangers, from quite disparate locations; dry bags and paddle bags indicating that we had a common intent. By the time we arrived in the departure lounge, we were missing only one female member of our group. Eager to demonstrate their fear of nothing, several chaps put themselves in danger by interviewing all the single ladies in order to track down our missing person, Vic Brown, only to find that she had been sitting close behind us all the time. At the check in desk, Air Zimbabwe had a sort of 'Blind Date' approach to seating people, but as most of our party seemed happy with their current partners we rearranged ourselves and settled down for a fairly sleepless but not too turbulent 10 hour night

and took up positions on plastic seating, from where we could see our luggage being loaded, unloaded and loaded, on and off a tiny plane - there seemed to be a problem! Too much weight! Would three of us please travel in a separate plane that would be rerouted to accommodate us? No problem. Three volunteers watched as the rest of the group disappeared into the blue, while a wheel was changed on the second aircraft. The pilots were smart, cheerful friendly, and optimistic but it was not their personalities alone which made a few hearts skip a beat on plane one. Unaware of the presence of a co-pilot on the little fifteen seater aircraft, the group were somewhat put out when their pilot suddenly left his seat and started dishing out sandwiches! On plane two, Margaret, myself and Mark described the whole spectrum of enjoyment - sheer hell, sheer heaven, and he who has done it before in an even smaller plane! At Kariba, an over enthusiastic airport staff loaded a bit too much luggage onto two open safari jeeps, leaving the remaining passengers on the plane with not quite enough, and we bumped and rattled our way to the Kariba Breezes Hotel on the edge of Lake Kariba, only to find that our expected straw hut type accommodation hadn't yet been built. So we wallowed, happy as hippos in mud, in large airy en suite rooms with balconies overlooking the lake, flying squirrels swinging in the trees, and mongoose, monkeys, hornbills, lizards and water monitors closer than the T.V. screen in your own living room!

Given the fact that we were about to embark on an adventure which had caused excitement, doubts, fears, packing problems, health concerns, and countless

jobs, over the passed year, it was not surprising that it was a quiet bunch of people who met at the hotel pool that afternoon. The

flight. The sunrise that heralded our first views of Africa was a spectacular taste of what lay in store, and a short stopover at Victoria Falls Airport revealed that the sun was hot and the long shadows deep indigo, even at 7.30 in the morning.

Victoria Falls Airport proved to be a popular place to disembark, so those of us who were continuing to

Harare, and who weren't called Margaret, grabbed an empty window seat. Below us, we could see the spray from Victoria Falls, and mile upon mile of traffic free brown roads trailing through endless bush land. Harare International Airport is new, gleaming and air-conditioned, until, like us, you need an internal flight to Kariba. We

were lead to a large shed, by an ever-

increasing number of smiling porters

wearing tabards proclaiming N.H.S. I rather suspect that this means "we're Not Harare Staff actually but if we are jolly then you will give us all generous tips!" We checked in at a trestle table

journey had been good but tiring, and the hippos were still getting bigger in our minds. Everyone was keen to get paddling and make it real!

We were told to raft up!

The soles of my boots were wet with Zambezi water as Mavis and I sat enjoying the shade of a rocky outcrop. The pool in front of us rippled out to join the vast shining river that headed towards the distant mountains. Behind us, the earth was parched and dry, but in front, water swerved ceaselessly around islands of tan polished boulders. Flickers of scarlet, blue, and yellow delighted us as damselflies, dragonflies, and butterflies hovered near, and the first fish eagle of the trip hung in the pristine sky overhead. Looking tiny, across the river, the dark shape of a Zambian in a dug out canoe watched the events on our side of the river. Nine blue canoes lay parallel on the white sand. A team of porters helped Charles and Lloyd load the boats with massive amounts of heavy kit as fifteen keen canoeists, who had been instructed to stay in the shade, watched with pretended patience. We had been up and ready early that morning, watching baboons busily ripping the luggage off someone else's truck, at the hotel. One elephant sighting and one Spar shopping experience later



we had been busily ripping the luggage off our own trucks at the head of the Kariba Gorge, 6 kms below the Kariba Dam. The porters, bare footed, and heads piled high with kit made easy work of the steep rocky track down which we picked our way in boots. Our first sighting of the Zambezi had been a patch of blue shining through the prolific unfamiliar foliage. We wanted to be on it, but first, with the packing now complete, a picnic lunch was laid out for us to eat. Then, at long last we were on the water, paddles at the ready and poised for action, eagerly eyeing up the white bits when – oh no! - We were told to raft up! It was a bit unexpected and there was a miffed ripple of disappointment not to be getting our paddles wet immediately. It all looked so beautiful and peaceful. It was hard to imagine the dangers lurking under the water, waiting with big snappy jaws for people with unknown ability in unfamiliar boats to hit an unseen tree stump! As we clung tightly onto each other's boats, the 2 rafts drifted and swirled along in the boiling waters of the steep sided gorge for a couple of hours. The short paddle that followed was executed, on my part, with a sort of breathless denial! Adjusting my lower hand on the paddle so that it wouldn't be mistaken for a fish by a crocodile, I dared myself to look but tried to pretend that those weren't really hippos over there. I knew it! Holding my breath had made me invisible! I landed safely at Nyamoumba Island feeling more confident about tomorrow!

That night, by candlelight, over rice, chicken curry and squash a la surprise, Charles and Lloyd told us tales of Mad Max, a hippo with a score of 27 tipped canoes, Psychotic Simon, the canoe following hippo, and two stretches of river nicknamed Hippo City and Death Valley. Surely they were just winding us up! As we ate we could hear an elephant tearing at a tree not so far away and the briefing that night had included worrying warnings about impoverished but non-violent Zambians coming across the river to rob us, not to mention the dangers of wild animals wandering around the camp after dark. We had also seen a very large crocodile on the island, which may have accounted for the mysterious disappearance of Mark's beer, which he had placed in the river to cool!

It was hard to imagine the dangers lurking under the water, waiting with big snappy jaws for people with unknown ability in unfamiliar boats to hit an unseen tree stump!



Sunday 17th June. Charles banged his paddle on the side of his canoe. A hundred large brown heads popped up out of the water for a quarter of a mile in all directions. Eyes stared. Mountainous brown bodies arose from 2' of water and lumbered grudgingly into the depths, only to disappear mysteriously, who knew where! Our blue snake of canoes hugged the bank, those at the front convinced that they were more scared than those at the back who were convinced that they were more scared than those at the front! A lone hippo reared up quite close out of the water and smashed down creating a wash that set the boats rocking. We zigzagged cautiously around the pods, listening to Charles banging his paddle and strained to see the response. Then suddenly: "Go to the bank!" "Go to the bank!" "Go to the bank!" echoed down the line. We all waited and watched as the massive shiny bodies moved out into the deeper water, but we didn't go forward. Charles knew there was still danger. One hippo remained and couldn't be hurried because she had a baby. Last night's fears had become past tense!

It was the danger that made the routine rituals of unloading the boats, setting out the mealtime stools, and fighting Bob for a turn at the washing up buckets both bizarre and comforting. Each night, the sunset, the serenading cicadas, and the wide-open space of cloudless starry sky were unhindered by mosquitoes and unhidden by flysheets. The mosquito net tents were quick and simple to erect and didn't need pegging. Nightfall brought with it the sounds of Africa. Roaring lions and laughing hyenas could be heard accompanied by the banging and



clanging of pots and pans from nearby Zambian villages across the river. Each morning we awoke to a new view lit by a spectacular sunrise, and the cheerful voice of Lloyd calling “tea lovers may come and get their tea”. For the first few days, the canoe/camper’s natural instinct to pack his/her own boat with his/her own kit was thwarted as Charles and Lloyd manfully endeavoured to organize weight distribution. But the team’s accumulative experience soon became apparent and our little village appeared and disappeared each dusk and dawn, with lessening confusion over bags and belongings. Sometimes we camped on islands and sometimes on the mainland riverbank. A few of the islands were very flat and treeless. Darkness was the only cover for a private pee, but with darkness the sounds of the hippos came louder and closer. You could aim at dusk for a visible loo destination but, take too long and forget your torch and the journey back through the darkness would seem like a hundred miles!

Monday’s breakfast of fruit, beans with onions and peppers, fried egg, bacon, and bread was part of the routine, with Jax’s tall figure becoming a familiar sight behind the bacon griddle. The food was organized and cooked for us and Monday brought us to the first re-supply stop at Chirundu near the construction site of the new Zimbabwe/Zambia bridge. It was a remote place but the river ‘grapevine’ brought vervet monkeys for our lunch crumbs and a seller of solar eclipse T shirts who went away happy after we all made our purchases! When the fresh stocks arrived Charles and Lloyd packed it all away into the canoes, Alistair and Alison again ending up with the heaviest boat, loaded down with two huge cold boxes heavily packed with ice and provisions.

The water level in the river is governed by the weakening state of the Kariba Dam wall. The planned island stopover for Monday night was under water, so we landed instead on a convenient sandbar. Every morning our line of canoes set off from camp in pure air and a pleasant temperature under clear sky. Fleeces were soon discarded as the sun came up. It was challenging following Charles and his particular style of paddling, trying not to bump the boat in front and straining to see any wildlife on the banks. It wasn’t the nippiest of entourages for a guide to lead on a wildlife safari. We were a larger than normal group and often by the time the front canoeists had spotted the crocodile or water monitor sunning itself on the bank, it would have slid into the water as the end of the queue reached the place. Bumping between boats became commonplace as cries of “Ease off!” were mistaken for cries of “He’s off!” By Tuesday it was clear that, apart from hippos, we were going to see and be seen by more eclipse seekers than wild animals as the riverbanks at Mana Pools filled up with cars and

tents. It seemed a good reason to paddle on the Zambian side of the river, where the Zambian children ran along the bank waving and the women called out “Hello! How are you?” We understood that some of the villages avoided famine very well by using their skill in catching and trading fish, but we also learnt about the prices paid to hunt the animals in Zimbabwe, and in spite of the many new village water pumps, we were not convinced that the killing was justified or that the money was going where it was most needed.

“Did you see that?”

A lone monkey stared in wide-eyed disbelief as a group of English people set up tables and stools for a picnic underneath a killer bee’s nest. Charlie posed as Eros on top of a large pointed termite mound, while the usually perfectly coordinated Lloyd giggled with frustration as he tried to learn the basics of ball juggling with two palm nut seeds. The monkey remained aloof and glanced nervously at a distant herd of grazing impala to see if they would turn into white coated men! But at least these strange people left crumbs when they packed up and went on their way!

That night the tables and stools were set up beneath a cathedral like lattice roof of Ana tree branches, ghostlike against the black sky. We glimpsed the stars and listened to bats. Camped on the mainland for once, the possibility of nighttime prowlers with big paws was a good reason not to have a final drink before bedtime. I was lulled to sleep by the gentle and repetitive strains of Charles’s mbira music drifting across from his tent; only to be awoken again by the sight of Jax and Terry’s tent moving position! Well, whatever it was, it was big and dome shaped. Rather like the back end of an elephant I suppose. Anyway, you can’t see very clearly with your eyes shut and your head buried under a roll mat! On waking, there were at least 9 different birdsongs to be heard and the silhouettes of acacia and mahogany trees were dark against the red morning sky. Jax’s first words on Wednesday were “there was something large clomping about!” and the morning trek to find a loo spot revealed that something bigger had beaten me to it! Only 17 paces from the tent there lay an enormous fresh heap of elephant dung which baboons and jackals had spread asunder while looking for undigested seeds and nuts.

The river traffic drastically increased on Wednesday. So far, we had seen a couple of dugouts on the distant Zambian bank, and a smaller group of open boaters who were having their kit transported for them by motorboat. There must have been more of these groups gathering for the eclipse because half a dozen motorboats were now cruising up and down. The wash from one of these, ignorant of his danger to canoeists, had Charlie angrily waving his paddle as we all diverted from our route to ride the waves. Charles was more accustomed to a different kind of danger and when, that same day, a crocodile all but snapped the blade from his paddle in a frenzy of red splash and teeth, he grinned and squeaked, “Did you see that?” With the eclipse growing closer, our guide had to improvise stopovers on islands. Blackpool came to the Zambezi as a whole score of lights shone across from the mainland to where we were camped. That night discreet toilet visits were once again a matter of trusting people not to look, but the threat of big cat visits were lessened with the river as a moat! It was the evening of the hippo charge, and with the peace already shattered we made the transition from silent petrification to a passable impersonation of a rowdy football crowd in a surprisingly short space of time. Our circle of chairs became a stadium for some hilarious games which brought out the competitive streak in the chaps as they balanced on bottles and twisted themselves around canoe paddles, but not before Diane had challenged their manhood by demonstrating it first.

Part two of this story in the August Canoe Focus

info

Many thanks to Mark for all the time and effort he put into organizing such a wonderful trip. Words by Heather Stacey and photographs from members of the group. Thank you to those who have contributed. Bob and Mavis

Summer Gold

The Summer Gold project has been running successfully for 12 years. Based at Lea Green Centre in Derbyshire it makes use of their facilities as well as the local environment. Through a combination of paid and volunteer help we have enabled around 1,400 disabled people aged from five to 95, each year to take part in a wide range of adventurous and creative activities.

Canoeing is always a popular choice, as for many it is the only opportunity they have to access this sport. We are lucky to be able to use the beautiful Cromford Canal for our first forays onto the water; this can be extended for those with a little more experience to the 'Trent bes cent!'

For a couple of years now our only means of enabling access to canoeing to those with spinal injuries or more severe mobility restrictions has been a 'Heath Robinson' approach by using plastic chairs with the legs removed and sandbags to tilt the chair and so on. Although time consuming it was a halfway solution to giving postural support.

However, last year we were extremely fortunate to be awarded a grant from the Canoeing Foundation. This enabled us to purchase the newly developed Aquabac, a postural support system created by the design for life team at Brunel University.

In 2001 for the first time, friends at Summer Gold who are wheelchair users could access canoeing, when in previous years they could only watch. The seat offers varying levels of support that we can adapt according to the preference of the user.

Without this funding the canoeing experience would not have been as accessible as it now is. We

have also been able to loan the Aquabac to another group who has also been able to widen the availability of canoeing to their service users. We hope now to expand our activities to include weekend expeditions further afield. This we can now open to more Summer Gold paddlers with physical disabilities. Our next obstacle to overcome



is how to lift people from wheelchairs into boats. Sadly hoists are designed for use indoors or fixed on pool edges. Who can come up with a design that will work on canal and riverbanks?

Emma Yates, Summer Gold, as a thank you to the Canoeing Foundation



info

For any enquiries about Summer Gold please contact Tony Sharp at Lea Green Tel No.01629 534561.

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Bio-synergy have teamed up with Canoe Focus to offer five lucky readers a free case of the recently launched Liquid NRG. Available in Orange, Lemon and Lime and Blackcurrant, the drink has been named the preferred energy drink for a number of teams competing in the 2002 Commonwealth Games, providing an immediate and continuous release of energy which re-hydrates both pre and post training.

To enter the competition simply send in a SAE to Canoe Focus, bio-synergy competition, 2b Graphic Design, 8 The Waits, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5BY.

All materials used in bio-synergy products are of the highest quality and, where applicable, are of pharmaceutical grade. Bio-synergy are the only British company to be a member of the Forum of Pharmaceutical Professionals and to have had their products passed by the State Drug Inspectorate, following a year extensive testing.



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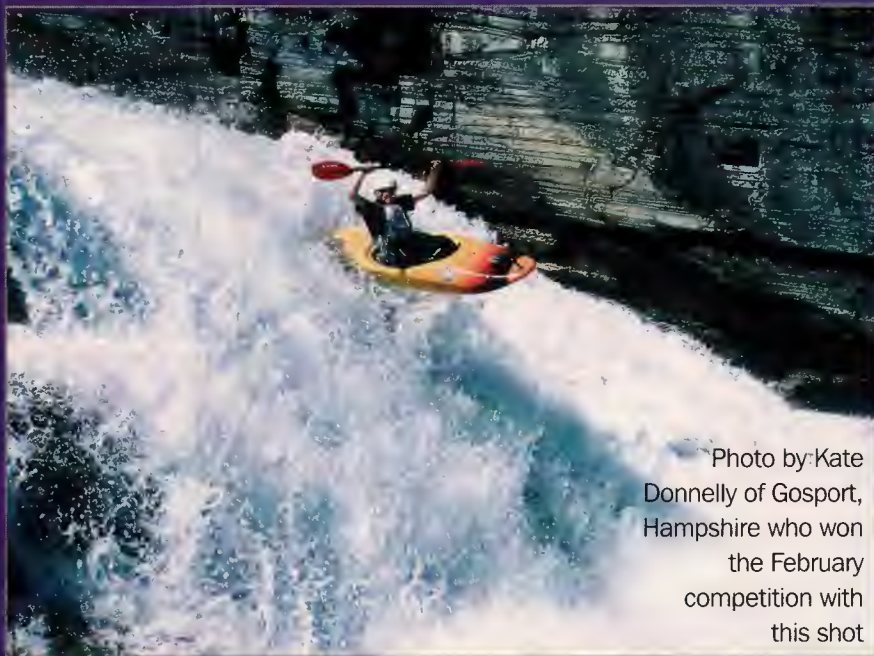


Photo by: Kate Donnelly of Gosport, Hampshire who won the February competition with this shot



Photo competition

Canoe Focus in association with Nookie, offers readers the opportunity to win a Nookie £50 discount voucher. All you have to do is send us your most interesting photograph (prints or transparencies please), the content of which must relate to any element of canoe/kayak sport. If we consider it to be 'the best of the bunch,' your picture will be published as the winner and the prize voucher will wing its way to you. Here's the February winner. Can you improve on this? Good Luck

Amateur photographs only please.
Please refer to conditions and technical restrictions on the right

Competition closes 10-7-2002

please post to: Photo Comp

Nookie Kayaking Equipment, Ottery Business Park, Ottery, Tavistock, PL19 8NS

Conditions

1. Amateur photographs only. No professional or copyright images to be submitted.
2. Please identify print on reverse with your name, address and telephone number.
3. Please supply an appropriately sized self-addressed envelope for return of material. NOTE; No responsibility will be taken by the publisher or Nookie for loss or damage to entries to this competition.
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5. Judges decision final. No correspondence entered into.

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A dream come true!

Craig Hill from southern region
Craig has been helping to co-ordinate youth activity in the Berks and Bucks area of southern region – for 2002 he will be including Oxford and some areas of Hampshire.



Following on our series of profiles of our youth Paddlesport Development Officers – we've returned our attention South.

I first got involved in canoeing at the age of 17 through my local venture scout unit and soon joined my local canoe club, Adventure Dolphin in Pangbourne, to begin a one star course, run by one of the local coaches - Martin Butcher. I have to give Martin some serious credit as a coach, as here I am fifteen years later, still paddling and having now made outdoor education my career.

Adventure Dolphin was such a good centre to learn, as even 15 years ago, it encouraged a breadth of knowledge of the sport and I soon learned to paddle in all disciplines of the sport with varied success. My enthusiasm led me to rise through the ranks of the coaching scheme in both Closed Cockpit Kayak and Open Canoe disciplines, before I got roped into

marathon paddling. After a few seasons of Watersides and Thamesides and one very painful DW attempt, I began to be drawn back to the call of white water. Not wanting to give up marathon paddling completely, I chose to combine the two, and started into the wonderful Exe and Liffey descents!

After a few minor cases of hypothermia from the Exe in November, I thought it was time to go back to the comforts of paddling a nice plastic boat, that doesn't snap if you paddle it into rocks. My coaching qualifications led me to working more and more weekends and evenings, until one fine summer's day, back in 1996, I threw in my career as an underwriter and decided to try and earn a living as canoeing and climbing coach. The drop in wages was quite a culture shock, but my job satisfaction more than made up for it. I worked a number of seasons around the country, working in many different places including a spell at the mecca of all outdoor centres, the River Dart Country Park where I was truly in heaven. Eventually though I grew tired of the seasonal work and looked for something more permanent which resulted in my moving back to my friends in Reading, as the summer co-ordinator for Adventure Dolphin, before settling down as the Director of youth activities for Leighton Park School, where I still work today.

I still love the adrenaline rush of white water and the ice cream headaches of rolling (and the occasional swim) and although I may attempt the Devises to Westminster again in the near future, I think I have finally found my niche. In comparison to my peers, I do not have the provenance of the likes of Howard, Gordon or Suzy, as I have a very short attention span, always looking for the next challenge, rather than training well in just one area. I suppose the best description I can give of myself is jack of all trades, master at none, having tried almost every craft from high kneeling C1 to surf shoe, Super fly to Nelo scorpion.

I think it was this love of all aspects of the sport that drew me into the job of Paddlesport Development Officer, having never really grown up, the office life was not for me, so the prospect of being paid to paddle with all the local canoe clubs and helping young people participate in all aspects of the sports is a dream come true!

Surfs up!

A surf spectacular event designed to bring novice paddlers and experts together was recently held at Bude, Cornwall. The competition on the Saturday comprised of two events in one - the first a straight forward high performance surf contest and the second used a handicap system to give everyone a fair chance of winning. The Sunday coaching clinics plus the handicap system resulted in plenty of junior paddlers and families taking part along side some of the countries top paddlers. The weekend was a great success for all. 1st Mark Casling, 2nd Tom Iggledon, 3rd Phil Caiston, 4th Chris Bray. Outstanding performance: Peter Williams

Simon Hammond – PDO Devon and Cornwall.

“My Weekend at Bude”

On Thursday evening we packed food, drinks, clothes, tents, sleeping bags and the canoes and canoeing gear. Friday morning we set off with the gear and Becky's friend Emma, it was a longish journey about 100 miles. When we got to Bude, we had to find the campsite, by following the signs. The campsite was quite big; the people who owned it were friendly. They had lots of animals, rabbits, goats, chickens, horses, and peacocks.

On the Saturday we all went down to Widemouth Bay, where the canoeing competition was being held. The sea was

very rough and messy, which meant it would be hard to surf in. We had to answer a set of six questions to work out our handicap, because I was so young and hadn't competed before I had a very low one. I spoke to a man from Jersey, called Nigel Holland, he said that he would find someone to help me and be a minder while I was in the surf. So I got ready, with all my canoeing gear.

There were lots of different kayaks; surfing ones white water ones and mine, a junior dancer. All the kayaks were checked to make sure they were seaworthy. My dancer had to have toggles and air bags fitted. For surfing you should wear a buoyancy aid and a helmet.

Each round was 15 minutes long. Tim the timer who was in charge of the timing split up the 15 minutes using different coloured flags. Green flags for the first ten minutes, a yellow flag for the next five minutes and an orange flag meant your heat had finished. You are scored on your best three waves. You score points by getting on to the wave and riding it and for getting off the wave, any tricks you can manage when you are on the wave will give you more points. We all took part in the judging. I had some help with the scoring and was given advice about what was good and bad about a wave.

In the first round, I was a little bit nervous about the surf, five minutes had gone Nigel told me to paddle hard to catch a big wave. I caught it successfully, all of a sudden the canoe did a 180 degree turn and I was surfing backwards, then the



Peter Williams

canoe did a 90 degree turn and so I quickly decided to do a bongo slide to the beach. In the second round I was taken out, the sea had changed, the surf was now about 1.5 to two metres high and still quite "messy" I didn't feel comfortable trying to catch these waves. On the way back in I capsized. The wave caught the canoe but soon three people came to help me. Two of them were British champions, Simon Hammond and James Hawker, Simon

Hammond told me to take hold of his toggle, but I slipped off, just as James Hawker was surfing in he stopped and told me to take hold of the back of his canoe, he tried to catch some waves but did not succeed, finally he caught a huge wave and surfed in like a rocket with me on the back.

In the third round, Nigel said we were not to go surfing in the large waves. We stayed in the small waves and he helped me do some bongo slides. When I came out Simon Hammond asked me if we would go to the presentation in the evening. At the presentation cups were given to the surfers who came 1st, 2nd and 3rd, there was also a little cup left. This was presented to me for being the youngest one taking part. I didn't expect to win a cup. I felt happy and proud and very tired.

On Sunday morning we met up with some of the instructors and had an enjoyable morning playing in the surf. I caught lots of waves even managing to turn on them. Simon also told us about the beach and what we need to look out for if we surf beaches we don't know very well. We learnt about rip currents and what can cause them and also about pits that form in the sand making it difficult to know which way the current is flowing.

**Report from Peter Williams aged 10.
Bude Surf Spectacular 2002.**

Perception Wavehopper Challenge

On the weekend of 20/21st April the first two challenge events were run at the Nene in Northampton and Prudhoe on the Tyne with over 60 youths enjoying their first taste of WWR. All the youth are keen now to go to their next progression event at the Burrs and Nene – the points they collect from each race will be added together for a final total at the last event at the Junior World Championships at Bala.

It's not too late to join the challenge - contact your local Paddlesport Development Officer for details. The final - in Bala North Wales on the 20th July - will be a great event and you'll have the opportunity to watch our top youth compete against the rest of the world.

In the meantime, to whet your appetite here is a report from the first event.

"Cum on Beccy man – Show them what you're made of!"

Some one always has to go first... whether it's the first time in a Wavehopper, first to do a timed 500m run or first region to hold their Challenge event! The series got off to a flying start in the North East Region when on Sunday 21st April, 41

youngsters from six clubs turned up at Tyne Riverside Country Park, Prudhoe – on what was the only wet day for weeks! They all experienced a coaching session with top Scottish coach Kelso Riddell in Wavehoppers in the morning as well as playing in the rapids in GP kayaks under the careful supervision of voluntary coaches. After lunch, there were two timed runs each down the 500m course in a boat of their own choice. Amazing how many opted for a Wavehopper on their second run when they realized how much faster then went! The day rounded off with a presentation of medals, "fun" prizes for the "best capsize" etc., and certificates and cream eggs for everyone who took part. Thanks must go to the sterling work of all the volunteer helpers, whether on or off water.....strange how only one of them was prepared to actually have a go in a Wavehopper themselves though! (Well done Pam of Stockton & Thornaby CC!).

Bobby Timperley the North East PDO.



Paddlestars of TV

BBC Children's TV recently visited West Kirby, Wirral to film a unique event – youths from wheelchair basketball having their first taste of Paddlesport! Of course it was only fair that our paddles had to have a go at basketball as well! Due to the nature of the challenges involved – it was decided for the two brave basketball players to have a go at Canoe polo (well they both are team games with a ball)! Abby Ireland and Dave Latham had an introduction in advance of filming and they then joined the local Peninsula Canoe Club team for the "real thing". Meanwhile, two of our paddlers Matthew Townsend and Gareth McCann had their first go at wheelchair basketball. Verdict all roundæ FAB!

Thanks go to coach Steve Hill, Mike Jervis Caldly Grand Swimming Pool, PDO Len Hartley and all the parents involved.



By the time you read this it will have hit the TV channels but in the meantime here are some pics...the team being filmed (that is not a caterpillar but a BBC mike in view!) and the teams in action! Peninsula players to star with the above: Stuart, Lynday, Steven, Chris, Shaun and Nick.

LETTERS

Your chance to put forward your point of view

Please send your letters to

Canoe Focus,
British Canoe Union
John Dudderidge House,
Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford,
Notts NG2 5AS
or email them to
peter@canoefocus.co.uk

Great encouragement

The Slalom Exec. must be congratulated on recognising the benefits of running 2/3/4 events. Twice now I have been up to Middleton where we have had a very enjoyable event. Numbers taking part were very satisfactory and must be a great encouragement to those running the events. Last year the water was high giving the better paddlers something to think about whereas the Div. 4's were run on a reduced course. This year the river was lower allowing all the paddlers to compete on the same course however I never heard anyone say it was either too hard or too easy. This alone must benefit the lesser paddlers being able to see how the course should really be done. Clubs were able to turn up with the majority of their paddlers making for a very sociable weekend, and it must also be a boon to parents who have paddlers in more than one Division. The only problem was that with a Prem. and Div. 1 on the same day Tees were without many of their helpers, but now we have a managed calendar it should be possible to prevent these unfortunate clashes and create some really well run and enjoyable events. I hope more Clubs follow Tees example.

Roy Bradshaw

Action on Access.

The article "Action on Access" in the last issue of Canoe Focus called on canoeists to support the BCU campaign by writing to their local MPs. An excellent idea, but most canoeists prefer to put paddle to water than pen to paper, so I fear the campaign is going to sink like the proverbial stone. May I suggest that we adopt a different strategy, we have an extensive network of clubs and dealers – lets use them:

- 1: The BCU Access Officer should circulate to all clubs a draft letter, which can be adapted to cover local examples if appropriate. Club chairman should get all club members to sign the letter which should then be sent to local MPs, the Minister for Sport, plus local and regional Environment Agency Managers.
- 2: All canoe retailers should be asked to hold a petition on their counters and ask all customers to sign, this will catch the support of non-BCU paddlers. These can then be sent, with the same letter as the clubs, to the contacts listed above.
- 3: Lets have petitions at all BCU events, this will catch the non-paddling supporters of our cause. This could be co-ordinated by local clubs and added to their clubletter, or centrally by the BCU and sent direct to the Minister.
These actions will enable us to generate the maximum impact for the minimum of individual effort.
- 4: Why not take up the example of other lobby groups, e.g. SAS, and take our case directly to Westminster. A BCU rally of hundreds, or hopefully thousands, of paddlers. From all disciplines will have a massive PR impact. If we can get a couple of friendly MPs to invite us we could even get our boats and our cause into the great house itself.

Finally, lets raise the political profile of canoeing by inviting key politicians to national and international events, e.g. present the prizes at the D-W, Hurley Rodeo, Premier slalom and other events. Clubs should not forget the value of inviting local MPs to minor events, especially where they involve kids or disabled paddlers. If we don't raise the profile of canoeing – nobody else will. And without profile we won't win support for better access to rivers.

Brian Smith, Tewkesbury.

The BCU has circulated all clubs with facts, hints and suggestions and circulated the same to it's trade list, and other parties e.g: The Association of Canoe Trades, British Marine Federation. We also gave out lobby packs to all enquirers at ICE and to the office.

So far we know that over 110 MP's have expressed support and concern and we have had 40 MP signatures on an Early Day Motion in the house. All senior MP's have been lobbied including: The Prime Minister, Margaret Beckett and Alun Michael the ministers at DEFRA, Richard Caborn Sports Minister, both in person and by letter, as have the Shadow Front Bench and the Liberal Party Shadows.

In addition the Environment Agency, British Waterways, the ARA and RYA, English Nature, RSPB, Otter and other flora and fauna interests have been lobbied.

A petition, 'Raw Deal' has been circulated from Wales which the BCU has supported (with amongst other actions we inserted copies in Canoe Focus) which already has 1,000 signatures garnered as your correspondent describes. The public PR and a mass rally of parliament is being planned as we speak... The problem is that we need paddlers capable of handling the tideway outside of Parliament mid week. Would you be prepared to take part or even organise it? After all, the BCU, its Executive, its staff and officers reflect the membership. It is your union and it is in action.

Replies by Chris. Hawkesworth — Planning and Facilities Manager. BCU Office, Nottingham.

What's wrong with it?

Thank you for the new money saving membership card format. What's wrong with it?

The assembly instructions deserve a booby prize - Does "personalise" mean sign it?

Not wishing to cut down the photograph which I have been re-using for years I have obscured the words "London 6" which are totally meaningless to me. As a Jerseyman who lives in Kent and does most of his canoeing elsewhere I was happy enough being called British.

Only after sticking it together did the signature space become apparent, so it is sealed unsigned.

The card is no longer water proof round the edges (I will have to find some way of re-laminating it unless you have any of the old wallets going spare).

Finally, the only information of any real use to me on the old card is no longer there. That is the statement about liability insurance. I have found showing the card to be of immense benefit when hiring canoes abroad. It completely changes peoples attitudes and has often broken the ice for me. It's no good asking someone with a beach concession in the back of beyond to refer to a website for further information, just put it back on the card please even if it makes the card larger. It is still small enough to put in my passport -

I can't imagine the name "Canoe England" impressing them as much as "British Canoe Union" either.

What's good about it? I can use it to disguise a credit card in my wallet.

Frank Connor.

Frank Connor raises valid points about the new style membership cards. We are attempting to source a more suitable product and hope to have something better in place for next year.

Finding flat water

With reference to the letter from John Connell in the April issue of Canoe Focus I would encourage him not to give up on finding flat water to paddle on. As he has found out it's much easier to get information on canoeing down Everest or to the North Pole than our canals. We were in the same position a few years ago but found the following useful:

1. Join the BCU. You will get a licence to paddle most waters in the UK including all of the canals. Inland Waterways were quite right, anywhere you can get public access you can paddle. We don't usually bother with rivers because access is too much of a pain.
2. Buy an OS map of the area you want to paddle. It'll show the intersection of canals and roads and each intersection is a possible access point. Make a list of the likely looking ones.
3. Reconnaissance on foot/car. A quick afternoon's tour round your list of access points will give you an idea of which ones are possible. It's not always the obvious ones!
4. Get paddling!

The above worked for us in the West Midlands and we now have a list of easy access points which we use regularly. We've also done a similar thing on our holidays in France and found quite a few good paddling spots using the same method. Access in France is generally much easier as they seem to have a much more liberal attitude than the UK.

John Davies

We agree with John Davis's letter referring to John Connell in the April issue. This approach brings immediate results. Do not give up on river access though. All interesting rivers are covered in the BCU's River Information section of the Members Year book. It is up to date (Jan 2002) please use the information provided.

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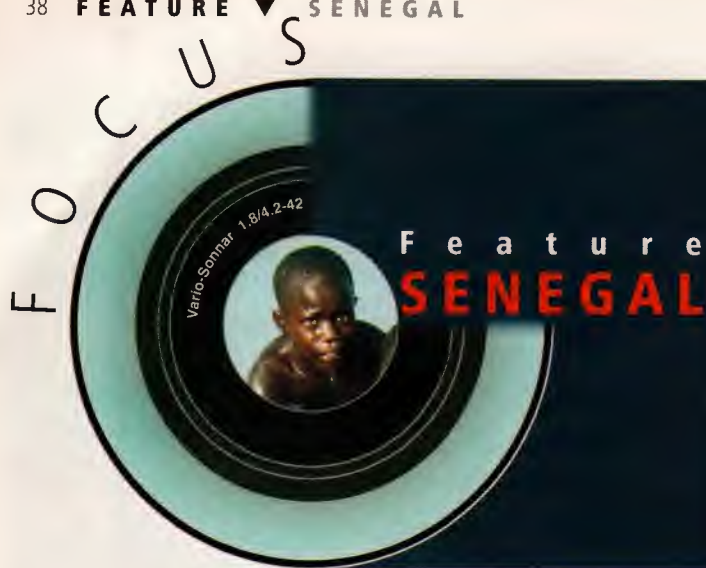


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With just a little time to go before Ute and I started our winter ski season training, we were both looking to head off somewhere to explore with our kayaks. We decided on a surf mission, sun, sand and warm waves was just too tempting. Our only problem was where? We got hold of the Stormrider guide to the world (the surfers bible) and drew up a short list. Out of all the places that came up, Senegal sounded mystic and an adventure waiting to happen. Ute had also never been to Africa and it had been some three years since I was on the continent, so Senegal it was!



info

Senegal is relatively expensive for Africa. In fact, if you compare the area of Cap Vert, where we were based, to places like Ecuador, India or Sri Lanka it certainly is not that cheap. Senegal was formally a French colony and it is still the main language, the locals are really friendly and as long as you use common sense you will have no problems at all. Like anywhere in the world there are a few hazards and hassles.

The currency is CFA which is fixed to the French Franc and soon the Euro. There are CFA100 to the French Franc.

The climate when we were there in October was hot and very sticky, the average temperature was around 30 degrees centigrade and the humidity was at least 90% everyday. The average water temperature was around 25 degrees centigrade.

Apparently there are rumours of sharks patrolling the coasts but with fish plentiful there should not really be a problem. Check with your local chemist to see what vaccinations you will require.



After September 11th our family and friends were certainly concerned about us flying to Senegal, whether it was a mixture of flying and Senegal also being an Islamic state we did not know, but Ute did not show any emotion and my mind was set on the mission! Anyway if it did go all "Pete Tong" then it would certainly make a great film about our escape and evasion! However, when we arrived at Innsbruck, the start of our journey, our concerns were certainly quashed. The airport was shut! The Austrians idea of security was to lock the doors and turn off the lights! We had to wait an hour before the airport opened for business and finally we were on our way.

After a flying from Innsbruck to Frankfurt, waiting there for six hours we finally arrived in Dakar, Senegal at 7.30pm. We collected all our

SURF



Breakfast was at a very sociable 9.00am. The surf looked awesome and 700 metres away was a small island called Ile de Yoff. Either side of this island were huge reef breaks, the biggest I have seen with my own eyes (though I have never been to Hawaii or to the infamous pipeline in Mexico). A little further along the beach, waves were breaking both left and right. Luckily the beach brake was a little more appetising for Ute. Ute was up first and what an introduction to surfing, the waves were forgiving and the water was



gear and then it was "Stanby Stanby" for the ensuing chaos that is involved outside third world airports. Heavily laden with kayaks and bags the temperature hit us only seconds before the first so called guides, porters and helpers. Somehow we managed to get the kayaks onto the roof of a taxi, all the gear into the boot and ourselves on the back seats with the minimum amount of fuss! We got a room in a lodge near the beach, put the mossie net up, turned the fan onto full power and crashed.



MISSION

so, so warm. She got some great first time surfs with a few wobbles and the occasional roll was called upon but the smile just said it all.

We then paddled out to the island to have a closer look at the breaks either side. The sea was so clear and pure, we could see the bed and the crabs scurrying too and fro. The island itself was fantastic, there was hardly anything on it, just a few rocks covered with a strange grass and a small lighthouse. The island was about the size of two football pitches in length and one in width. With just us and some birds on the island we got a great feeling of being alone, something that is very hard to come by in the area of Senegal that we were in.

The waves coming off the island on the right were big, sometimes three metres in height all left handers, some forming just perfectly. So after checking out the rocks I decided it was time to ride a few of these waves. While I was kayaking out, fishermen were riding some of the smaller waves in, to dispense their catch to the women selling their husbands fare. One of the fisherman looked over and made a motion of having a screw loose in my head, whether this was supposed to stop me going out or just to point out what was a crazy "Tubab" (the local word to foreigner) doing out here in such a small piece of plastic I will never know. My mind was focused and I was completely happy with my ability to surf out of harms way. However, a few days later a local asked me just before going out to surf the left hand side of the island whether I could swim and this did shake my senses a little as even the locals would have nothing to do with the waves there. As I was paddling out to my planned take off zone, I was treated to a truly awesome sight. Just beside the break, schools of fish were swimming in on the green wave.

The waves did not disappoint, I had some great rides and the power was immense, the speed I was picking up was just made for throwing a boat around. On paddling back out I was pulling wave wheels off the waves coming back in and falling over a metre off the back of the waves, I was buzzing. What seemed to be five minutes but was well over an hour paddled back to the island, met up with Ute and we both kayaked over to the beach break and surfed the waves in. The kids on the beach came out dragged us up the beach and then we just let them loose in the kayaks to play in the sea. It always amazes me how the local kids have such great balance and how quickly they pick the techniques up.

Our whole two week mission to Senegal fell into the same category, it was certainly a great way to recharge the batteries ready for a full-on winter season in the Arlberg. ■

thanks

Steve and Ute would like to thank the following people for their continued support and help:

Pete Astles of PEAK UK
– www.peakuk.com
David Olson of Smith
Sunglasses USA –
www.smithsport.com



Yoff

This was our main base for the trip, great reef breaks and a reliable beach break too. Campement Le Poulagou is based on the beach front and it just a 100 metre walk to the surf. Yoff is a strictly Muslim community, there is no beer available to purchase and it is regulated solely by the local residents, a police force is non-existent and there is no crime. Ute never had a problem going to the surf in shorts and a rash top. However, when walking through the village a long skirt and T-shirt is appropriate.

Campement Le Poulagou costs around £6.00 per night per person with breakfast included. Street snacks consisting of a small plate of chips will cost around 50 pence. A two course meal in the Campement Le Poulagou will cost around £4.00. Colas, Sprites etc cost around 40 pence. There is no beer available in Yoff due to the town being strictly Muslim.

La Virage

This is another beach break where we surfed and stayed for a few days, the sea was not very clean with plastic containers and wrappers everywhere. La Virage was certainly geared for the French ex-pats staying for the weekend, to get away from the heat and stress of Dakar. Hence the prices of everything.

Cap Ouest costs around £16.00 per room (double) with private toilet and shower. Evening meals cost around £4.00 and breakfast around £2.00. Colas, sprites etc cost around 70 pence and beer costs 80 pence.

N' Gor

This is just five minutes to the west of La Virage. There is a small island opposite the village which you can get to by motor boat. There are numerous hotels on the island and on the mainland, however, it is a bit of a hassle to get your kayaks and gear over, so it is worth first looking at the reef breaks left and right of the island. When we were there, the surf was certainly bigger in Yoff.

Dakar

The capital of Senegal, a bustling city that never rests. Not only is Dakar renowned for being the first African city but the nightlife here is amazing, whether you want to chill out to live reggae, dance until the small hours or catch a local live act, Dakar has something for everyone. Youssan N' Dor regularly performs in Dakar. There is a little surf but with rumours of high pollution no-one really surfs there. It is worth taking a trip to the former slave enclave of Goree to escape the stress of Dakar. There is also a kayak club in Dakar but when we tried to get in touch with them they were not so friendly and helpful!

Hotel Oceanic costs around £14.00 per person per night with a private toilet, shower and air conditioning.

Street snacks (kebab) cost around 75 pence. A set meal will cost around £5.00 and breakfast around £3.00. Colas, sprite etc cost around 50 pence and beer 80 pence.

The Geoff Good Coach of the Year Award



The UK Coaching Committee awarded the following Geoff Good Coach of the Year Awards for 2001. Slalom Coach Ester Mathews for the coaching of young paddlers, Polo coaches Mike Moffitt & Greg Smale for the

coaching of senior paddlers and inland coach Robert Cunnington for voluntary services to coaching.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2002 awards please see the advert below and respond. The work of coaches in the field is

significant and should be recognised. What better way than to nominate them for this prestigious paddlesport award.

The Geoff Good Coach of the Year Award is aimed at raising the profile of coaching and the work of coaches and in so doing will honour the memory and work of Geoff Good the BCU Director of Coaching 1970 – 1999. The award is co-ordinated by the BCU Coaching Service, the awarding body of the BCU.

Award Categories:

There are three awards of equal status in the categories as detailed below:

- Junior Coach of the Year
- Senior Coach of the Year
- Voluntary Services to Coaching

For further details contact: BCU Coaching Service

New Canoe & Kayak handbook

The publisher and the BCU would like to make the following corrections to details listed in the new canoe and kayak handbook.

1. The Illustrators name is Carol Davies (not Hughes). Carol's contact details are: web address (greenfrogart.co.uk) and business phone number (01978 861049).
2. The photo on page 171 of a bearded man wearing dark glasses and a hat that shades half his face is not Suresh Paul. It is in fact Mitesh Makanjee.
3. The post code for the SCA should read EH12 9DQ (not EH1 9DG)

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Activities Manager

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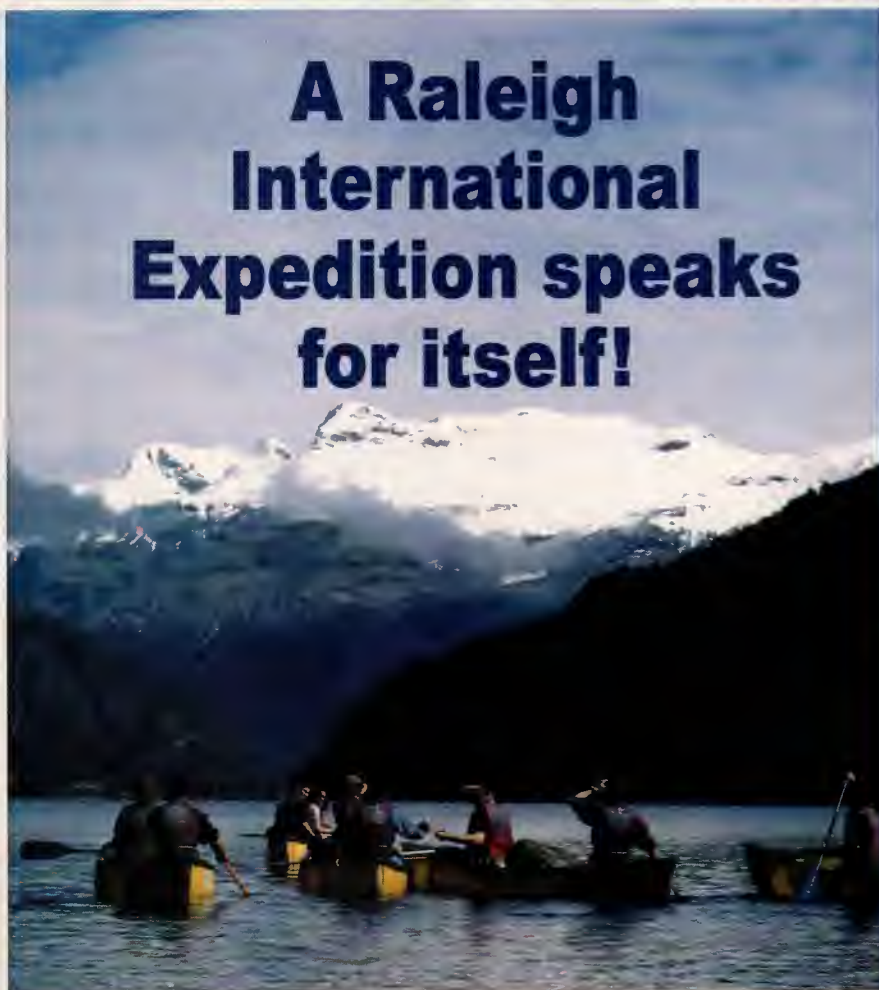


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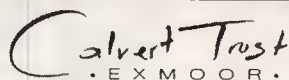
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John Fenna

Be prepared

When swimming in cold water, it is reassuring to know that, once you are ashore again, your



clothing will dry quickly and keep you warm. Good base layer clothing helps here and I have recently been trying out Regatta's Base T-Shirt and leggings. This is not to say I swim a lot. Just that I like to be prepared!

Made from 100% polyester "Comfort Control" fabric, both items have a good wicking ability and give good thermal insulation as well as drying quickly. An anti bacterial finish helps keep down any odour caused by sweat while the weave gives a textured finish.

The T-shirt which, of course, can be worn on its own in warm weather as well as being the basis of a cold weather layering system, has comparatively long short sleeves compared to some T-shirts, and a slightly longer cut back as well as a plain crew neck. The sleeves are cut to provide freedom of movement.

The Leggings have plain leg cuffs, an elasticated waist and a fly front featuring a single button closure.

Both items work well and are comfortable to wear for extended periods of time - doing their job without fuss.

The Leggings are available in sizes S-XXL, colours navy or green and cost approx £20, while the T-shirt is available in sizes S-XXL, colours navy, denim, green and stone and costs approx £17.50.

If not the most exciting garments in the world, the base layer clothing is important, and these items from Regatta are practical, comfortable and not over-expensive.

Regatta Ltd. Tel: 0161 749 1313.
www.regatta.com

John Fenna

Clearly the best

New 'Virtually Clear' Power Duck Tape mends almost anything, almost invisibly

Torn life jacket? Split sail? One strip of new Virtually Clear Power Duck Tape and the problem is solved.

The first transparent tape of its kind in the world, it has a fine cloth grid that gives tearability by hand and strength in both



directions, tiny edge perforations to make tearing easier and an innovative adhesive technology that withstands the harmful effect of daylight and weathering.

Virtually Clear Power Duck Tape is 100 per cent weatherproof and equally effective on rigid surfaces like boat hulls, or flexible ones like canvas.

The 50mm wide x 20m rolls retail at £6.99 and are available from good DIY stores nationwide.

For further information please call: Natalie Lintott or Katherine Burges, Spreckley Partners Ltd Tel: 020 7388 9988



Feature rich

The latest in Yak's extensive range of Buoyancy Aids, is the McKenzie. It is rated at 60 Newtons which is mid range buoyancy suitable for all.

Comfort is the keynote with non-restricting low cut sides, that have elasticated inserts; plus side belts and shoulder straps, which can be fully adjusted to create the snuggest fit.

Even the adjustment points on the shoulders have been padded with neoprene webbing ties to eliminate rubbing and the waistbelt is elasticated to prevent the jacket riding up. The supersoft closed cell PVC foam, used to provide buoyancy, also ensures the McKenzie is flexible and light to wear.

It has good load distribution with webbing running from the shoulders down the front of the jacket to the waistband and for added durability the cover itself is made from 600D polyester.

To finish off, Yak have included a zippered pouch on the front, complete with internal 'D' ring, ideal for storing.

The McKenzie is available in three sizes, Junior, SIM, MIL and one colourway Red/Navy.



No bother boot

Yak have stepped up their accessory range by introducing a portage boot. Built to be tough but comfortable, they take the pain out of rock hopping, bank scrambling and generally getting your feet wet.

Constructed from 5mm titanium neoprene, the portage boot has a thermal fleece lining for warmth and a flexible, injection moulded sole, to support the underside of the foot. The patterned sole also possesses excellent gripping properties in and out of the water.

To prevent any ankle twisting "on the move", Yak have run laces high up the front of the boot and added protective panels both sides of the foot and across the back of the ankle. Heels, toes and instep are also well protected and nubuck leather reinforces the lace eyes and tongue. The Yak portage boot is available in five sizes ranging from Small to XX large.

Yak, Tel: +44 (0)23 9252 8621

Fax: +44 (0)23 9251 0905

email: yak@crewsaver.co.uk



The TOR

A new fast stable K1

The ICF decision to remove the width restriction has re-ignited the boat design game over the last 18 months.

The TOR from Kirton Kayaks is the new wingless stable K1. Its sleek lines and cut away fore deck provide a great paddling position and careful styling give the impression of a fine bow.

The rear deck has also been cut away to reduce windage.

The cockpit is larger – long and wide – it's the first boat that I've been able to paddle in comfort for years.

The standard GRP seat is low which aids stability and with a fixing front and rear it gives a good firm feel. A wooden Gees seat or a platform version give extra height and are a little more to my liking – although for the less experienced they do sacrifice a bit of stability.

A lovely looking boat but, of course looks aren't everything and I was keen to trial the boat against my more racey Cleaver-X.

The first attempt foundered in the only real draw back to the design as low freeboard means that for the 17stone paddlers like me a spraydeck is needed in the rough and I didn't have one!

Once properly kitted out I found that the Tor runs really well (for the senior paddlers not dissimilar in speed to the Lancer) but more importantly for paddlers not totally comfortable in a full blown K1 the extra stability gives the chance to transfer real power from the blade to boat speed with the end result that you go quicker.

Finally as you would expect from a Kirton boat they are not the cheapest but the build quality is first class, well finished inside and out and a life expectancy of many years.

Assessment by Richard Ward

Kirton Kayaks 01363 773295

www.kirton-kayaks.co.uk



Nikwax travel towel vs cotton towel

Nikwax, specialists in high performance waterproofing products, have launched a revolutionary new travel towel. Using their own unique Parameta S Directional fabric, Nikwax has created a travel towel that is half the weight, less bulk, dries twice as fast and is now retailing at outdoor clothing shops across the UK at a special introductory price of £11.99.

Forget using a normal cotton towel or even a chamois 'cardboard' sports towel. Nikwax use their own Parameta S fabric which mimics a mammal's fleece. It is furry on one side and smooth on the other, making it unusually soft and luxurious. And, because it is made using finely woven polyester, it helps stop the wind-cooling effect - making it a wonderfully warm and welcome relief after a swim, at the end of a workout or some outdoor pursuits or simply after a shower.

The new Nikwax towel only weighs 219.8g compared with a cotton towel which is almost double the weight, at 511.2g. Imagine what the cotton towel weighs when it gets wet?



Unlike a cotton towel that holds the water in the middle of the fabric, the Parameta S fabric actually moves water to the surface allowing it to dry twice as fast. The towel then folds neatly into its own convenient carry bag, to take up less room than a pair of flip flops.

Take it on holiday, to the swimming baths, mountaineering, skiing or rock climbing. Whatever the occasion, whatever the weather, wherever you go, the Nikwax Travel Towel will take up less space, weigh less and dry twice as fast.

For further information please phone 01892 786400
Email: info@nikwax.co.uk

www.nikwax.co.uk

Adventures in Loonerland

Mark Birkbeck
Ed Cornfield
Andy Phillips
Deb Pinniger
Karl H. Preece
Simon Westgarth

Locations: New Zealand, Norway and Africa.

A film by Simon Westgarth

www.loonerland.net

Global adventures

Adventures in Loonerland is the debut film from global adventurer Simon Westgarth. Two years in the making, this film documents the antics of some of the best UK kayaking talent as they travel around the world.

Watch as they search out the cleanest lines and nail the trickiest rides during their endless summer. The boating action comes from all over the globe featuring some of the finest waves, steepest drops, chunkiest holes and cleanest boofs captured on film.

UK paddlers include Deb Pinniger, Paul Robertson, Ed Cornfield, Mark Birkbeck and Andy Philips. Watch as they cross continents to rip it up in premiere locations - New Zealand, Norway and Africa are all destinations on the map.

The MTV style action includes paddler interviews, profiles and an unforgettable 80-second beating in Rapid Number Nine on the Zambezi River.

For more information on this video and other related products visit

www.loonerland.net

Little book of Palm

Palm have released the 2002 line-up of Kayaking and Touring apparel and Equipment in the form of a little booklet. Don't be deceived by the size - you will discover that The Little Book of Palm 2002 contains something for every paddler and multi watersport user from the entry-level beginner to the whitewater athletic warrior.

Enjoy what Palm have created for you by ordering a copy - phone Palm on 01275 798100, or browse through the brochure online at www.palm-equipment.co.uk.

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Alps. For those who just can't decide, there's our classic 'white water sea and surf' week designed to give paddlers with limited experience a taste of all sorts of water and various types of boat.

You needn't worry about experience either as our extensive programme covers all levels, from complete beginner right up to coach level 5 development.

What's more our fully residential courses start from as little as £120, a price that includes hotel standard accommodation, great food, expert instruction and even equipment hire.

For a free copy of our 48-page brochure e-mail info@pyb.co.uk or call 01690 720214. Go on, go to the phone.

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