

# Canoe

## F O C U S

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**Weekend on the Wye**

**Iran's grandest canyon**

**Popping out to St Kilda**

**River Severn: source to sea  
and more...**

**National polo  
league**

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**The BCU vision is to:**

enable our members, partner organisations and the wider paddling community the best available opportunity to achieve their potential in all aspects of paddlesports.

The BCU's mission is quite simply helping and inspiring people to go canoeing.

Paddle now, join us now, together we can all achieve more.

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### THANKS

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**Front cover:** Dave Sanders, focused on both speed and the ball  
**Photo:** Agnello Guarracino

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**YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE CANOE FOCUS HAPPEN.**

The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. **Technical Information:** Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to [peter@canoeofocus.co.uk](mailto:peter@canoeofocus.co.uk), or mailed to 2b Graphic Design, 49 Greenfields, St Ives, Camb. PE27 5HB. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material.

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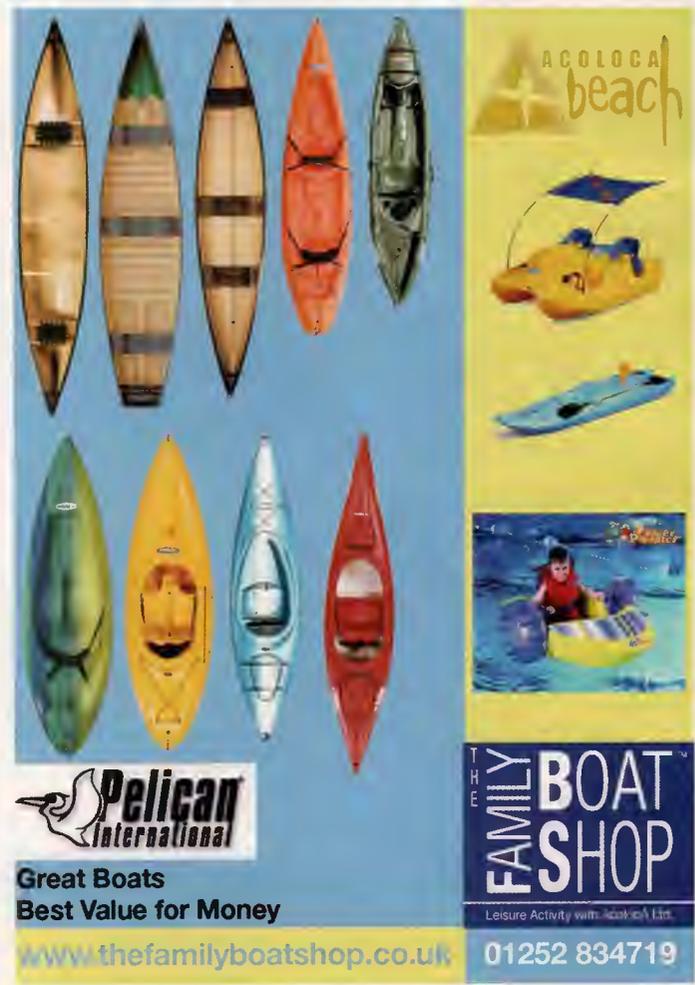


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# Comment

by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

## Jonnie Schofield hits gold

Great Britain's Jonnie Schofield claimed his first Wild Water Racing World Cup gold medal when he won the first sprint event in the men's K1 class at Holme Pierrepont.

After the first run, Lancastrian Schofield, with a time of 71.21 seconds, found himself in third place, with the Slovenian Nejc Znidarcic leading, having posted a time almost a second faster. But Schofield went much quicker on the second run with a time of 70.20 seconds and much to his delight and that of the crowd, Znidarcic could not match him and he held on to win with a combined time of 141.47 seconds, just fourteen hundredths ahead.

In the other men's races, Andy Hamilton was the leading Briton in the C1 class, finishing in 10th place, and Simon Wright and Jamie Christie finished 5th in the C2 class.

In the women's K1 class, Leicester's Jessica Oughton led the British challenge, finishing 9th, just ahead of the young Hyslop sisters, Sandra and Jennifer from Hexham in Northumberland, who finished 10th and 11th respectively in their first senior World Cup race.

By the time this goes to press, the World Cup rounds will also have taken place at the River Washburn, Shannon in Ireland, and on the River Tryweryn.

## Change of access minister

Ministerial responsibility for improving access now rests with Jim Knight, the MP for Dorset South.

Taking on the mantle from Rt Hon Alun Michael MP, Jim becomes the Minister for Rural Affairs. Jim is said to be a campaigner for Sport and Leisure and has been a keen activist to bring the 2012 Olympics to London. Jim is also listed as one of the key political moving forces behind establishing the National Sailing Academy in Weymouth.

The BCU is seeking a meeting with the new minister as soon as possible to discuss the lack of access to inland rivers.

## RAC launches new website

The Rivers Access Campaign has launched a new website. This site has thousands of visitors including those for and against the campaign, as well as many of the key players (including government departments) involved in the access debate. The site has been developed to provide more information concerning all aspects of the campaign and to be more reactive to current

issues and activities. On the new site you are able to:-

- Log your support for the campaign.
- Log access incidents (positive and negative).
- Find out more information about what is going on in the government and its departments.
- Find out what is going on with the campaign.
- Discover how you can help keep the profile of the access issue on the government's agenda and in the general public's support.
- See what activities that you can get involved in.
- Sample letters and questions that can be written and asked.

Visit the site regularly to see what is going on - [www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org)

## Daily Telegraph

Some of you will have noticed the recent article in the Daily Telegraph which suggested that the tax position currently enjoyed by the BCU may be challenged by the Inland Revenue. Although it would appear that the journalist who wrote the article did ring the BCU, he spoke to a member of our general office team who did not have the specialist knowledge concerning our tax position. That member of staff promised that someone better placed would telephone him right back. Sadly, the journalist then placed his telephone on voice mail.

The BCU does not generate any commercial return from the brokering of personal liability insurance on behalf of its members. If a member were to take up his or her own personal liability insurance then it would come at a cost far greater than that of membership to the BCU.

The article actually gives a misleading picture of the BCU's position, although of course the Inland Revenue may care to challenge any organisation/person at any time.

## Long Term Paddler Development

Through the Long Term Paddler Development (LTPD) pathway, the BCU aims to create a working framework that provides paddlers at all stages of development, in all disciplines, the opportunity to be the best they can.

It provides a logical progression of development that supports paddlers from the day they first get in a boat, over a span of many years. It aims to give paddlers the necessary building blocks required to progress, ensuring the right opportunities are offered at the right time, as part of a clear and agreed vision and strategy.

It does not matter if someone just

wants to have fun on the water, become a hard-core river runner or an Olympic / world champion. Whatever their aspirations, LTPD is about giving them the chance to get the most out of paddlesport, being able to achieve their ambitions and realise their dreams.

In order for LTPD to make a difference, we need you, whatever your involvement, to help us implement this programme. With time, the principles behind LTPD should underpin everyone's paddling experiences across all levels of our sport.

A detailed booklet explaining the LTPD Pathway is available from the BCU office.

## Freestyle Eurocup

The Freestyle Eurocup will take place at Holme Pierrepont from 30th June to 3rd July. Featuring Nottingham's 'New Wave' and other enhancements to the white water course. The event will provide an exciting opportunity to see GB's very best freestyle paddlers, including medallists from the successful world championship team, competing at home against the very best paddlers in Europe. For further information, visit [www.eurofreestyle.com](http://www.eurofreestyle.com)

## Cotswold Outdoor

### – 15% discount

Many members have already taken advantage of the 15% BCU members discount available at Cotswold Outdoor. To obtain the discount, show your membership card and quote account code C2114.

We will be introducing further valuable and relevant member discounts in the coming months.

## Youthfest 2005 –

Saturday 16th July

For young people the BIG event for July is the annual BCU Youthfest - which this year is based at the Teesside WW Centre in Stockton. This year's event forms part of a 'Waterscape Weekend' which is a feature of the '2005 Alive Festival of the Rivers and the Sea' events throughout the North East, and promises to be a day of fun and excitement. Alongside the National Bellboat Championships there are a range of paddlesport activities (see page 35).

## ECA Congress

The European Canoe Association awarded the 2009 Senior European Canoe Slalom Championships to Great Britain during its recent Congress in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

## Welcome to the BCU

Several new members of staff have joined the BCU since the last issue of Canoe Focus. Welcome to:

**Chloe Nelson**

PR and Marketing Assistant

**Alison McKenzie**

Coaching Administrator

**Tim Deykin**

Head Physiotherapist

**Gitte Nielsen**

Team Physiotherapist

And returning to the BCU, 1991

Canoe Slalom World Champion,

**Shaun Pearce**, who has been newly appointed as Kayak Specialist Coach.

With hello inevitably comes goodbye: **Oliver Fix** left the BCU to start a new life in Hawaii with his wife Gilda who is expecting their first baby. Good luck Oliver and thank you. Goodbye also to Accounts Assistant **Gail Fowkes** who has found work closer to home, and finally we will be saying goodbye to our Physiotherapist, **Margie Olds**, whose vibrant personality and cheerful laughter will be greatly missed.

## London 2012

We write this Canoe Focus Comment with just 50 days to go until the 2012 decision. If you have not already done so, please register your support for the bid on [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com)

## Canoe Sailing World Championships

The 2005 Canoe Sailing World Championships will take place in Weymouth, Dorset with action on the water from Sunday 7th August to Friday 12 August.

## Lea Valley Park

Plans are well advanced for the proposed White Water Course at Broxbourne in the Lea Valley Park. The proposed sight of the Olympic canoe slalom facility will provide a sensational white water facility in the South East.

A recent meeting between the Lea Valley Park Authority and the BCU demonstrated real commitment to the project with the authority keen to complete the development whatever the 2012 result.

## New activity instructors course

The College of West Anglia is launching a new course for all potential instructors of the future. The Activity Instructors Certificate is an introductory course designed to prepare young people for a first employment opportunity in the outdoor/adventure activities sector.

This course is a 28-week full-time programme, 80% of each week is practically based and includes many residential elements throughout the UK. The course is aimed at 16-19 year old students who wish to develop knowledge and skills in various key activities, along with the attitudes and professionalism to make an impact in this vocational area. Students who successfully pass Activity Instructors Certificate will be eligible, subject to interview and age considerations, to progress onto the College's Diploma in Outdoor Activities course.

For more details contact COWA on 01553 761144 or email [enquiries@col-westanglia.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@col-westanglia.ac.uk)

## Tom Parker - Coaching and Guiding

This spring saw the launch of Tom Parker - Coaching and Guiding. Based in north Wales, the operation is headed by Tom Parker (curiously enough) a Level 5 coach, who are able to offer a wide range of courses, both BCU and bespoke, aided by Tom's wealth of boating and coaching experience gathered worldwide over the past 14 years. The master plan is to help improve people's boating using the most up to date methods currently available.

"We have two real aims with our coaching; tailor it to the students' needs and keep it simple. Far too much coaching uses loads of jargon and techno-babble. We want to get away from that and show everyone that you can develop really easily with the right help. I'm really looking forward to it!" said Tom. For more information on courses and dates, check out [www.tomparkercoaching.co.uk](http://www.tomparkercoaching.co.uk)

## World record smashed!

The 30 year old record for crossing in the English Channel in a single handed kayak was well and truly broken by Ian Tordoff on Wednesday 18th May 2005.

Ian, a resident of Huntingdon in Chester, managed to shave an incredible 11 minutes with a new record time of 3 hours 21 minutes and 54 seconds from Folkestone Beach to Wisant Beach in France.

A delighted Ian was naturally thrilled with his marathon feat, "To beat the old record has been an ambition of mine for many years. Having competed at World level at Wild Water, Marathon and Sprint kayaking since the age of 16 years there are not many challenges left for me in the kayak world."

"I felt good from the start at 05:56 hours at Folkestone; it was not till the last hour that fatigue really made it start to hurt. The weather was good with just a force 2 blowing and we tried to time the attempt around the high tide. What did surprise me was the strength of current which meant despite steering a straight course we ended up covering over 40 kilometres for the 35 kilometre route."

Ian's attempt was made possible by the kind generosity of his sponsors - Chester City Council (for whom Ian works as their Sports Development Officer), HBOS, Shell UK and Valley Sea Kayaks - with whom Ian had helped develop the new sea kayak he used in the crossing.

The small team who assisted Ian and made sure all the rules for this Guinness World Record attempt were adhered to included - Andy King - Cross Channel Boat Pilot; Barry Frost - Umpire from the British Triathlon Association.

As well as wanting to break the record Ian also saw this as an ideal opportunity to raise monies for the British Heart Foundation and is now busy collecting all the pledges in for the charity.



## Summer crossing of Arctic

In the first attempt to cross the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean in summer, Lonnie Dupre, a 2004 Rolex Awards for Enterprise Laureate, and his fellow explorer Eric Larsen set off on 10th May 2005, from Siberia's Cape Arctichesky on a 2,250 kilometre journey to make landfall on Ellesmere Island, Canada by the beginning of September, with no external support.

As a large amount of the ice cover melts in the summer, 30 to 50 per cent of their journey will be over water. The two explorers have designed sledges that will double as kayaks for crossing the vast expanses of water.

"At that time of year, temperatures range from 14°F to 39°F [-10°C to +4°C], so it won't be too cold," said Dupre as he was preparing for the expedition. "On the downside, at those temperatures it will be humid and damp with dense fog. This will make it hard for us to stay dry and a constant fight to ward off hypothermia. The fog will make navigation extremely difficult." The two men hope to cover 22 kilometres a day, putting in 10-hour days.

"I can't think of a better way of raising public awareness of global warming than paddling two kayaks in a place that was covered in thick sea ice in summer just a few decades ago," said Dupre.

## Obituary: Bernard O'Connor

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you of the death of Bernard O'Connor, who died unexpectedly over the Easter weekend.

Bernard opened new opportunities for thousands of people, especially young people through activities in Canoesport, Scouting, The Army Cadet Force, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and his work at the Leicester OPC.

Bernard was tireless in his voluntary work, whether it be behind the scenes on countless committees and management groups or as coach and mentor to thousands, literally.

He held the post of Chair and Vice Chair on the BCU East Midlands regional committee, Chair for the Open Canoe Sailing Group and was LCO for Leicestershire for many years. He was Scouts water activities advisor and was also instrumental in the establishment of the management group for the Leicester OPC, striving to keep it open following Leicester City Council withdrawal.

Many people owe Bernard a huge debt of gratitude for his work and next time your out on the water, take a few moments to think about what you have been able to do because of him or maybe reflect on just one the many happy moments whilst out paddling with a real gentleman.

One thing is for sure, he is already getting heaven organised and undoubtedly paddling the endless river.

Our thoughts are with his wife Angela and his children Chris, Jane and Andy, his grand children, family and friends.



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## Richmond CC squeezed tight

Richmond Canoe Club has temporarily moved out of Landsdowne Boathouse, club home for over 60 years.

Two years of ongoing negotiations to secure the freehold of the building on the banks of the River Thames in return for adding a residential floor above the clubhouse are nearing completion. Richmond, Great Britain's largest canoe club, will be using a temporary building and facilities for most of 2005 while building work goes ahead.

Richmond Commodore Sean Martin, said "We've worked very hard as a club to get this far. When we get back in the clubhouse it will be just a shell. Then we'll have even more work to do." Richmond Canoe Club will be looking to raise funds to refit the clubhouse and continue supporting and developing kayaking and canoeing on the upper tideway of the River Thames.

## PICTURE THIS

### Canoe trade to export more

The canoe trade's only representative body, the Association of Canoe Trades has recently appointed an export champion, Joel Scott of Phoenix Spraydecks, to work with the British Marine Federation and DTI in order to communicate export opportunities and develop activities more relevant to the canoe sector in order to help ACT members improve their sales.

Said Joel "I seek out the right people to talk to and feedback to ACT members at our meetings news of export events, training courses and publications including helpful 'how to guides'" Joel Scott receives the BMF's Export Guide from BMF export executive Alex Shephard.



## Expansion plans follow T&G clothing acquisition

Following the successful acquisition of outdoor clothing specialist T&G, an exciting expansion plan is set to take the brand from seven to eleven UK stores in the next twelve months alone.

T&G's current stores include Guildford, Salcombe, Cowes, Rock, Lymington and a London store on the Fulham Road, plus a warehouse store in Stockbridge. The new stores are to be opened in Truro, Falmouth, Padstow and Dartmouth following a franchise agreement. In addition, T&G also runs a highly successful mail order business, with over 30,000 customers preferring to order by post.

T&G is also on the verge of launching its new autumn / winter range. A new area for the company, this will include its largest ever women's collection, as does its current summer range, and many new elements to combine style with performance to create T&G's best collection yet.

## International regatta venue in Cambridge

Cambridge Sports Lakes is to be a 220 acre outdoor multi-sport and leisure park located 4.5 km from the centre of Cambridge. It will be one of the largest multi-purpose outdoor sports venues in the country featuring two connecting lakes of 1,000 metres and 2,000 metres in length designed to international competition standards.

The lakes are oriented with the prevailing wind direction but landscaping is being designed to minimise windspeed on the lakes. Cyclists and triathletes will also be catered for by the inclusion of a three mile closed cycling track and an international standard BMX track. The facility will be open throughout the year for training and competition for athletes of all ages and abilities. The creation of another international flat water racing facility is potentially a huge boost to the sport in the East of England and for the country as a whole.

The project is well advanced with over £5 million having been raised to date. Building is planned in two phases with the completion of a 1,000 metre long 45 metre wide lake scheduled for 2006 and the 2,000 metre lake in 2009.

For information [www.cambridgesportlakes.org.uk](http://www.cambridgesportlakes.org.uk) or Gareth Bevan or Rob Smith of Cambridge Canoe Club.

## Going fishing?

In the wake of the sit-on-top craze, Wilderness Systems has produced a range of performance boats from Gen 2 polyethylene that redefine the entry level kayak. Tarpon sit-on-tops are becoming one of the kayaks of choice. Speed, glide, stability, storage and the way Tarpons behave in variable water conditions make them one of the hottest-selling boats on the market.

The USA has led the world in kayak fishing. Now White Water Consultancy brings that world to the UK. Leave the motorboat at the dock and explore new adventures aboard one of the Wilderness Systems sporting kayaks. Quiet, zero polluting and stealthy, the Tarpon Anglers are rigged and ready to pursue the quarry of your choice.

The boats come in three sizes. The Tarpon 120 (12ft) has created more buzz in fishing circles than any other. It's got it all: comfort, storage, glide, and good looks. The Tarpon 140 (14ft) is faster than the 120, more maneuverable than the 160, with a flat-floored cockpit that lets you stand and cast when conditions demand it. The Tarpon 160 (16ft) is an outstanding fishing machine for those who have a lot of water to cover and encounter wind and chop. The 160's low profile and multi-chine hull cuts through the wind and gets you where you're going. Each boat comes with a Scotty console mounted rod holder, two flush mount rod holders behind the seat in easy reach, paddle and rod parks with quick release tabs and an anchor and cleat system fitted as standard. Prices range from £649 to £750 and all the boats are available in olive, sand and a camo finish. For more details contact White Water Consultancy.



## PADDLE THIS

### New river level monitoring product – waterWhisperer



Ever wish you could easily find out the level of your favourite river or being disappointed at the level of the river when you get there after travelling miles? Perhaps it's time to consider

asking your club to install a waterWhisperer.

A waterWhisperer continuously monitors the level of a river, or any body of water, still or flowing. Dial a mobile phone (1) access number and be told in a clear voice exactly what level the river is, or access the web (2) for a graph that updates automatically every hour.

PegTronics specialise in GSM and GPRS data communications. Their latest product is a simple to use and install system, specifically designed for canoeists / Kayakers or any river enthusiast interested in monitoring the level of rivers. The waterWhisperer consists of a robust submersible stainless steel pressure sensor connected to a micro-controller (data logger and mobile phone unit). The whole system is powered by just 12 volts so it can be installed virtually anywhere.

waterWhisperers have been designed and built in the UK so they can easily be configured or customised to your specific requirements.

For more information please contact Stephen Pegler  
Phone: 0845 200 7919  
Email: [Stephen.Pegler@PegTronics.com](mailto:Stephen.Pegler@PegTronics.com)  
Web: [www.waterWhisperer.co.uk](http://www.waterWhisperer.co.uk)

For a demonstration of waterWhisperer

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## PICTURE THIS



These photos were taken in early December at Puffin Island on Anglesey. We did not have time for a long trip that day so we decided to go to visit the seals at Puffin Island. We expected to get fairly close to a few inquisitive seals, but not to this extent!

One of the seals took a shine to us from the start; she started with nudging the boat and blades first of all. Then as she became a little more confident, she started to take an interest

in my deck bag. Suddenly, she decided she was going to climb on board and that is what she did. A little tentatively at first, but she soon got the hang of things.

To start with she would lie across the two rafted boats in a rather un-ladylike manner! But eventually she became experienced enough to lie lengthways along one boat, though at times she could make things a little tippy!

She would clamber up on deck and happily lie there watching life go by as we drifted gently alongside the island. Each time we reached the end of the island, she slipped gently back into the water and swam alongside us as we paddled back up to the slack water.

Once we got there, she clambered on board again and we would drift towards the end of the island once more. This continued for maybe an hour or so.

Soon it was time to head home and we paddled off towards Penrhyn, a little bemused to say the least!

**John Wills**



## Who will survive the Braveheart Challenge?

To celebrate its 21st anniversary, the leading youth development charity, Raleigh International is challenging people from across the UK to take up the 'Braveheart Challenge'. The three day team event, held from 9th – 11th September 2005 gives participants the chance to push their limits of grit and determination. At the same time challengers will be raising essential core funds for Raleigh International's development programme, Motive8, which works with young people at risk.

Set in the grounds surrounding Loch Lomond in Scotland, the event will see teams of four take part in a variety of activities including canoeing, quad biking, archery, abseiling and JCB digger driving. Teams are awarded points for each of the 19 events completed, based on the time taken to complete each challenge and the degree of accuracy.

Teams also receive points for the total sum of funds raised for the charity. Ahead of the starting gun being fired, the funds raised will be converted into points providing an instant leader board to get the competition off to a roaring start. Prizes are awarded to the top three male, female and mixed teams. The overall winners will win an all inclusive trip to the Pecos Mountains in Spain, where they will be able to spend a long weekend making the most of the resorts sports and activity facilities.

For more information: [www.raleighbraveheart.com](http://www.raleighbraveheart.com) or contact Crispin Vitoria on 0207 371 8585

## YORKIE NEWS

Happy Birthday and congratulations to everyone at West Yorkshire CC who this year celebrate 50 years of paddlesport. Their first celebration in April went very well, but for those who couldn't make it, make sure you book Sept 24/25 in your diaries as there will be another party at the clubs annual West Tansfield / Sleningford slalom. Happy 10th Birthday also to all at Lower Wharfe CC.

Make a note to get to Hatfield Water park near Doncaster on June 25/26th for a full weekend of action organised by Green Star CC. Try, slalom training and competition, Polo for beginners and improvers, bell boats racing, freestyle coaching, come and try its. Contact Ester for more info on [ester.mathews@btinternet.com](mailto:ester.mathews@btinternet.com)

In the slalom yearbook you'll see July 9/10th as Premier and Div 2. Please note that the Prem bit is a mistake.

The resurrected "Yorkshire Champs" is an open event and a lot of fun as well as a "proper" test of your abilities. Have a crack at a combination event in which your aggregated results in both a slalom and WW race give you your final position. Don't forget to check the new Washburn hotline 0845 833 8654 (all calls at charged local rate) before you set off.

The new regions group of Sea kayakers (YORCIE salt n' shakes) has had a good reception. The first meet was at Flamboro to explore the caves and the next is imminent. Check the regions web at [www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire](http://www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire) to find out more or contact Ken Reece on 01937 588786.

A big thanks to the regions' coaches who have so far got in touch offering to help with our local clubs (and to any more who are still thinking about it). Believe me you will be appreciated. Please contact me if you can.

Thanks to all the coaches who turned up to see the two of the UKs best freestylers in Leeds last March. Ed (Trix) Smith and James (Pringle) The following week at the NEC, Ed won the Wavebox challenge.

The next coaching scheme get together is on Sunday evening Sept 4th at Bradford and Bingley CC site. This is being run by AP for Yorkshires coaches and you can contact Adam on [adam-peter@ntworld.com](mailto:adam-peter@ntworld.com)

Thanks also to John Lucas and the entire Aldwark Scout Water Activity staff in April, for putting on what must have been the most ambitious and successful coaching event in our region. Over 70 coaches took part in 16 courses when the entire coach pre-requisite courses were all run concurrently. And the food was good. Well done team.

I hope the regions clubs secretaries keep a good lookout and be ready to act when another round of Community Club Development Programme gets re-launched. Both Bradford & Bingley CC and White Rose CC have so far benefited. If you have some club aspirations (especially if you can't sort them on your own) let us know because we know a man who can! So one good turn deserves another.

### Coaching Young Paddlers

The BCU has recently introduced a pleasant 2.5 hr evening session, which is highly recommended for clubs who coach and train young paddlers. Neil Jennison from Kingston Kayak Club is the region's only trained presenter and will present this workshop (free whilst funds last) in Leeds on Tuesday 21st June from 6.30pm. If you think this would be useful to your club or organisation (maximum of 2 per club), please make your bookings with me. The Leeds venue will be confirmed the nearer the date. Workshop outcomes:

- The benefits of adapting practice and behaviour to meet the needs of young people.
- Plan and deliver coaching sessions to maximise learning and enjoyment.
- Recognise the diversity of Paddlesport and the benefits to young people.
- Can list the BCU, youth initiatives and have discussed methods and issues relating to implementation at their club / centre.
- Apply good practice when coaching young people.

Numbers have to be limited, but more sessions can be arranged to suit demand (they won't be free though, so why wait).

Hope to see you with your clothes on or off!

Thank you, Dick: [dickconstable@canoists.co.uk](mailto:dickconstable@canoists.co.uk)



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## Access Agreements Audit

The Access Department with the assistance of Regional Access Officers and Local River Advisors is in the process of auditing access agreements to assess the current number and the range of conditions of use. The information will serve as a backdrop to the current developments in access agreements. Assistance from paddlers and canoe clubs is requested to notify the RAO of any unregistered agreements

## Water-based sport and recreation: the facts

### Section D: Potential Solutions

The report considers the 8 following policy scenarios for addressing user wishes and the problematic issues associated with water-based sport and recreation:

- Minor development of current planning policy and strategies
- Targeted purchase of services and revised funding arrangements
- Targeted acquisition of land and water rights
- Voluntary agreements
- Voluntary agreements with dedication
- Compulsory access orders
- A selective increase in statutory rights of navigation
- Statutory rights of navigation to all major rivers, canals and water bodies

As the new Government settles in we will be continuing to lobby at every opportunity, as well as attending meetings and conferences.

We will keep you informed as to what is happening but in order to move the campaign on, and for MPs to realise the depth of feelings, we do need the support of all canoeists and those who feel that there should be equitable access to the waterways in England and Wales.

## SURF THIS

# New website for RAC

The Rivers Access Campaign has launched a new website. We are aware that our site is visited by thousands of different people including those for and against the campaign as well as many of the key players (including Government Departments) involved in the access debate. The new site has been developed to enable us to give out greater information concerning all aspects of the campaign and be more reactive to current issues and activities,

- The site will continue to develop overtime. On the new site you are able to:-
- Log your support for the campaign
- Log access incidents (positive and negative)
- Find out more information about what is going on in the Government and its Departments
- Find out what is going on with the campaign
- Discover how you can help keep the profile of the access issue on the Government's Agenda and in the general public's support.
- See what activities that you can get involved in
- Sample letters and question that can be written and asked
- Visit the site regularly to see what is going on.
- The General Election is over now so help to raise the profile of the access issue

We need to continuously keep the issue of access to water in the mind of our politicians and supporting bodies. Please find the time to write to your MP. Congratulate them on their return or if they are new congratulate them upon getting the seat. Discuss the access issue (help on facts and figures and outline letters on the website) and ask them for their support in recognising there is a significant access issue and that there should be equitable access to the waterways



in England and Wales. The research undertaken in 1999 in preparation for the CrOW Bill showed that 69% of the public were in favour of increasing access to the water for canoeing. In your letter also stress that Brighton 1 (Water Based Sport and Recreation: The Facts) showed that the percentage of water accessible is 2%. This means that we have no access to 98% of rivers in England and Wales. The BCU are asking for the eight points summarised as the findings (and as follows) to be addressed and these include some form of legislation.

## A fishy tale...

Whilst reading the Gamefisher Spring 2005 (The Salmon and Trout Association) the following articles were noted.

On page 9 under the heading 'Canoe access on water' there is the quote "The threat for anglers is legislated access of canoeists. Whilst Rt Hon Alun Michael MP made it clear 'open access to all waters is not on the agenda', voluntary agreements between angling and canoeing groups will ensure that it does not get there."

The article goes on to say, "There are S&TA affiliated clubs that have successfully negotiated access with canoeists on terms that benefit the club. S&TA is working with the Environment Agency, Country Landowners Association and NAFAC to provide the background, examples and advice needed by anglers and land owners to deliver negotiated access agreements and this will become a major issue within the newly formed FACT."

The danger is several "half hearted" agreements which do not really improve the overall situation but act as a Trojan Horse to legislation. The Environment Agency as the "Champions of Access to water" will find managing this a challenge.

The BCU has for over 40 years tried to negotiate voluntary access agreements but the vast majority have been found to be unsustainable and have not worked. Although we are currently working with the Environment Agency looking at the four rivers as highlighted in Brighton 2 (Water Based Sport and Recreation - Improving Access for Canoeing on Inland Waterways - A Study of the Feasibility of Access Agreements) we fundamentally believe that primary legislation is the only real answer for sustainable access to water.

At the meeting with Rt Hon Alun Michael in October 2004 the BCU agreed to work through the Brighton 2 findings and the Minister agreed to look at the findings of Brighton 1 (Water Based Sport and Recreation: The Facts).

Also in the same magazine on page 11 under the heading of 'FACT' the workings of FACT are explained and in summary look like it has been set up in defence of angling.

Also spotted in the Angler's Mail... an interesting article by BW Fisheries Chief entitled 'A nation of carp anglers!' which states that the perceived demand for silver fish fishing is not a reality. The article quotes many incidents and situations where carp fishing is becoming the main type of fishing. The article says "As a public body operating commercially BW won't operate commercial fisheries at any price."

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Our progress seemed good so I was stopping often to take photos.



# Verdon Grand

## Canyon

a paddling trip not a holiday

On a bright sunny day three paddlers and I woke early and, without the usual faff, got ready for a long trip. We had been staying in a lovely campsite on the D952 just west of Tailore. Campsites are not difficult to find here and all seem to be tidy with great facilities. Our campsite was quiet and pleasantly situated by the river. We even had a swimming pool, though we had little chance to use it: this was a paddling trip not a holiday.

On a bright sunny day towards the end of June, three paddlers and I woke early and, without the usual faff, got ready for a long trip. We had been staying in a lovely campsite on the D952 just west of Tailore. Campsites are not difficult to find here and all seem to be tidy with great facilities. Our campsite was quiet and pleasantly situated by the river. We even had a swimming pool, though we had little chance to use it: this was a paddling trip not a holiday.

The Verdon Grand Canyon was going to be a long run, so our boats were packed with all the kit we could ever need: everything from first aid kits to woolly hats. We'd noticed when lifting our boats onto the car roof that they weighed a lot more than normal. We thought





Foreground to background  
Chuck, Chris and Conrad

nothing of it. Everyone was in long sleeve cags and all their thermals because, we thought, the canyon would be cold. We thought wrong.

At 9am, Chris, Conrad, Chuck and I squeezed into the car with our shuttle driver (Gina) and set off for the short trip west along the D952 to a bridge over the Verdon called Pont de Soleil. The sun was beating down: Pont de Soleil really was a bridge of sunshine.

Pont de Soleil is in the Pre-Canyon section of the Verdon and provides access to some easy paddling as a warm up for the Grand Canyon. We had not run this section of the Verdon Pre-Canyon before so this was our chosen start. After all, what was another 3km on top of a trip that was already going to be 34km long!

Without having to run a shuttle, we were soon underway on the river. Rapidly the walls of the canyon rose up on either side of us producing stunning scenery. The river was easy and we chatted about how long we thought the run would take. We were sure that we could beat previous times of around nine hours and thought instead that we would do the trip in around seven hours. We were wrong about this too!

Gina met us at la Dégouline, the first rapid of any note. Pictures were taken and Gina commented that "you were longer than I thought you would be". This would not be the last time today she would say that.

The Verdon Canyon continued to be stunningly beautiful and eventually we gave up trying to put its beauty into words. While the cliff walls were immensely high, I had noticed that for most of the time we had been in direct sunlight. I was quite hot. Unfortunately, the only piece of kit we had not packed was sun cream.

We paddled on for some time – constantly darting around rocks which almost filled the river. We were not alone even here – climbers were hanging from the cliffs and some locals had climbed down to enjoy the sunshine on the secluded beaches. Our progress seemed good so I was stopping often to take photos.

After a rather leisurely morning we stopped and had lunch. We all drank plenty of water since it was

still hot. We had two litres each so, we thought, that would be plenty for the rest of the trip. For a third time that morning, we were wrong.

Soon we came across a rapid which required a little attention. A drop in the river led the Verdon below ground for a short section. After a brief look this seemed to be completely safe and so we carried on marvelling at the difference in scenery this river offered. We knew that the Verdon went underground but this section was a little disappointing: it was quite short and never completely dark. We weren't to be disappointed for very long.

The canyon narrowed sharply up ahead and so we stopped on a convenient beach and got out to inspect. After a considerable climb up and over uneven rocks we managed to get a glimpse of the river below. A roof with small holes had formed over the whole river. While we couldn't actually see all the rapids, there looked to be plenty of slack water inside the cave and so we set up a camera and sent the first person in.

The cave was very impressive. Exactly what we had been expecting – dark, eerie and unlike any paddling we had done before. More time was spent lowering cameras on ropes so that everyone could have their unique photo underground.

At this point we realised that it was around 5pm and that our seven hour guess was not going to be very accurate. Small amounts of panicking were done about whether we would finish the river before dark or not and I was consequently restricted to a maximum of one photo per kilometre. OK I thought, that's around 15 photos yet!

The cave was very impressive. Exactly what we had been expecting – dark, eerie and unlike any paddling we had done before

The cave was very impressive. Exactly what we had been expecting – dark, eerie and unlike any paddling we had done before

Paddling seemed to go slower from here. There seemed to be more and more complete blockages of the river meaning long portages over difficult terrain. By this time all our drinking water had gone and we

were so dehydrated that we resorted to filling our bottles from the river. We began cursing the idea of bringing so many thermals and woolly hats – the boats were very heavy.

At around 7:15 we emerged from the rapids into Lac de Sainte-Croix. The cliff walls were still very high and we could not yet see the Gatelas road bridge which would signal the end of our long ordeal. We made slow progress on this flat water. Before long, at least as much energy went into complaining as went into paddling. I was reminded this was a paddling trip not a holiday.

Four kilometres later we saw the bridge. There was our get out. Spurred on we hurried to the beach. Gina informed us that we had taken eleven hours by telling us once again "you were longer than I thought you would be".

Now we are back in the UK the trip seems like a distant memory. At the time we all swore we would never do it again: it was too exhausting. If you are inspired to give the Verdon Grand Canyon a go, I have the some advice. First, take plenty of water, water purification tablets and sun cream. Second, take as little extra kit as you can while remaining safe, you will have to carry it a long way. Finally, get a good nights sleep the night before. You will need it!

**Photos and Article by Richard Jarvis.**



We knew that the Verdon went underground but this section was a little disappointing: it was quite short and never completely dark.



The cave was very impressive. Exactly what we had been expecting – dark, eerie and unlike any paddling we had done before.

## Thames Waterway Plan - Consultation

The BCU and many canoe clubs based on the Thames contributed to the Draft Thames Waterway Plan in 2004 with aims to improve facilities and the way the River Thames is developed and cared for in the future. The resulting Plan was launched for public consultation on Tuesday 26 April and all of the associated maps and documents are now available to download from [www.visitthames.co.uk/twp](http://www.visitthames.co.uk/twp). A Strategic Environmental Assessment and various other elements of the plan can all be found on the web site.

The web site also enables submitting feedback online with a response form to give comments. Alternatively, feedback is possible offline by completing the consultation response form and returning to the Environment Agency. A printed version of the plan is also available on request that is without the detailed mapping.

The consultation period ends on 22 July 2005.

The Thames Waterway Plan has been developed by the Environment Agency on behalf of the River Thames Alliance, formed from a membership of over 60 organisations. Membership is formed from regional, county and district authorities, wildlife trusts, and the navigation and recreational interests that include the BCU.

# Improving access for canoeing on inland waterways

As reported previously in Canoe Focus the BCU planned to meet with the Environment Agency team responsible for the access studies for a progress report. The meeting was held at Reading on 20 April.

### River Mersey:

three local authorities and a number of golf courses are engaged to dedicate stretches of the river under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Other landowners are expected to provide access by agreement. Risk assessment remains to be completed at a few specific sites.

The use of Section 16 for access to water will provide one of the first applications of the legislation for this purpose to provide access on the Mersey in perpetuity. DEFRA and the Countryside Agency are following this development with interest. An agreement under Section 16 will come into force 6 months from the date of dedication and the Environment Agency expect this to be by December 2005. In total some 24km of river will have access.

### River Waveney:

an overarching agreement has been negotiated for at least 24km which may include some Section 16 dedication. From this a series of separate agreements with landowners are being negotiated combined with a local code of conduct. Risk assessment work continues and the Environment Agency are looking at December 2005 for the access agreement to be operational.

### Rivers Teme and Wear

studies commenced in April and will be undertaken by the University of Brighton consultants. The BCU have appointed local contacts to liaise with the consultants.

Looking to the near future following the four study projects, the Environment Agency were placing the wider 'access to water' issue within their Strategic Planning for Recreation. The Agency aspire to have pilots for this initiative in two of their regions in 2007. The BCU expressed the view that strategic planning should be focused on identifying needs that allows for the integration of canoeing with other water users; rather than specifying measures to segregate particular activities and define where they can and cannot take place. The BCU maintained whilst this work continues it will continue to press for legislation.

## MPs support DW '05

That this House congratulates all who competed in the gruelling Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon; further congratulates the crews comprising Steve Baker and Gary Mawer, Daniel Beazley and Simon Dark and Piran Shelley and Nevil Stonehouse, who were the top three crews; and notes the work of the 150 volunteers

from Barking and Dagenham Canoe Club, Richmond Canoe Club, The St John Ambulance Marine Division, SkillsActive and Westminster City Council, amongst other organisations, who ensured the safe running of this event.

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### Is one of these your MP?...

Do contact them to thank them for their support and ask them to consider the access issue. A paper produced by the BCU in support of the campaign would be advantageous to send along as well as a letter..

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Hold-up at the bank



Friends Meg and Roger came down from the Lake District



# A Weekend on the Wye

Canadian canoe excursions are biannual at Reading canoe club. We only go for the weekend and stick to UK rivers. The Autumn trip in 2004 was down the river Wye in South Wales. Saturday was Ross-on-Wye to Symonds Yat, a 16 mile meander passing Goodrich Castle, and Sunday was seven miles to Monmouth. The Wye is one of the few rivers in the country with a long and undisputed right of navigation, from Hay-on-Wye at least.

We managed to get down to the clubhouse for 6am Saturday. There have been a few thefts from cars parked on the road outside, so I opened the club gates and parked my car inside on the grass. My mate Ron arrived soon after and drove us to Ross-On-Wye with Jean and Dom in his wicked Subaru. Ron has a Road Angel in his car which went red when we were approaching a speed camera or accident blackspot, so we didn't get caught speeding. Not that we were, though. Indeed.

Not surprisingly, we arrived in Ross early and visited the cafe in Safeway for beans on toast and cup of tea. Other vehicles started to arrive – some had canoes on roof racks but most of the boats were on the club trailer. We stood around chatting whilst people drove all the cars down to our destination – Symonds Yat.

We launched canoes and went at a leisurely pace. I was in a canoe with Jean who is a retired girl-guide leader, and we half-drifted, half paddled our way downstream. The river conditions were grade 1-2 flowing with several small rapids. The rapids were easily traversed, but provided some diversity. Medieval Goodrich Castle, named after the English thegn Godric, stood majestically on its red sandstone crag as we sauntered past looking for peregrines.

Our party of 11 boats was quite fragmented by lunchtime. We had booked lunch at a pub near the



Someone left a bridge in the way.



Gail standing on her trophy chair, with Will (me) and Nigel holding the balance.



looking at birds, or something.



Almost everyone in the group photo but not everyone.

river which was a cunning plan.

Unfortunately the people who knew where, exactly, we needed to stop for lunch were at the back, and so half the boats went past the pub and continued downstream. Brian had to sprint down the road to catch up with them and he yelled at them from the bank to stop! The current was too strong to paddle upstream so they had to moor the canoes there and walk back. Us people who had managed to stop correctly looked pretty smug when they finally arrived and found us downing our beer and chips.

So after lunch we paddled down to Symonds Yat where there is landing platform and canoe centre, and beneath this a 200 yard stretch of white water. Several people inflated buoyancy bags and tied them into the bow and stern of their Canadians. There was some fun to be had on these rapids but apparently it used to be more bumpy than it is now. Wiki and Ron capsized; in spite of the water being about 12 inches deep, Wiki's screaming could be heard a league or more distant.

When the light was fading, we carried the canoes to the car park. The nice people at Symonds Yat let us lock

our canoes in their secure cage overnight, which was much easier than putting them back onto the trailer etc. Ron's car had a GPS navigation system which directed us to the Inn we had booked for the night – we only needed to input the postcode. Then we got to the Inn and we found it closed, locked and empty. There was some mix-up over times so we had to wait outside for half an hour before the landlord arrived. Ron wanted the score of the Cardiff match, so we all checked our mobile phones to see who had a signal - Orange just about covered the place.

We had a great dinner at a huge oak table and several people got very drunk. A speech of thanks was made to Nigel Frankland for organising the trip for us. The Inn had a shortage of single beds so there were some unusual sleeping partnerships that evening.

In the morning we continued paddling and we stopped on a little mid-channel island for a glass of Chardonnay and lunch. After the island we started on the last few miles – there were distance markers on the river left as we approached Monmouth. Gail spotted an abandoned chair on the bank and we grabbed it for a trophy and put it in the boat. She got to stand on it, but the alternative use was to sit on it like an Egyptian Queen and sip wine elegantly from a goblet. We landed at Monmouth and packed the canoes away, got changed and went home tired. We left the chair behind – shame really. ●

Will Nichols

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# Shoreline surf spectacular

## Results

16 April

Widemouth Bay in North Cornwall

### Handicap competition

- Joint 1st Philip Watson
- Joint 1st Alex Read
- Joint 3rd Keith Page
- Joint 3rd Martin Bailey
- Joint 3rd Chris Harvey

### Open final

- 1st Simon Hammond
- 2nd Andy Hambley
- 3rd Dave Jaggs



Mark Quest

Left: Ed Long, Sam Davenport, Dave Trelease, Andy Hambley, Simon Hawker (L to R)



John Trelease, Mark Quest and Andy McCullough had some impressive waves during the early stages and Guernsey paddler Chris Harvey looked good throughout the day. Junior paddler Philip Watson had made huge improvements since the previous year and local Bude Canoe Club paddler and ex-board surfer Keith Page shocked everyone including himself with an excellent result during the second round.

Paul Hurrell



As the event rolled on Paul Hurrell, John Watson and Dave Oxnard kept the judges on their toes and maintained a fast and furious pace, the competitors responded by being ready for every heat, providing safety cover on the water and then ready for their own turn at judging.

Darren Bason



By the end of the afternoon the first part of the competition drew to a close. Points were added together to find the top eight paddlers that would progress into the semi-finals and at the same time and results of the handicap event could be calculated. Drawn in the first semi-final were Darren Bason, Andy Hambley,

As the Shoreline team pulled into Widemouth Beach, the sun was shining and the surf was rolling in, what more could they had wished for. The event was completely full with a mixture of elite surfers, old timers, local boys and girls and some very keen first timers. Dave Oxnard explained the competition structure for this unique surf kayak event.

Basically you can surf any type of kayak and you can be at any level of ability, a short set of five probing questions then gives you a handicap for the competition. So if you're between 18 and 39 years old, male, with a surf specific kayak, you compete regularly, are a member of the national team and happen to be a world champion you'll have a handicap so big that you'll have virtually no chance of winning the handicap competition, you might however do OK in the open event? And then the clever bit, because the handicap results are only added in at the end of the event both the handicap competition and the open competition can be run as one and the same. If you can't quite picture this just come along to next years event.

Five paddlers at a time entered the water and surfed for 13 minutes (13 minutes is an unusual time for a heat but it worked!). During their time in the water each wave surfed was scored out of 20 points, points being awarded for the quality of the wave surfed and the ability of the surfer to produce the most spectacular ride. Unlike freestyle competitions the scoring

focuses on the green wave rather than on the broken white water wave and so moves like bottom turns, top turns and cut backs score more highly than spins and ends.

Three rounds were surfed in total to provide the points for the handicap event, a quick couple of semi-finals and a final were then added on to sort out the top places in the open competition.

Paul Hurrell, Chris Harvey and Dave Jaggs, a tough draw for any of the paddlers especially as it included Darren Bason the British and European number one. Undaunted by the opposition Andy Hambley and Dave Jaggs surfed out of their skins to win through to the final. The second semi was no less competitive with World Champion Simon Hammond, James Hawker, Steve Bowens, Andy McCullough and English team manager Pete Blenkinsop all having showed great form throughout the day. Despite still learning how to surf a newly designed Mega Mustang, Simon Hammond won the closest of battles to progress with Steve Bowens to the final.

The final itself was an epic as all the finalists surfed at their physical limits in order to pull off some of the most incredible surfing seen at Widemouth for years. As the red flag was raised for the end of the event the finalists, arms burning returned to the shore each one happy with their performance. He's not prone to being over confident but when asked by Dave Jaggs how he'd surfed in the final Simon replied "Awesome". ●



## PADDLE THIS

A great day in which skills and knowledge were shared amongst everyone present. On the subject of passing on skills and knowledge keep a eye out for Simon's soon to be published book Surf Kayaking: The Essential Guide

For information about next years event, surf kayaking courses or Simon's book, please contact Shoreline Outdoor Pursuits [www.shorelineactivities.co.uk](http://www.shorelineactivities.co.uk) email [info@shorelineactivities.co.uk](mailto:info@shorelineactivities.co.uk)

# Junior surf development day

On the Saturday the Shoreline Surf Spectacular was held in glorious sunshine and moderate surf conditions. A good sign for the following day when the Shoreline team of Dave Oxnard, Andy Hambley and Simon Hammond were set to run the first South West region junior surf development day. You can imagine the shock when Sunday morning broke with gale force south easterly winds, black skies and a heavy and ominous swell!

Not fazed by these challenging conditions 20 young paddlers arrived at Crooklets Beach, Bude for the chance to be instructed by some of the countries top performers and coaches. Whilst the young paddlers were divided up into groups their families and friends sought shelter in the extremely well positioned Crooklets Beach Cafe, indeed some never left its shelter, happy to watch proceedings whilst sipping hot chocolate and enjoying a traditional Cornish Pasty or two! Joking aside these youngsters would never have had this chance were it not for their Mum's and Dad's driving.

The paddlers spread out across Bude's three beaches, Summerleaze, Middle and Crooklets and after a good brisk warm up were quickly in amongst the waves. Despite fairly hostile conditions all the youngsters, ranging in age from 11 to 18, fared very well. Indeed the beauty of surfing is that even in the biggest surf conditions the activity can take place in one foot of water catching the smallest of white water waves progressing all the way up through the wave sizes until you're out the back. Dave's group working at

Summerleaze Beach worked on the foundation skills of core dynamic stability and edge control, Andy's intermediate group worked on bottom and top turns in the larger surf on Middle Beach whilst Simon's advanced group were challenged to surf in specialised surf kayaks, some for the very first time on Crooklets Beach.

Well done to all the young paddlers involved in the day. Such was the interest that the SW BCU, together with the Surf Committee and the BCU Youth Department will definitely be supporting another surf development day / course in the future. Any interested paddlers or other regional development teams should contact Simon Hammond, Cornwall Paddlesport Development Officer for more details email

[hammond.family@virgin.net](mailto:hammond.family@virgin.net)

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# National youth freestyle

## Results

Llangollen, North Wales

### Overall

- 1st Hannah Brand
- 2nd Jonny Noblett
- 3rd Arron Layton
- 4th Nathan O'Callaghan

### U 15s

- 1st Tanni Hargreaves

### U 12s

- 1st Arron Layton

All of the above won Soulboater gear for their efforts except Arron Layton who, being already sponsored by them, won a great kayaking book instead.

The National Youth Freestyle Series is a group of events designed for under 18s, with free coaching and fun freestyle events. As I am one of these 'youths', I decided to go along to the first ever one, held in Llangollen, North Wales.

We started the weekend by splitting into our groups for the weekend, after our briefing from the wonderful organiser Lowri Davies. The first group got some excellent freestyle coaching at the bottom hole from Pete Catteral and Liam where the whole group progressed in their freestyle from spins to cartwheels. While we were playing in the bottom hole the other group were learning how to read and run a river from Lowri, Phil Hadley and Vicky Barlow.

After a quick spot of lunch we were back on the water, this time we swapped around and Lowri took the freestyle while our group did some river safety with Phil. This was a really good session and I definitely learned a lot about the safety elements of river running. It was useful despite the fact I am a park and play lad. Then we had a quick paddle on the bottom hole, only to be put to shame by the other group showing off their new moves!

At the end of the day, we all gathered below the top weir for a downriver race, which was very tiring! A certain incident happened during this race which Mark Darby was not pleased about. He blames it on the raft but I think it was just an excuse. Pete Astles used his lesson from the river running class to his advantage by doing a quick draw stroke



Arron Layton



Nathan O'Callaghan

into the flow, while the rest of us sprinted down the eddy like fools. He managed to make it to the bottom in plenty of time to see the winners. Gareth McMann in 1st, followed by Hannah Brand in 2nd and Greg Addicott in 3rd. We were finally

dragged off the water (especially Arron Layton who never stopped all weekend) by any of the coaches who still had the energy to do so!

An early night was had by all, then an even earlier wake up to squeeze back into wet smelly kit and do it all over again. On the Sunday we were joined by some new people, who did some river skills while the other two groups merged to do some flat water freestyle with Lowri and Sid. After bowstalling and almost bagging myself a flatwater loop, we swapped around. We did river running while the other group did some flat water freestyle with Lowri. Finally, we had another free session on the bottom hole to put our rides together for the competition after lunch.

The competition itself was brilliant and practically everything scored except just flushing, but moves that flushed gained a partial score. Each competitor had three 45 second runs with the best two counting so on the last run it was 'go big or go home'.

After the competition we had a small 'King of the Wave' competition. We had to try and stay on as long as we could, pushing one another off the wave whilst Lowri counted to a number which we didn't know. At the end, the joint King and Queen were Hannah Brand and Arron Layton. As I was upside down but still on the wave, I was also awarded some, very sticky, mini eggs.

After some more playing, it was a quick change and up to the café to watch some of the video kindly taken by Pete Astles over the weekend, before the prize giving itself! Spot prizes were also awarded to Ben Brayfield, Callum Stone and myself for entertaining the judges by hand surfing, swimming, some of the old school paddle tricks and a bit of disco dancing. ●

**Nathan O'Callaghan**  
Photos: Pete Astles



River Skills



Coaching

## THANKS

The weekend was a great success and everyone who went had lots of fun, I would definitely suggest anyone under 18 try this series of events. I would also like to thank Lowri Davies for organising this great event and all the coaches and sponsors that made the weekend such wicked fun: Sid, Pete Catteral, Liam, Phil, Pete Astles, Carl, Mark, Vicky, Fluid Kayaks, the WCA and Soulboater for the brilliant prizes.





# Devizes to Westminster

The race as a whole is an annual event with over 200 kayakers entering each year. However, splitting the 125-mile race into a relay event was an entirely new category that was introduced. This was worked so that the three pairs paddled one section each day. For all team members involved this was our first ever marathon race, and it was also the first ever marathon 'relay team event', that has been seen in the history of the University Canoe Club.



Paddling down a canal in a two-man kayak, at first glance seemed a straightforward affair, but as we soon found out there were many encounters along our journey from Devizes to Westminster.

The race began the morning of Easter Friday, and following a rigorous kit inspection we set off from Devizes, Wiltshire just after 8am. Within the first few miles our first paddling pair were faced with the aggression of the infamous territorial swan. Quite surprisingly, several racers every year are reported to have had the same problems from the same bird, and for our guys this included a full wing-flapping launch at the boat. Luckily no harm was done to either the swan or our team members. Within the same day we also saw the first bit of damage to the boat, and unfortunately it was due to Becky's steering, that is into the bank, rather than next to it.

The second and third day saw a change in scenery, as the placid Kennet and Avon Canal became a flowing River Thames. Despite fewer locks to run around, the team was still faced with the Ladie's Rowing Regatta in Henley and fleets of sailing boats and pleasure crafts to avoid along the way. Still the weekend ended well, even despite a quick rudder change, and the team gained a good paddling time, in preparation for our final leg, 'The Tideway'.

The Tideway section runs from Teddington to Westminster Bridge. Due to the strong current, the last leg needed to be synchronised with the out-going tide. This

resulted in a 5am start. Therefore it was an early night for all on Sunday, in preparation to leave Reading at 3am! As there were no support points at all on this day's stretch only two paddlers were able to finish the race. The chosen weary eyed paddlers set off from Teddington, with only street lighting, glow sticks and head torches to guide them, and the rest of the team sped from bridge to bridge keeping track in the cold

and dimly lit morning air of London. After the sun rose, it wasn't long before the London Eye was in view, and our team's two paddlers pushed for the finish line past Big Ben, and beyond Westminster Bridge. In the distance the rest of the crew saw a blob of red, which as it drew closer revealed itself as our boat. As Big Ben showed 8:06am 'Team 999' crossed the finish line completing the 125-mile experience in a muscle aching 23 hours and 16 minutes! ●

**Becky Osborne**

## THANKS



On behalf of the team, Andy Gingell, Bobby Boydell, Becky Osborne, Cat Mattos, Will Hollins-Gibson and Ashton Eddolls, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported us. This includes our sponsors, Marsport, for providing the boat, sponsorship from various departments across the University of Reading, and our family and friends for all their help and much needed moral support. We would also like to specifically thank all the members of the public, who raised a fantastic £569.16 towards the total in our collection on the 17th March, in Reading Town Centre. We are now looking forward to handing over this money to Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance with the rewarding knowledge that it will be invested in saving lives.

Over the past Easter weekend, from Friday the 25th through to Monday the 28th of March, six former and current Reading University students successfully completed a new relay version of the Devizes to Westminster Kayak Race. In doing so, an amazing sum of over £2,000 was raised for the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust.



# National Leagues polo

7th May

Dukes Dock, Liverpool

British polo reached a milestone with the first outdoor league tournament. Friends of Allonby, Liverpool hosted the tournament in the excellent facility at Dukes Dock, Liverpool.

Below: In the final games, no one is prepared to give the ball up easily!

Below middle: Paul Hammond teases St. Albans with the ball  
Photos: Agnello Guarracino



Meridian's Darren Ling puts on a "firm" hand tacktke  
Photo: Glenn Summerbell

Sometimes the will to win is the most important thing...  
Photo: Agnello Guarracino

Petrie of Viking A rebounds off the B team's Bowers  
Photo: Glenn Summerbell

Alan Vessey and Pip Grayson had fought the odds and lack of qualified referees to get a workable playing order out during the preceding week and all the Open and Ladies Division 1 teams were assembled to determine who would be the National Leagues Champions for the 2004/05 Season.

The format for the top divisions had been split for the first time this season, with all of the teams playing each other over three indoor tournaments between January and May, and over the weekend in Liverpool they would all play each other again, giving a final placing based on the ability to play consistently both indoors and outdoors.

## Saturday

The form book was carefully followed in the first few games, St Albans and FOA brushing past Viking B, with Viking A taking the biggest win of the day with a 12-0 thrashing of bottom of the table Avon, followed by Meridian inflicting a 9-1 score line on them. The two exceptions to this during the morning session were the Meridian vs Dragon game, and a key clash between Viking A and St. Albans. Dragon were the upset team of the previous tournament, having beaten FOA 4-2, and they had taken points off all of the top half teams in the league – except Meridian. Perhaps mindful of this fact the current league leaders were very wary of being the next on the Dragon 'hit list' and despite taking a first half struggled to capitalise and Dragon brought the score to 1-1 before half time. Meridian came out at full speed for the second half and took a lead within seconds and after that seemed content just to kill the game,

Dragon in their turn were willing to accept a one goal loss, a disappointment to the crowd from two of the most entertaining teams in the league.

The Viking A vs St. Albans game was a quite different story and was one of the most entertaining of the day, with both teams keen to prove their superiority. Perhaps against the run of play St. Albans were very pleased to run out 3-2 winners in an early doors game that really took the possibility of winning the league out of Vikings hands.

The short lunch break introduced the more competitive games – led out by a Friends of Allonby team eager who took revenge over the scalp hunting Dragon with a score of 3-1.

As is so often the case Viking A managed to struggle with their B team, eventually running out 3-0 winners and breathing a small sigh of relief to have avoided a major crowd pleasing upset.

Meridian vs St Albans was another game that could have swung either way but a poor pass from the Meridian defence that dropped to the hands of a St. Albans player – only to be snatched away and thrown in an open goal by Neil Parker, was a turning point and the final score of 4-2 to Meridian left them sitting at the top of the league at the end of the day.

FOA vs Avon was the matter of routine that all (including the teams) were expecting – FOA taking a 12-1 win like the proverbial candy.

St. Albans and Dragon had the privilege of closing the day and both teams knew that this was now going to be a middle of the table clash. St. Albans took the lead, only to have it snatched away by Dragon, who seemed to find an extra gear in the second half and eventually frustrated St. Albans with a final score of 5-2 in favour of Dragon.

## Sunday

Games started at 9.00 on the Sunday morning, with the weather pretty much unchanged from the day before – blustery wind, but the much feared heavy rain held off.



The St. Albans B defence foils FOA – on this occasion  
Photo: Glenn Summerbell

## Open Competition

It was a reasonable expectation that as the final league places were resolved the tighter the games would become and so it proved. The first game of the day was the key bottom of the table fight to see who was going to join Derby Rammers in Division 2 for next season. Avon and Viking B were both keen to avoid the drop, but in the end it was the young Viking team that held onto their Division 1 place for their first season after getting promoted. They edged the game 3-2.

The FOA vs Meridian game was the top of the table equivalent, the teams being placed top and second overnight. FOA took an early lead and followed it up with a second and it looked as if the game might be another of their well orchestrated walk overs. Towards the end of the half, Neil Parker was awarded a free shot in front of the FOA goal and somehow managed to find a gap to make the half time score 2-1. Meridian came out for the second half with all guns blazing and new boy Dan Robson made a pass over the FOA defence that Ollie Bishop was able to convert into an equaliser. Both teams scored once more and then the Meridian defence came under relentless pressure towards the end of the game, until eventually Neil Edmunds found enough space to score FOA's winner in this 4-3 cliff-hanger.

Viking A vs Dragon was another or the potential upsets with Dragon looking to add to their tally of surprise results – but today it was just not to be. Despite some very close chances Viking had a more comfortable win than the 4-3 score might suggest.

Meridian vs Viking B was a somewhat predictable affair, Meridian needing to add to their goal difference in case FOA slipped up later in the day, put pressure continually on the less experienced Viking side and racked up an impressive 13 goals, but in doing so conceded four.

FOA's next opponents were the Viking A team, who were virtually out of the running by virtue of having lost to St.Albans on the Saturday, but who put up a great fight but to no avail, the superior firepower of FOA earning a 4-3 win.

Dragon took their turn with Avon next and continued the fashion for kicking a team once they are down, but running (or was it walking) out winners 9-1.

FOA rounded off their season by playing St. Albans, the team that had put them out of the National Championships and they surely laid that ghost to rest and confirmed themselves as league champions with a 4-0 win.

Meridian and Viking knew that their respective league positions were second and third, when they took to the water for their last games of the weekend. But still both came up with very spirited performances and the 4-4 final score line showed just how close the league had been.

Viking B and Dragon had the distinction of playing the last game of the season and having confirmed their place in the top flight for next year Viking were able to play with the pressure off and their game showed it. Dragon who had enjoyed an outstanding season were only able to score the winner in the dying seconds of the game to win 3-2 and breath a huge sigh of relief, as they were nearly on the wrong end of an upset result for a change!

## Ladies competition

By Sunday morning the battle for the top spot was still a very close affair and with all the top teams still having to play one another there was still potential for any team to win. The opening battle saw FOA, currently third, play second place St Albans' A. FOA took an early lead and, despite some staunch defending from St Albans, managed to secure a second before half time. The second half saw a renewed vigour from the St Albans' side, who were desperate to fight their way back into the match, but with two minutes left on the clock they were still trailing by two goals. Following constant pressure on the FOA zone they managed to pull one back through Lianne Grayson and equalise just seconds

before the final whistle.

The following match saw an as yet unbeaten Meridian side take on Aberfan, a team who had struggled to find their form of the previous season. With FOA and St Albans taking a share of the spoils in the previous match, Meridian had the opportunity to lengthen their lead at the top of the table. This they did with a goal from Kirsty Sutcliffe within the first minute, however, Meridian failed to capitalise on their opportunities and were only leading by 1-0 at half time. In the second half the Aberfan zone came under sustained attack and Meridian scored a further two goals courtesy of Sam Barry and Sam Raddings. Aberfan did not give up and managed to score a consolation goal, through Zoë Anthony, late in the second half leaving the result 3-1.

Banba duly saw off St Albans B by a convincing 5-2 scoreline putting St Albans B in ever more danger of the drop zone and FOA inflicted further damage on the wounded Aberfan with a 7-1 drubbing, which effectively put them out of contention for a top three finish.

Next up saw a top two clash of the titans between St Albans A and Meridian. With St Albans needing a win to have any chance of surpassing Meridian and Meridian needing only a draw to clinch the title, this had the potential to be a nail biting experience for players and spectators alike. St Albans took an early lead through Hilary Clarke but were unable to capitalise on their efforts, despite applying immense pressure to the Meridian zone for most of the first half. It appeared that the Meridian side had little in response and they went into the break trailing by 1-0. The second half saw a different Meridian side as they came out all guns blazing. The sprint was won, the ball pumped up field to Andi Fear-Ross who managed to see her shot saved into the hands of Caroline Hollies who duly slammed it into the back of the net, drawing Meridian level. St Albans then applied the pressure trying to secure the winner but in doing so left themselves vulnerable to the fast break which Meridian managed to capitalise on through Katie Hamer. Final result 2-1 to Meridian.

A closely fought battle between Banba and Dragon was to follow with the winning goal coming for Dragon in the final minute courtesy of Jo Townend, result 3-2. The battle between Aberfan and St Albans A saw St Albans running out eventual winners by 5-3 and Dragon inflicted further damage on an already relegated St Albans B by narrowly beating them by 3-2.

With Meridian already confirmed as winners, the game against FOA was about FOA securing second place and whether or not Meridian could finish the league not having dropped a single point. FOA took the first initiative scoring two goals within a minute and took a 2-0 lead into half time. Meridian managed to pull one back in the third minute of the second half but due to some fierce defending from FOA they were able to inflict the only defeat on Meridian all season and secure them the second place slot. Result 2-1 to FOA.

So another season is over, with congratulations to Meridian in the Ladies and FOA Liverpool in the Open, for taking the League crowns this year. (Meridian Youth also won their respective category). Doubtless there will be chat about the format for the competition, with the weather having a less than perfect weekend, but it seems that outdoor league polo is here to stay – at least for now. ●

**Curly Barker**



**Top: Viking A demonstrate how well turned out the top teams are these days**

**Photo: Glenn Summerbell**

**Middle: Stuart Moffitt shows the kind of determination that won FOA the title**

**Photo: Agnello Guarracino**

**Bottom: Ginny Coyles of FOA plans her next move**

**Photo: Glenn Summerbell**

## THANKS

Thanks must go to the League organisers, Alan and Pip and the Friends of Allonby Liverpool Canoe Club – especially Mike Moffitt and Gerry McCusker, as well as the team of non-playing referees, without all of whom the event could never have taken place.



We rolled into Iran from Turkey where we filled up with diesel for just over one US dollar for 50 litres and, as we drove through the crowded streets of Tabriz, the other drivers would shout greetings in broken English or Turkish, the lingua Franca of the area, and welcome us to their country. 1500 miles further down the road and we arrived at the village of Sepid Dasht on the banks of the Sezar river to check the river levels and to call in on the local English teacher, Abbas Sayadii, my friend from previous visits. I had taken a gamble on the river levels: the two previous times we had paddled in the region the river level had been perfect but research told us that they had been low snow pack years. We had gambled and decided to go six weeks later. This six week shift meant we had to deal with summer temperatures of 40°C and above.

The river level was perfect! We stayed the night at Abbas's house and the following day drove to Isfahan to meet Bob, Debs, Igor and Diego, who had flown into Iran. Also I made contact with Amir Hossein, an Iranian kayaking friend, who I hoped would be able to come on the trip. Both Amir and Abbas could make the trip down the Sezar.

Two days later we were on the river and Abbas and Amir were both excitedly talking up their Iranian fearlessness as we launched and set off down the initial rapids - a slalom through big boulders with the raft guide having to choose carefully the correct line so as not to be presented with a gap too narrow for the raft. Amir much to his chagrin was filmed hurling his shoes and paddle to the ground in frustration after a swim when, on his third attempt at an Eskimo roll, he was knocked back down by an over-enthusiastic X - rescue attempt by Becky. Abbas's paddling power on the raft noticeably decreased as we entered rapids - but boy were they enjoying it and so was everyone. It was a happy smiling group that arrived at camp for the first night and everyone was at their most enthusiastically helpful.

On down the river and on down to the one portage on the Sezar - a little nerve-racking this, as three years had passed since I last ran the river and if we failed to recognise the entry to the rapid, once entered stopping a loaded raft before the boulder choke would be well nigh impossible. Fortunately, Bob and I, veterans of two previous trips down this river spotted the portage. It is all very well gathering a group of your peers to run a river but inviting two Iranians adds a certain extra responsibility - especially as they may not be fully aware of the dangers! We camped by the portage and in the cool of the morning carried around the rapid, paddling an empty raft down to the last possible eddy above the boulder choke and putting back on just below, and then running the raft to the next small eddy to reload. Throw lines and rope burns to a couple of hands prevented the disaster of the raft careering on down the narrow gorge without the group's gear!

By now the river was entering the spectacular

stage where the railway that runs alongside the rivers disappears into a dozen or more tunnels. Built largely by the allies in the second world war to supply the Russian front, much of the railway track and steel sleepers are marked with BSC WORKINGTON.

The second night we camped where the Bakhtyari river meets the Sezar at Do-Ob (Two Waters). We camped on the far bank and a couple of kms downstream of the railway village of Tange Panch. Abbas warned us to be careful that night and everyone gathered their belongings around them before going to sleep. However, between 2.00 and 3.00am thieves came into the camp taking three 'pelicasas' containing two digital cameras, one of the 3 chip digital video cameras, microphones, a Pentax camera, video tapes and two passports and over 1,000 dollars in cash along with miscellaneous paddling gear and clothing. In the morning we reported the theft to the railway police and spread the word around the elders and friends of Abbas in the village. But, as the father of one of Abbas's students said "They are all thieves here - they even steal the wire from the railway". Meanwhile the others searched around in the rocks but the thieves were from Tange Panch and would have known every nook and cranny and hiding place if they had even stashed the goods and so it was to no avail.

After setting enquiries in motion I left Rob and Abbas to deal with the authorities who were coming down by the next train. The rest of us had to paddle on down to Telle Zange where there was a practical take-out and a railway station from where we could catch a train back to Sepid Dasht. There we could report the theft to the police and collect the important police statements for the insurance claims.

I have been robbed on every occasion I have been to the Bakhtyari region of Loristan, why return to this region when there are other rivers in Iran and the rest of the world to be paddled? - Why? Because of the Bakhtyari river.

So after re-supplying we set off to make a second descent, this time knowing it would be an eight-night self-support trip through absolute wilderness but that the blind canyons did not conceal lethal waterfalls. The kayaks (thank you Pyranha) had to carry all the dehydrated food (thank you Expeditionfoods.com) for the group along with cooking and camping gear as well as the film equipment (thank you Dayman Lowe Pro, Manfrotte and Kodak) all stored in waterproof bags

# The grande canyon

Why did I go back to Iran? After Bob, Debs I had been thinking about it: the river was those quiet moments or driving late at night something Bob or Debs had said on the river been such an amazing trip; the most fun



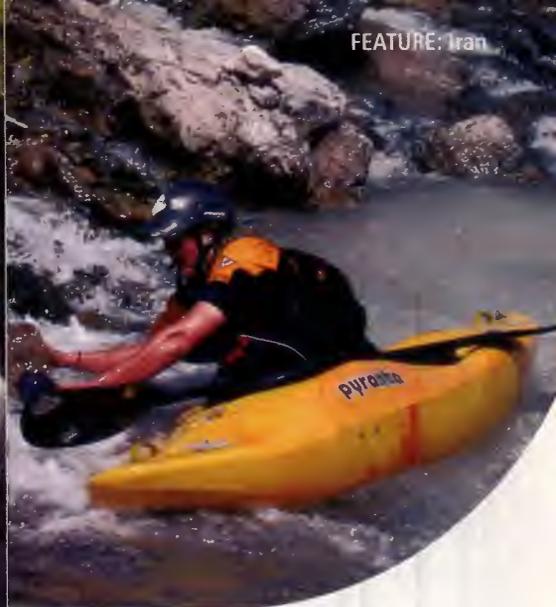
## TEAM

Dave Manby, Bob March Nicks, Ally Collett, Queen Valsecchi, Rob Coffee, B Details of the Coruh river Rivers To Run' at [www.dr](http://www.dr)



# est yon

and I paddled the Bakhtyari river in 2001, could not leave my mind - every so often in the night, an image of the gorges or an action shot of a river would jump into mental focus. It had been a life-on trip in my lifetime of running rivers.



on any river trip I have ever done. (On the previous descent the spring had been dry - I have a photo of it). The others entering the gorges had only a little more knowledge than we had had on our first trip: Bob, Debs and I were frequently having to reply "I don't know", to questions like "How far?", "How long?", and "When?". There was so much to see that we could not recall much of it even when we came across it again.

(thank you Palm) in the rear of the kayaks. We also carried spare breakdown paddles (thank you Robson), throw bags and first aid kits just in case. Apart from Bob, Debs and me, no one else on the trip had done a nine day self-support kayak trip - and we three had only done one by mistake - our last descent of the Bakhtyari river which was planned as a six day trip.

Bob, Debs and I knew we would be rewarded with everything you could ask for on a river trip: we knew that there was quality white water, but had forgotten how much there was; we knew the scenery was of unimaginable grandeur, but we had forgotten just how towering the walls were; we knew we would be entering places where the only people who had ever been there before were Bob, Debs and me on our last trip down the river; we knew there would be springs to drink from and this year we had the bonus of rounding a corner to see a spring falling clear into the river from the calcium outcrop that had grown out over the millennia high up on the canyon wall, lit up by the evening sun; the most stunning vision I have ever seen

The white water too was not without incident and, on one rapid, Becky and Rob swam, both losing paddles. Igor fell whilst scouting when a boulder he stood on collapsed. He fell three metres down the river bank and badly sprained his wrist; luckily he still had his helmet on. This sprained wrist was a big problem, we were in the middle of nowhere. A walkout was considered but it would have been a major undertaking, possibly taking four days. We were below the hardest of the rapids and so to paddle out was the best option. Ibuprofen and codeine were administered in large quantities, splints were duct-taped to his forearm and we nursed Igor down the river for the next few days. I did not lie to him when I told him that the river was grade II from there on down - I had just forgotten the grade IV sections: they had been overwritten in my memory by the drama of the attempted extortion. He stoically did not complain though at times he could not hide a grimace of pain as he had to pull hard on his arm. He agreed (mind you afterwards) that it was well worth the rewards of the lower river and the grandest of the canyons. ●

**Dave Manby**

## A F T E R    W O R D

We finished the Bakhtyari river by paddling down to Telle Zange again and caught the train to Sepid Dasht and Abbas's house. Abbas and I went back to the police station: none of our gear had turned up. Eventually Abbas and I obtained a form of police statement with an official stamp on it which would have to do for the claims. Meanwhile, a bag containing the cameras and some other stolen goods had turned up and been handed in to the Railway police.

I heard later that the three officers from Sepid Dasht had been arrested and carted off to Khoramabad for their incompetence.

Abbas and I went to Andimerskh, four hours by train, to collect the bag and deal with the authorities there. In the bag were the four cameras, the pelicasas, the video footage, the microphones but not the passports and money and most of the smaller, more portable items. An amazing result. What was really troubling about this was the reverence that Abbas had to proffer to the local police whilst we were dealing with them. Their arrogance, ineffectiveness and intrusive and idiotic repeated questioning of Abbas was such that when Alex, Becky, Rob and Diego were attacked, threatened and had a camera extorted from them by locals whilst running the Zez, (a side creek that flows into the Sezar at Sepid Dasht) that we decided not to report this to the police.

We were astounded by the general attitude, not just the police but also the locals; it was "Why were we so careless with our belongings?". We had just underestimated the criminality of the region that stretches back into history. The Lors (we were in Loristan) were noted for their raiding the caravanserai that would have passed by the Zagros mountains where the Lors live in ancient times; it would appear that this tradition has not died out, just that we had become the new caravanserai. To top it all the kids filled the locks in my Ford Transit with road tar and twigs so we had to get a syringe and squirt petrol into them to be able to open the doors.

ant, Deb Cook, Alex  
tin 'Igor' Carson, Diego  
becky Bristow.

and my book 'Many  
manby.demon.co.uk



# 400 mile canoe marathon for Sue Ryder Care

**Thirteen year old Alec Jeddere-Fisher, accompanied by his father, plans to paddle 400 miles, from Godalming to a few miles outside Kendal, during the first three weeks of August 2005, to raise money for Sue Ryder Care.**

Alec has chosen to do this in memory of the mother of one of his best friends, who had been fighting cancer for as long as he knew her. Claire died in her own home in December 2003 after a number of stays at the Sue Ryder hospice in Nettlebed. Alec visited Claire in Nettlebed and was very impressed with the atmosphere of the home and the work being done there for people with life-limiting illnesses. There is also a family connection in that Alec's grandfather, who has himself recently received treatment for lymphoma, has for many years helped to organise the four-weekly sales that raise funds for the home.

Alec and Ken will start down the River Wey and then upstream along the Thames to Oxford. The entire South and North sections of the Oxford Canal and the Coventry Canal, followed by a section of the Trent and Mersey Canal will get them just past Stoke-on-Trent. They will travel along the Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals before passing through Manchester on the Ashton, Rochdale and Bridgewater Canals. From here they will follow the main line and Rufford branch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to the River Douglas. The crossing of the Ribble estuary will provide the only open water of the trip. Then the new Ribbble Link Canal will give access to 50 lock-free miles of the Lancaster Canal. They will finish by seeing how far they can probe up the now disused northern end of the canal that was closed in the 1950's to make way for the construction of the M6 motorway.

The trip will be unsupported and the pair will camp or stay in canal-side pubs along the way. This will mean carrying in the canoe a quantity of food and equipment, including a trolley to help negotiate the 200 locks along the route.

As well as route planning and making arrangements for accommodation along the way, training for the journey has also started. Both 13 year old Alec and 55 year old Ken need to develop a steady and economical paddling style as well as reaching a sufficient level of fitness and stamina for the trip. This will mostly be along their local stretch of the Thames but will include daily paddles along the Broadland rivers during a week's holiday in Norfolk in June. There will also be sessions along the nearest sections of the Grand Union Canal to get used to canal paddling and lock portages. ●

**Ken Jeddere-Fisher**



## HOW TO DONATE

If you would like to support Alec in his efforts to raise as much money as possible for Sue Ryder Care, please visit his fund-raising web page at [www.justgiving.com/canoe400](http://www.justgiving.com/canoe400).

All money raised will be used to provide expert palliative care aimed at achieving the best possible quality of life for patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment and their families. To learn more about the work of Sue Ryder Care, please visit their web site at [www.suerydercare.org/](http://www.suerydercare.org/). From here you can follow the Hospice Care links at the bottom of the welcome page to find out about the Nettlebed home.

Alec and Ken would like to acknowledge the support of Richard Bennett of Outdoor Active in Berkeley, Glos who supplied the canoe for the trip at a generous discount. This has been used to start off the fund of money Alec is raising for Sue Ryder Care. Also Raynor Harmsworth of Reflex Signs at Wycombe Air Park is kindly creating adhesive banners for the canoe to draw attention to our efforts.

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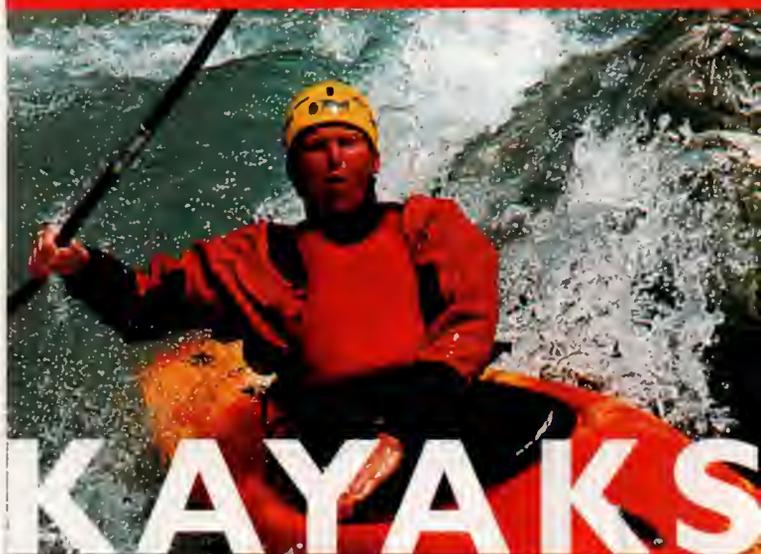
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# Paddle Adventures in Laos

Having grown up on the placid rivers of Oxfordshire, gaining my three star award and basic skills with the BCU, I then moved to Newcastle University and was attempting the Wye, the Dee and some of the rivers of the North-East. After University I found a love for travelling and fell in love with the excellent climate the warm water the beautiful untouched forest and the people of Laos in South East Asia. I loved the hospitality of Laos, the weather and the slower pace of life and of course the cheap price of a beer.



I returned to set up rafting trips with a small company on a great class 3-4 river trip taking two days and camping out in a purpose built fishing hut for the night. I first kayaked this river in a perception 3-D and loved it, great forests great rapids with about 18 grade 3 and 4 rapids over the two days with each rapid followed by a long stretch of flat water where you can recover if things go wrong.

The trip starts about two and a half hours from the capital Vientiane which borders Thailand, or 30 minutes from Vang Vieng, a backpackers retreat.

From the main road you cross through a restricted area into Xaysomboun which used to be a Secret CIA base in the Vietnam War. Driving two hours up the mountain we cross to the put-in point. From here we say goodbye to roads and civilisation, only coming across two or three fishermen over the next two days. You can kayak or raft down the river to our hut where we spend the night in sleeping bags under mosquito nets, which is all stored at location which means we only take food and gear on the trip.

On the second day you continue down through several grade 4 rapids which can all be scouted and portaged if you don't think you're up to it with relative ease. After the last grade 4 rapid we arrived at the Nam Ngum Lake formed by damming the river in the early 70s. At the lake we will have a fishing boat waiting to take us back to the nearest road this trip is takes about two hours. Of course there is beer and food waiting on the boat.

This is the main commercial trip run by Paddle Adventures for kayakers or rafters. There is also the Mekong fault line on the border between Cambodia and Laos which has given rise to a long line of numerous runnable and unrunnable waterfalls and rapids for the daring – this is some of the best water in the world. These trips should be booked in advance as are not run on a daily basis. Contact [paddle\\_adventures@hotmail.com](mailto:paddle_adventures@hotmail.com) or [www.paddle-adventures.com](http://www.paddle-adventures.com) for more courses and trips.

**Alex Aziz**



## PICTURE THIS

### Stithians welcome HRH The Princess Royal



Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal opened one of Cornwall's most prestigious projects today. Stithians Lake, near Redruth in West Cornwall, is the second largest inland water in the county and covers an area of some 274 acres. It attracts over 50,000 visits a year from watersports enthusiasts and anglers, as well as those interested in bird watching, camping and walking.

It is managed by one of the region's largest environmental charities, South West Lakes Trust. The new £1 million angling and watersports centre provides

state-of-the-art classrooms, information technology access, boat and equipment storage, clubroom and changing facilities and offers year-round watersports training facilities for members and courses for those wanting to learn.

The ambitious project received funding from Sport England, Objective One (European Regional Development Fund), The South West of England Regional Development Agency, South West Water, Cornwall County Council, Kerrier District Council and Falmouth College. It has also been supported by local clubs and businesses including Wendron Parish Council, Pennon Environmental Fund, Greenbank Falmouth Rowing Club, Imerys and Rural Economic Partnership Ltd.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of South West Lakes Trust, Cairns Boston added, "We are Delighted HRH The Princess Royal is able to join us in this very important day for Stithians Lake, West Cornwall and the South West Lakes Trust. These wonderful new facilities are a testament to the efforts of many people over more than 20 years. It could not have been achieved without the efforts of staff and volunteers, an often unsung group of people who deserve our very sincere thanks.

As well as the direct employment it creates, the Lake brings over £1million to the local economy and supports many more local jobs. Stithians Lake has long been recognised as one of the natural jewels in West Cornwall's crown and we now have the facilities to match these superb surroundings."

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**Saturday advice morning - 27th August 2005**

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# Popping out

to

The St. Kilda group of islands lie 41 miles WNW of Griminish Point, North Uist and consists of Hirta which is the largest island, Soay which is nearby, and four miles distant lie the spectacular rocks of Boreray, Stac Lee and Stac an Armin.

As we had left Inverness earlier that day the latest forecast suggested... Hebrides south east 3 to 4, occasional 5. Visibility good. Sea state moderate.

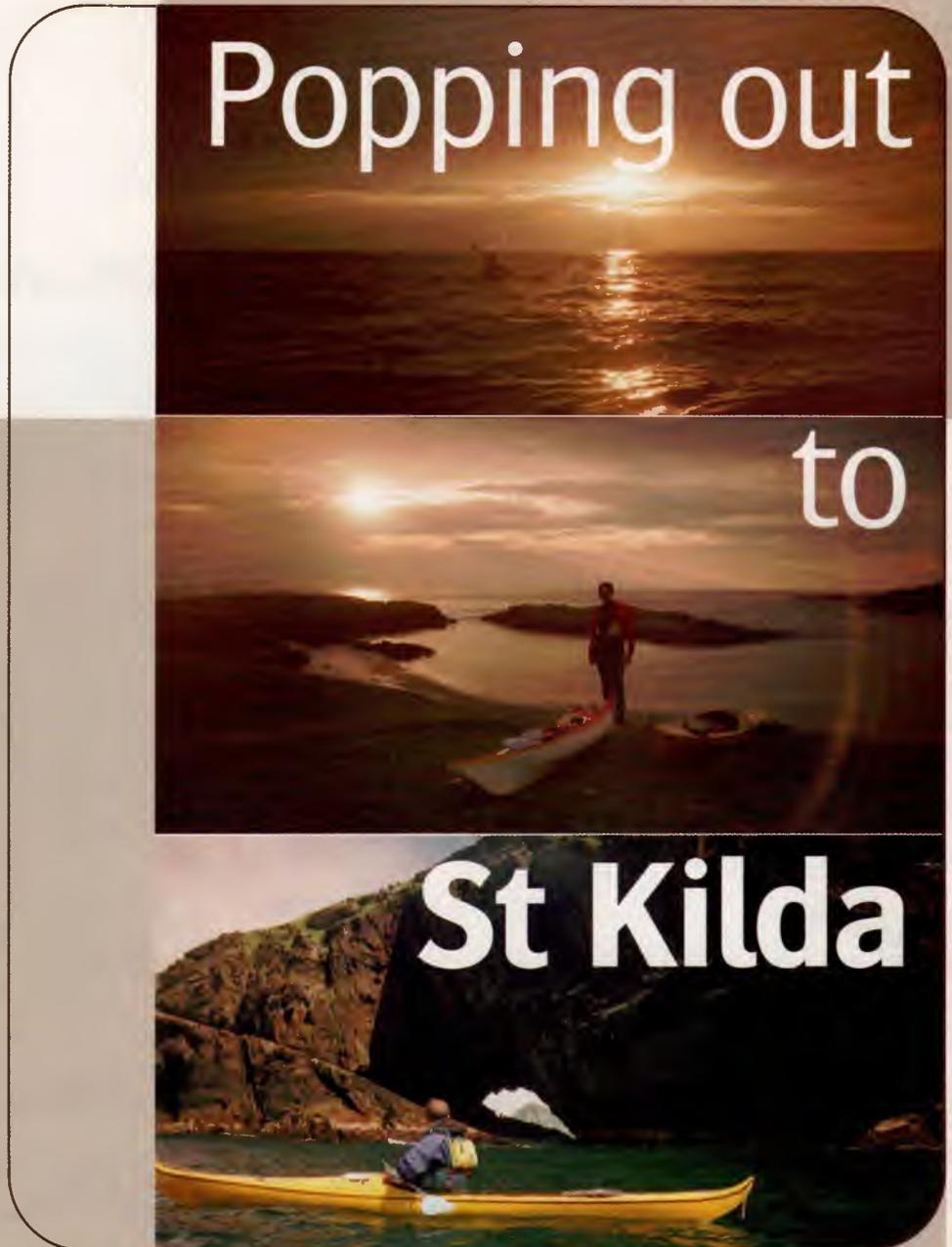
A continuing south east breeze was expected until 6 pm the following day before a front moved in from the south west. So having arrived at Scolpaig beach at 9pm it seemed sensible to paddle to Haskeir Island, a rock which is situated eight miles away, en route to St. Kilda, and spend the hours of darkness there before continuing our journey at first light. We knew other paddlers who had landed on the rock and assumed that we could do likewise. Two hours later, as darkness fell, we arrive at Haskeir but found that the south easterly wind was creating a choppy sea, preventing landing on the usual east side of the rock. On the west side a large swell from the south west was crashing on to the rock preventing us getting closer than 20 metres from the rock.

After paddling around the rock we were faced with a dilemma. What to do now? After some serious thought we decided to continue into the darkness, heading for St. Kilda through the night, on the basis that the favourable wind would help us on our way and the forecast suggested that we would not get another chance this week. We were well aware of the serious nature of this decision and we were to reconsider the wisdom of our choice during the next few hours.

We had not packed the boats expecting to complete the whole journey that night and so most of our supplies were not ready to hand, but were nicely tucked away inside our hatches, which we did not dare opening in the current choppy sea. We had some warm clothes, plenty water but very little food. Fortunately Andy had put some food behind his seat which we could access. It consisted of a smoked sausage, two pints of milk and several tubs of pineapple chunks. Not what I would normally call a feast but it kept us going!

Off we went, into the night, with a freshening wind behind us, surfing down breaking waves which seemed to get larger as the light faded.

How do you navigate out there in the dark when you can't see the compass on your hatch? Well there was a glow in the sky to the north where the sun had slipped below the horizon. We kept this to our right and the wind on our backs. However it was a bit off putting when the glow was obscured by black lumps of water bearing down on us.



**St Kilda was first glimpsed as a grey smudge on the horizon six years ago whilst hill walking on the Hebridean island of Harris. The seed was sown as I thought about the possibility of paddling there. So it was that Andy and I found ourselves loading our kayaks, on the west coast of North Uist, as the sun sank towards the horizon.**

As the wind picked up we were doing less forward paddling and more steering and general control strokes. It was especially difficult to paddle close enough to keep contact with each other without colliding. We did not relish the possibility of a collision of two heavily laden kayaks. A holed boat would be no fun 20 miles from the nearest land.

The wind increased to what was probably a steady force 4, but in the dark it felt more like force 5 for about an hour, and I began to feel a bit scared. This when the thoughts go through your mind that this time you've made the wrong call. What else can you do, but keep paddling? Try to relax, loosen your white knuckled grip on the paddle, let the boat run with the waves. We would stop and raft up every now and again but it got too rough for this with the waves breaking over the rafted kayaks, so we just kept paddling. It was very dark with a cloudy sky and for a while the only light was the flashing light on

Haskeir which could be seen if we turned around. After a while this also disappeared.

Fortunately by the time the sky began to lighten at about 3am the wind had dropped to a light breeze and soon it was light enough to navigate on a compass bearing again. We were relieved when we could discern the grey haze of Boreray on the horizon at 5am. After another four hours we arrived in village bay on Hirta. A welcome sight.

On the shores of village bay are the huts of the MOD missile tracking base. Grey, flat roofed buildings which look very out of place and even include a pub called the 'Puff Inn'. There are also a few houses used by the National Trust of Scotland warden and volunteers who spend a week on the island carrying out maintenance work on the ruins of the old village.

We were somewhat surprised to be met on the jetty by the warden who asked us where we were planning to stay. On being told that we were



planning to camp he asked if we had booked! We had not booked but were certainly not turning around and paddling back! After a bit of friendly discussion we were directed to a suitable area where we could pitch our tent. Over the next few days we were surprised to see tour boats arriving, offloading their passengers via rubber dinghies who would visit the National Trust shop, opened especially for them, then wander round the old village, before heading back to sea for their next destination. Perhaps you don't need to book if you are just there to buy a tea towel!

St.Kilda was inhabited until 1930. The islanders lived mainly on sea birds and would scale the cliffs and stacks collecting birds and eggs. St.Kilda is Europe's most important sea bird colony and is home to the world's largest gannet colony as well as the largest fulmar colony in the UK. Puffins are common and were also an important part of their diet.

Other sub species unique to St.Kilda include the St Kildan wren (with an estimated 115 pairs remaining), and the St Kildan field mouse and house mouse which is now extinct. Soay sheep are an example of the survival of a primitive breed dating back to the Bronze Age.

In 1726 an Islander visited Harris and died of smallpox after which his clothes were returned to St Kilda. Unfortunately his clothes took the disease with them resulting in most of the St kildans dying of smallpox. Only one adult and eighteen children survived the outbreak on the island. However three men and eight boys escaped the disease as they had been left on Stac an Armin to collect gannets. In the meantime the people on Hirta were dying of smallpox so the boat never came back to collect them. It was nine months before they were rescued by a visiting boat. The island was repopulated by people from Harris after its decimation.

After two days exploring the island on foot we decided to paddle around Hirta before heading over to Boreray and the Stac Lee and Stac an Armin. A south westerly front had passed through the previous night resulting in a large westerly swell. The swell meant it was not possible to paddle through the narrow channel separating the rocky promontory of Dun from Hirta and so we paddled round the south west point of Dun. We were met by huge seas as a result of a tide race (spring tides didn't help), the westerly swell and clapotis. Things improved once we were round the point but the whole west coast of Hirta was a seething cauldron for some distance off shore. The channel between Hirta and Soay was filled with confused water and it was a relief to pass through the gap which is guarded by two sea stacs, and reach sheltered water on the north east side of Hirta.

A gentle paddle into North Bay followed. We were able to enter a cave in this bay and came across a dead killer whale, approximately nine feet long, floating in the back of the cave

The sea state and weather was improving all the time and we had a pleasant paddle under the 1400 feet cliffs of Conachair before turning towards Stac Lee and Stac an Armin. These are the highest sea stacs in the British Isles rising 165m and 191m respectively as well as being home to the large sea bird colonies. As we approached the stacs the sky was filled with gannets circling above us. A hat was essential. Skuas were wheeling and diving amongst the gannets attacking them in mid air and causing them to crash land into the sea. They would then land beside them and prevent them from taking off until they regurgitated their food for the skua after which they were free to go.

The sun was out, the stacs and Boreray were



amazing and it really has to be the most spectacular place either of us have canoeed.

An early start the following day saw us leaving village bay on a calm sea with a gentle south west swell as we returned to North Uist, 12 hours paddling away. It was all going too well until about ten miles from North Uist a south westerly wind steadily rose to force 5 within half an hour. This helped us on our way and we chose to aim for a more sheltered sandy beach about two miles further south from our departure point. The last two hours paddling with tired arms meant that we were just grateful to be dumped by the surf on the beach. ●

**Calum Urquhart**

**FACTS :** A WORD OF WARNING

The paddle to St Kilda is a committing journey across the open sea and we were reminded how quickly weather can change and how vulnerable a kayak can be to these changes particularly if the crossing is being done in a 'weather window'. Weather forecasts can be inaccurate, fronts can arrive or depart sooner or later than expected and the area around St Kilda is prone to local weather variations.

However, having made the journey, we were rewarded with a tremendous experience of a very special place.

**Photo: John Cunningham**



## PADDLE THIS

## Top Club and Club Mark Awards

**Congratulations to Sutton Bingham and District Canoe Club and Mike Jones School of Sailing who have recently been accredited for the BCU Top Club and Sport England Club Mark award.**

The Club Mark and Top Club awards recognise clubs that are safe, effective and child friendly and there are currently 69 BCU clubs and centres working towards the awards.

Full details of the awards and how to register are on the BCU web site [www.bcu.org.uk/youth](http://www.bcu.org.uk/youth)

### Accredited Clubs include:

Tandridge Canoe Club  
Elmbridge Canoe Club  
Chelmsford Canoe Club  
White Rose Canoe Club  
Tamar Canoe Association  
Halifax Canoe Club  
Wey Kayak Club  
Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club  
Macclesfield & District Canoe Club  
Kingston Kayak Club  
Shropshire Paddlesport  
Burton Canoe Club  
Salford Watersports  
Sutton Bingham & District CC



## More fun in the white stuff

**Gareth Edwards aged 13, of the Oldham & District Canoe Club raised over £700 in February by paddling 22 miles on Hollingsworth Lake for North Chadderton School and the Tsunami Appeal.**

Pictured on the Tweryn, Gareth, gained his 4 star in December, and is now on the BCU Cadet Leader Program as well as Bronze Duke Of Edinburgh Award.

**Dawn Edwards**



## Cadet Leader Award

Two young paddlers from Maesteg Canoe Club received special achievement awards at the 2005 International Canoe Exhibition at the NEC for their efforts in working towards and achieving the BCU Cadet Leader Award. Morgan Williams and Morys Loveluck have both developed excellent personal paddling skills along with helping their club. The awards were presented to the paddlers by Freestyle Women's Junior World Champion Jenny Chrimes, along with Sid Sinfield from the WCA and Sue Hornby from the BCU.

The Cadet Leader Award aims to encourage young people aged 13-18 into leadership roles in their club. For more details visit [www.bcu.org.uk/youth/cadetleaders.html](http://www.bcu.org.uk/youth/cadetleaders.html).



## NE region – 'springing into action!'

Although at the time of writing this the weather could hardly be described as 'Spring – like' up north, junior paddlers have sprung into this season's events with enthusiasm. For some beginners it has been their first experience outside the safe confines of the local

swimming pool where basic skills have been mastered over the winter months.

To date three events have taken place. A Xstream Slalom at Teesside on 17th April challenged fifteen juniors not only to get through the gates in record time but also tested their polo skills and flexibility as they limboed and stern dipped their way round the course. Parents likewise succumbed to the temptation!

Weekend 23/24th April saw a 'back to back' Perception Wavehopper Challenge on the Saturday at Tyne Riverside Country Park, Prudhoe and the Sunday at the Sands, Carlisle. Competition was keen both days with individuals determined to out manoeuvre rivals in their class. A mere second separated U14 Girls in first and second place at Prudhoe whilst second place was shared in the U16 Boys category at Carlisle! Nearly as many adults as juniors took part in the '16s and over' class with some very determined paddling.

With the Perception Wavehopper Final taking place at Sleningford near Ripon in October this year, it would seem that northern juniors are already getting the paddle between their teeth! Thanks to all the volunteer helpers at these events.

**Bobby E. Timperley, PDO N.E Region.**



## PICTURE THIS

### New facilities at Elmbridge Canoe Club

April saw the official opening of Elmbridge Canoe Club's new gym. The new facilities costing almost £60,000, come thanks to a new initiative for grass roots sport called the Community Club Development Programme or CCDP which contributed £33,000 towards the total investment. A further £15,000 has been raised by the club. The CCDP provides funding from the government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), supported and administered through Sport England and the BCU. Elmbridge is the first canoe club to benefit from such funding.

The new facilities will be used by the club's thriving youth membership to support the development of basic movement and paddling skills and training. It will also provide the much needed space to enable the club to expand and work with more youth in the local community and schools. To help with this programme Elmbridge has recently appointed six times Marathon World Champion, Ivan Lawler as a part time Community Sports Coach. The post is the result of an initiative to support coaching and after school clubs and has been achieved with funding from a range of partners including, DCMS, BCU, Sport England, the local Surrey Sport Development Unit and the club itself.

During the evening the club was also presented with two additional awards – The Clubmark from Sport England and the Top Club Award from the BCU.

Phillip Don, Client Manager in the Governing Bodies Team at Sport England added, "The Elmbridge project is the first CCDP project in canoeing and is very encouraging for the whole of paddlesport and sport in general. The facilities here are excellent and added to the high standard of services that the club provides it should make a real difference in helping to maintain interest in canoeing in the region."

Picture Sport England's Philip Don receives tuition on the Paddling ergo machine from Ivan Lawler in the club's new gym.





# Youth Freestyle Series

Round two of the brand new Youth Freestyle Series is over and the future is looking promising for white water paddlers with full attendance for the coaching clinics at both events.

The Youth Freestyle Series is a combination series running up and down the country for budding young freestyle and river paddlers. Young paddlers have enjoyed coaching clinics in freestyle, river running and river safety and then have the opportunity to show off their new skills in a fun freestyle competition.

With two events down, the leader board is warming up with some truly impressive performances in all age categories. Young paddlers will be using their best three results of all of the events to gain their overall result.

The first event at Llangollen saw Jonny Noblett and Hannah Brand take top honours in the U18's. Nathan O Callaghan won the U15 boys and Arron Layton and Tanni Hargreaves took the top places in the U12 boys and girls respectively (see page 22).

Event number two in Nottingham and the leader board is looking different David Bainbridge took first place in the U18 boys in his C1 whilst GB team member Flic Meares won the girls section. Ross Montandon put down some impressive runs with some big loops to win the U15's category. Arron Layton continued on his winning streak to place first again in the U12s giving him a very strong position in the series after two events.

To see the full results or download an entry form for the forthcoming events please visit [www.ukfreestyle.com](http://www.ukfreestyle.com)

**Photos: David Leathborough**

[dave@focused-on-adventure.com](mailto:dave@focused-on-adventure.com)

[www.paddlersphotos.co.uk](http://www.paddlersphotos.co.uk)

**Peter Astles**



## PICTURE THIS

### North West region

**Congratulations to Salford Quays Canoe Club and Salford Watersports Centre, who on Thursday 7th April, were presented with Sport England's Club Mark and BCU Top Community Club Status by Richard Saunders Chief Executive (Greater Manchester Sports Partnership) and Len Hartley PDO (BCU). This was achieved for good practice in club development and providing evidence for their activity program, coaching, and duty of care, ethics, and club management**

Stuart Gibbon, Watersports Development Officer, says, "This is a major step forward for canoeing within Salford, providing sustainability and retention within the sport and offering a next step and progression for interested individuals, especially young people".

Salford Watersports Centre hosts other major projects such as a Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, a T15 club for windsurfing and a junior sailing club, plus prestigious events such as the World Cup Triathlon, National Open Water Swimming Championships, and the BCU's National Youthfest.

As part of Salford Community Leisure Limited Sports Development Team the watersports centre also runs community events throughout the year.

**Len Hartley, PDO NW & Yorkshire**

**Below: Len Hartley, Richard Saunders, Peter Hollis (club youth representative), Ruth Fenn (club member), Stuart Gibbon and members of Salford Quays CC.**



**Not long to go now... have you got your entry in?**

**Saturday 16th July 2005**

**At the Teesside Whitewater Centre, Stockton**

**Come and join us for a day of fun and excitement!**

This year we are in the North East joining in the 2005 Alive Festival as part of Stockton's Waterscape weekend.

There are lots of Paddlepower events to take part in alongside the Bellboat National Championships and the whole event promises to be a cracker! Events include:

**National Bellboat Championships** – crews of 8 racing head to head

**Slalom** – Diamond Slalom Challenge – try for one of the blue, bronze, silver or gold certificates – plus coaching from GB paddlers

**Xstream Slalom** – try your boat skills this great new challenge

**Racing** – Lightning and Open Canoe Sprint Regatta and mini marathon – GB coach support

**Fun Challenge** – Ergo Paddling Machine Challenge – 100 metres timed runs – go for bust and beat your mates!

**Try a boat** – lots of different boats to experience with coaching

**Polo** – "Golden Shot" challenge your shooting and ball handling skills.

**Freestyle** – coaching and demos – flat water and on the Tees White Water course!

**Entries** – closing date 6th July 2005

**For details go to** [www.bcu.org.uk/youthfest/html](http://www.bcu.org.uk/youthfest/html) or email [youth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:youth@bcu.org.uk) with your address and we'll send you an entry pack

# River Severn Source to sea

Having enjoyed a wonderful Christmas day with my friends and family, I woke up on boxing day looking forward to turkey sandwiches and a good long walk to work off the excesses of Christmas dining. Then, while watching the news I was shocked to see the horrors of the Asian Tsunami unfolding in real time in front of my eyes.



I am a great believer that we all have a valuable contribution to make so society on a local, national and international level. It is in the good use of our individual skills and experience where the greatest contribution can be found. I had been considering a solo descent of the river Severn for a few months, and now saw the paddle as an opportunity for me to make such a contribution.

After close inspection, I made the decision to get on just below Llanidloes, to get on any higher would have resulted in more of a walk than a paddle. We grabbed a quick drink in a local pub, during which a quick chat with the landlord and a few locals over the rugby proved fruitful. One of them was the friend of a local farmer, a brief phone call followed and I now had permission to camp in a field with good access to the river. We pitched the tent and said our farewells.

floods, with low banks, large gravel beds and huge swampy flood planes. I lost count of the number of fallen trees, some completely blocking the river. In flood they would have been a serious hazard. Through Newtown just before lunch, progress was

## Day one

I woke up to a cold, calm morning, broke camp and loaded the boat. After dragging the boat 200 meters across a field I was on the river, although here it was more like a stream. Almost straight away I began to think "what have I let myself in for" scraping down shallow grade one rapids, feeling rather isolated. The upper stretches of the river are very prone to flash

My aim was to paddle the full 220 miles of the river, from as close to its source as possible on the slopes of Plynlimon in the Cambrian Mountains, to the sea or estuary near Sharpness. Planning began using a combination of maps, Chris Sladdens Welsh guide and a very useful 'Canoeist guide to the river Severn' produced by the Environment Agency. I anticipated the trip taking between six and ten days, depending on water levels and weather. There is a public right of navigation from Pool Quay to Stourport, from Stourport to Gloucester British Waterways are the navigating authority and a licence is required. Membership of one of the canoeing national governing bodies serves as a licence. Because I was planning to paddle the river solo and unsupported, I contacted the events organiser for British Waterways who expressed concerns. He stated that there should be a minimum of three people in a canoeing group, all holding 3 star or above. Following several phone conversations and the emailing of a detailed risk assessment they gave me the all clear, simply asking me to check in with the lock keepers on route. All I needed to do now was sweet talk the boss to allow me the time off work. Fortunately I have a very supportive boss.

The plan was to start the paddle on Sunday February 27th, this proved to be a little optimistic due to the fact that I consumed large amounts of alcohol and had very little sleep thanks to a Birmingham University medic's ball on the Saturday evening.

On our journey to the source on the Sunday afternoon we crossed the river on several occasions and I started to get a little concerned about the low water level. Arriving in Llanidloes confirmed my fears; there was very little water in the upper stretches.



slow but steady. Just east of Newtown is the huge two tier Penarth weir, I approached with caution expecting a long hard portage. Fortunately there was a tree stuck on the lip of the weir allowing safer inspection. With only an inch or two of water flowing over the weir the stopper was not a concern and I decided to run it. If you are paddling this section in high water it would be prudent to portage river right early, the weir and its salmon steps on the left would be lethal. The next hour was one of the most frustrating I have spent in a canoe. I rounded a corner to be confronted by a pair of swans; one in particular was showing signs of aggression. On the upper stretches of the river these beautiful but large birds are not too familiar with canoes and can become quite territorial. I waited, giving them some space then tried to creep past. He swam towards me aggressively hissing and flapping his wings, I paddled backwards slowly. I then gave them at least 100 meters, but as soon as I left the river bank, he turned, saw me and proceeded to fly towards me like a Japanese kamikaze pilot, missing me

by no more than a foot. This swan was not going to let me past. I looked at the map to check on my position and noticed the canal was close. Could I drag the boat up onto the canal and overtake the swans? The problem was the canal was only close for a few hundred meters or so. It had to be worth a try, save assaulting a creature protected by the queen with my paddle! Blood, sweat and almost tears followed. After dragging the laden boat through two fields, under two barbed wire fences and falling down a six foot bank into the river. I looked upstream from my swamped boat, the swans were behind me, just. Various expletives were directed at the swans as I paddled to the far bank where I could empty the boat and move on. By now it was starting to get dark, I was about 10km south of Welshpool, time to find a campsite.

### Day two

The river bypasses Welshpool and cuts back in a series of meanders. The erosion here is amazing, 15 foot high crumbling banks form the outside of the bends. After Pool Quay the river becomes narrow and deep as it goes into a mad meandering frenzy. At time the passage was barely wide enough for the boat as willows try to smother the river. After the Vyrnwy joins the river grows in volume and becomes wide again, it was time to find a place to camp for the night.

### Day three

It was a cold night and I woke up to a layer of snow and ice on the tent. I was on the water by 0800 and paddling into Shrewsbury for lunch. I had only been on my own for three days, but it still felt strange to be walking amongst the hustle and bustle of every day life. I grabbed a hot pie, filled my water bottles in a public toilet and walked straight back to the boat and the solitary simple life. Shrewsbury weir was the next hurdle, to save a possible and embarrassing soaking I portaged left. Once through Shrewsbury it was time once more to look for a campsite, although a five star hotel on the river bank was tempting! After an hour of looking I had to pitch camp near the grounds of

Atcham House, a National Trust property. I shared the field with what must have been at least a hundred roosting swans.

### Day four

I woke up early to the sound of a woodpecker and low flying Canada geese. The paddle down to Ironbridge was very pleasant in early morning sunshine. The river here flows through a plane with views of grand country estates and banks bustling with Canada geese. More easily spooked than the swans their comical running take-off provided me with me continuous amusement as the cooling towers of Ironbridge power station came into view. Paddling under the famous Ironbridge and through the peaceful Apley gorge, the rapids of Jackfield loomed. These rapids, of which I had heard so much about came as a welcome, all be it short, stretch of white water. The rest of that day proved to be one of my most enjoyable days touring in an open canoe. The river from Ironbridge through Bridgnorth to

Bewdley flows for most of the time at a steady rate through beautiful countryside, progress was good. I locked the boat at Bewdley rowing club, after meeting one of their friendly coaches and went to look for a B & B and a welcome shower.

### Day five

The wind had picked up, fortunately it was a north westerly and with less meanders this meant I could put the sail up. I sailed towards Lincombe lock near Stourport, the lock keeper saw me coming and to my surprise opened the lock. I was expecting to have to portage, but he ushered me in with a "I've been expecting you" He said he had been working the locks for 25 years and never seen a canoeist using a sail, which surprised me. The river below here is pretty much flat and I was now sharing it with a myriad of other crafts of all shapes and sizes. Each lock keeper phoned ahead to let the next know I was on my way. This preferential treatment was great, "no portaging" but only possible due to the fact that the river was so quiet. I finished the day at Tewkesbury where I was met by an old friend who lives in Worcester. Finding somewhere to wild camp in the more heavily populated lower stretches of the river was not easy, so I went back to his place for the evening.

### Day six

Unfortunately, there was a death of a diver in Upper Load lock recently and as a result the lock and surrounding area was a no go zone. On the advice of British Waterways I launched at Lower Load on what I hoped would be the last days paddling. Unfortunately, on my second stroke I snapped the shaft of my handmade paddle which had served me so well throughout the trip. Paddling down to Gloucester was straight forward. The lock keepers advised me to continue on the Sharpness canal, I was keen to continue on the river but had a three hour wait at Gloucester for high tide. I left Gloucester with an hour of rising tide remaining. Gloucester weir was easily shot on the right as I proceeded with caution. After an hour of so I noticed what looked like a series of waves approaching. I presumed this was the bore, as the timing was about right. As it drew closer I could see it was only a small wave of no more than

10 inches high and decided to turn back up stream and have a little surf. A novel experience, surfing the Severn bore on your own in a fully loaded open canoe. I stopped for a quick snack and waited for the tide to turn. By the time I got back on the water the wind had picked up, on coming around a bend it hit me straight on and this situation I found myself in was not too good. The wind was blowing against the tide, picking up waves which at times were starting to swamp the boat. I was not making any progress, feeling tired I made the decision to finish their. I had not got quite as far into the estuary as I had hoped, the only other option open to me was to portage for two km.

This trip far exceeded all my expectations. To paddle a river in its entirety gives the canoeist a unique insight into how the river impacts on, and is influenced by the environment through which it flows. Paddling the Severn at this time of year gave me for the most part a solitary experience. Over the six days, the only other moving boats I shared the river with were two narrow boats and one pleasure cruiser south of Stourport. It was also interesting to see how the wildlife changed with the river. Buzzards, oyster catches and kingfishers on the upper stretches. Herons, ducks, swans, geese and to my surprise cormorants on the middle section. Normally found on the coast, these attractive birds were selective with the trees that they perched on, so much so that the trees looked as if they were covered in a layer of frost and ice in the morning sunshine! For me the trip served as great mental and emotional detox, it makes you appreciate the simple things in life and remember what's important to you. I am sure you could paddle the river by open canoe in less time, but to make the most of the experience, I would say between six and ten days is a realistic time span. I was exceptionally fortunate with the weather, if I had more rain and wind I'm sure the experience would not have been such a short or pleasant one. Happy paddling. ●

Simon Neenan



### THANKS

British Waterways and all their lock keepers; BBC Wales; Radio Hereford and Worcester; Gul International; Dart photos.com; Atlantic college development dept; Claire my girlfriend; Dave my boss.

**For sale**

**2-man fibreglass 18'** kayak with removable rudder (Gaybo). Good condition, usual scratches, one good repair. Excellent on inshore, lake, canal waters and for family use. Plenty storage space. Good steering even in strong head wind. £350 ono incl. roof bar struts. Two 2-piece paddles and two L size PFDs as package for £395 with kayak. Delivery by arrangement. Roy Tel:077 655 33 615

**4 Perception Wavehoppers** £250 each; 4 Pyranha Mountain 300s £150 each; 4 Perception Spectrum tourers (1 hatch) £150 each; 2 Pyranha Acrobat 275s £200 each; 1 Rob Roy double £100; 15 Pyranha Creeks £150 each contact Mark or Gareth on 020 8940 5550 tym.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk gareth.moss@surreycc.gov.uk

**6 Pyranha Stunt Bats** - all in good condition £150 each. 2 Pyranha Master Lites - both hardly used £150 each. Phone Kevin on 0118 948 1425

**Canadian open canoe** Coleman RAM-X 17. Reasonable condition £250.00 (office hours - 0208 467 5557 Fred or Stewart) (Chislehurst, Kent)

**Acrobat 300.** General purpose kayak beginner to intermediate. c/w full plate footrest, seat and backstrap. Usual river scrapes, but fair condition for age. £95.00 onvo. Tel Andrew 01992 714461 (Junct 26 of M25)

**C2 We.no.nah** ICF21 in Kevlar. Very fast very light. little used. £900 Patrick 01453 546160 Glos

**Corsica S**, blue, £175, excellent condition, includes 2 rear airbags, neoprene spraydeck, can be viewed near Tetbury, Bristol, Abingdon or Ascot. Please contact 01666 841387 or e-mail: KCUnderwater@hotmail.com.

**Cycle. Gents Vitus 'Futural'** 50cm (19 3/4") silver alloy frame, Mavic rims/gears (12), Campag brakes, hubs, pedals, Stronglight cranks, Colt leather saddle. Unique 10kgm sports bike; 1980s but in as new condition. £550 ono. 01237 475165.

**Dagger Dynamo.** Red/Black/Yellow. Excellent all round boat, very light. Excellent Condition, been kept in a garage. Only paddled on local lake £275? West Sussex 01403 732494

**Dagger Ego** - Green mint condition. \$350 ono (North Wales - Conwy area) 01492 621189 pilarchris@tesco.net

**Dagger Freefall LT**, black and blue with air bags Leeds £275 OND 07906098225 or gill@kayakqueen.co.uk

**Dagger G-Force.** Almost new in very good condition, only had a couple of months but too big for me! would sell for £400 ono. Stu Clark, 01242 691485

**Dagger ID 6.8**, blue, good condition. Ideal playboat for small people. Excellent boat for cartwheeling. £350 ono. South East area but often travel to HPP/North Wales. Contact Jackie (jsah197@hotmail.com, 07976 935505)

**Dagger infrared**, excellent condition, minor scratches, 1 year old grade 3-a plastic £250 call prudence on 01823 283862 (Taunton)

**Dagger Legend 16.** Excellent, responsive WW canoe, capacity for tandem paddlers with full camping gear. Bang-plates, airbags, painters, webbing seats and kneeling-thwart all fitted. £600. West Yorkshire, 01484 311 857, nordkapp1@hotmail.com

**Dagger Ovation OC1**, fully fitted, complete with Pedestal Seat/footrest, Front/Rear Air bags and paddle. Virtually as new, used approx 6 times, Garage stored - £550 no offers. Tel. 01744-757119 (North West)

**Dagger Quake OC1**, complete with Pedestal Seat, Front/Rear Air bags and paddle. Very Good Condition, Garage stored - £350 no offers. Tel. 01744-757119 (North West)

**Dagger Showdown.** Used but in good condition. £300. Contact Steve 07879 841409. (The Midlands)

**Dagger Vengeance:** Very Good condition, excellent beginners boat for surfing or playboating in general. Also good for some river running. £350 ono. Contact Andy on 07840 884218, 01522 526401.

**Double Dutch K1.** Full race carbon spec, with metallic blue top deck, only two years old. With adjustable seat and foot pedals, very light weight. In excellent condition with very little use. Price £400 Email: Richard\_thom1@hotmail.com or call 01244 - 811380 / 07868 111 65 for further information.

**Eskimo Kendo**, COEX in Red with Airbags, VGC 275 ono. Contact Dan 07916 327423 (Yorkshire)

**Eskimo Kendo:** Classic river runner full W.W. spec. Pure black £250.00 Terry Hailwood 01969 650438 tandjhailwood@aol.com

**Eskimo Salto**, red, great creek boat, good condition £250 Contact Phil 07958 242135 or info@adventure-whitewater.com

**Eskimo Topolino Duo.** Good condition. Stored under cover. £580 ono. Kayak picture can be viewed at www.eskimo.de/english/02\_topoduo.html Contact Alex McKee: Southampton day: 02380 319014, evening: 01280 488550, e-mail: alex.mckee@solent.ac.uk

**Eskimo Zwo(Awako).** Comes with rear airbag, excellent condition (hardly used) £350 ono. Contact Chris on 0116 2330235

**Grand Tent Sale!** Due to downsizing my fleet the following Vango tents are no longer needed. TSB Equinox 350 3/4 person, three hoop tunnel, sleeping area plus storage/setting area. £125. Odyssey 400 (similar to Storm) 3/4 person semi geodesic, very strong and stable, porch on front. £125. TSB Equinox 800 (similar to Vista) 8/10 person 3/4 hoop tunnel. Two sleeping areas plus vast central storage/setting area, great for late night paddling tales! £250. All tents have been well looked after and have additional protective groundsheets. Contact Tim 02476672584 (Coventry) 07801 259376 tim.spencer10@ntlworld.com

**INUK Sea Kayak.** Race trim skeg rudder yellow/red in very good condition £600. Phone John 01363 84219 Devon

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**K2 Marsport Crewser.** Carbon kelvar hull. U/s rudder. Good condition. £300. Telephone 0116 287 7865. East Midlands.

**K2 'Mirage'** based design, double layer kevlar construction, with o/s and u/s and seats. Good condition, free DW '05 race sticker - £600. Call Stephen Best on 01963 359253.

**Kayak**, tortured ply single, 13' x 24"; has spray cover, but no paddle. Offers. 01237 475165

**Liquid Logic Lil Joe** orange good condition. £500 ono. Contact Lawrence 01992 479355

**Marine ply 16ft canoe** vgc. £175. GRP open canoe model 16ft as above £40. Phone 01702 291649. Southend, Essex

**Mega Jester Pro.** Good condition. Glassfibre. Excellent beginning to intermediate surf kayak. £180 ono or swap for Pyranha Acro 300. Kayak picture can be viewed at -

www.mega-kayaks.co.uk/jester.htm Contact Alex McKee: Southampton day: 02380 319014, evening: 01280 488550, e-mail: alex.mckee@solent.ac.uk

**Mobile Adventure** "Interlude" aprox 5 years old, very good condition, Red, 16' 6" (5 metres) RoyaleX construction. I am looking for a solo canadian as my family are now not paddling with me. West Midlands area. 07821349988 £450. ono

**Mobile Adventure Majorette** open canoe. Wood seats/yoke unmarked £350. Tel. 01509 268008 (Loughborough)

**Necky Gliss**, purple & light blue. Excellent river runner and surfs really well too. £300. South East area but often travel to HPP/North Wales. Contact Jackie (jsah197@hotmail.com, 07976 935505)

**Nelo Swing** Carbon Epoxy Paddle 200cm, a few scratches going cheap. 01308 423963

**Nordkapp HM**, the classic expedition sea kayak. Good condition, white GRP, 3 bulkheads, 3 hatches, expedition declines, footpump, spraydeck. Dover area. £585. 01303 862189

**NORDKAPP HS** sea kayak yellow deck/white hull: Retractable skeg. Ocean cockpit with neoprene spray deck. Small round forward hatch. Large oval rear hatch. Hand operated bilge pump. Electric pump. Fitted good quality compass. Deck lines & elastics. Stored indoors since new. Only used 5 or 6 times in last 3 years. Genuine reason for sale. In excellent condition - a well loved boat £900.00 onvo. Terry West 01 903 815571 (SUSSEX)

**Nordkapp HS** sea kayak. Valley Canoe products. Colour orange. Two watertight compartments plus paddle. Used once. Garaged. Mint. £550. All offers considered. Telephone 01243 264331

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**Old Town Pack RoyaleX**, Located Richmond, London, 12 ft, 33lb boat in good condition, twin seats, with adult and child paddles. Light enough to carry single handed, small enough to store easily, perfect for messing about on rivers like non-tidal Thames and Wey for adult and up to two young kids, £425.00. E Mail: cforstyh@investec.co.uk Mobile: 0771 2872564

**P & H Capella.** New version with 3 watertight compartments, new seat and internal outfitting. Never been used/in the water and due to injury I have to reluctantly sell. £750 or nearest offer. Phone Paul on 01803 406281 or email paulmatts@hotmail.com

**P&H Vela sea kayak.** Composite construction. Only used a few times and in excellent condition. Yellow deck white hull. £990. Please contact David 07802 412528. dbrown@atomictimdms.net. Based in Surrey.

**PH Surfer fibreglass surf kayak.** Footrest, foam buoyancy, new Mega seat. Fin box but no fin. Several patch repairs, but watertight and seaworthy. £85.00 ono. Tel Andrew 01992 714461 (Junct 26 on M25)

**Paddlers caravan**, 4 berth, shower, toilet, cooker, fridge, awning. superb for weekends/weekends away. £1850. Gareth Moss 020 8332 9326 gareth.moss@surreycc.gov.uk

**Pelican Pursuit DLX.** Red/white, excellent condition Deluxe 11'6" long, with paddle, tie down, two storage hatches, high quality adjustable back rest, adjustable foot pads, shock cords, grab loop handles at bow and stern and drain plug. Almost half price at £249 ono plus an Ainsworth paddle. Phone 01480 370144 (Cambridgeshire)

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**Prijon Hurricane:** Once much loved river runner now only used for flat-water coaching & coastal touring. £200.00 ono. Terry Hailwood 01969 650438 tandjhailwood@aol.com

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**Pyranha Blade**, little use hence excellent condition, back support, neoprene deck. £225ono. Phone Tim 07956 434841 or email t.pearson@sheffield.ac.uk

**Pyranha Creek 280.** Good condition - red \$180 ono. tel 01492 621189 (North Wales)

**Pyranha i3 223**, yellow/jafra. Rarely used. VGC £450. North Hampshire. Colin via email chgreaves@ntlworld.com or mob. 07929568637

**Pyranha inazone 212.** £500 new, 18months old. Yellow. Good river + surf, easy for beginners. Ideal for small people, girls and children. Excellent condition. Southwest or Manchester area! £350. drop of could be possible. Contact Victoria on: 07776284237 or vict31@hotmail.com

**Pyranha Inazone 230** VGC Green Full WW spec £250 ono Contact Gary on 07815784182 Or 01623 740654

**Pyranha inazone 230**, located with pink patches. very good condition. located in dorset £300. 07841575056 jaggs2002@hotmail.com

**Pyranha Inazone 222** Red/Yellow. Hardly used, excellent condition, stored indoors. Ratchet system. £250 SE London call 0208 776 7422

**Pyranha Inazone 230** blue/green, very good condition, W/W spec, comes with spraydeck and paddle, great starter kit for novice, genuine reason for sale money needed for pram! £400 or ono contact 07808772753 or tjb@repton.org.uk

**Pyranha Inazone 232.** Yellow and red in colour, full white water spec, including shock bloc footrests and ratchet backrest. Good condition (the backrest system is as new), with no repairs or major scratches. Includes mint condition Nookie V twin deck (double waist, so v watertight!). £300 Nottingham area. Please email boat@cazaroo.co.uk

**Pyranha Inazone 240** (red/black) good condition £300 o.n.o. Perception Whiplash (green), good condition £300 o.n.o. Dag Scandal (red), very good condition £350 o.n.o. Schelegel Allround paddles (2.05m) £40. Contact OZ on 07789 425691 (Scarborough Area)

**Pyranha i3 223**, Yellow/Jafra, rarely used, garaged. VGC £450. N Hampshire. Colin on 01252 686466.

**Pyranha magic bat** well used £100.00 surrey area 01252 836220

**Pyranha S6 200.** Very Good Condition. Yellow With Blue Flex. £450 ONO. Contact Greg 07776 215 363 Merseyside

**Pyranha Microbat 230**, hardly been used £300. Tel. 01509 268008 (Loughborough).

**Pyranha Mountain 300.** Blue. good condition for its age. Excellent beginners - intermediate WW boat, also excellent instructors boat especially when doing lots of capsize drills and deep water rescues. Good boat for rolling £200 ono. Call Chris or John on 0116 2330 235.

**Pyranha S6F 193** £395 2005 model synchro 5 outfitting. Yellow/red, nearly new. Phone Frank on 01925 767972 or Frank@Baccountants.co.uk

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**Pyranha S6 235**, red, in good nick, no repairs, full WW spec. Great all round boat - freestyle, river running etc. Tempt me with an offer around £350! Contact Tim on 01494 482959 (South Bucks)

**Pyranha s6x 195**, orange and yellow. mint conditions used 4 times email a.dobson@bury.gov.uk phone 07971 964 983

**Pyranha S6X 195.** Hardly used and in excellent condition in yellow and blue, £450. West Yorkshire. Phone 07930 461493 for full details and spec.

**Riot 007** £180 Acrobat 270 £180 8'10" Foam Filled Surf Ski £70 Steve 01788 833643

**Riot booster 55** in black. Good condition / ratchet thigh braces \$320 ono (North Wales - conwy area) 01492 621189 pilarchris@tesco.netnt. £550. All offers considered. Telephone 01243 264331

**Riot techno yellow** £275 ono and a blue riot disco ultralite for £220 contact details jrwinter@yahoo.co.uk or 07766 680599

**Rotobot with airbags**, yellow, which is in excellent condition, and two sets of kayak paddles for sale am looking for £60 for the lot. My contact details are Catherine on e-mail bluehoo32@yahoo.com, or mobile 07901761319

**Riot Dominatrix 54** - The Big Dom. Yellow, Only a year old, Complete with thigh straps & buoyancy. A few cosmetic scratches but nothing deep. Been a great fun boat. Based in South East but often in Nottingham & Northampton. For more details & photos. wrighat@matthey.com or 07967 278103. £300

**Trailracks** - Original Nissan supplied roof-rack for X-Trail - not T-Spec. (£60). Also Thule roof bars and feet for Honda HRV - 3 door, with roof rails - (£50). Both in VGC. Contact Carl on 01462 487163, or e-mail on j\_werrett@hotmail.com

**Wave Maniac** Playboat similar to Whiplash. An

American Boat blue/black colouring, Paddled hips and seat. Airbags. Good condition £200 for quick sale, call Phil 01246 629094 mobile 07904 543253. Possible exchange for "Whip it"

**Sea Kayak Classic.** P & H Umnak. Length 490 cm, width 60 cm. Ocean cockpit. Little used. £250. Cumbria. 015395 67259

**Sea Kayaks**, P&H Iona, 15ft excellent condition, yellow/white, fibreglass, built in compass, pump and skeg, with roof rack mounts, £350, MacNulty Alaskan sea kayak, 18ft, yellow /white, fibreglass, rudder, excellent expedition boat, £250. Both can be viewed near Tetbury, Bristol, Abingdon, Ascot or Windsor. Please contact 01666 841387 or e-mail: KCUnderwater@hotmail.com for more details or photos.

**Trailer for Canoe/Kayaks.** Large, so suitable for clubs schools etc. Can carry up to 8 large canoes, or loads and loads of kayaks! Excellent condition. £600+ Please call David on 01726 870844 or david@adventurecornwall.co.uk. Photos available

**Van Roof Rack.** A pair of very heavy duty galvanised commercial roof bars and feet to fit Ford Transit, Renault Traffic or similar, gutter fitting van or campervan. Adjustable in height and width. In excellent condition as they've never been used. Padded & will easily carry 5 kayaks. £50 ono. Located in Peterborough. Contact chris\_burnham@rocketmail.com or 01733 241006 or 07050 241006

**Wavesport Ace 7** Excellent condition. This boat equals playboater heaven. It will spin, cartwheel, handstand, you name it, the boat is at your command! Only used once on sea (unwanted gift) and stored indoors therefore excellent condition (as new). Orange and yellow. Possible delivery / meet up around the UK due to travelling for work. £420 ono Pictures available on request. Shropshire area. Please contact Kath on Tel: 01588 673489 or horsfield@hotmail.com

**Wavesport EZ.** VGC, Excellent allround play boat. Yellow. Complete with uncut footrest and hip pads. £350. Based S.E England. Tel: 01474 568219 or mysterious\_walsho@hotmail.com

**Wavesport Forplay:** Play & Surf, full spec, orange and black £250.00 Terry Hailwood 01969 650438 tandjhailwood@aol.com

**Wavesport Siren.** Light Blue. Very good condition, stored indoors. Good playboat for small female or child. £450 ono. Contact Katie on 07960 972352 (Manchester).

**Wavesport X** red good condition air bags and ratchet back rest £300. Contact Pete (M) 07939 433 453

**Wavesport Zero Gravity 54**, artic blue, modern playboat, as new condition, only used twice in the pool. £595. contact Mick 01823 326478

**Wanted**

**Any old Dancers**, or similar, that still float, and would be considered to be donated to a small Explorer Scout Unit in Clevedon, Somerset. Also looking for Perception Whip's for around the £150 mark, or lower, and again to be used by Explorer Scouts. Any offers or help please call ian on 07743 848036

**Dancer Perception**, life jacket medium, helmet medium, left handed paddle or any of the above arwhite@dircon.co.uk

**Decent whitewater paddle:** Whitewater buoyancy aid; YAK paddling dry trousers or similar. Must be in good condition and reasonably priced please. I live in Lancashire. Telephone 01253-700867 or email - steve@teach.freereserve.co.uk

**I am a 29 year old female**, my name is Alison Bull. I am deaf and from N. Yorkshire - I would like to join a group of Deaf Sea Canoeist. I am very easy going - email abull@madassurf.com

**Mega Titan** or Trident surf kayak. Call or text 07960781806

**One man open boat** with sailing rig for still water touring (not racing), fairly light, and in decent order. All reasonable propositions considered seriously. Contact Martin on 0208 872 8229.

**Rob bars** wanted for Land Rover Discovery Tel' 07765 372838

**Royalox open canoe** in good condition. Please contact mandy in the west lakes 01946 861677

**Sea Kayaks & Canadian Canoe** - will consider all options, will collect anywhere in Scotland - if you have 1 or 2 sea kayaks or a open canoe and are looking to make some space please contact me (Nik): nrbinson@iname.com

**Single touring kayak** for big paddler. 01252 836220

**Wavesport EZ.** Depending on condition, will pay up to £350. Contact Neil by- 07817270670 or pine85uk@hotmail.com

**Wanted**

**Werner paddle**, orange glass fibre blades and glass fibre shaft. on the river Tay in scotland. it was on Monday the monday the 19th of April 2005. I was on the slalom course and got stuck in a hole and let go of the paddle if anyone finds it please let me know by ringing me on 07709199287. Rob Burnett

**Found**

**2 kayak paddles** found at Sowerby Bridge Canal Basin, Sunday 8th May. Phone John on 07963 647611.

**Stolen**

**From Jesmond**, Newcastle late Feb. Pyranha H2, blue with black markings, air bags, all postcoded TS6. Also Riot Honcho in red. Please email briananderson1954@hotmail.com if you see them.



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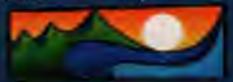
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Tel 01647 221307 Email [heatree@aol.com](mailto:heatree@aol.com)

## Low Wood Watersports & Activity Centre

We are looking for qualified and experienced instructors in canoeing, sailing, water-skiing to join our enthusiastic team.

Our busy centre caters for the general public as well as corporate entertainment & teambuilding.

The centre is situated on the shores of Lake Windermere, a few minutes from the lively towns of Bowness and Ambleside.

Please send application in writing including CV  
To Mike Coates, Centre Manager, Low Wood  
Watersports and Activity Centre, Low Wood,  
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SITUATIONS VACANT

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### Positions Available during summer period:

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Closing date for applications is 27 June 2005

Application form and further details are available from:  
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[sarah.marsh@frontlineresponse.co.uk](mailto:sarah.marsh@frontlineresponse.co.uk)

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Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Loughborough Rd, Leicester LE4 5PN

Tel: 0116 268 1426 Email: [leicesteropc@btconnect.com](mailto:leicesteropc@btconnect.com)

Website: [www.lopc.homestead.com](http://www.lopc.homestead.com)

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### Royal Victoria Dock Watersports Centre

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#### Sessional Rates

Please quote ref: 30133

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Please quote appropriate reference number  
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## Plans, plans and more plans...

Selway Fisher Design has had canoe and kayak plans on it's main site ([www.selway-fisher.com](http://www.selway-fisher.com)) for many years. However, with the recent addition of over ten new designs for ply/epoxy construction in the last twelve months ranging from Adirondack Guide canoes through sea kayaks and a Waka Ame Hawaiian beach canoe, they have decided to set up a new website just for the canoe, kayak and skiff enthusiast.

Go to [www.canoesandskiffs.com](http://www.canoesandskiffs.com) to see over 50 canoe and kayak designs and ten rowing skiffs. These are all aimed at the home canoe builder using stitch and tape plywood, ply/epoxy and cedar strip plank building methods and represents one of the biggest design catalogues in the world. Apart from plans, they hope to start producing kits for some of their designs. [www.canoesandskiffs.com](http://www.canoesandskiffs.com)

## One tidy package

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# Ainsworth skid lid 'Airstream'

The new 'Airstream' model is an evolution of the peaked skid lid and now features drainage holes down either side of the centre ridge. At the back of the holes a flute offers drainage and a funky new look on the river.

The 'Airstream' is formed from an elastomeric polyurethane material. This material allows for multiple

impacts while still maintaining its strength, this also means that it does not have to be replaced after your first impact. Who could ask for anything more, especially if you spend a lot of time with your head under water?

If you are planning on spending a lot of time under water, 'skidlids' have been further reinforced by half inch thick material on the crucial impact zones on the helmet. The crucial points are formed in three ridges an inch apart, these run down the centre and to the side of the helmet, from front to back offering maximum protection.

Skid lids have recently been CE approved and scored well above the minimum requirements for helmets under impact.

Liners used make up a crucial part of the helmet. Variation in head sizes are accommodated by inserting soft liners into the shell and retaining them with Velcro attached to the straps. For finer adjustments pieces of 5mm foam can be inserted at the back of liners.

So for a great look, value, and protection on the river you can't go past a skidlid 'Airstream'. Retail Price: £75

Ordering info: Call Dave Chandler at Ainsworth paddles on 020 8898 4839 or purchase from kayak stores that stock Ainsworth products.

Email: [sales@ainsworthpaddles.net](mailto:sales@ainsworthpaddles.net)  
Website: [www.ainsworthpaddles.net](http://www.ainsworthpaddles.net)



## Lifeventure towel

Whatever activity you are taking part in, a towel is amongst the essentials. Over recent years, high-tech fabrics have increased the production of lightweight, quick drying towels and the Lifeventure range is no exception to this.

A recent partnership with HealthGuard has given Lifeventure the technology to develop 'AX', an anti-bacterial formula that is applied to the Soft Fibre and Micro Fibre Trek Towel ranges. Lifeventure claim the 'AX' formula will give the towel range the following benefits:

**Anti-odour:** AX kills existing bacteria and prevents build-up of future bacteria.

**Durable:** The AX anti-bacterial treatment will last up to two years, or 35 washes.

**Protective:** AX inhibits fabric degradation.

**Weight:** Six times lighter than a standard towel.

**Compact:** Takes up 1/8th of the space of a standard towel

We tested the Soft Fibre towel and it certainly passed the stink test, despite deliberately being left in a bag for days on end after swimming and gym workouts. I did have a niggle though, perhaps the towel is too smooth, as particularly after swimming I didn't really feel the towel was doing such a good job in the drying department. I'm sure we have all dried ourselves with a t-shirt at some time and this is how the Soft Fibre Towel felt. However, Lifeventure do say the Micro Fibre Towel has a more conventional towel finish.

The other claims on space and weight are very true and it has to be said bearing in mind these towels are aimed at those on the move for a few days or more and not aiming to replace our conventional fluffy towels – then space, weight and the absence of smells are of more importance.

In these departments the towel excels and I would have no hesitation in recommending them for those on the move.

Prices for the Soft Fibre towel are as follows: face - £7.99; medium - 11.99; large 14.99; XL - 19.99; XXL - 23.99.

Available from outdoor high street retailers and online sites such as [www.ellisbrigham.co.uk](http://www.ellisbrigham.co.uk). For further information on stockists and prices contact Lifeventure on 0118 9811433.

Peter Tranter



## Scottish Sea Kayaking Fifty Great Sea Kayak Voyages

By Doug Cooper & George Reid

We are very lucky in this country. In my opinion, the west coast of Scotland (and Ireland for that matter) has some of the finest and varied sea kayaking areas in the world! So does Scottish Sea Kayaking promote this vision?

The book is clear, concise and well laid out. Each trip has a small 'topo' type map with start and finish points, distance, expected duration, tidal streams. Coastguard info as well as a simple grading system that will help people new to the area. Then followed by a more detailed introduction, description, tide and weather and any additional information that may be needed. Intermingled between this information and in typical George Reid style, the text is full of interesting facts on local and natural history.

For someone who has not visited Scotland before or as a guide to new areas for the seasoned 'sea dog' then the book is a must when planning your trips.

I appreciate that to take and collect good pictures for a book like this is a mammoth task! However, though the book is full of 'nice' pictures I do feel many are very similar in format and composition. I am sure a call to a number of sea kayaking/photographer friends for the loan of some pictures would have sold the area even better.

I was also surprised to see that the 'Gulf of Coryvreckan' was not included? Though the 'Grey Dog' is described and is probably a better tide race to play on, the Gulf does have a huge attraction. Even if you are not into tide races and avoid them like the plague, a trip to the bay before hand on the south side of Scarba and a walk out to see the 'Hag' in all her glory is a must for any sea paddler! Also missed are the Orkney and Shetland Islands, both worthy of a guide book in their own.

My only little gripe if I have one, is though I understand that publications like this have a limited audience and print run, I wish publishers would not include adverts for various companies on the inner sleeves and back few pages, it only spoils an excellent piece of work!

Howard Jeffs BCU Level 5 Coach (sea)

## Stay cool – vaporise yourself!

Designed for summer touring the Vapor cag from Yak is manufactured using their TRI3000 trilaminate fabric, which benefits from being fully breathable and extremely durable while at the same time remaining soft and comfortable to the touch.

Taped seams ensure minimal water ingress and ergonomic tailoring allows maximum freedom of movement while eliminating garment ride up. In addition, the Vapor has fully adjustable neoprene cuffs and collar and full depth sealing on its single adjustable waistband.

A front offset mounted cargo pocket with water resistant zip is ideal for storing small items such as keys and energy bars. For increased visibility, retro reflective tape has been incorporated across the chest area.

The Vapor is available in one colourway, blue/black and in four sizes from small to extra large

RRP inc VAT: £79.95

Tel: 023 9252 8621

[www.yak-paddling.com](http://www.yak-paddling.com)



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## New Wave kayak jets to the States

The latest design from Holyhead-based Rockpool Kayaks, the 'Alaw' (Welsh for melody), is heading across the pond, where enthusiastic US paddlers plan to put it through its paces.

Boats will soon be en route for Sea Kayak Georgia, Maine Island Kayak Company and Body Boat Blade International in Washington State.

Designed by Mike Webb and ace paddler, Aled Williams, the high-performance 'Alaw' features a hi-spec construction, enhanced stability, ergonomic cockpit and dynamic paddling position.

"These new features are attracting interest from paddlers in the US," said Mike Webb.

"The enhanced comfort is a major pull. I could never see why kayaking had to be so uncomfortable, which is why I designed the Alaw to be easy on the paddler. The relatively elevated knee position alleviates stress on the leg joints and knee ligaments, and the large back support prevents strain on the lower back."

The Alaw's groovy paint job is also hitting the spot with US kayakers.

"We can customise the paintwork to suit the owners' tastes so that their boats really do stand out from the crowd," said Webb. "The days of plain yellow or red canoes are numbered!"

Anyone wishing to take the 'Alaw' for a paddle around the rugged Anglesey coast should contact Mike or Aled on 07973 785537

Aled Williams of Rockpool Kayaks in Holyhead puts the Alaw through its paces on the rugged Anglesey coast



# Whiter than white



## Gerber LX 3.0

The Gerber LX 3.0 is a very tough general purpose light that is made from machined anodised aluminum with either a black or gray matte finish. Three AA alkaline batteries power the light and inside the bezel is a direct driven Luxeon III LED which is shockproof and provides a very bright spot of pure white light. The endcap is the switch – twist for on and off. The batteries are included and are replaced by removing the endcap.

The body is very stylish with its anodised matte finish, very well built and shows a high degree of quality. The shape of the light, size and weight makes it very comfortable in the hand and the granular texture to the makes it very grippy. In fact it would make an excellent cosh! Because there are no external switches etc, the torch is perfectly balanced and can stand on its end.

Output is in the form of a very bright white light which is one of the purest white lights you will see (don't shine it in other people's eyes as you will not be thanked!). The beam itself consists of a round hotspot in the centre, surrounded by a diamond shaped spot. The range of the beam is a very impressive 150 feet. The head is permanently attached to the light, and therefore makes the torch water-resistant, which of course makes it very useful for those who hang around water!

Battery life is touted as 50 hours, however, there is a great deal of dimming within this time period. Therefore the light in the 50th hour is very dim and OK for emergencies only. If you want the torch to stay at its brilliant best, then five to six hours is the maximum. Battery changing could not be simpler – just twist the end cap off and replace.

This torch goes right to the top of its class and deserves to be top of Gerber's range. I don't think anyone can be disappointed in this light. If there is one disappointment it is perhaps the price of £49.95. A simple browse on the internet will find the same torch being sold in the US for \$47-49 which works out at around £26. Why is this?

### Technical Specs:

- One Super-bright three-watt lifetime white L.E.D. bulb
- 50 hour battery life on three standard AA batteries
- Illuminates up to 150'
- Water-resistant

[www.gerberblades.com](http://www.gerberblades.com)

## Gerber Sonic keychain light

I've had this ideal little torch hanging off my keyring for six weeks now and it has been a good companion. I live in a rural area and street lighting is sometimes at a premium and this is obviously where the little torch comes in very handy.

A patented circuit booster enables power by one single AAA battery, which generates up to 40 hours of burn time. The case is made of the same anodised aircraft aluminum as its bigger brother and comes in four flavours of blue, red, black and silver.

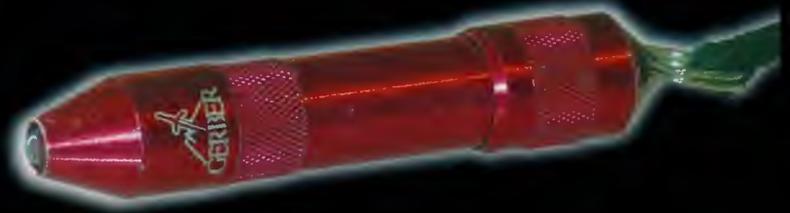
The super-bright LED bulb throws out a good concentrated beam of white light so you can work in close quarters on whatever you are doing and gives out enough light so you are perfectly able to see where you are walking in darkness. Simply twist the base for on and off and to change the battery - couldn't be simpler. However, this reveals the only weakness. In six weeks of using the torch, the base has detached from the body on four occasions resulting in the battery and head unit falling to the ground or coming apart in my pocket. The irony is if this happens in pitch darkness, as it did to me once, you will find it difficult to find the other piece and the battery. I went back in the morning to find them, it's maybe that the screw assembly needs to be a little harder to twist like its bigger brother the LX3.0.

Don't let this put you off though as it is a great little tool that I find indispensable at times. The torch comes equipped with a keychain lanyard and one AAA battery. Expect to pay around £12.99.

### Technical Specs:

- One Super-bright lifetime white L.E.D. bulb
- 40 hour battery life
- Illuminates up to 30 feet
- Water-resistant

Brian Globe



# Blaze a trail

## Helly Hansen trailblazer

This is the third year we have reviewed items from Helly Hansen's Lifa baselayer range. However, the Trailblazer is different from the previous as Helly Hansen has updated its superb Lifa baselayer for this spring with new designs in the Lifa Versa range.

Lifa Versa is the latest development of the company's polypropylene fabric. The fabric is cut in a more relaxed and loose manner rather than the traditional, close-fitting Lifa garments. A close fit is effective as it allows more of the material to contact the skin and improves overall wicking performance, but in hotter conditions it can feel restrictive and uncomfortable and if you don't possess that athletic muscle strewn torso, can also make you feel a little self-conscious.

The Trailblazer top solves this by using a vented Coolgrid section for improved cooling and venting in crucial areas. Ideal for trail running, gym work-outs and other high intensity activities in warm conditions, the high-tech construction increases comfort and improves performance by transporting moisture away from the skin and aiding the

body to maintain its optimal operating temperature. The relaxed design enables the Versa top to be used for other activities, as well as maintaining fitness.

The debates about whether polypropylene with its non-absorbent fibres is better than polyester or merino wool will run and run, however, the lightweight material and loose cut looks like it'll make the Versa kit a good choice for summer use. It also looks much better than the traditional tight fitting blue Lifa top.

The Trailblazer comes in both long and short sleeved options as well as the Trailblazer tights and is available in both men and women's fit. Priced at £27.50 and £30 for the short and long sleeved respectively and £30 for the tights.

**Stockist information Helly Hansen 0115 960 8797**

[www.hellyhansen.com](http://www.hellyhansen.com)

Steve Humphreys



# Keen to impress

## Keen Taos sandal for men

Blurring the boundaries between sports sandal and trail shoe, the Keen Taos gives you the best of both with a rugged sole and big breathable openings along the upper. Unlike wrap straps that sometimes lose their initial hold with repeated use, the Taos has a secure-fit lace capture system connected to a wraparound webbing for a fit that you can customise for hiking, walking or paddling. An Aegis Microbe Shield minimises odour and bacterial buildup throughout the life of the shoe.

They are extremely comfortable, full of spring with really good arch support. They manage to grip smooth, wet rocks as well as loose dirt and gravel very well and have ample toe room and protection. The venting is cool on the foot. They have a well thought out design and look great (they have been complimented twice) and required no breaking in, due to a very flexible sole.

Keen has done its homework on these shoes. They are a great all-around design and perfect for hiking, wearing in the sand and surf, and for everyday comfort. You will be impressed. This combination of shoe and sandal is exactly what kayakers and canoeists look for.

- Waterproof leather upper with webbing
- Aegis Microbe Shield™ mesh lining
- Secure-fit lace capture system

- Removable metatomical footbed for support
- Dual-density compression molded EVA midsole
- Stable ESS shank controls torsion
- Trail-oriented 4-mm. lugs on non-marking, carbon rubber sole

Tony Cornwell

**Stockist information: 0800 612 9292**

[www.keenfootwear.co.uk](http://www.keenfootwear.co.uk)

Keen have only been around since 2003 but with manufacturing and selling shoes like these, are sure to make a great impact on the watersports market in the UK.



## Events



## Urban Escapes show

17-19 June 2005

Make a splash at the Urban Escapes show at the Lee Valley Showground (Waltham Abbey – M25, J26) where watersports enthusiasts will be offered a whole host of activities to keep them close to the water.

You can try your hand at canoeing and kayaking, as Herts Young Mariners are providing top instructors and Avoncraft will be supplying the latest gear.

Ever wondered what it would be like to scuba dive? You can experience this amazing activity before committing time and money to a full course! Take part in a lesson with Adventure Divers PADI instructors along with free usage of all the gear.

A highlight of the show is the Talk Tent where famous experts in the outdoors field will mix with 'real people' to share their knowledge and experiences. There is an opportunity to buy products at many stands at the show and other activities include boating, walking, cycling, climbing and angling. There are 150 mooring spots for canal boats, so moor up and get involved in the fun Urban Escapes!

With a 400 pitch on site courtesy of The Camping & Caravanning Club and evening entertainment, there is no excuse to enjoy a weekend of activities and celebrate the outdoors at Urban Escapes with like-minded enthusiasts.

The event is strongly supported by partners including Visit Britain, The Camping & Caravanning Club, The British Canoe Union, The Ramblers Association, British Waterways London and Lee Valley Park Authority.

Further information: [www.urban-escapes.co.uk](http://www.urban-escapes.co.uk)

**Ticket hotline:** 0870 060 1754

**Open times:** Fri & Sat 17th June 2005 9:30am - 6:00pm  
Sunday 19th June 2005 9:30am - 5:00pm

**Tickets:** Daily: Adult £8, Child (5yrs - 15yrs) £5, Family £23.  
Weekend tickets (three days): Adult £14, Child £7, Family £35

### Entry Fees

**Eurocup £30 (£45)** including entry into the parties, event t-shirt, paddling all weekend, some meals and unlimited fun.

**Junior white water challenge - £10 (£15)** including coaching

Tel: 0115 981 3222 / Fax: 0115 982 6743 / E-mail:

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[www.eurofreestylekayak.com](http://www.eurofreestylekayak.com)

**Postal Address:** Current Trends, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham. NG2 5AS

## Island Challenge

Saturday 3 September



"Making the most treasured dreams of seriously and terminally ill children come true"

Are you looking for a challenge with a difference? Could you get a team of three together, each to cycle 17 miles, run ten miles and canoe

three miles, and have a great time all in aid of charity?

The Island Challenge takes place around the western side of the Isle of Wight on Saturday 3rd September 2005 and all funds raised will help support Dreams Come True, a national charity dedicated to offering terminally and seriously ill children the thrill of translating their most cherished dreams into a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

In its second year, the Wight Challenge is being organised by Wight Ventures, in association with Dreams Come True. A minimum sponsorship of £100 per team is required to secure your place.

All children have dreams and to have these dreams turned into reality would be a magical moment! However, for those suffering from a life threatening illness or debilitating condition, it can have an even greater impact!

**For an information pack, please contact Michelle at Dreams Come True on 0800 0186013 or email [michelle.chenery@dctc.org.uk](mailto:michelle.chenery@dctc.org.uk). Alternatively, please visit [www.dctc.org.uk](http://www.dctc.org.uk) and complete a contact us form on the events page. For more information on Wight Ventures, please visit [www.wight-ventures.co.uk](http://www.wight-ventures.co.uk).**

## 'Kanumesse' moves to Nürnberg

15-17 September

This year the canoeing industry will meet at the Exhibition Centre in Nürnberg in September.

The successful concept of canoeing as the central theme, free entry for visitors and low stand costs will once again be organised by people within the canoeing industry.

This year the Kanumesse will be held for three days instead of four days as in the past. Any conflict with other shows such as Friedrichshafen Boat Show (Interboot '05) should be non-existent.

The Kanumesse is directed at buyers, manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, the press and organisations connected to canoeing. Entry to the exhibition is strictly trade only and is not open to the public.

At the last Kanumesse several companies were unable to exhibit due to the restricted amount of space available. Moving to a larger venue was therefore necessary to accommodate more exhibitors.

**More info at [www.kayakehhibition.com](http://www.kayakehhibition.com)**

**Email: [horst@kanumesse.de](mailto:horst@kanumesse.de)**

## L&SE region ww training weekend

Holme Pierrepont 30-31st July

This weekend is open to all paddlers in the L&SE region as members of clubs or individuals. The slalom course is not suitable for absolute beginners but novices will be catered for by reducing the water flow in the mornings. The cost of the weekend is £12.00 for BCU members and £14.00 for non-members, not including campsite fees.

For details and application form please contact Geoff Orford  
Tel: 01737 766435 e-mail [gorford@ntlworld.com](mailto:gorford@ntlworld.com)

## River Usk canoe race

Sunday 11th September

**Start:** Newbridge on Usk

**Finish:** Hanbury Arms Hotel, Caerleon

**Distance:** 7 miles

**Start time:** 12.15 hrs

Everyone welcome

For details contact:

Alan Baker, 20 Larkfield Close,

Caerleon, S.Wales NP18 3EX

Tel 01633 421629

[baker@alval.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:baker@alval.freeserve.co.uk)

[www.croesyacanoe.co.uk](http://www.croesyacanoe.co.uk)



## Freestyle Euro Cup

1-3 July

Paddles at the ready! – The Freestyle Eurocup is only a few weeks away!

This is an open event that kicks off on Friday 1st July for three days of quality boating, fun and entertainment for everyone. New adjustable metal kicker boards have been put in place and final adjustments have been made to produce a worldclass freestyle wave. A number of European paddlers have already taken the opportunity to visit Holme Pierrepont and practice on the new wave.

Along side the main competition there are a number of events and activities taking place.

**New to the sport?** – Take the opportunity to try paddlesport on the tranquil windmill pool.

**Thinking of a new boat?** – Paddlers will have the opportunity to demo the latest boats from a number of leading manufacturers exhibiting during the three days.

**Junior white water challenge** – The younger paddlers who are getting into the exciting realm of white water will be able to get some coaching and support from some of our leading freestyle paddlers, and enter in a junior mini freestyle and white water challenge.

**Squirt event** – The pace will slow just a little while the squirt boaters complete for the top place. Evening events will include a big air and style competition, an amateur paddle video fest, live music and parties.

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