

# Canoe

## FOCUS

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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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Front cover: Marc Girardin throws big moves to win the Bremgarten Freestyle.

Photo: Sarah Bell

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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, Cams 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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# Comment

by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

## Olympic decision

Well done to the 2012 Olympic bid team! Securing the 2012 Olympics in London is great news for Britain and British people.

There are two venues for canoe and kayak in the 2012 Olympics;

- A new white water facility will be built in Broxbourne, which is situated on the River Lea in Hertfordshire and will be part of the Lower Lea Valley proposed Olympic Park.
- Sprint racing will take place at the Eton College Rowing Regatta at Dorney Lake, near Windsor.

### Impact on our sport

Currently one of the capital's most underdeveloped areas, the Lea Valley is an area of outstanding potential which will be transformed by the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

It will create a major new urban park the biggest created in Europe in 150 years.

The 2012 Olympics would transform the area stretching 20 miles from the Hertfordshire countryside to the tidal estuary of the River Thames. The development of a new white water facility at Broxbourne in Lea Valley, North London is very positive.

The Olympics in London will enhance the opportunities and support available to Britain's competitors in canoeing.

Canoeing will become more accessible in the south of England and newcomers as well as experienced paddlers will not have to travel as far to enjoy canoeing.

Paddlesport is already the most popular and fastest growing watersport but this announcement will only help to further develop our sport. The decision will also have a huge impact affect on the funding and delivery of canoeing in general. These new facilities will undoubtedly give us new opportunities and we will be looking to host several international events including possibly world championships.

### Olympic programme

Since 1936, sports have been regularly added to the Olympic programme. In Mexico in 2002, the IOC decided to cap the numbers of sports to 28, 301 events and 10,500 athletes. There was also a decision to systematically review the composition of the sports programme after each edition of the Olympic Games to ensure that its composition continues to be relevant and meet new expectations.

It is great news that canoeing contributes to the programme. To be included in the programme sports must have the best athletes and have a universal appeal. Baseball and softball were excluded from the programme.

## Access

Why not Paddle from Putney to Westminster and take advantage of the opportunity to present the Access for water case and to lobby MPs? In order to make this a success and in order to demonstrate the depth of sentiment, we need as many people to take part as possible. Details have not been finalised but it is anticipated that the paddle will take place in November in order to get a convenient tide, on a Wednesday afternoon. For those of you who cannot attend Westminster, postcards will be made available for you to show your support for the need to change the access to water situation. Check the Rivers Access Campaign website for more details;

[www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org). It's good to see that the website is so popular – thousands of people have visited and the average length of a visit is five minutes and forty five seconds!

## European Youth Olympic

It was fantastic to see that twelve British canoeists took part in The European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) formerly known as the European Youth Olympic Days which took place in Lignano Sabbiadoro (Italy) from 3-8th July. The European Olympic Committee launched the EYOF, the only multi-sport event on this continent in 1990, thanks to the initiative of Jacques Rogge's. The EYOFs, have a summer and a winter edition and take place every year with an odd number.

Congratulations to everyone who took part and represented canoeing and Great Britain.

## Special Olympics

At this year's Summer Special Olympics Great Britain in Glasgow, for the first time ever, kayaking was a demonstration sport. Shaun Baker was there to give a visually impressive demonstration. The Special Olympics offers children and adults with learning disabilities year round training and competition in 26 Olympic sports. As well as being a memorable day out, it also helps to raise the profile of kayaking in the Special Olympics Movement.

It's great to see that there are things beginning to happen within kayaking for people with learning difficulties.

## Canoe Polo World Games

Canoe Polo made a debut at the IWGA World Games, which took place on 17-18th July at Duisburg in Germany. The GB women's team won silver and the men's GB team won bronze.

For more in depth coverage of the Games, visit the canoe polo website [www.canoe polo.org.uk](http://www.canoe polo.org.uk)

## Wild Water Racing World Cup

The Wild Water Racing committee successfully hosted the Wild Water Racing World Cup at Holme Pierrepont (Nottingham), Washburn (England), Shannon (Ireland) and Bala, North Wales.

British paddler Jonnie Schofield claimed GB's first ever World Cup overall medal in wild water racing when he finished in bronze position in the men's singles kayak (K1).

Following gold medals at Holme Pierrepont (Nottingham) and Shannon (Ireland), Schofield claimed silver in the sprint race at Bala before holding on to finish 16th in the classic race to confirm his bronze medal. The series was not just a success for Schofield though as several of the GB team put in best performances to give Britain its best ever World Cup results. Christie who competed in the men's doubles or pairs canoe (C2) finished sixth with partner Simon Wright.

Following the accomplishment of hosting this year's World Cup the Wild Water Racing committee looks forward to hosting a successful World Championship next year at Bala, Wales.

## Freestyle Eurocup event

Last month witnessed an exciting form of paddlesport, when competitors from over 20 nations battled it out on the whitewater course at the National Watersports Centre at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham in the Eurocup Freestyle.

Europe's leading kayakers competed on the whitewater course, as local residents also took to the water in one of the many different 'Come-And-Try It' sessions organised. See page 16.

## Canoe Sailing World Championships, Portland

The International Canoe Federation is holding the World Championships at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy, on 5-12th August. This is the first time that the World Championships have been held in the UK since 1987. A large attendance is expected, and the event will see the first World Championship for the Asymmetric Boats (ACs).

## Welcome to the BCU

Since the last issue of Canoe Focus, two new staff have joined the BCU. Please welcome Aynsley Buggy and Diane Bedford as our new Administrative Assistants. On a sadder note, we will be saying goodbye to Molly McKenzie from our Access and Facilities Department. Molly will be leaving us mid-August to further her career with Severn Trent Water. We wish Molly every success.

**Happy Paddling! Paul Owen**

## Youthfest

**Youthfest at Stockton-on-Tees on Saturday 16th July was a great success! There was a variety of fun packed canoeing ranging from; Bell Boat and open canoe racing, Lightning time trials, slalom, flat water freestyle and polo skills plus the new XStream Challenge! Being based at the Teesside White Water Centre the event was also able to run whitewater freestyle coaching for the first time which was enjoyed by all.**

The National Bellboat Championships were on the same day.

Well done to everyone who took part and Congratulations to the Winners:

Under 16s – St Patrick's School  
Under 14s – Melbourne ASC  
Under 11s – 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts

In addition Sky TV were there filming for part of their television program 'U Can Do It' – keep an eye out on the BCU website for details of when this will be aired.

See page 34 of this edition and there will be a full report in the October edition of Canoe Focus.

## GB medallists

**GB's Ian Wynne takes World Cup bronze in sprint regatta in Duisburg, Germany, 29th May**  
Britain's Ian Wynne followed his Athens success last year with another bronze medal in the men's singles kayak 500m (K1) at the Duisburg regatta in Germany.

**Senior European Slalom Championships 24-26th June**  
Stuart McIntosh claimed a bronze medal in the men's singles canoe class (C1) at the Slalom European Championships in Tacen, Slovenia.  
**Slalom Senior World Cup Series - World Cup 2**

Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh is back in the medals after finishing second in the World Cup canoe slalom event in Augsburg, Germany.

**Marathon World Cup, Crestuma, Portugal 25-26th June**  
The GB marathon canoeing team celebrated success in the junior men's doubles or pairs kayak class (K2 junior men), when Andy Daniels and Allen Spencer claimed a bronze medal.

## New boats by the dozen

Wensum Ospreys Canoe Club based on the River Wensum at Fakenham in Norfolk have recently purchased a fleet of 12 brand new Pyranha Master TG kayaks complete with buoyancy aids, paddles, helmets and spray decks.

The spending spree was made possible by a grant from the Local Network Fund which is a programme for the Department of Education. The club is currently running a series of sessions for beginners which includes introduction lessons in the local college swimming pool and Tuesday evening sessions on the river at Fakenham. Contact club secretary Nigel Emmerson on 01328 864062 or visit the clubs website at [wocc.org.uk](http://wocc.org.uk)



## PADDLE THIS

# Water activity centre launched



Wednesday 15 June marked the opening of the Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre, a first for South Wales.

This is an exciting purpose-built centre offering a wide variety of exhilarating water activities and courses. The centre is staffed by fully qualified, experienced instructors and offers opportunities for canoeing; rowing; power boating and water skiing.

Supported and endorsed by both the Welsh Amateur Rowing Association (WARA) and the Welsh Canoe Union (WCU), the centre will initially specialise in all types of canoeing, kayaking, and traditional rowing before developing other water activities.

A full programme of activities has been developed to run throughout the week and at weekends to suit all ages and abilities and includes sessions for schools and the general public along with providing specialist coaching and access for clubs. The centre has been equipped with over 50 of the most modern rowing boats and canoes and a team of experienced professional instructors has been recruited to deliver water sports to a wider audience from beginners to advanced in a safe, relaxed atmosphere. There are also bad weather contingencies, with a climbing wall and other facilities available in the Channel View Centre should the boats not be able to take to the water.

For full details of all courses, access to the water or to make a booking, please call the centre on 029 2037 8161 or check the website [www.cardiffharbour.com/wac](http://www.cardiffharbour.com/wac)

## Open house for members

Manor House Activity and Development Centre is an 18th century house nestling in the pretty Cornish village of St. Issey, minutes from the stunning harbour town of Padstow; but more importantly right in the centre of some of the best surfing beaches and rugged coastline that Cornwall and indeed the UK has to offer.

The house has been tastefully restored to its former glory and is a far cry from the damp cold activity centres of old! As an approved BCU centre they run sessions for all ages and have in-house instructors of all levels who can provide coaching and assessment for those that want it in surf, sea and kayak.

This summer the owners of the centre have decided to provide an open house for BCU members to stay on a discounted B&B or full board basis and to play in some of the local surf, sea or estuary with fellow kayak enthusiasts. You may decide to take your own kit or, by prior arrangement, use the centre equipment. You may also want some coaching or just to go off and play with others for fun using the centre as your base.

Whilst you are staying at The Manor House you may like to try some other activities like climbing or surfing, which could also be arranged! To take advantage of this offer, give Lesley or Steve a call at The Manor House on .

For further details Contact Lesley or Steve on 01841 540346: [enquiries@manoractivitycentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@manoractivitycentre.co.uk)  
Or view our website: [www.manoractivitycentre.co.uk](http://www.manoractivitycentre.co.uk)

## Paddle Yorkshire

Over 200 young and not so young paddlers attended the first 'Paddle Yorkshire' event at Hatfield Water Park Doncaster on the 25/26th June. The event organised by Green Star CC and White Rose CC with help from other clubs in the area.

With a wide variety of events everyone had the opportunity to 'have a go' at slalom, canoe polo, freestyle, bell boating, Lightning K1's, white water racers, open canadian and sea kayaking.

A team of dedicated coaches were on hand to teach people all aspects of canoeing, with friendly competitions taking place over the weekend for paddlers to test the skills that they had learnt.



Also on hand were a variety of different boat's to try out with support from Acoloca and The Family Boat Shop who supplied a full range of Dag playboat's, sit on tops and sea kayaks, Pelican Canadian's, sea kayaks and sit on tops. The stars of the show were the Power Paddler and Tiwok sea kayak which were very popular.

A similar event is planned for the weekend of the 10/11 September. Please check out the BCU Yorkshire website.

**Graeme Brautigam**



## Children gain as charity event raises £183,000

Thirty-three teams battled the elements and overcame aching muscles to raise £183,000 for Wooden Spoon and continue its work with disadvantaged young people.

Nurses, engineers, teachers, solicitors, rugby coaches, HGV drivers and investment bankers were among those taking part in the ninth annual Ford Ranger Great Lakeland Challenge – dubbed the country's longest, steepest and highest outdoor charity challenge.

Their aim was to canoe the length of Lake Windermere (10.5 miles), cycle 26.5 miles over Wrynose and Hard Knott – the Lake District's steepest passes with gradients of 1:3 – and climb Scafell Pike (3,208 ft) in just 12 hours.

The record books were re-written as a stonemason and leisure club manager from Wigan, teamed up with a firefighter from Keighley to set a new Challenge record time of six hours, 11 minutes and 56 seconds. They were supported by an optometrist from Hebden Bridge, who chauffeured them from section to section in a Ford Galaxy.

The coveted Challenge Bowl – awarded for the combination of time and funds raised – went to a healthcare practitioner and clinical aromatherapist from Benson, Oxfordshire, a solicitor from Twickenham and a company director from Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, who completed the event in eight hours and 30 minutes while raising £10,251.

Individual section honours were awarded to those who



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Unlike most current white-water blades the designs have a sharp drive dihedral, providing impressive balanced power on the forward stroke and a smooth rear spine combined with concave surfaces for positive grip in reverse strokes without compromise to slicing.

Every tester of the new blades claims to have experienced increased power in their strokes without the flutter common to so many other designs.

The difference in feel is a product of the Streamlyte philosophy of 'Design for Performance' rather than design to suit a manufacturing process. They are more complex in manufacture but Streamlyte think it's worth the extra effort.

Carbon blades on a Carbon XT Shaft or Glass Sky pole are competitively priced at £195. Glass blades are to follow soon.

**To find your local Streamlyte Dealer contact Streamlyte on 01926 640573**



## PICTURE THIS

# Special Olympic kayaking



The Special Olympics organisation offers children and adults with learning disabilities year-round training and competition in 26 Olympic-type summer and winter sports. Kayaking will be a demonstration event at this year's Summer Games.

To really kick-start this relationship for 2005, SAS UK, a long-standing sponsor of white water kayaking's living legend, Shaun Baker, the SAS Hurley Classic Freestyle event, and also the Special Olympics

movement, recently hosted a fabulous day of sporting endeavours commencing with the arrival of the 'Flame of Hope' to the SAS riverside premises at Hurley weir. Shaun Baker arrived clean-shaven above the weir bearing the 'Flame of Hope' between his legs in a specially converted kayak. Having first of all received permission from the excellent people at the Environment Agency, Shaun shot the weir steps, to the delight of the crowd, and very nearly avoided putting the flame out in the eddy line - do not worry, the organisers always keep a back up eternal 'Flame of Hope' burning for just this sort of eventuality.

After delivering the hastily re-lit flame to the assembled dignitaries, and signing autographs, Shaun along with various medal winning luminaries of the freestyle kayaking world entertained the several hundred Special Olympians, their friends and minders to a freestyle kayaking display the likes of which have never been seen before. Thanks at this point have to go to Gaye, the Environment Agency's Lock Keeper at Hurley, for the warmth she showed and the help she gave by opening up an extra gate to make the event as spectacular as possible.

As well as providing many people with a memorable day out, kayaking's profile within the Special Olympics movement and SAS UK received a useful boost as the directors of those organisations were all present and saw the possibilities that kayaking has to offer. There are, it seems, many great things beginning to happen within kayaking for people with learning disabilities.

A new club called WaterWaves, based at the Surrey Docks Water Sports Centre, is led by young adults with learning difficulties. The members developed the club's name and are involved in all aspects of running the club. WaterWaves is in the process of applying for associate membership status of Special Olympics GB. Nicky Collier, Chair of Splash Dolphins Water Sports Youth Group has been instrumental in helping to set up the club, with advice from Dr Geoff Smedley, author of the BCU's 'Canoeing for Disabled People' and Bob Billson, from Special Olympics GB.

In addition, thanks to financial help from the BCU and Southwark Council, Geoff recently ran a 'Disability Awareness in Canoesport' course at Surrey Docks to launch the project. Chris West at the BCU is keen to form an information-sharing network for groups seeking support and advice to develop similar initiatives. Chris can be contacted at [info@bcu.org.uk](mailto:info@bcu.org.uk).

For further information, and a full programme of this year's Special Olympics Summer games, please visit [www.specialolympicsgb.org](http://www.specialolympicsgb.org), or phone Bob Billson on 01767 699 662.

● **As navigation authority for the non-tidal Thames the Environment Agency was pleased to support this event. However, it does not encourage other canoeists to go over weirs as it can be extremely dangerous. For more information on canoeing on Environment Agency waterways see [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/recreation](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/recreation), and click on 'Activities we support and promote'.**

**Photos: Darren Baker. Words: James Farquharson**

set paddles and pedals ablaze to score maximum points in the canoe and cycling elements while event creator Nigel Brindley, a driving instructor from Rugeley in Staffordshire, joined in the fun for the first time and celebrated as his team romped home with the Mountain Bowl in a time of three hours, 16 minutes and 54 seconds.

There were also awards for the top-ranked veterans and mixed team and the individual team pledging the most funds - this year a superb £15,393.80. A Ford fleet team picked up the Best Dressed Vehicle prize and wooden spoons went to the gallant losers!





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## Performance Development Centre

With a view to providing part of a support structure for high performance canoeists in the Northern region, a Teesside/Durham steering group is looking into the possibility of building a Performance Development Centre close to the Tees WW course near Stockton.

It is intended that anybody who is currently competing towards to the top of their discipline, or has the potential to do so in the future would be able to use the facilities to enhance their development. At the moment the plans are very much in their infancy and before any further progress is made with the plans, we would like to hear from you, particularly if you are based in or near the North of England and might make use of a centre such as this. If you have any thoughts or comments on what might be included in such a new facility, then contact Chris Lomas at [c.d.w.lomas@durham.ac.uk](mailto:c.d.w.lomas@durham.ac.uk). We would like to receive all comments by the end of July so that we can progress discussions over the summer period.

## Lough Erne Canoe Trail

In an exciting new era for outdoor pursuits, Northern Ireland experienced its first ever canoe trail, in Lough Erne, County Fermanagh. This exciting new concept was launched on 26th May at the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen. The new initiative was developed by the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland and Countryside Access and Activities Network (for Northern Ireland).

The opening of the trail will coincide with the launch of a new website, [www.nicanoeing.com](http://www.nicanoeing.com). Canoeing Development Officer for Northern Ireland, Matt Peach stated "The website offers a fantastic source of information for tourists, enthusiasts and novices who wish to paddle the new trail or develop their skills in different waters". Albert Woods, President of the BCU said, "I am delighted to see the development of Canoeing in Northern Ireland, this is a fantastic project, the trail can be paddled in sections or as a whole offering challenges and excitement to all those who wish to paddle it".

The 50km trail passes through the vast expanse of the Lower Lough in full view of the breathtaking Cuilcagh Mountains offering a superb venue for the experienced paddler. In contrast the Upper Lough offers paddling through a maze of islands and narrow channels of slow flowing water, perfect for beginners and families. For further information contact [shirley@countrySIDEREcreation.com](mailto:shirley@countrySIDEREcreation.com) Or call: 028 9030 3930



## A special tour for special needs

We asked for a sunny day and did we succeed, of course we did. We asked for special people with special needs, did we succeed, of course we did. We asked for help from coaches and clubs in the Region, did we succeed, of course we did.

The second regional special needs tour took place on the 12th June on the River Severn, Arley – Bewdley a four mile stretch of tranquil placid water. Approx 30 paddlers with special needs took part from all areas of the region mostly paddling open canoes although we did have a couple of fully laden Bellboats as well.

The weather was kind, which made the day more enjoyable and all seemed to enjoy the event. The support and help from the various coaches and clubs from the region who gave up their time and efforts free of charge was extremely welcome, so a special thank you to all concerned from the BCU WM regional committee.

Next years event will be on the 11th June so please pencil this into your diaries. Thanks to you all for making the event a worthwhile experience.

**Dave Bateman, WM RTO**



## YORKIE NEWS

**The Yorkshire Salt N' Shakes** sea kayaking group continues to attract new faces to its events and more are very welcome. The idea is to share each other's company and paddle safely and so far we have done this via the caves at Flamboro, The Farne islands, Runswick Bay and the group has also had a week away based on Oban. There is still time for you to join in the September meet – see the regions website at [www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire](http://www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire) or ring the groups contact Ken Reece 01937 588786.

**A big thank you goes to Neil Jennison** (Kingston CC) and Len Hartley who kindly came over to White Rose CC new clubhouse in June, to run the region's first 'BCU Coaching Young Paddlers' module. This excellent evening course attracted 13 coaches from the regions clubs and scout groups, who now know that bit more to help them focus their coaching. The response was good and requests for further courses can be sent initially to me.

**The next Yorkshire Coaching meeting (7.30)** is again to be preceded by a practical paddling opportunity and get together and is on Sunday 4th Sept starting at 6pm. Bradford & Bingley CC are hosting this for us at their Wagon Lane site and the theme will be "slalom". For more information contact the organiser Tony O'Connell on 07887 885011 or [tony@gizmo.co.uk](mailto:tony@gizmo.co.uk)

**All requests for coaching** whether it's personal performance qualifications (via the star tests) or training and assessment for coach awards (including requests for revalidation) can be sent to Ian Scott (RCO) [highcliffadventure@hotmail.com](mailto:highcliffadventure@hotmail.com) Ian will also plan and run bespoke courses for your own group bookings, please see Ian's website: [www.highcliffadventure.co.uk](http://www.highcliffadventure.co.uk)

**How to find your local club.** If you aren't a member of a club and think you might like to be, here are some details of where to find one near you.

**Sheffield CC** meet on Tuesdays at Ponds Forge pool 6.30 to 8.30. **Broomhall CC** meet the 1st and 3rd Wed evenings from 9pm at Graves Tennis club. **West**

**Yorkshire CC** meet at Sun Lane baths in Wakefield on Thursday evenings 8.30 to 10.0 and on Saturday afternoons at Pugnies Country Water Park. **Lower Wharfe CC** meets at the pool in Tadcaster on Sunday evenings and at Bishopthorpe on Thursday evenings

**Rotherham** meets at Maltby swimming pool. Give the pool a ring to find out more. **Leeds CC** meet on Tuesday evenings on the R. Aire in Kirkstall (nr Morrisons). **Bradford & Bingley CC** meet higher up the R. Aire at Wagon Lane sports club on Thursday evenings. White Rose CC meet at Roundhay Park Lake from 6.30 on Tuesday evenings (and from mid Sept to Easter) from 4.45 to 7.0pm at Fearnville Sports Centre Pool (Oakwood Lane).

We plan to add clubs to this list in future editions but in the meantime if you live in an area not mentioned here, please contact me and I'll try to help.

**The next Yorkshire Regional Development Team** meeting is on Monday the 5th Sept at 6.30 and all clubs are invited to send a representative. Details are available from our regional Secretary Jon Dakeyne at [jdakeyne@aol.com](mailto:jdakeyne@aol.com) who will send you minutes and an agenda if you are not currently receiving them. At the last meeting we discussed a "YORCIE paddle trips" publication.

The regional team is looking for someone to act as the "Focus" to gain professional coverage (through the media) of canoe and kayak events in Yorkshire. It was felt that maybe somebody in our region may well be employed (or freelance) in that line of work and that with an allowance for expenses and perhaps a modest honorarium.

**Finally,** I just ask you to note in your diaries the date of the Yorkshire ACM is Tuesday 28th Nov 7.30 at Ossett (Cricket Club) with a pie n' pea supper! (Was Monday 27th).

I hope you and yours are all having a good paddling summer and hope to see you with your clothes on or off. Thank you.

**Dick.** [dickconstable@canoeists.co.uk](mailto:dickconstable@canoeists.co.uk)

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Cartoon courtesy of Andrew Quick



Typical UK access!

## Website statistics...

The Rivers Access website receives thousands of hits and different visitors and the average length of stay is 5 minutes, 45 secs... so do visit.

[www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org)

Visit the site regularly to see what is going on.

## Fishing gets 'caught' by the canoeing bug

Have you seen the website [www.anglersafloat.co.uk](http://www.anglersafloat.co.uk) Apart from being a very informative site it does show that with a kayak/canoe being so versatile access to waterways is important for us all.

## PADDLE THIS

# Paddle to Westminster

## and help to raise the profile of the access issue

A chance to get ourselves noticed in the centre of London and at the heart of the countries decision makers has arisen. We have been invited to take our case for access to Westminster and possibly have a meeting room in Portcullis House where we can present our case and meet with the MPs to further lobby them.

Plans are in their embryonic stage as we are having to work around new rules and regulations about protests/raising awareness of issues that have just come in to being as of July 1st 2005. (plus MPs etc... but we are hoping that it will all come together)

### However the outline plan is

**Date:** A Wednesday pm in October (has to be a Wednesday as that is the day the MPs are there! Date also dependent on MPs and tide times as we need to go out with the tide and paddle back up on the incoming one).

**Meet:** Near Putney/Barnes Elms and paddle down to Westminster Brightly coloured banners etc being displayed. Re-group under Vauxhall Bridge.

**Portage:** Near County Hall/Festival Pier.

Leave boats in a secure compound and walk around to Portcullis House. Those who are unable to paddle can meet us where we portage and come along to on the walk to Portcullis House.

In to Portcullis House and present our case and deliver all the postcards (\* see below) from those who are supporters but were unable to attend due to work/school/health/distance etc.

Our aim is to provide free car parking just outside the congestion charge zone so no one needs to pay it.

We will paddle back up river (on the incoming tide) portage and then ferry people back to their cars so that they can collect their boats so that no one (except our buses) need pay congestion charge then either.

**\*Postcards.** We will make cards available which you can send to us so that that you would have been there if it were not for school/work etc and that you support the need to change the access to water situation.

If you want to receive regular updates as to what is happening, then please email us at [info@riversaccess.org](mailto:info@riversaccess.org) and we will put you on to our distribution list. Do also keep an eye on the website. The next edition of Canoe Focus will be out around the time of the paddle so in order to keep things up-to-date we are going to have to use email and the websites. We will put out a club mailing around that time too.

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.

Please do be aware that with the new rules and regulations plus trying to combine dates etc we may not be able to do this but we are going to try our hardest to try and get this one live!

## Have you logged your support yet?

Join the several hundred who have logged their support for the campaign. It may be an old fashioned method of lobbying but we have been advised by an organisation that successfully got their situation changed that collecting names for a petition is not only back in vogue but essential. We know that there are millions of people who are affected by the lack of access to water but we need to have proof of the numbers too.

All sorts of people have visited the website and logged their support. These include people of all ages and from all parts of the country and not all are canoeists. (Those who are well known include Shaun Baker) It is easy to do – just visit the site [www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org) and you can find the link to the petition on the home page.

Don't delay... log on today. Pass the word around and encourage others to do the same.

It is knowing how many people, not only support the changes we are calling for, but are affected by the lack of access to rivers can we add proof to the Government and other influential bodies that the case for greater access to water is a huge issue.

The access required is for all rivers so that whatever people want to paddle... recreationally/competitively the opportunity exists... legally.

## 'Latest News' and 'Campaign Comment'

We have put two sections up on the Rivers Access website that are changed very regularly... the 'Latest News' and a new section called 'Campaign Comment'. The latter allows us to put up snippets of information and comment to provoke thoughts and ideas.

If you have anything that you feel are suitable for either do e mail us at [info@riversaccess.org](mailto:info@riversaccess.org). Both of these sections can be accessed directly from the homepage.

In helping us to prove our case we are looking at the economic issue as well. We are researching to see how much each canoe trip is worth per head and then we can see what a positive impact we would have on the rural economy if access to inland water was not an issue.

We are also currently researching the positions of fords and crossings that have been 'lost' as in the next few years if they are not noted down the access points will be lost. These access points are vital to us as once we have access to the river (all fords etc had access rights across land) the next step is access along the waterways.



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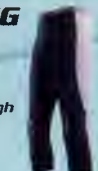
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The aims and objectives of our trip to the Alps were to stretch people's abilities and comfort zones. Sponsorship was received, and was much appreciated, from Carlisle Canoes. The trip was also aimed to be more 'student driven'. We camped at Argentiere la Bessee in the region of Briancon.

### Day 1 (The warm-up)

We started at St Clement where the river was impressively wide. It was all very scenic and we were looking forward to our journey on the river from St Clement to Embrun. The distance was 16km and the section of the river was Grade 3+. This meant that it was a good gentle introduction to our Alpine experience. Half way down the river at about 8km we all got out of the boats and checked out the Rabioux rapid, then got back into our boats and played on and around the rapid. We got to Embrun, home of one of the best play waves in Europe. Most of the guys were a bit apprehensive about running the Embrun so only a couple of them went back in to play. After this we all went back to find a place to eat and found a pizza shed next to the campsite.

### Day 2 (Bring it on)

The weather on the second day was sunny. It was a grade 3+ section and there were two groups. The first group, run by Matt, were more experienced and started first. The second group followed with the less experienced, run by Twill. The more experienced group attempted a grade 4 section whilst the less experienced group portered around. They had swum, due to the fact that it was all a bit too soon for them

## TEAM MEMBERS

### The Newton Rigg Team

Paul 'Twill' Wilson, Matt Heffer, Ingrid Matthews, Anthony Pike, Bret Ffitch, Joe Bogumsky, Jon Heather, Phillip 'Pip' Redshaw, Richard 'Chard' Lane and Stevie Taylor



# Good scenery, good weather and great rivers



As the University of Central Lancashire grows, the lecturers help to steer the students in the right direction, enabling them to cope very well outside of university. Opportunities are arising for the students to become self-driven which gives them the chance to experience life skills.

to take on. Matt Heffer said "When we got to the bottom of the 'Onde', seeing everyone's faces light up due to an exciting section of constant rapids" was for him the highlight of the week. We also went on to the Claree which was a good run but was not as intense as the Onde.

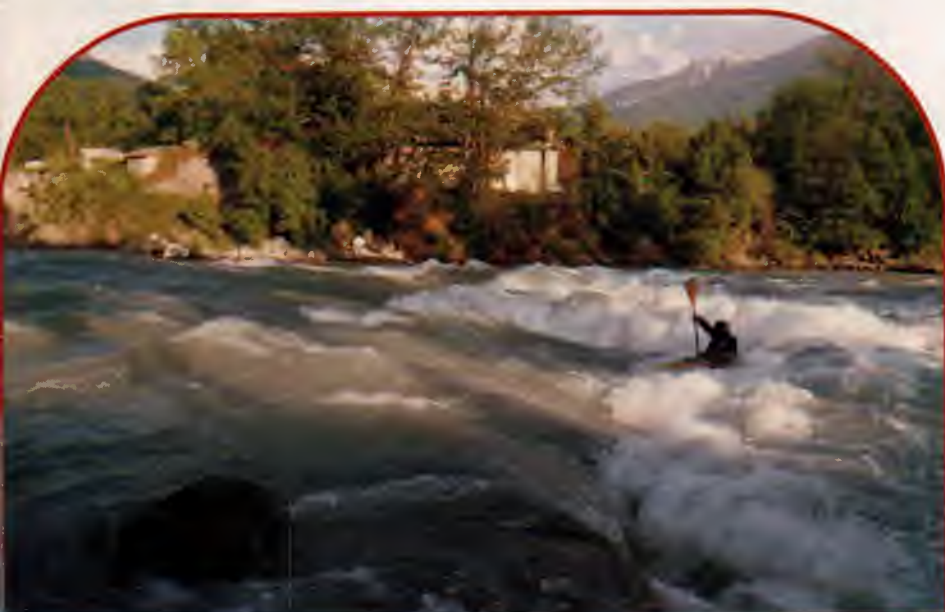
### Day 3 (Big Boyz)

We split up into two teams again to run the Claree. It was a sunny day and we attempted a section where the rapid was a lot faster, stronger and tree lined. This day for Twill, was his highlight of the week. He said "The whole day on the Claree with all the different events going on, and to see the whole group coming together and making things work

like clockwork". Everything just slotted into place. At night we went along to a rodeo competition at Embrun wave. It was an unusual event to witness, with a great atmosphere, spectators sitting on the banks of the river and a very European feel. This event, for Stevie was his highlight of the week. He said "The highlight was everything, which excelled from being on all the rivers to having a few beers with the guys watching the rodeo".

### Day 4 (Hmmm... know your limits)

This was a very cloudy day which made the water feel colder. We ran Upper Guil which was graded 3+ to 4. Two members decided to get out halfway down the grade 4 section as it was a little bit out of their



comfort zone. We ran the Lower Guil (grade 3-) which was a nice section to run; towards out was the better half. As we were driving back to the campsite we were driving near to Embrun wave so decided to stop there and play on it. Joe's highlight was "Going back to Embrun wave and being able to flat spin".

**Day 5 (Leadership is the way)**

There were two groups on the Upper Ubaye (grade 3) and though the day was cloudy and cold, people's morale was up. The day was focused mainly on leading a group on the river. Basically it was a good Grade 3 area and we did not expect that section to be so full of twists and turns which made it more enjoyable. The river gave everyone the chance to lead and to experience leading. Richard's highlight of the week was "Being able to have the opportunity to lead and pick lines on harder rivers".

**Day 6 (The cool down)**

Everyone was very tired after the long week paddling and it was nice to finish on Upper Guisane. It was a nice and easy river to paddle and we paddled 11km that day on Grades 3/4. Jon's highlight of the week was "Running the Grade 4

**section the right way up".**

As we finished the Upper Guisane we saw a couple of white water canoes, where Ingrid's highlight was "Seeing a Canadian canoe on a river and thinking there is hope for me yet". It was a nice easy cool down to the end of the week.

As we departed on from the Alps, Ant finally gave us his highlight. He said "Experiencing the Alpine



**lifestyle, good scenery, good weather and great rivers".** He summed it up for us all. As this was such a success it has paved the way for future trips to the Alps in the knowledge that it can only get better ●  
**Joe Bogumsky**



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# Euro Cup

1st - 3rd July

Nottingham

The second of the three Euro Cup events was held at the National Water Sports Centre. The new hole had been under development for the last year or so and final alterations were finished the week before, providing a beast of a hole: big, gnarly and quite retentive at times.

Friday saw the start of the men's qualification rounds: the introduction of the new rules, a gnarly hole, and the presence of the greatest freestyle paddlers in Europe separated the men from the boys. Local paddlers, Pas Blackwell and Adam Norfolk, put in good solid rides but Dickie Chrimes showed who was boss taking an eight point lead over second place. The quarter finals started with 20 paddlers and then cut to ten with Dickie still way out in front, then ten cut to five and Dickie was now getting caught up by Germany's Simon Strohmeir pulling Tricky Woo's both left and right!

In the ladies class there was none other than Germany's Jutta Kaiser, the reigning World Champion, GB's world number three Fiona Jarvie and number four Lynsey Evans. Jutta, Fiona and Czechoslovakia's Lenka Novotna all traded places throughout the rounds leading up to the finals putting in rides that would have qualified them in the men's event! Nottingham paddler Bryony Devoy put up an awesome display against these pro-paddlers to take her through to the

final in style - a real hope for the future of British freestyle.

Britain's James Bebbington dominated the junior men's class from the outset pulling out McNasty's and other assorted moves not even seen in the senior mens. Also showing great form, the 'Welsh Wizard' Edward Harry and Jack Mitchell, all of which had knocked out current World Champion Alan Ward from the final. Keeping it in the family, Junior World Champion Jenny Chrimes led all the rounds leading up to the final. Again, the Brits were strong in this event with Flic Meares and Jak Alder also going through.

The new feature was particularly suited to the C1's, kneeling that bit higher gave them the added leverage to go big! GB's Ollie Castle did just this to go straight to the final with fellow Brits Stu Morris and Jamie Burbeck, Ollie and Stu



A Stu Morris loop

throwing down the highest scoring rides of the event so far.

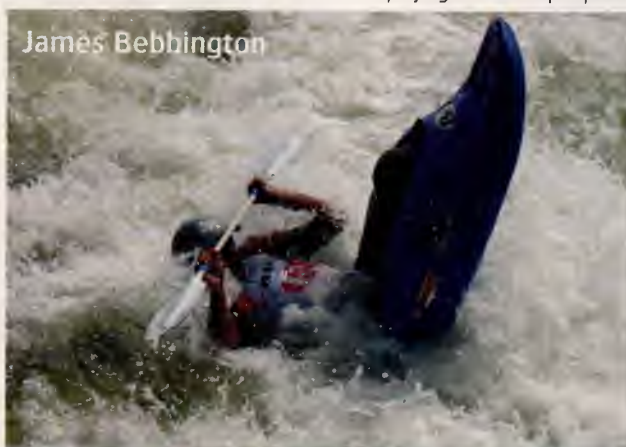
Boating aside, it was a superb social event. On Friday night the Hoopla bar hosted their first 'Money Shot' competition. This is an amateur video contest where entrants showed their footage and then underwent the clap o' meter... after lots of alcohol of course - it was a party! Pas Blackwell won with his comical video and put his prize money of £100 towards taking the team to the rafting worlds. Pete Astles' video from Nepal was also a high contender, and I don't think any of us will forget the screaming pig in a hurry! Saturday night's party saw three bands playing at the rugby club and as the weather was gorgeous a lot of people just sat outside and watched the sun go down. There were 'come and try it' sessions on the lake and a novice freestyle on the muncher as well as free coaching by Mark Birkbeck, Pete Cattral and Andy Turton. To keep the crowds at bay during the intervals loads of games were played, the winners of which won spot prizes donated by the sponsors. Games such as heads and tails, the fat fitness camp, de-bag Jon Best and Lee Pyke and watch Lowri get naked, great fun for all involved, superb entertainment!

So Sunday afternoon soon came around as did the final rounds. First up were the OC1's where young David Bainbridge put on a fine show to finish in third place. The final two went down to Jamie Birkbeck and Spain's Jordi Deminj, both world medallists, with Jordi just taking the lead after pulling an entry move in an OC1!

The junior ladies battled it out and although Jenny had been winning all the way through, she went out in third place leaving Flic to clinch the top spot away from the German Stefanie Bank.

James Bebbington took the gold for Britain in the junior men pulling off entry moves, big air loops and the odd phoenix money and McNasty. Also in the medals was 'The Welsh Wizard' Edward Harry taking the third position.

The ladies final was a spectacle. They carried on with the



James Bebbington



Lenka Novotna



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Photos: D.Hardy - R.Kelly

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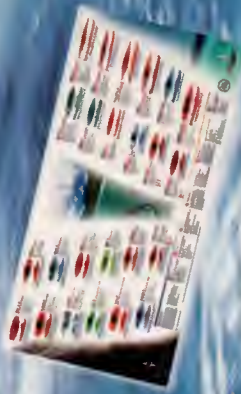
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## Flic Meares



## THANKS

Thanks to Pete Astles for organising the event superbly, and all the sponsors that made the event possible: BCU, Peak UK, Riot, Current Trends/Bar Hoopla, Pyranha, Nikwax, Soul Boater, Aquapac, Reed, High n Mighty, Sues Canoes, Paddles and Canoe Kayak Magazines, [www.markbirkbeck.com](http://www.markbirkbeck.com), [www.paddlersphotos.co.uk](http://www.paddlersphotos.co.uk), River Legacy, Avoncraft, Sweet, and Plas y Brenin.

outstanding performances they had put on in the previous rounds, but unfortunately no Brits were in the medals. Round after round Jutta Kaiser went up against Czechoslovakia's Lenka Novotna with both putting in excellent rides showing the extreme high standard of the ladies event. Jutta finally gave way to Lenka in the last round, only to say, "Well I have had such an awesome weekend and I have won so many events over the last few years that I couldn't be happier!" Never a bad word uttered by this girl.

Air loops and super clean cartwheels were the moves to beat in the C1 class. Jamie Burbeck GBR went from above attempting the entry loop manoeuvre, alas impressive as this was it was, still not enough to take him through. Ollie Castle pulled sweet sets of super cleans both ways to finish in third place and Stu Morris went on to snatch gold from the fingers of Ralph Rudiduli CH with super clean cartwheels and front and back air loops on his rides!

And that was that as that prize giving followed and the big thank you's went out to everyone that made the event possible. Thanks to everyone else who helped to make the event run so smoothly, it was a fantastic weekend, and just goes to prove that the European Championships next year will definitely be one to watch! ●

**Article: Stu Morris. Photos: Sarah Bell unless stated @fishbusiness.co.uk**

## THANKS

## Funding helps Scottish canoeing paddle to success

sportscotland is delighted to announce funding totalling **£195,000** to the **Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)**, to support key areas of the sport's development and performance plan.

The money will benefit all areas of the sport from club development to elite athlete support and is a combination of £140,000 from the sportscotland Lottery Fund and £55,000 of sportscotland Exchequer funding from the Scottish Executive.

Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh headlines a strong performance record for Scottish canoeing in recent years and the SCA's performance plan aims to build on this success as well as providing elite Scots with a pathway onto the UK World Class Performance Plan for canoeing.

£130,000 of sportscotland's investment will provide Athlete Support and fund elite coach development, to target both Olympic disciplines of slalom and sprint canoeing. Athlete Support goes towards coaching, training and competition costs.

# British canoeing congratulate London 2012 bid team

**Chief Executive Officer of the British Canoe Union, Paul Owen said on hearing the news: "On behalf of the British Canoe Union I would like to congratulate Lord Coe and the 2012 bid team on securing the Olympics for London. For a country that loves its sport, it is great news for Britain and the British people. It is also great news for canoeing in this country with the development of a new white water facility in North London."**

The new white water canoe slalom facility will be built in Broxbourne in Hertfordshire, just a few miles away from the main Olympic Park and Village in East London. Flat water canoeing will take place at the Eton College Rowing Centre at Dorney Lake, near Windsor.

"Paddlesport in the UK is already in a very healthy state, but the announcement that London will host the 2012 Games can only further the development of canoeing as both a sport and a recreational activity. An estimated two million people paddle in the UK and according to the 'RYA Participation in Watersports Survey', canoeing is the largest and fastest growing form of watersport in Britain."

The 'RYA Participation in Watersports Survey 2004' claims that of the GB population over the age 16, 2.7% participate in canoeing, as compared to 2.23% in 2003, a growth of 0.47% points. This equates to an increase of over 200,000 adults over the year.

"After our most successful games at the Athens Olympics in 2004, we have now started our Olympic cycle for Beijing. Both Ian Wynne and Campbell Walsh have had recent successes in international events that bodes well for the World Championships later this year and for the Olympics in 2008."

In the Athens Olympics, canoeing was one of Team GB's most successful sports with medals for Ian Wynne (bronze - men's K1 500m sprint racing), Helen Reeves (bronze - women's K1 canoe slalom) and Campbell Walsh (Silver - men's K1 canoe slalom). In 2008 GB Canoeing hope to go one better and claim the first ever-gold medal for the sport.

The first canoeing Olympic medal for Team GB came in Barcelona in 1992, when Gareth Marriot won a bronze in the men's canoe (C1) class. In Sydney in 2000, the team went one better securing two medals, with a bronze for Tim Brabants (men's K1 1000m sprint racing) and silver for Paul Ratcliffe (men's canoe slalom).

GB Canoeing is currently competing in the European Youth Olympic festival in Italy with a team of junior athletes. Albert Woods, BOA Vice Chairman and President of the European Canoe Federation is with the team:

"The decision is fantastic news and is great motivation for the junior team out here in Italy. We have some excellent athletes within the junior programmes who have already been identified as potential medallists for London in 2012. Six of these athletes are now on the London 2012 scholarship programme."

GB Canoeing currently supports 20 UK athletes in their training and competition with the aim to win medals in significant international competitions now and within the next 8 years, including the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the London Olympics in 2012. ●

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So it was that time of year again. After a winter of gnarly paddling in the wind, rain and snow, and of course the compulsory 9 to 5 to keep things ticking over, paddlers gathered together planning which events and countries they were going to go to this summer.

Plattling was the first on most boater's lists, a fine river wide hole suitable for beginners and pro boaters alike. In recent years this event had been part of the Eurocup series, and although this year it was only a Kanu Festival, it still pulled in a huge crowd including the current world silver medallist Billy Harris!

The new scoring system was put into action for the first time in mainland Europe, which made for an eventful and sometimes downright confusing time for the judges. In the men's qualifiers big names were struggling: GBR's Matt Cooke currently ranked fourth in the world didn't make the cut through to the semi finals, and Billy Harris just scraped through in last place.

In the ladies event GB's Sarah Bell, who most will know for her photographic and non-paddling skills, donned her canoe kit and made her rodeo debut styling her way into the final along with the lovely Emily Wall.

Saturday night saw the annual 'King of the Wave' contest. For those of you that have not witnessed this unique event, a large number of paddlers (around 100) start on the far bank of the river, run for their boats then surf all the way across the 50 metre wide hole to make their attempt at collecting the beer suspended from a pole, dangled by Robson from a raft. Absolute carnage and comedy rolled into one!

Finals day came at a scorching 40 degrees! Not good for most people who had over indulged the night before. The ladies category saw superb performances by all, but Holland's Lieke Servais put down a ride that rocked the crowd, throwing aerial loops and clean cartwheels to take the top spot. In the C1's it was a battle royal with the biggest and best moves being performed, Germany's Stephan Patsch and Stu Morris battled it out round for round in the final with a full aerial array. Both now locals to the Plattling site, they could not be separated by points in their head to head final and had to go again, Stu coming out on top with four aerial loops – two front and two back and the only clean blunt of the event! And if that wasn't enough for one day, next up was the Men's K1. Unfortunately Timmi Rah and the Clown had already gone out in previous rounds, so it was left to Jon Best to throw down for the Brits. Although nervous being in the final with both the world silver and European medallists, he put in rides of a very high calibre throwing massive air front and back loops ride after ride, but unfortunately going out in third leaving Germany's Tobias Bersch and Canada's Billy Harris to battle it out for first place.

Billy was up first, putting in an awesome ride finishing with a huge McNasty. The pressure was on, it was a hard ride to beat, but Tobias was the man for the job, the scores were so tight it went right down to the last move of his ride: the Tricky Woo, not an easy move for anyone, he sets up end left, splits right, looks over his shoulder catches too much tail and goes over the top, the horn goes... 10 seconds left, he sets up again, end left, splits right, looks over his shoulder and yep you got it, catches too much tail! The buzzer sounds and Billy wins!

So the event had come and gone and arrangements had been made by many to meet up again in Switzerland for the Quicksilver Wave and Wheels event in Bremgarten. Paddlers broke off into groups, some going back to work and the fortunate ones cruised over to Austria to find some sweet rivers to run.

# A trip to Eu

After only four hours of driving south westerly we entered the mountainous realm of the Austrian Alps bound for Landeck. Fortunately the snow and cold front of the previous weeks had given way to beautiful sun and high temperatures that graced the valleys with lush sparkling blue snow melt.

Myself, James Weir, Scott Simmonds, Dave Lambley and Sarah Bell spent two weeks running two rivers a day, including some new ones such as the Upper and Lower Venter Ache, a very nice river though not for the faint hearted or the inexperienced. It starts with a beautiful grade 5/6 gorge, which is both fast and technical made up of mainly pool drops and shoots with must make lines. This carries on down into a pleasant grade 4 with blind corners, excellent for those that like to eddy hop and scout from the boat. And of course some of the old classics



Stu Morris and Stephen Patsch



Oetz



King of the wave



Billy Harris throwing a space godzilla at Plattling

# rope

like the Imst Slucht and the Tosens run, both big and bouncy grade 3/4 playboat runs with huge wave trains ideal for people with some white water experience that want a real adrenaline rush.

After many days of boating, and evenings exchanging stories from the days rivers next to a log fire and sleeping out in vans, we all became tired and weary so it was time to take a break and hit the road to Bremgarten for another rodeo.

Five hours later and a total snow white out driving through St Moritz brought us to the very beautiful town of Bremgarten, which was home to the world's best freestyle paddlers, BMX, surf and skate board riders, at least for a week.

The main boating feature had been overwhelmed by too much water, so the paddlers joined the surfers on their wave until the water levels dropped. That's right, surfers and boaters sharing not only a wave but an eddy too! A little strange to start with but once everyone got talking it was even quite fun, Dave did his bit to show the surfers that boaters could do it too by getting on his old broken surf board in his full canoe kit and standing up - something even the surfers were finding hard enough to do.

The weekend of the first Euro Cup came along and an excellent wave had formed. Edd Smith and Scott Simonds tore it up for the Brits in the K1 mens as did Claire O'Hara and Jenny Chrimes for the girls.

Although the Brits all put in sterling performances, Edd was the only paddler to get into the medals. Up against Nico Langer GER and Tobias Bersch GER, he battled it out in the dark on the huge floodlit wave in the middle of the town,

surrounded by hundreds of people and banging music - a real party atmosphere. With three paddlers to go Edd threw down an unbelievable ride: big front and back air blunts and even a back loop - the only one of the event so far. This ride put him through to the next round with only two paddlers left - Nico and Edd. Nico was up first and nailed a sweet entry move, air blunts and blunts both ways a couple of cheeky ends and then he flushed, a moderate ride but the crowd knew that it was beatable. Edd gets in his boat above the hole, the crowd is silent, he gets the go ahead from the judges he paddles down the slope and sticks a massive kickflip. The crowd go wild, he air blunts right then left carves back across, catches his edge, recovers but then he's sprinting to retain, we are all screaming for him, he flushes river right a horrible eddy to paddle up even when your fresh, the time is ticking away he makes the wave with seconds to spare but with no energy or breath left, the buzzer goes its all over, Nico Langer takes the gold and Edd Smith the silver, well done!

So although we don't have money, a nice car, a career, a wife/family, house, or even a clue what we want to do with our lives, we as canoeists belong to a unique family of people who have passion, love, enthusiasm and an unbelievable desire to keep paddling.

The Wave and Wheels event brought together many different people from alternative sports, and hopefully it will run again next year. There was nothing left to do but say the goodbyes again, if only for now, so we packed our stuff and drove over to the French Alps. But, as there was no water, there's not much to tell boating wise, although we did go to feed the Marmots... but that's another story for another time!

Just enough time for a quick stop off at Lyon before heading back to Dunkerque for the ferry. A pretty hard level to catch, the wave was both frustrating and fun, but we all had a laugh. Top performances from Pat Campberlin and Edd Smith who pulled off some big air moves.

So although we don't have money, a nice car, a career, a wife/family, house, or even a clue what we want to do with our lives, we as canoeists belong to a unique family of people who have passion, love, enthusiasm and an unbelievable desire to keep paddling. It's almost an addiction, no matter where we go in the World and no matter which boaters you meet, they all share this unbelievable love and desire for the sport of canoeing which can't even be explained in the real world of 9-5's. I am a part of this family and so are you, this sense of family is never more apparent when you travel. So get out there be apart of it!

**Article: Stu Morris. Photos: Sarah Bell unless stated @fishbusiness.co.uk**

**Sarah Bell in her debut (photo by Stu Morris)**



Jenny Chrimes



Lieke Servais



Jon Best



Pat



Bremgarten



James Weir dropping in



Crowd at Bremgarten

## Silver for GB Women's team and bronze for GB Men's team

IWGA World Games,  
Duisburg Germany 17-18th July

The women's team stormed to the final at the Canoe Polo IWGA (International World Games Association) World Games and demonstrated why they won the World Championship title at the ICF Canoe Polo World Championships in Miyoshi, Japan in 2004. They were originally three goals behind Germany but managed to quickly come back. However, the women's chance of winning slipped away in the golden goal in a very close, nail biting game, the final score was 6:5.

The men's team won a bronze medal, retaining the third place they achieved in the World Championships in Miyoshi, 2004. They beat Italy 3:2 in the semi final but then lost 3:2 to the Netherlands in the semi-final.

It was an excellent Canoe Polo debut at the 7th World Games. Curly Barker, Chairman of the Canoe Polo committee said; "Both the men's and the women's teams fought to improve their positions. It was a fantastic debut World Games. The women's team will be a little disappointed that they were so close to gold, but the Games were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone."

The World Games is held by the IWGA every four years. This years World Games was held for ten days from 14th July to 24th. The games consisted of; 3,500 athletes, 500,000 spectators and 40 sports from 100 nations. The next World Games will be held in 2009 in Kaohsiung, China.

# BCU Club Championships

May 28/29 Hatfield Water Park



This first-ever event brought together 48 teams from 19 clubs across the country, competing in three classes: open, ladies and youth (U18). For the top teams in each category a place in the National Championships held at the London Boat Show in January was at stake. A prize for the best club would also be awarded based upon participation and performance across the board. In all 32 teams from across the four national divisions competed in the open class with teams from Divisions 1 and 2 competing in the A league and teams from Divisions 3 and 4 competing in the B league. The eight teams in both ladies and youth classes competed in a straight league whilst the A and B open leagues were split into four mini groups with the top two from each of the A leagues progressing to the quarter finals and the top four from the B league earning the right to play against the bottom placed teams from the A league to try and gain a place in the top 16. The group stages of the open competition took place on the Saturday whilst the first half of the league games took place in the youth and ladies leagues.

Meridian won both the open and youth level and took the top club award whilst FOA gained victory in the women's competition, there was also a prize for the top club

Thanks must be extended to Graeme Brautigam, Cassandra and Wendy Slater for their organisation of such a large event, the BCU canoe polo committee for their support of the event and to the staff at Hatfield Water Park, the venue for canoe polo for five years. Also Mikasa (Balls), Dave Brown and Paddlesport for their kind sponsorship and support.

For full final placings see [www.canoepolo.org.uk/s/results](http://www.canoepolo.org.uk/s/results)  
Eoin Price

very much doubt whether all 500,000 visitors to the River Festival managed to watch our polo games, but this most public of venues right in the heart of Liverpool will arguably have provided our sport with its biggest ever exposure to the public in the UK, and quite possibly anywhere in the world.

The playing statistics were quite staggering too. During the weekend 1060 goals were scored during 214 games involving 58 Teams in 72 hours of play – wow!!

This year we had a really broad spread of teams ranging from several non-League relatively novice teams, a really young Viking Youth team, Dragon Babes who were made up of several small children supported by their 'Wimpy Dragon' mums (or was it the kids supporting their mums?), a good number of all-women teams, two teams from the Royal Navy and one from the Royal Air Force, right through the full spectrum to BCU Open Division 1 teams and seven national teams (four from Ireland and three from GB). Sorting them into four competitive classes was an interesting exercise for Mike Moffitt and me but, subsequently looking through the results and with the benefit of hindsight, luckily we seem to have got the make up of the classes about right(ish).

Class four was initially played in two mini-leagues of eight and seven teams respectively, followed by cross-over games to determine final positions. In a closely fought Class four group, Meridian Ladies 'B' could not contain Caerphilly Adventure Group who eventually ran out deserving winners with a 6-2 score line.

With sixteen teams in Class three the early rounds were played in four mini-Leagues of four teams each. In an all-action final, The Toon worked very hard against a fast and skillful Linlithgow team but they eventually went down 2-4.

There were 15 teams in Class two initially playing in two mini-Leagues of eight and seven teams followed by cross-overs. The final between Ireland U21 and Avon was really too close to call and as the clock ran down towards the end of normal time, with the score at 2-2, it looked as though we they were heading for extra time. However, with only seconds left, the Irish lads made a timely interception in their own half and streaked towards the undefended Avon goal to deliver the killer blow and take the game 3-2.

With twelve teams in Class one the initial games were played in two mini-leagues of six teams each. The final between Friends of Allonby 'X' and Ireland Development 'A' was watched by hundreds of spectators who witnessed a very fine match. The dock water was churned into white froth as the teams battled for supremacy, roared on by the excited crowd. As the match progressed more spectators were drawn to the dockside to see what all the noise was about, and most of them stayed on to see the outcome. Despite giving their absolute best, the Irish team were eventually worn down by the current National Division 1 league champions, and Friends of Allonby 'X' went on to take the match 5-3.

Many thanks to all the teams for taking part in this year's Merseyside International. On behalf of Friends of Allonby Canoe Club I must also take this opportunity to thank our major sponsor, the City of Liverpool's Culture Company, for their continuing encouragement and support for our tournament. A full set of results can be found on our club website at [www.foacc.com](http://www.foacc.com).

Gerry McCusker



Ireland Development 'A' (White)  
v Meridian 'C' (Black)

## 14th Merseyside Canoe Polo International

11-12th June 2005

This event is played on the traditional four pitches strung out along the full length of Dukes Dock, Liverpool, which provided a free extravaganza of polo for thousands of visitors during the weekend. I

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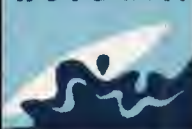
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# Justly deserved bronze

14-17th July

Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Junior and Under 23 European Sprint Racing Championships



Wycherley and Farrell

Over seven hundred competitors and 34 nations took part in the Junior and Under 23 European Sprint Racing Championships, making it the largest canoeing competition this year. There was very little wind throughout this four day event and it was very warm, creating ideal conditions for fast times and fair racing.

There was great excitement in the British team, and the small band of loyal supporters in the grandstand, when it looked as if the Under 23 Kayak Double pair of Paul Wycherley (Wey) and Ben Farrell (Elmbridge) had come second in the final of the 1,000 metres. After very close scrutiny of the photo finish it transpired that they had been beaten, in the last few centimetres of the race, by the Hungarian crew by 0.025 seconds. The winners were the Romanians. The level of competition was very high and to reach the final was a considerable achievement in itself. Paul is in his first year as an Under 23, and Ben still has one more year left. Their bronze was justly deserved and, hopefully, will be the first of many medals at senior level.

Six other British crews performed very well to reach finals. After our bronze medal in the Under 23s our next best result came from the juniors. Stuart Hastings (Nottingham) and Allen Spencer (Hereford) had a great race in the 1,000m event to finish sixth. Two crews in the Under 23s came seventh. They were Matthew Lawrence (Leighton Buzzard) and James Train (Fladbury) in the 1,000m Canoe Doubles,



and Edward Cox (Wey) and Edward McKeever (Bradford on Avon) in the 500m K2.

After the silver medal as a junior in K2 with Tara Nutt at last year's championship, Shuna Braithwaite (Nottingham) did very well in her first year as an Under 23 to finish eighth in the 500 metres. Andrew Daniels (Reading) worked extremely hard in his semi-final of the 1000m junior singles to make the final where he came ninth. Our other ninth position came from our Under 23 women's K4 crew of Kim Dawson (Chester), Hayleigh Mason (Nottingham), Jenny Spencer (Hereford) and Tara Nutt (Elmbridge).

The remainder of Great Britain's crews all reached the semi finals. The paddlers in those events were Leanne Brown (Barking and Dagenham), Louisa Sawers (Elmbridge), Ben Brown (Elmbridge), Nicky Taylor (Elmbridge) and the K2 of Shuna Braithwaite and Tara Nutt.

The team was very ably supported by coaches Shaun Caven, Alex Nikonorov and Claudine Le Roux, physiotherapists Gitte Nielsen and Julie Pearce, and Dyson Pendle and Steve Train who drove the 1,700 miles with the boats to Plovdiv.

In the junior points table Great Britain's small team came 21st and in the Under 23s they were 13th. All of the juniors, except one, will still be juniors next year. Only two of the Under 23 team will be too old for next year's championships, the majority of them being in their first year in this age group. So, the future is looking very promising indeed! ●

**Laurence Oliver. Team Manager.**

## PICTURE THIS

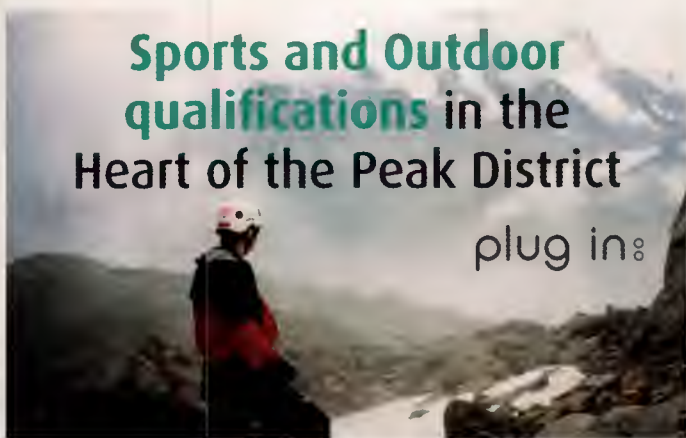
U23 women's K4 team



Lawrence and James Train







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THE MANOR HOUSE

## A summer sea kayaking with killer whales in British Columbia

I have always had a passion for the ocean and wildlife and finished my BSc in Marine Biology and Coastal Ecology at Plymouth University this summer. A dream of mine for many years has been to sea kayak close to killer whales, the top marine predator in the world. This summer I got a job working for a sea kayak company that has expedition trips in Johnstone Strait.

Johnstone Strait is a cold, deep-water channel between northern Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia in Canada. Killer whales or orca (*Orcinus orca*) are the largest of the dolphin family inhabiting all oceans from the edge of the polar ice packs to the tropics. Killer whales frequent the Johnstone Strait area in summer and autumn to feed on the large concentrations of pacific salmon in the area at that time of year. The orca community consists of more than 200 whales in 16 pods, typically of 5-20 individuals.

The company I worked for had a base camp in a particularly special location as it was next to the famous Robson Bight Ecological Reserve. This reserve protects unique gravel beaches, which are the only ones in the world where killer whales rub along the bottom regularly. The reason for this is unknown although the most likely explanation is simply because it feels good, like humans having a back rub!

Our camp was in a beautiful wilderness location with temperate coastal rainforest rising to snow capped mountains. I was working with another guide and we had 12 guests staying at our base camp for four days before a new set of guests arrived. Our camp set up had tents just above a pebble beach, a kitchen (of sorts) made out of driftwood and a river next to our camp allowing us to get fresh drinking water. We were sometimes able to get fresh wild pacific sockeye, coho and pink salmon off local fisherman while on our kayak trips. On one occasion a fisherman strapped a couple of huge coho salmon to my kayak alive!

Killer whales travelled past our camp within a few metres of our beach nearly every day often in the evening to forage after they had visited one of the rubbing beaches in the reserve. It was a spectacular sight with their blows producing a fine shimmering mist against the golden sunset. Often you could also hear their blows as they went past our camp at night. We also had a hydrophone at our camp allowing us to hear them communicating under water. Killer whales use both echolocation and whistles and squeals to communicate.

One of the first things the owner of the kayak

company said when I arrived at his company office in a very relaxed voice was "yes our camp is in a region with lots of black bears, wolves and cougars (mountain lions)". He then added "in fact someone got attacked by a cougar a few miles from our camp several years ago, although that was with another kayak company!" As a kayak guide you are also responsible for the welfare of your clients. We were trained in using bear spray and had anti-bear proof storage units for our food although I still had a few

unsettled nights! Bears were a common sighting, foraging on beaches at low tide for intertidal life.

Usually the other guide and myself would be cooking breakfast by 7:00 am and tried to be on the water at about 9:00 am. The water in the region is very clear and most mornings very calm. By about midday the wind in Johnstone Strait usually picked up causing wind chop waves and sometimes limiting where we could take clients. Strong tidal currents also occur in parts of Johnstone Strait making the region dangerous if you are not experienced. Even without the wildlife the area is great for kayaking with small cedar and spruce covered islands, large pebble beaches and reefs covered in bull kelp. The top of the beaches are literally covered in driftwood ranging from huge logs to small chips, all smooth and contorted into amazing shapes and sculptures. The region has a rich history of native Indian culture and some beaches still have remains of first nation



# Being gentle with killers



### MORE INFORMATION

For more information on sea kayaking in British Columbia see [www.bcadventure.com](http://www.bcadventure.com). Excellent areas from watching wild killer whales from kayaks other than in British Columbia include San Juan Island in Washington State, Alaska and Norway. Killer whales sightings although more rare are sometimes seen off the British coast particularly in Northwest Scotland and parts of the North East coast.

If you are lucky enough to see killer whales or any other marine mammals in a kayak it is very important to act in a responsible way so you reduce disturbance to these animals. Sea kayaking can surprisingly be just as disturbing as large powerboats to marine mammals if you act without any respect. Many countries like Canada have strict guidelines that should be understood before you go on the water. For further information on responsible viewing of marine mammals and how you can help protect these magnificent creatures please visit [www.wdcs.org.uk](http://www.wdcs.org.uk)



## Two accounts of very special memories of paddling in Canada's British Columbia with killer whales



archaeology.

My first close encounter with orca from my kayak was with a pod of about six. The majority of the pod kept their distance from us (we were rafted up so not to scare them) although suddenly two huge males in the pod turned and started heading straight for us. Adult male orca are over eight metres long with dorsal fins the size of a fully grown man. At first they were quite far away, but every time they surfaced they were closer to us, their dorsal fins slicing through the water in synchronisation on a collision course straight for our boats! Suddenly they disappeared into the depths. It's an awesome feeling when they disappear and you don't know where they are going to resurface, making you feel very small in your fibreglass sea kayak. Suddenly we heard a very loud blow by the side of our kayaks and looked around. One of the orca had surfaced next to our

kayaks so close you could touch it with your paddle, its dorsal fins towering above us!

In late July you get large pods of pacific white-sided dolphins entering the straight. On one occasion we had 150 dolphins swimming between our kayaks. The dolphins are very playful and if you bang on your kayak, shout and make lots of splashing it excites them and they charge over like playful dogs, swimming under your kayak and doing huge jumps next to your kayak. We also witnessed the dolphins on several occasions charging over to a pod of orca and leaping all around them, much to the annoyance of the killer whales.

Most evenings we would have a fire, followed by a sweat lodge. This consisted of putting large rocks into our fire, heating them and then putting them in large tarpaulin "tent". Water was then added to our rocks causing steam. After the sweat lodge we would

jump in the freezing sea. On cloudy nights the sea was lit up by thousands of small florescent green lights known as phosphorescence (produced by plankton) producing a spectacular display.

Very early one august morning I was woke up by the sound of killer whales blowing in the distance and so got the other guides and clients up. The sun was coming up and the water was glassy calm. The other guide and myself got in a double kayak and paddled a few metres out. The killer whales were coming along the shore in the distance; their bodies back lit against the sunrise giving them a dark almost sinister appearance. As they got closer an orca started slapping its tail, smashing up the once smooth water. There were several pods together. Suddenly they all erupted in to playful behaviour slapping the water, breaching and circling each over. The excited killer whales didn't seem to notice us they were so involved in mating behaviour. Very close to our kayak a large female orca spun around parallel to us and twisted on her side. Seconds later a juvenile male rammed into her with its nose. It was a tremendous demonstration of just how powerful these creatures are and I felt very vulnerable in our double kayak with such sexually charged orca so close!

Sea kayaking appeals to people as it gives you a special kind of freedom so rare today, allowing you to feel very close to the oceans changing moods and natural beauty. This kind of exploration I think is unique to kayaking and is very different to exploring in larger craft. The quiet, sensual characteristics of sea kayaking also allow you to feel a lot closer to the whales (and wildlife generally) than you do from a larger whale watching boat.

Killer whales are threatened due to reduction of prey stocks, global warming, toxins and irresponsible whale watching. I therefore feel particularly privileged to have spent an amazing summer sea kayaking so close to these intelligent creatures and would recommend it to anyone. ●

**Andy Pearson**

## Salmon, orcas, bears and an explosive tidal race

I'm over 4,500 miles from home, jet lagged, alone, the weather's appalling, grey and wet and I'm seriously starting to question what on earth am I doing here...

I'm on the beach at Brown Bay just north of Campbell River on Vancouver Island, rushing to pack my boat as quickly as I can to stop everything getting drenched and also to catch the last of the ebb tide. The weather's totally miserable and the whole world around me looks dull and grey... On the plus side however, thankfully I'm on the right side of the Seymour Narrows, which is running at 14 knots today – more about the Narrows later.

Even in the middle of all this foul weather I take great pleasure in finally getting afloat and embarking on my solo journey out from the Discovery Passage and along the Johnstone Strait to Robson Bight.

With cloud base at virtually sea level, I cross over to Quadra Island making use of the last hour of the ebb stream, arriving at Kanish Bay a short while later. After being greeted by a seal I make one of the



Inset: 'Spirit Sails' Sailing Rig.

Main picture: Sayward Harbour, Johnstone Strait



Chained Islands home for the night. As I continue my journey over the next two days the weather shows no sign of improvement. The reasons for being here were also clouded over in my mind, though a few things along the way helped remind me...

I spotted an excited and vocal pair of Bald Headed Eagles in the trees just above me, squawking loudly as one flew in with a fish firmly in its talons. I love wildlife encounters – it is probably the main reason that I am so passionate about sea kayaking.

A short while later a small pod of Dall's Porpoise with their distinctive black and white markings cross my path, these large, fast and hyperactive porpoise are always a pleasure to see.

Though soaked to the skin and cursing the weather I have to give thanks for the wind and more importantly it's direction. My 'Spirit Sails' sailing rig is working brilliantly and on top of the tide my GPS is reading eight knots, which would no doubt cheer up any drenched sea kayaker.

I'm feeling confident and in control when suddenly my fishing rod bends alarmingly... I'm into a salmon! The Salmon fishing in the Johnstone Strait is probably the best in the world and yes the salmon is part of the reason I'm here. My fight with this salmon was eventful as I was still in the tidal race with my sail flapping noisily and the fish fighting hard darting and diving under my kayak. Ten minutes later I land a 6lb Salmon – I ate well that day. When gutting, cooking and eating the delicious salmon I made sure I was well away from anywhere where bears may roam. A word of warning, the salmon here can grow up to 40lbs plus and fish of 4lb+ can tow a kayak! It's been recorded in this part of the world that one unfortunate kayaker ended up being towed kilometres out to sea before being rescued by a fishing boat!

The large concentration of salmon in the Johnstone Strait is probably why this region is the best place in the world to spot pods of Orcas. Almost as soon as the greyiness started to lift and the colours started to reappear on the afternoon of my third day, a pod of Killer whales passed close to the campsite at Naka Creek. After enjoying the warm sun, blue skies and the awesome display by the Orcas I start remembering why I'm here in the first place. Six years ago I kayaked in a double with my wife Sarah

(pregnant at the time), the wildlife encounters we had were memories which we will treasure for a lifetime. Having a pod of Killer Whales passing within metres either side of your kayak is a truly moving experience – this is exactly the reason why I'm back!

Robson Bight (Michael Bigg Ecological Reserve) is an important killer whale habitat where the whales come to rub themselves against the beach gravel. The area is closed to the public (including sea kayakers) and has an exclusion zone, which is monitored by scientists with patrol boats. I kayaked early one morning to the campsite just on the southern border of the reserve. With no sign of any Orcas at Robson Bight I sailed back to Naka Creek.



The wind remained strong for three days at Naka Creek but I enjoyed a relaxing and quite a sociable time at the logging camp before finally heading back down towards Campbell River. Every day at Naka Creek the Orcas came past each time being more spectacular than the last. My dream however was not to watch from the shore but to be amongst the pod in my kayak, a chance encounter, the whales coming to me just as it had happened six years ago.

The forecast warned of winds increasing to 30/35 knots later and though Naka Creek was a possible escape route via a forestry track, I made the decision and committed myself to the 60-mile return journey back to Campbell River. I still wanted to suss out the Seymour Narrows so it was time to press on.

Having seen the Orcas from the shore on three days running I thought that that would be it, especially as I was distancing myself from Robson Bight. My next wildlife encounter was a pod of Dall's porpoise, as I had already seen quite a few porpoise

and dolphin I was only mildly excited, but this changed when, for the first time I could actually here them vocalising with high frequency whistles and squeaks... a truly amazing experience.

The North Westerly wind continued, always increasing in the afternoon so morning paddling led onto afternoon sailing. Tidal planning was important though progress could always be made by paddling in the huge eddies and when the wind picked up rapid progress could be made with the sailing rig against the tide!

I was sailing at about four or five knots when I next met the Orcas. Before I knew it I had two females either side of me, almost within touching distance with my paddle and just to make the experience even better just like the porpoise they too were vocalising, no doubt communicating with each other just as I was sandwiched between them. I will never forget their eerily beautiful calls a truly wonderful encounter beyond my wildest dreams. The rest of the pod followed rapidly but it was all over too soon as I sailed on a bit too quickly.

The next day I rounded another headland and spotted about a dozen Orcas heading my way. I struggled to get my sail down to slow my speed just before two females passed either side of the kayak once more. But the best was to come – directly in front of my kayak a group of six killer whales in a resting formation known as logging were heading straight for me, four of the group were bulls with fins up to two metres tall. My heart was pounding at this stage, as there was nowhere to escape from the Orcas who were swimming directly towards me, side-by-side and totally synchronised with all six rising and diving together. It appeared that they were going to surface exactly where I was. They must have known I was there as they passed directly underneath my kayak, which turned 90 degrees for no apparent reason (other than the fact that I had six huge Orcas directly below me!) They surfaced a short distance away spouting loudly and leaving clouds of mist behind before disappearing once more. I was truly moved by the whole experience feeling both privileged and emotional, this is what I live for, this is why I kayak on the sea.

With a feeling of total contentment and a big smile on my face I paddled on to camp at Little Bear

Orca from the Kayak



Bay. My last day would require a 25-mile paddle and some good timing to get to Seymour Narrows before slack water. After rounding Chatham Point I spotted a Black Bear foraging for crabs on the beach, I have a great fear of bears but felt confident enough to approach to take some photos I spent an enjoyable 15 minutes or so in the bears company before it decided to shuffle off. Six years ago we had a bear stood up on its hind legs waist deep in water chasing our double kayak – scary!

As I carried on towards the Narrows the wind picked up which proved exciting as I crossed Elk Bay surfing down waves with my sailing rig bent forward by the gusts. My confidence was high which was good as my next challenge was rapidly approaching.

Seymour Narrows is one of the fastest tidal races in the world; at three miles long with an even bigger reputation I did have my concerns. Many of the kayaking guidebooks dismissed it as an option and none of the local kayaking instructors I had met had been through it.

120 shipwrecks have been recorded in the narrows with over 100 lives lost. The Seymour Narrows is home to Ripple Rock, which was once the most notorious hazard on the inside passage from Vancouver to Alaska. On April 5, 1958 the two underwater pinnacles, which formed Ripple Rock, were blown up, a major civil engineering feat, which created the largest peacetime explosion ever recorded outside of nuclear testing!

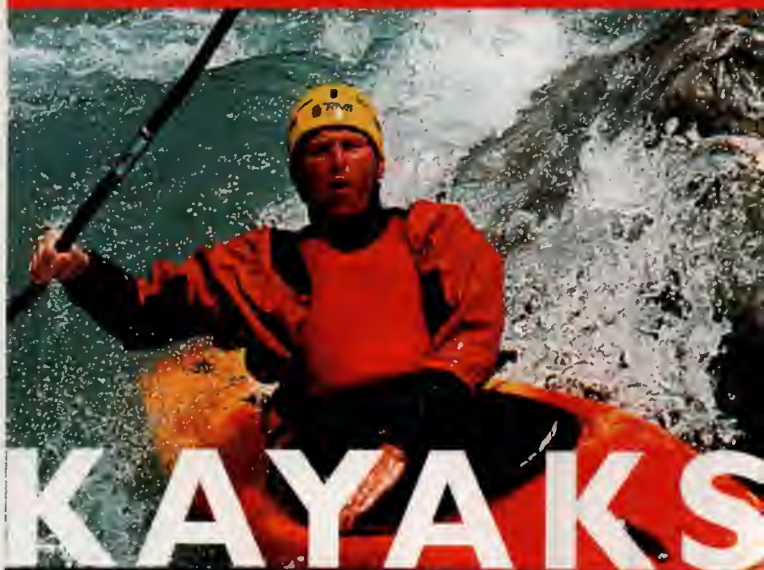
Knowledge and understanding is a great thing and armed with current tables I worked out that the max rate on a neap was only seven knots with a slack water window of 30 minutes. . .no problem! I headed into the narrows against the tide using eddies by the Vancouver Island shore. Before the tide had turned I had paddled the three nautical miles and had also found time to stop for photos and also to fish, catching a good-sized Ling Cod. Passing through the Seymour Narrows with all its history and reputation proved to be a perfect finale to an excellent sea kayaking journey and one, which I will never forget. ●

Photos and article By Ian Lloyd-Jones



Black Bear

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**"Almost overwhelming", was the first reaction of many delegates arriving at the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig on Skye. Not only because of the sheer number of sea kayakers assembled in one place, but also because of the range of sessions on offer.**

I was taught that lists are lazy journalism, but just listen to the selection which faced delegates on the first session of day one; 'Reflections' slide show with Franco Ferrero or two seminars; 'Introduction to Tides' with Paul Mills; or 'Science of Maps & Charts' with Donald Thomson. These could be followed by either 'Channel Island & Near Coasts of France' slide show with Kevin Mansell; 'Gathering Tidal Information' with Paul Mills; or 'Making a Map or Chart' with Donald Thomson. It sounds a full morning, but wait a moment – that's just for those who wanted to stay dry! Those who fancied a practical morning, there was even greater choice; 'Global Positioning Systems' with Andy Stamp; 'Introduction to Folding Kayaks' with Mike McClure and Brian Wilson; 'Foundation Skills' with Jas Hepburn and George Reid; 'Forward Paddling' with Sean Morley and Nigel Robinson; or 'Greenland Skills' with Soren Rasmussen. And still we're not finished. Delegates who wanted to explore some of the spectacular Skye coastline (there were visitors from Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands) could choose between three separate full day paddles. By any standards, that was a lot of choice. And bear in mind, this was just the selection for the first morning of the first day - there were three days like that, morning and afternoon! You see what I mean by this event being "almost overwhelming"?

Look at the names in that list and you'll see some you know. Of the 26 level five sea coaches in the UK, only three were not present.

The Gaelic College proved once again to be an excellent venue, providing hearty meals for hungry paddlers, and excellent learning facilities. More on-site accommodation would have been nice, but the campsite or 'swamp' as it became known, was not as bad as it sounds. The beach access was awkward, down a steep track that became churned, slippery mud. And there was the inevitable delay when fifty sea kayakers attempt to launch from the same, small rocky beach at the same time.

**Organisers Gordon and Morag Brown, Ken Nichol and Duncan Winning OBE**



Experts always make it look easy, and by now the organisers of this event really are experts. Somehow they manage to create an informal, casual atmosphere, and yet keep events running to a complex time-table. Don't underestimate this. If things were too laid back, then nothing would ever happen: People who had to spend a long time hanging about, waiting for sessions to start, would grumble and push off to do their own thing. Alternatively, had the organisers gone around with blowing whistles and ringing bells, demanding people went to their session NOW, then the result

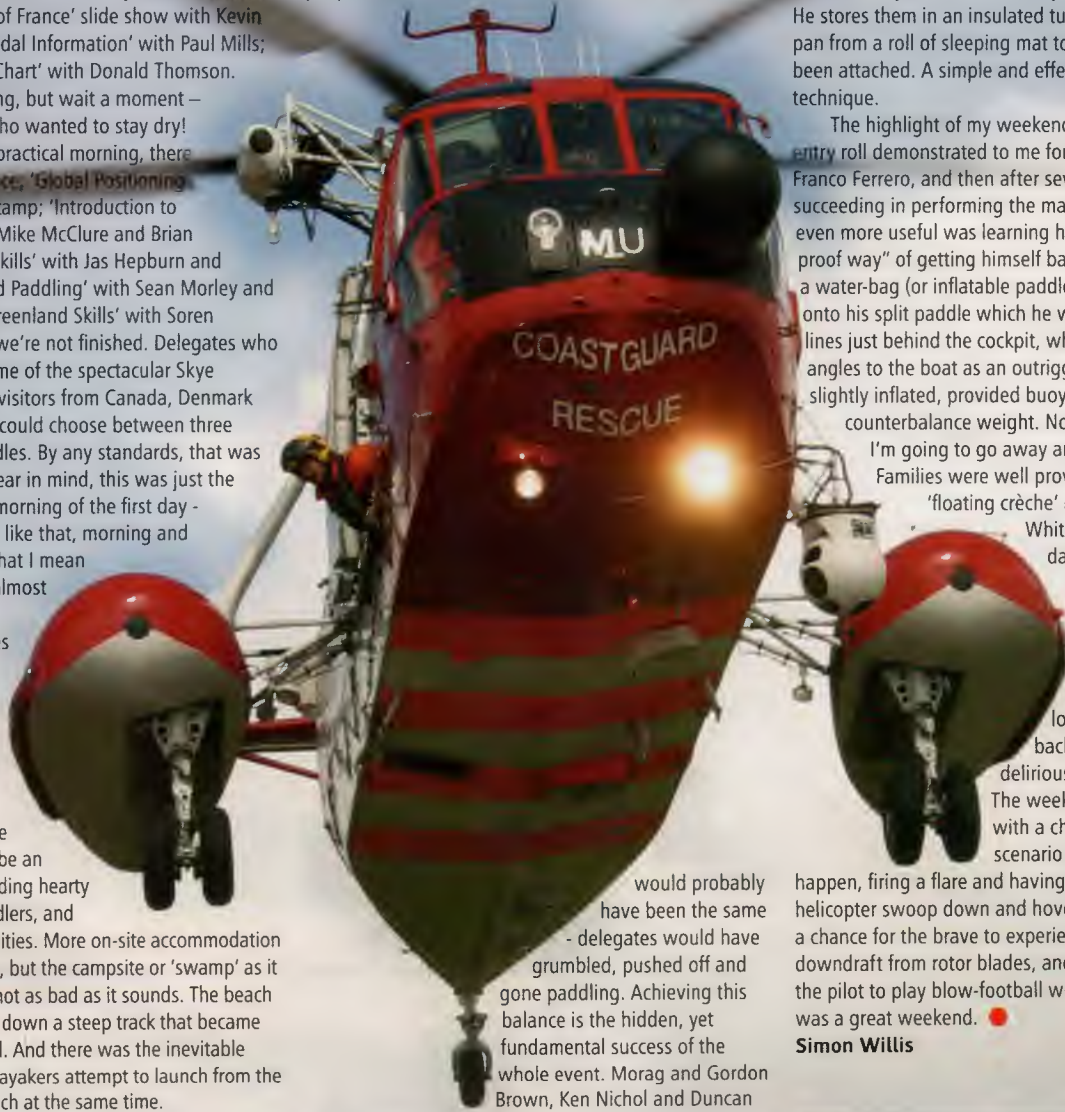
Winning OBE deserve many congratulations.

What's more, they created an environment in which everyone could learn something. For some people it was rolling; others picked up subtle boat handling skills; but best of all were the absolutely priceless 'nuggets' of knowledge you could pick up almost without trying. I'll give you an example. On a multi-day trip many people take a frozen dinner for the first day or two. Howard Jeffs just happened to mention he froze his meals in a poly bag, packed inside the pan in which they'll be used. So they fit the pan perfectly. He stores them in an insulated tube, shaped around the pan from a roll of sleeping mat to which ends have been attached. A simple and effective expedition technique.

The highlight of my weekend was having a re-entry roll demonstrated to me for the first time, by Franco Ferrero, and then after several attempts, succeeding in performing the manoeuvre. Probably even more useful was learning his "absolutely bomb proof way" of getting himself back in his kayak, using a water-bag (or inflatable paddle-float). This he slipped onto his split paddle which he wedged under deck-lines just behind the cockpit, where it sat at right-angles to the boat as an outrigger. The water bag, slightly inflated, provided buoyancy and a counterbalance weight. Now that is something I'm going to go away and practice.

Families were well provided for, with a 'floating crèche' run by the team from White Wave. On the first day they looked after seventeen youngsters, whose ages ranged from five to twelve, taking them open boating on a sheltered loch, and bringing them back soaked but deliciously happy. The weekend was rounded off with a chance to experience the scenario we all hope will never happen, firing a flare and having the coastguard helicopter swoop down and hover overhead. This was a chance for the brave to experience the full force of a downdraft from rotor blades, and the opportunity for the pilot to play blow-football with kayakers. In short, it was a great weekend. ●

**Simon Willis**



would probably have been the same - delegates would have grumbled, pushed off and gone paddling. Achieving this balance is the hidden, yet fundamental success of the whole event. Morag and Gordon Brown, Ken Nichol and Duncan

**'Discovery Learning' with Andy Stamp**



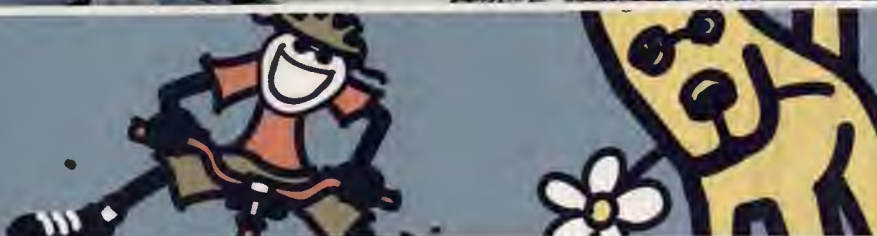
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The truth: I was terrified. Whenever my mind had a chance to wander I would drift into thoughts of every possible epic. I had never paddled big volume rivers before. I imagined that the trip would descend into a nightmare spiral of me being paralysed with fear, swimming or portaging everything, and spending most of the time in tears. Eventually I could bear the torment no longer and told Tony that I wouldn't be going. 'What if Al comes along to help you?' he asked. 'Will you go then?'

Al has been involved with my paddling since I began three years ago. He had already helped me to develop further than I could have ever imagined. He seems able to address all aspects of paddling, from the technical right through to the emotional, which is the trickiest part for me.

Al was hired, but I still could not rest easy. We spent a lot of time doing things that required a lot of courage on my part and that I wouldn't normally do, such as playing in holes and looking for harder lines down rapids I already knew. I was repeatedly put in situations that frightened me. I slowly learned that being afraid did not equate with impending death and disaster. I started to turn all the emotion associated with the fear into positive action. For any of you that have experienced the same you'll know the sense of achievement I felt.

I still wasn't entirely convinced that I wanted to go, but before I knew it we arrived in Kathmandu. We made our way to the offices of Ultimate Descents Nepal to finalise arrangements for the trip. Behind the desk was a large photograph of a raft skirting round the edge of a hole so massive it dwarfed the raft. 'What river's that?' one of us asked. 'That's Harkapur rapid on the Sun Kosi. It's the most difficult rapid on the river.' I wished we'd never asked.

We left early the next morning on a rickety bus that took us to the put in of the lower Bhote Kosi. We had arranged to paddle from Lamosangu to Dolalghat as a warm up day.

With a light spirit I got ready for my first day of paddling in Nepal. Excited, and not fully able to believe we were here, I lead the way. The rapids were fun and the water level perfect. I felt so comfortable I

began wondering why I had been so worried. After playing for ages on a lovely surf wave, we set off again, this time with Al leading. We rounded a corner and the whole river narrowed down and entered a



Ingrid on the Sun Kosi

I suppose most paddlers would jump at the opportunity of paddling in Nepal. I did not. Tony, my long suffering husband and regular paddling partner, and his friend Dave had decided that they fancied paddling the Sun Kosi River. It would be warm, beautiful and there'd be guaranteed water. The river is rated as one of the top ten best river trips in the world. What could be better? Almost anything.



Relaxing on the Sun Kosi



Al's boat and paddle with Ganesh

Words: Ingrid Gooch  
Pictures: Alan Pashley  
Useful websites: [www.udnepal.com](http://www.udnepal.com)  
[www.raftnepal.org](http://www.raftnepal.org)



rapid that was pushy with much bigger features. I noticed Al was paddling hard towards the inside of the bend. I tried to do likewise, but had left it too late. I found myself rising up the back of a hump of water, which turned out to be the biggest poulover I had ever seen. I dropped sideways into it screaming loudly with terror. As my boat did the first end of an involuntary cartwheel, I pulled the deck and to my relief was washed straight out.

After executing a textbook self-rescue I sat on the riverbank and cried. I felt childish and stupid for doing so, but I just couldn't help myself. Any of us could have ended up in that poulover, but it just happened to be me, the least confident member of the group.

I got back in my boat subdued, but determined to try to forget about it. It was at times like these that Al excelled in his role. He treated my tears on the river the same as he treated my laughter and smiles. It was all normal and all just part of paddling. He encouraged me not to dwell on negative experiences, but to think only about the task at hand. He supported me in my decision to take the chicken route down the next rapid and to walk the one after, and joined me on my chosen routes down both.

I felt extremely apprehensive as the river narrowed to go through a gorge. I had underestimated its size and I knew I was going to find it big and pushy. At one major rapid we were told there was a big curling wave at the bottom, which could be punched in the middle, but could be avoided by staying left. Left was where I intended to be. Once in the rapid I saw the wave. It was huge. I was transfixed. We all know that you end up where you look, and so I ended up rising up the face of the wave at its very centre. As my boat got to the lip I fell over backwards. I don't remember being upside down. I just remember successfully rolling and to my amazement and disbelief found myself coasting over the top of the next wave. I was delighted. That unexpected successful roll did more than just restore my self-confidence. It put me on a high. I carried on down the river elated and enjoyed every second of the rest of the trip. By the time we got to the takeout the day had become the best I had ever spent on a river.

We were all in high spirits as we drove to Borderlands, a very beautiful resort where we stayed that night. During dinner, a quietly spoken Nepali man came and introduced himself. His name was Ganesh, and he was to be our guide on the Sun Kosi. He told us that we would love the river. He talked to us for a short while answering our questions and allaying our anxieties. I went to bed later happy and relieved.

I slept extremely well for about four hours, but awoke filled with a creeping sense of dread and anxiety. Over the course of the next few days I would be paddling a river 270km long into which seven tributaries emptied. It had seemed pretty big by the end of one day's paddling and it was only going to get bigger.

I could not get back to sleep. I could not calm myself down. I had spent hours fretting and I was no longer in control of my runaway emotions. Al found me shortly after dawn doing a very poor job of making some alterations to my boat. I was struggling to see through my tears. I was overwrought. 'Ingrid, nobody's going to make you go. It's not about how hard you can paddle. You're here on holiday, and if you don't want to go paddling, just forget about it. We can do anything you like,' Al told me. Trouble was, I did want to paddle. I knew if I backed out I would feel like a failure and I'd always regret it. Al as always sat patiently with me, calmed me down and

soon had me smiling again.

I gradually settled down into the paddling and was soon immersed in the routine. Awake early to breakfast, load the gear and set off for a day's paddling even better than the one before. We'd all take turns to chop the vegetables for the evening meal, to help Ganesh, Ram, David, Laxmon, Dill, Mahendra, and Raj conjure up a variety of tasty delights. Chatting, joking and laughing with the staff were unexpected bonuses to a wonderful trip.

The friendliness of the Nepali people was striking. Every day, within a few minutes of landing we'd be surrounded by groups of smiling curious Nepali children, who had run miles from their village to see us. They'd stay till dark, playing in the camp, and they'd be back in the morning as soon as it was light.

The day that we were to paddle Harkapur dawned with excitement in the air. Harkapur had been the subject of many conversations over the preceding days and had acquired a fearsome reputation. The noise as we approached was phenomenal. The days spent on the river so far had gone better than I had hoped for so I was feeling unusually confident. The line to avoid the enormous hole at the bottom would require a lot of work, but seemed possible.

Pushing out into the current we were off. I had elected to follow Al, as I was afraid of losing my way in the rapid. As we entered I got pushed off line by one of the two massive standing waves at the top of the rapid. I need not have worried about losing my way. The line was obvious and I was nowhere near it. All was not lost. I looked at the eddy where I needed to end up and knew I would just have to work harder.

And then I let my eyes fall on the back of the hole I needed to avoid. I have never seen a horizon line so high. It was a mountain of water. I was mesmerised by the size of it, and I could not look away. Time seemed to slow down as I rode up the back of this monster. I looked down at a foaming seething mass of water a long way below me, but which I knew would consume me any second. I felt like I was falling off the edge of the world as my boat and I fell into that hole. As soon as I hit the foamy pile, I chose to part company with my boat. I was pulled down in to the green room and flushed out a considerable way down stream. The boys had seen it coming and were moving into position to help. Ganesh offered encouragement whilst I made the eddy, and Al and Laxmon rescued my gear. As I sat on the bank catching my breath I felt on top of the world. That was unusual, considering that I just had a swim. I might not have made the line, but I had given it a go. I had overcome all the fear and apprehension and had tried. I had not walked. As we set off again Ganesh teased the boys. 'If you were real tigers,' he said, 'you would have gone through the hole like Ingrid.'

After Harkapur I relaxed and enjoyed the holiday even more, revelling in my sense of achievement at having overcome what had seemed like insurmountable fear. The last full day on the river was the crowning glory of a brilliant trip. That day we paddled through Jungle Corridor, a place more amazing in reality than any pictures your imagination may conjure up. Jungle Corridor was just packed full of loads of fun rapids that followed in quick succession. Even though I felt quite challenged, I laughed and smiled all the way through as I rode over wave after huge wave. After all the worry and dread, I was here, and thanks to a lot of hard work from Al and myself, I was paddling well and loving it. ●

Dave, Tony and Ingrid



Help with the raft



Gear raft on Harkapur



Mahendra



View of Kathmandu from the Monkey Temple



# YouthFEST 2005





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The road on different levels

“I believe we are just about getting on top of this season,” I confidently announced one morning at the meeting with the senior managers. “That’s good,” said Lee, the activity manager, “then you’ll have time to come out on the ‘Deche”.

Being the centre manager for Acorn Adventure and working at their largest establishment, in the South of France, I had up to that point, been too busy. With 250 guests a week, 70 members of staff, 14 different outdoor activities to deliver, not to mention, nearly the thousand meals a day, budgets, vehicles and French locals - I had more than enough to deal with, without swanning off enjoying myself. Don't get me wrong, I would have loved to, but there was work to be done and a centre to run.

The ‘Deche, Lee was referring to, is a two day descent of the magnificent Ardeche River. Twenty seven kilometres of flowing, swirling and enticing water set in a 300 metres deep gorge, basking in thirty degree sunshine. Why wouldn't anyone want to do it?

We left our meeting and immediately went to the staff briefing where we all stood in a circle. Attendance was checked and the day's activities confirmed. At the conclusion, I asked, as always, “Anyone with anything else?”

“Yes,” said Donny, one of the slightly older members of staff. “Is it right that you're coming out on the descent this week?”

The entire circle began to grin, snigger and look pleased with themselves. Donny had obviously been primed.

It's not that I was scared. I was apprehensive. There are 30 rapids, many with names such as Black Tooth, Can Opener and Grade 7, and I had conjured up all sorts of disasters. I am not a ‘paddler’. More importantly, I did not want to make a fool of myself by repeatedly falling in, in front of the staff. Knowing that the name Ardeche comes from the Latin word Ardesco, meaning ‘I burn’, didn't help either.

The company provides adventure holidays for kids and adults, and this is one of the top attractions for everyone. It's a mighty river - a tributary of the Rhone, France's second longest river and it rises in the Cevennes Mountains. The famous Pont d'Arc sits along the route; a 66 metre high and 34 metre wide limestone arch, which was once used as the river crossing.

River Leader, Jonny, insists that I should be seen in a Mad River canoe, instead of ‘the run of the mill’ plastic Couchoir. This adds to my worries, as I know how expensive these are and that any poor performance on my part can't be blamed on the workman's tools.

The departure is from a sandy beach called Trois Eaux and I watch with interest as my staff brief the school kids and their teachers, on safety and paddling strokes. There's a warm up, the loading of boats and checking of equipment and as I run around helping out, I suddenly begin to appreciate being out of the office. The fifty or so clients are divided into cells of five, each with a member of staff and I am pleased when the cell leaders ask if I will paddle with their group. I become aware that as much as I feel they are looking at me, they feel I am looking at them.

The entire armada puts to the water and I decide that I've just got to relax and enjoy myself, after all,

There are 30 rapids, many with names such as Black Tooth, Can Opener and Grade 7, and I had conjured up all sorts of disasters.

these twelve and thirteen year olds we have with us today aren't fazed by it – they're lapping it up. During the day I watch, observe and copy my

colleagues and each time I paddle alongside one of the cell leaders, I am given tips and advice on my strokes. I am impressed with the river leaders, who head off to the approaching rapid, assess it, choose the safest route and then control the flow with a series of hand signals; only to have to paddle furiously, passing everyone, in order to get to the next one.

There is an air of anticipation at the description of the white water turmoil that lies ahead of us.

“You must keep to the left then paddle hard to the right, don't look at the big rock in the middle or you'll paddle into it”, one of the cell leaders explains to her flock.

The sign for ‘do not proceed’ which would come from the river leader, is crossed arms above his head in the shape of an X. It puzzles me that should this be given at the point when the river has taken a grip of you, how would you stop? All of a sudden and before I can work this out, I am beckoned by the river leader to come through. Well here goes and don't try and stop me.

“Look calm”, I say to myself as I give it a couple of draw strokes to set myself on the right line. The water quickens and all I can focus on is the gigantic rock I was told not to look at. It's in the middle of the river with water swirling round both sides and underneath! Anxious to get this over with, I paddle too hard and the boat turns into water that appears to be going the wrong way. The front of the canoe whips round and the boat wobbles as if to throw me. My heart leaps but fortunately, I don't; but wait - now I am now going backwards. Into focus comes the comforting sight of a river leader, thigh deep in water, ready to deal with any eventuality.

# che

immensely aware of my surroundings, experiencing a certain freshness in the air, found at that time of the morning and being so close to the water's edge. For our guests, the day starts with a warm-up song and dance, snippets of history and folklore from the area. A hearty breakfast and just as could be predicted, it takes longer than it should, to get the kids packed and into their boats. Almost for the first time, I take note of the towering cliffs that engulf us and ponder how small we must look from the top.

The hours are spent serenely pushing through the crystal waters; punctuated with rushes of excitement; dropping into deeper states of calm. Silvery fish break the glassy surface, as buzzards and eagles cruise above the rock faces. I can feel the back of my neck burning under the sun and I don't want the journey to end. I am more confident with my paddling now, encouraged by the fact that I haven't taken a 'swim'. I show off by going backwards – this time on purpose.

Before the last stretch of river, aptly named 'Final Fling', the entire fleet is called to order and a river leader climbs up on to a pedestal of rock. He talks of the expedition; that we have all gone through it together; that it has been a success and he thanks the guests for their hard work, enthusiasm and company. He thanks the cell leaders and I feel warmth of admiration for my staff, most of whom are eighteen and nineteen years old. Whatever our age, we have truly had an experience of a lifetime.

The coach back to the centre takes us along the gorge road and we marvel at the scenery and the passage we have taken. I recall my own emotions throughout the journey and in wonderment ask, 'Why on earth was I so apprehensive – all part of the adventure I suppose, but hey - let's not tell the staff'.

●  
**Kevin Albin**

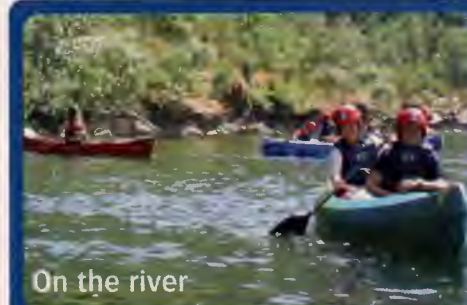
"Nice one Kev" he grins.

I grin back, "I kept to the left though".

In calmer waters I turn the boat and the relief sweeps over me as my adrenaline levels begin to subside. Later on, no doubt, I'll be saying how easy it all was.

By late afternoon we arrive at Gourney, a nature reserve that allows overnight stays. The staff work furiously, with half of them pulling up boats whilst the other half prepare food for our guests; who at this time, are as excited about sleeping out under the stars, as they are exhausted from the day's events. There's giggling by torchlight until the most resilient drop into slumber and the staff can then retire to their hammocks. I lie in mine, and think of tomorrow, when we shall do it all again.

As I come to my senses, following a fitful sleep, I am slightly torn between the desire to lie in longer and excitement of getting back on the river. I am



On the river



River leaders at work



On the Ardeche



Staff preparing dinner



Staff getting ready



Pont d'Arc

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Application forms and further particulars, in respect of the following post can be obtained by visiting [www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk](http://www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk) or by telephoning (01443) 484480/484476.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DIVISION

**Project Worker (Outdoor Pursuits) Ref: PLA 249**

(Temporary until 31 March 2006)  
Miskin Outdoor Pursuits Team  
£16,260 - £20,970

Rhondda Cynon Taf, Children and Young People Division is seeking to recruit a nationally qualified and experienced outdoor practitioner. You will be required to instruct and lead groups in outdoor adventurous activities and hold a minimum of two National Governing Body Coaching Qualifications. A working knowledge of Adventure Activities Licensing is desirable.

The post involves delivering activities in a group setting and on a one to one basis to a range of disadvantaged young people. The Outdoor Pursuits Team also provides development through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and its own climbing and canoeing clubs.

The Miskin Outdoor Pursuits Team is a small team of highly committed staff and is looking for a highly motivated individual who would enjoy the challenge of working with young people 8 - 17 years of age and being part of a team. The successful applicant will ideally have the ability to win the trust and confidence of young people, have excellent communication skills and have an imaginative and flexible approach to working with young people.

The availability to work flexible hours i.e. evenings, weekends and school holidays is essential as well as the possession of a full clean driving licence.

Interviews will be held on Wednesday 14 September 2005.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Matthew Free on (01443) 218112 for an informal discussion and further information about this post.

THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT FOR THE ABOVE POST WILL BE SUBJECT TO AN ENHANCED CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECK.

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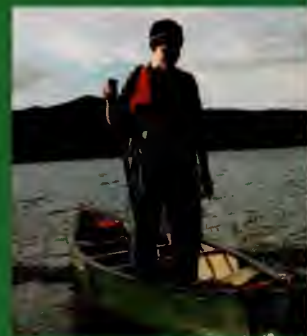
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## Events

There's been a lot going on over the last couple of months and by the time you read this Youthfest will have been and gone (see page 34). If you missed YouthFest – then start planning for next year when YouthFest visits the 2012 Olympic Regatta site – Dorney Lake, Eton on 25th June 2006. In the meantime – here's a sample of some events around the country.

## Fairland's Dragon Boat Day

If you are anything like me you'll want to be near water when the sun comes out or preferably in amongst it when it gets warmer. Thankfully for young pupils around Stevenage, Billy Brogan and the staff at Fairland's Valley Sailing Centre gave them just the opportunity they needed to have great fun on the water when they hosted their school's Dragon boat race.

Fairland's Valley Park is a mutually shared nature and leisure area for all parts of Stevenage. Sited in the park is the Fairland's Valley sailing centre which offers many activities on the reservoir for young people in the Stevenage area. The staff at Fairland's take groups for dragon boating, bell boating, various types of canoeing and kayaking and sailing.

Billy and the boys organised a fantastic water borne day out during May for local primary schools. School groups duelled it out in a head to head race as the main event, but there was more on offer in the park. As some school groups drummed a rhythm and made waves across the reservoir in their dragon boats, other groups were able to have a go at canoeing and kayaking for the first time. Some groups even took part in a mini polo tournament and a spontaneous Bell Boat race, won by St Nicholas School.

Thirteen primary schools from the area entered teams for the race and judging by all the excited voices and the smiles the day was enjoyed by all. Mossbury School were triumphant winning the Finals of the Dragon Boat Races with Lodge Farm and Longmeadow the runners up in second and third respectively. It was great to see so many young people getting out on the water and enjoying it, so a big shout out to all the staff at Fairland's for running a great starter event.

**Matt Tidy – PDO Essex, Herts and N.London**

## Paddlefest

Liverpool 18th June 2005

Paddlefest had glorious weather for the many young people and spectators who came to enjoy a wide range of paddlesport events 50% increase on previous year. The event which is part of the Mersey River Festival celebrations, was supported by Liverpool Capital of Culture and local canoe clubs and youth organisations.

The event included both individual and team events, U18s canoe polo – where Peninsula CC came first whilst Runcorn CC won the U15s and Pendle CC the U12s. The Bell Boat challenge also saw not just youth entrants but a veteran race for all parents and helpers who had a great time on the water.

Medals and trophies were presented by Sue McAdam, joint co-ordinator from the Liverpool Culture Company. Many thanks to Mike Moffitt, Gerry McCusker from Friends of Allonby CC and to all the many clubs who delivered the various events. Big thanks also to Merseysport Watersports Centre in hosting Paddlefest Liverpool.

**Len Hartley PDO Northwest**

## Youth Games

Canoeing has been in the London Youth Games since it started – and for the first time this year we've been involved in many Youth Games across the country – with the aid of the paddling ergo machines! The Youth Games are big events in the annual county calendar and these are great opportunities to showcase our sport to schools. Thanks to all the volunteers and community sports coaches who have attended and helped out. Here's an account from one of the events.

## Shropshire Youth Games

About 800 young people from North and South Shropshire, Bridgenorth, Oswestry, Telford and Wrekin attended the Shropshire Youth Games in June. The main events were football, netball, hockey, gymnastics and rugby but for those with some time (and energy) to spare they could take part in a 100 metre kayak challenge on the ergo paddling machine. The Newport Gymnastics Display Team were particularly keen and had their own competition (good potential here for freestyle with their aerial awareness!) By the end of the day about 130 people took part in the ergo challenge – most of them girls!

**Phil Hadley**

## PADDLE THIS

### Top Club and Club Mark Awards

Congratulations to Royal Canoe Club who have been accredited for the BCU Top Club and Sport England Club Mark award.

They join 15 other clubs who have received the award.

The Club Mark and Top Club awards recognise clubs that are safe, effective and child friendly and there are currently 68 BCU clubs and centres working towards the awards.

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



## PICTURE THIS

### New facilities for White Rose CC

In June White Rose Canoe Club held the official opening of their new facilities. It was a great day for White Rose CC who have worked closely with the BCU to secure Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) funding for new premises. The new facilities will provide the club with easy access to Waterloo Lake and include better storage areas, a meeting place, shower, toilets and accessibility for disabled users.

The CCDP funding is a new initiative to support grass roots sport with funding from the government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport administered through Sport England. Further funding has been released from 2006 and clubs wishing to apply should visit the BCU website for details.

White Rose CC works closely with the local community and this will provide new opportunities to increase participation and accessibility to paddlesport building on the good practice that the club has established through committed members of the committee and club coaches. The photograph shows Robert Wright officially receiving the funding from Andrew Fawkes Development Manager Community Club Development Programme of Sport England.

**Len Hartley PDO Yorkshire**





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# Sweet surfing

## Mega Maverick

I've surfed a few surf craft in my time but I've never had such a great first session as when I recently paddled the Mega Maverick. With its classic highly rocked bow it was no trouble at all to paddle out through the breaking surf skimming up and over the biggest white wave faces with ease. Once out beyond the break the Maverick was quick to move about in, this kayak maintains good boat speed essential in the surfing environment.

But the best features come out during the ride. Starting with an amazingly easy take off, due to its relatively wide tail, followed by incredible speed down the face and the ability for this kayak to carve fantastically sharp bottom turns. This kayak has some great design features including three well positioned fins, a sharp rail from the centre of the boat all the way to the tail and a beautifully rigid and wide hull which gives this kayak all the speed and stability you could wish for.

This is a versatile surf kayak suitable for all sizes and abilities, if you surf once a year or every day you should try this boat out, you'll be amazed.

**Simon Hammond**  
 World Surf Kayak Champion



I am a surfing snob. I surf eight ounces of Mega carbon joy, or a handcrafted precision surfboard shaped by a man that's done it since he was born, or the fine balance of monofilm and epoxy of my wave sailing kit. I don't like surfing plastic boats, they're heavy, you can't turn them as hard, moulding techniques sometimes compromise the shapes, and invariably they're yellow. So you can imagine my delight when given the opportunity to surf the new plastic Maverick from Mega.

The first thing that instantly drew my attention was the shape. Ski like is the only way to describe it. The hull is built for speed, with a single concave in the nose running through into a perfectly flat tail to provide maximum water release. The fin positions are right back in the final third of the boat. The rails are shaped to maximise speed being soft at the nose to help engage the water, and getting progressively harder down toward the tail. A perfect constant curve runs down the rail from nose to tail. All this in a plastic boat!

I was sure all my preconceptions would be realised on the water. But they weren't. I was able to paddle it using the same box of tricks that I apply to my carbon boat, it was comfortable, the seating position is much improved on previous models, it felt loose on the wave with the ability to attack the lip at an angle that would allow re-entries, the hull provided plenty of speed on both slow, fast, and critical waves. I actually had two really enjoyable sessions in it! This is a well thought out, designed, and manufactured boat, and offers high performance without the associated high price tag. Yes it was yellow, and yes the name did encourage you to sing the Top Gun theme tune whilst paddling out, but on the water it is a true surf craft, happy to just cruise down the line or explode into a big manoeuvre. If you are looking for the resilience of plastic, married with ski like performance, there currently is no better product. Will I be ordering one? I actually have!

**Glyn Brackenbury**, BCU Level 5 Surf Coach  
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## PADDLE THIS

# Paramo Tacana shirt

Ever wished in hot and humid temperatures for something a little more practical than a t-shirt? Then the Tacana shirt should be top of that list. The shirt can be rolled into a very small bundle and takes up little room in a rucksack, doesn't crease easily and is very lightweight. On the practical side it is long sleeved with two secure storage pockets on the chest plus a large zipped pocket a little lower and a long hem with side slits. Attention to detail via additional design features, such as flat seams to minimise rucksack rub over the shoulders and reduced gape from closely spaced buttons to improve temperature control and to keep out biting insects. To stop the little beasts from crawling up your arm there are velcro strips on the cuffs so they can be firmly clamped against the skin.

It is made with Nikwax Parameta A, a versatile fabric that improves comfort by doubling the wind resistance, has UV protection cutting out virtually all harmful rays and antibacterial treatment completes the hi-spec. Because of the rapid drying and minimal care properties, the Tacana can be washed and ready to wear again with the minimum of time and fuss.

Needless to say it would be an ideal piece of clothing to wear before and after paddling. The lightness of the fabric makes the shirt very comfortable and it can be worn in a variety of conditions, it dries very quickly and has no smells even with repeated use.

**Andy Pearson**

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# A lot to shout about...



## The Dag Tiwok kayak

Dag may not be the first manufacturer of canoes and kayaks that comes to mind for most paddlers, however, with a new UK distributor they aim to change that. I always look for information on the kayaks that I test but when I looked at Dag's website it appeared to be well over a year out of date – not a good start. Furthermore, the kayak I was testing wasn't even mentioned on the site – that's even worse. So come on Dag, you have a lot to shout about, because the Tiwok is an excellent touring/sea kayak.

There are two Tiwoks to choose from: the standard specification for day paddling and the super equipped for longer trips. I tested the super equipped where the two bulkheads are watertight and you get a front net, mooring hook and comfort backrest. The Tiwok can also be equipped with a rudder.

The Tiwok is sleek and has a long keel-line that adds directional stability, increases hull speed and gives additional

stowage space for equipment. It would be a good choice for paddlers looking to extend their touring range without sacrificing stability and easy control. As well as being at ease on rivers and lakes, it is ideal for coastal and estuary paddling. I took it on the River Ouse, a very gentle river, and was impressed with its ease of use, tracking and sheer comfort – definitely, a kayak you can spend the day in. The neoprene covers on the hatches are a little tight to say the least, but it was the only quibble I could have after a great day.

At nearly 4.5 metres long and weighing in at 22 kilos – it isn't the lightest of kayaks but does compare very favourably with similar kayaks in this price range. The plastic polyethylene shell obviously adds the weight, however, I think a plastic boat is a good choice of sea kayak to begin with as it can take a lot of abuse such as being dragged on landings, bounced off rocks and it bounces off the floor when dropped loading it on the roof rack.

The Tiwok is amongst the most elegant of its class. Its well proportioned volumes give it excellent qualities of navigation, speed, stability and comfort of use. However, it is in a very competitive area of the kayak market and starting at £625 sits very much in the middle of that category. It remains to be seen whether it will compete in the long run but having a mention on its own website will not harm its chances.

### Mark Anderson

Length:	4.40 m
Width:	0.60 m
Paddler weight:	95 kg
Maximum loading:	140 kg
Weight:	22 kg

[www.thefamilyboatshop.co.uk](http://www.thefamilyboatshop.co.uk) [www.dag-kayak.com](http://www.dag-kayak.com)  
01252 834719

## PADDLE THIS



## Helly Hansen Transat jacket

Helly Hansen have a very varied clothing line-up from the very specialised watersport gear to the everyday sportswear. The Transat II jacket is in the everyday bracket. However, the technologies and qualities that Helly Hansen build into those top of the range specialised items also filters down to jackets such as the Transat II.

The 100% nylon Transat is a very comfortable and wearable jacket that uses Teflon water resistant technology to keep it waterproof but breathable. There are two outer zip pockets plus one inner zip and velcro pocket for your iPod or whatever. The collar has a fleece lining plus it has ribbed cuffs and waist to keep you snug and warm.

An excellent water-resistant, lightweight and windproof jacket for sport and everyday use that offers great protection in variable or changing weather conditions such as rain or snow showers.

- Waist length jacket
- DWR Teflon coated for high water repellency
- Music pocket
- sizes from XS to XXL

Steve Humphreys

Stockist information:

Helly Hansen 0115 960 8797

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

On the street price: £45.00



# A true hybrid

## Keen Newports

Keen are relatively new to the UK and specialise in 'hybrid' shoes and sandals with waterproof uppers. The Newport sits at the core of their range and is intended to combine comfort, style and performance. Last month we featured the Taos which is more of a trekking shoe, however the Newport is much more at home in wet environments and hot conditions.

As with the Taos, the Keen Newports laces have been replaced with an elastic cord and cordlock system which cinches down evenly over your arch for a secure fit. The Keen Newports are very well thought out and unlike a traditional sandal, the toes are totally enclosed by a sturdy toe box making it impossible to stub them. The top of the shoe is constructed from tough waterproof leather with the ventilation of a traditional sandal keeping the foot cool in all conditions.

The inside consists of a soft Aegis<sup>™</sup> treated foam lining which helps in the fight against whiffs. It is with the lining that I have my one single complaint. The footbed has metatarsal ridges built in and for me personally, the metatarsal ridges are in the wrong place. The weakness is that you cannot remove the footbed and take them out. Having said that, the extra-wide footbed is very comfortable indeed.

The outsole is very multi-terrain with a flexible and shock-adsorbing EVA midsole which makes them perfect for wet terrain grip. The tread is precise and non-marking. The



Newports have sensible sized reflective loops on the back that you can actually get your fingers through. An excellent all-round sandal which oozes quality and have succeeded in designing a true piece of hybrid footwear.

- Wrapped EVA Metatomical footbed – anti-microbial, cushioning under foot.
- Compression-molded EVA midsole for shock absorbency.
- Patented toe protections.
- Razor siped and 3mm lug rubber outsole is non marking and provides superior traction.
- Waterproof leather upper.
- SBR lining is soft and comfortable against the bare foot.

Tony Cornwell

### Stockist information:

0800 612 9292

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

On the street price: £55.00

# A gripping pair

## Onium Pro

If Keen are new to the UK market, then Teva are at the other end of the scale – they seem to have been around since time began. The Onium Pro follows Teva's tradition of excellent footwear for the committed kayaker. The neoprene bootie is sleek with an ultralow profile and simple design that ensures there is less to break, tear or snag during hard use. Their is ankle padding sewn under an abrasion-resistant wear guard that circles the shoe and to round it off – Teva's super sticky spider rubber sole wraps around the toe and heel for extra control in wet and dry terrains.

The Onium Pro is ideal for day tripping, whitewater, and all-around comfort. They are an excellent shoe for the days when it's too chilly and damp to wear sandals. Don't get confused though, these boots are not waterproof. They are designed so when your feet do get wet, like a good wetsuit, they stay nice and warm through the whole day. They are rugged and durable and also very comfortable when exploring on land. The Onium Pro can be highly recommended as an all-day shoe for serious kayakers and canoeists for when the weather gets a little chilly.

- 3mm/2mm Neoprene placement
- Lateral ankle protection zone
- Rough skin ballistic overlays
- 3D wrap-over outsole
- Low profile Spider Rubber outsole
- UK sizes: 3-13

## Neutron II

The Neutron II is very low profile, self-bailing and super sticky shoe for all types of watersport. Think of

the advert where the shoe had a tyre tread on the bottom and you will get the idea. If you take a swim in the river, lake, sea etc, you encounter items that are uncomfortable to stand on in bare feet. However, when wearing the Neutrons, it is safer and more comfortable to swim in these areas.

They drain quickly and did not allow small stones and sand to get trapped under the foot like an open sandal would. This is thanks to the velcro self-adjustable strap that keeps the shoe tight around the instep and base of the ankle. The strap also ensures that the base of the foot is almost welded to the bottom of the shoe for extra security.

On solid ground you can encounter some discomfort if you inadvertently tread on sharp stones - this is due to the ultra low profile design of the shoe and emphasises the fact that these shoes are more like an aqua sock with a something more to offer in terms of a better fit, more support, and better sole for traction. This does not offer cushioning such as you would find in a water aerobics shoe.

All in all – a very slick water shoe that is very comfortable in and around the water where the going gets slippery.



- Adjustable Liquid Frame technology
- 2mm neoprene and synthetic upper
- Multiple drainage ports
- 3D wrap-over outsole
- Low profile Spider Rubber outsole
- UK sizes - 7 13

Tony Cornwell

### Stockist information:

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

Onium Pro

On the street price: £44.99

Neutron II

On the street price: £39.99

## Events

### ERDT-E ACM

14th November

Advanced Notice of ERDT-E ACM which will be held on Monday 14th November at The University Athletics Ground, Wilberforce Road, Cambridge. Full details of elections of officers and agenda will be given in Canoe Focus for October.

Agenda items signed by two full Regional BCU members may be submitted at least 14 days before the meeting to May Block: 01223 311717 or Family Block: [aol.com](mailto:aol.com)

### Poole Harbour Circuit Race

Sunday 11th September

Come along and join us for a day of great racing as well as excellent scenery, food and prizes!

**3 Courses:**

**15 Miles:** K1 (Divs 2 & 3) & K2 (Divs 1/2 & 3/4) Sea Kayaks

**8 Miles:** K1 (Divs 4, 5 & 6) & K2 (Divs 5/6) Sea Kayaks

**4 Miles:** K1 (Divs 7, 8 & 9) & K2 (Divs 7/8 & 9) General Purpose and TC2

**Start:** Lake Pier, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset at 11:30am

**Check In:** 9.30am to 10.45am

**Race Contact:** Malcolm Acreman 282 Rempstone Road, Merley, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1SZ

[acreman@suema.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:acreman@suema.freereserve.co.uk)

**Telephone enquiries:** Malcolm Acreman (01202)

## Canoe Sailing World Championship

5th-12th August

Preparations for the XVIth Canoe Sailing World Championship and the defence of the New York Canoe Club International Challenge Cup are well under way. The event is to be held at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy, Portland, Dorset.

The Championship will be held in the International 10 Square Metre Canoe Class (ICs), with separate courses for the asymmetric spinnaker-fitted canoes (ACs). Entries are expected from as far as Australia and the USA. A new initiative is a division within the IC fleet for 'Classic ICs' over about 15 years of age. This should encourage some of the older boats to keep sailing and increase the fun factor for all.

Friday 12th August is set aside for the New York Cup, the oldest international trophy for small boats in the world and second only in age to the America's Cup itself among yachting trophies. The New York Cup was first presented in 1884, and has been held by the UK since 1993. Racing is between two teams of three ICs, with a unique scoring system whereby the first boat scores the point for its country, the remainder scoring zero. In addition to the NYC racing in ICs, there will also be a challenge from the UK AC sailors to a team from the rest of the world for the recently presented Worcester Regatta Trophy (1909).

The event promises to be the highlight of the season for canoe sailors, and could be the largest ever gathering of international canoes.

Information on the International Canoe class can be obtained from the class website at [www.intcanoe.org](http://www.intcanoe.org) or from myself: Peter McLaren, Competition Organiser, IC World Championship 2005 [petermclaren@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:petermclaren@ukonline.co.uk) 01786-465546

## South West Canoe Show

1st October 2005

A/S Watersports are continuing with the success of last year's industry leading South West Canoe show by following it up again with the South West Canoe Show 2005.

To coincide with the start of the white water season in the south west the show will be supported by all the major manufacturers and suppliers of the best in paddle sport showing off all the shiny new kit for the coming season. Hosted by A/S Watersports and held on the piazza outside the shop and next the Exeter ship canal for easy demos and tester sessions. This year's show will have some thing for every one including white water, surf, sea and recreational paddlers. Most important of all the hog roast is back! Entry is free and the show runs from 9.30 am until 5pm on the the

1st October 2005. Haven road, Exeter.

Call the dudes at A/S for more info on 01392 219600 or check out the website [www.aswatersports.co.uk](http://www.aswatersports.co.uk) as more info goes up.

## SCA Coaching Conference

7-9th Oct

Building on the success of the previous year's events, the SCA Coaching Conference will take place at Glenmore Lodge.

It is hoped that, as well as the regular attendees, from all levels of coaching in Scotland, this year will see the net being cast further afield to attract our colleagues from the national coaching community.

This would mirror the planned input, as the organisers have secured the services of some of the best coaches the UK has to offer and subsequently an attractive programme of events promises to look to the future and assist coaches in the development of individuals and clubs.

Paul Mills, a member of the organising committee, said "With such a variety of workshops and speakers on the programme we aim to ensure that all coaches attending, whatever their level of qualification and experience, add to their 'toolkit'. The focus of this year's conference is to facilitate the development of paddlers both as individuals and within the club structure.

The new developments which are now taking place nationally, with regard to UKCC and LTPD pathways, are dealt with in a way that hopefully will show those attending what roles they will have in the process and how they can put the information and resources available into practice. And, not to forget, we also intend to have fun!"

The programme will include the favourites from last year, which have been requested as repeat performances after rave reviews from the delegates in 2004. Workshops of this nature have been instrumental in ensuring that attendance at the event has increased every year since the present format was introduced and the conference placed on the calendar at Glenmore Lodge. This fact alone ensures that attendees enjoy the best of facilities, locations, equipment and support that Scottish coaching has to offer.

Given the theme of this year's event the workshops will also be extended to include sessions on content and direction for pool sessions, dealing with challenging behaviour and help and advice on making funding applications for club development. All to be delivered by committed coaches dealing with these areas both as professionals and club volunteers.

The Scottish conference remains unique in its format and focus; it is hoped that it continues to grow and to this end the booking form has been placed on the new SCA website to allow access to the conference by coaches UK wide. With the usual healthy attendance expected and promises from a variety of coaches all over the UK that they intend to come and 'sample the goods', it is recommended that bookings are made well in advance to ensure provision of workshops can be confirmed.

Accommodation ranges from being on a full board and lodgings package, to a cheap and very, very cheerful, on site, camping option with permutations in between to suit every budget.

The organising committee extend a warm invitation to all paddlesport participants interested in the future of coaching and hope to see you, in the presentations, on the water and strutting your stuff, medallions and all!, on the dance floor, See you there!

**Iain Abercrombie on behalf of the SCA Coaching Conference Organising Committee**



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