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**The BCU vision is to:**

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

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

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

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### THANKS

**We would like to thank the following for their articles and photographs:**

Andy Goodsell, Matthew James Twiselton, Dave Leathborough, Fiona Jarvie, Rebecca Isles, Peter Hutchinson, Jan Carpenter, Andrew Byatt, Dave Savage RAO East region, Tamsin Phipps, Kevin East, Keirron Tastagh, Dick Constable, Shruti Passi, Chloe Nelson-Lawrie, Ray Hudspith, Philip Oakley, Jon Church, Phil Clegg, Denise Staplehurst, Jamie Houghton and Mike Devlin.

**Front cover photo:** Mark Townsend and Peter Grey in Antarctica.

**Photo:** Mark Jameson

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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@canoeocus.co.uk](mailto:peter@canoeocus.co.uk), or mailed to 2b Graphic Design, 49 Greenfields, St Ives, Camb. PE27 5HB. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material.

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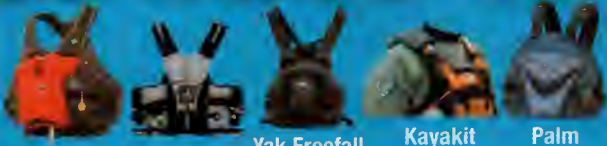
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# Comment

by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

## Welcome to the June issue of Canoe Focus

The summer is finally here! Whether you enjoy paddling as a pleasurable pastime, recreation, competitive sport or in a coaching capacity, there are lots of events taking place nationwide.

A reminder of the new BCU contact details: If you have not yet updated your records - the BCU have a new address, telephone and fax number:

BCU, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8AP  
 Telephone number: 0845 370 9500  
 Fax number: 0845 370 9501

### New head of access

We welcome Andy Green to the new position of head of access.

His role will be to lead the implementation and development of Canoe England's access strategy.

### Child Protection

The BCU work and commitment to achieve the Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport standards is on-going and as you read this we will be commencing working towards the advanced level. We would like to take the opportunity of thanking coaches, volunteers, parents and all involved with young people in making paddlesport a positive experience for children.

The revised documents to support Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults are now on our website and can be found by a direct link from the home page. Further information with respect to training will soon be on the website - we will be rolling out workshops to support Club Welfare Officers in the autumn and more details of this will follow in the next edition of Canoe Focus.

### Youthfest National Watersports Centre, Nottingham 7th July 2007

This year's Youthfest promises to be as memorable as previous years, with lots of canoeing activities planned. To find out more visit the youth section of the Canoe England website.

### Eshop

We have launched a new Eshop [www.bcushop.org.uk](http://www.bcushop.org.uk) with simpler and clearer navigation.

If you have any comments about the new Eshop, please do get in touch [shruti.passi@bcu.org.uk](mailto:shruti.passi@bcu.org.uk)

### Cotswold discount periods

Cotswold are offering members 20% discount on products during the following periods:

7th - 10th June  
 9th - 12th August  
 25th - 28th October

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To take advantage of the discount, quote code C2114 when purchasing products in store, via telephone or through their website

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

### Photo competition

Due to the popularity of the photo competition, it is continuing to run, there are so many interesting and inspiring photographs being entered which you can view by visiting

[www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)

Why not enter your own photographs of canoeing? Each month one winner is chosen by you and wins £25 vouchers (the overall prize, chosen at the end of year, wins a digital camera worth £150). For an opportunity to win start clicking now!

### Rivers Access Campaign

Get your MP afloat!



The Rivers Access Campaign is continuing to rally the support of MPs. The aim is to keep the argument for clear legislation

regarding rivers access, firmly on the political agenda.

You can help support the campaign by inviting your MP to go out with you in a canoe, go along to your club or to an event or competition. Meeting your MP is a great opportunity to highlight the many benefits of canoeing and will help raise the profile of canoeing.

For more details on the campaign visit the website, which is updated frequently [www.riversaccess.org.uk](http://www.riversaccess.org.uk)

### Happy Paddling!

The next issues of Canoe Focus in

2007 are:  
 - August  
 - October  
 - December

#### PADDLE THIS

### Competition Sprint racing

**World Cup 1** congratulations to the K2 pair Lucy Wainwright and Abigail Coulson, who won a silver medal in the 500m event in the first World Cup held at Zagreb. Tim Brabants demonstrated his form by winning a bronze medal in the men's K1 1000m event. Jonnie Schofield who only made the switch from wild water racing to sprint racing this winter achieved a very respectable seventh in the men's K2 500m with Ben Brown.

**World Cup 2:** Tim Brabants won another bronze medal in the men's K1 1000m, well done.

### Slalom team

The selection races took place at Holme Pierrepont Nottingham, over two consecutive weekends and finished with some very exciting racing. The course was tough and there were plenty of first class paddlers battling for places. Good luck to all team members for the forthcoming international events.

MK1	WK1	C1	C2
Richard Hounslow	Fiona Pennie	David Florence	Tim Baillie/Etienne Stott
Campbell Walsh	Laura Blakeman	Stuart McIntosh	Dan Goddard/Nick Smith
Huw Swetnam	Lizzie Neave	Colin Radmore	Andrew Marshall/Adam Marshall

### Freestyle World Championships in Ottawa

**Team GB** were very successful at the world championships held in Ottawa, winning several medals.

Fiona Jarvie won gold in the women's K1; Ben White won gold and Greg Nicks won bronze in the men's squirt; Claire O'Hara won silver and Emma Runciman won bronze in the women's squirt.

### Wild water racing Euro Championships

Congratulations to Jonnie Schofield who was crowned European Champion and to Jessica Oughton, who in her first year as a senior won a bronze medal in the women's K1 sprint event, missing out on silver by just 0.01 second.

Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
1-Jun	3-Jun	Sprint Racing	World Cup Race 3, Gerardmer, FRA
2-Jun	3-Jun	Slalom	Bala Mill, Premier & Div 1
2-Jun	3-Jun	Slalom	Langham Farm, Div 3 & 4
2-Jun	3-Jun	Sprint Racing	Senior National Championship Regatta, Holme Pierrepont
3-Jun		Marathon Racing	Hayton
3-Jun		Marathon Racing	Bristol
3-Jun		Freestyle	Youth Series, Nene
9-Jun	10-Jun	Marathon Racing	World Cup 1, Skanderborg, DEN
9-Jun	10-Jun	Slalom	Sowerby Bridge, Div 3 & 4
9-Jun	10-Jun	Slalom	Holme Pierrepont, Pan Celtic Cup, Premier & Div 1
9-Jun	10-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Cup 1 & 2, Lofer, AUT
10-Jun		Marathon Racing	Windsor Vets
10-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal Leamington Spa
10-Jun		Marathon Racing	Bath to Bradford
10-Jun		Marathon Racing	Derwent
10-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal
13-Jun		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series 10km
16-Jun	17-Jun	Canoe Polo	Merseyside International, Liverpool
16-Jun		Marathon Racing	Conwy Ascent
16-Jun	17-Jun	Slalom	Fairmilee, Div 2, 3 & 4
16-Jun	17-Jun	Slalom	Stone Town Council Cup, Div 3 & 4
16-Jun	17-Jun	Slalom	European Championships, Liptovsky Mikulas, SVK
16-Jun		Surf	St Ives Bay Contest
16-Jun	17-Jun	Surf	Magheraroarty, North West Donegal
16-Jun	17-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Cup 3 & 4, Karlovy Vary, CZE
17-Jun		Marathon Racing	Oxford
17-Jun		Marathon Racing	Leighton Buzzard
17-Jun		Marathon Racing	Burton
17-Jun		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Regatta
17-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Chester Dee, Div B & Youth
22-Jun	24-Jun	Freestyle	European Cup, Lienz, AUT
23-Jun	24-Jun	Canoe Sailing	Gratham
23-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal Paddling Challenge
23-Jun	24-Jun	Slalom	Cardington, Div 2 & 3 & Jun & Vet Championships
23-Jun	24-Jun	Surf	HP Series Qualifying Round 2
23-Jun	24-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Cup 5 & 6, Ivrea, ITA
24-Jun		Marathon Racing	Reading Circuit
24-Jun		Marathon Racing	Fal
24-Jun		Marathon Racing	Hereford
24-Jun		Marathon Racing	Macclesfield 2
24-Jun		Sprint Racing	Scottish Championship
24-Jun		Multi-Sport	Coniston Race - Duddon Canoe Club
25-Jun	1-Jul	Freestyle	European Cup, SWE
27-Jun	1-Jul	Sprint Racing	European Championships, Pontevedra, ESP
29-Jun	1-Jul	Slalom	World Cup Race 1, Prague CZE
30-Jun	1-Jul	Marathon Racing	Cheshire Ring
30-Jun	1-Jul	Slalom	Hatfield Water Park, Div 4 & Open
30-Jun	1-Jul	Slalom	Shepperton, Div 3 & 4
1-Jul		Marathon Racing	Wey
1-Jul		Marathon Racing	Shropshire
1-Jul		Multi-Sport	Ullswater Race - Cumbria Canoeists
6-Jul	8-Jul	Slalom	World Cup Race 2, Tacen, SLO
7-Jul	8-Jul	Canoe Polo	Hull International
7-Jul		Multi-Sport	Youthfest, Nottingham, NWSC
7-Jul	8-Jul	Slalom	Washburn, Div 2 & Open
7-Jul	8-Jul	Sprint Racing	Junior National Championship Regatta, Eton/Dorney
11-Jul		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series 10km
13-Jul	15-Jul	Slalom	World Cup Race 3, Augsburg, GER
14-Jul	15-Jul	Canoe Sailing	Weston
14-Jul	15-Jul	Marathon Racing	European Championships, Trancin, SVK
14-Jul	15-Jul	Slalom	Orton Mere, Div 3 & 4
14-Jul		Sprint Racing	Royal Junior Regatta
14-Jul	15-Jul	Surf	English Nationals
14-Jul		Wild Water Racing	Nene 2 (Wavehoppers only) Div B & Youth
15-Jul		Marathon Racing	Soar Valley
15-Jul		Marathon Racing	Lower Exe
15-Jul	22-Jul	Wild Water Racing	World Championships Juniors, Charlotte/Columbia, USA
21-Jul		Marathon Racing	Reading K4
21-Jul	22-Jul	Slalom	Washburn, Yorkshire Water Championships, Div 1
23-Jul	29-Jul	Freestyle	European Cup, Galicia, ESP
27-Jul	29-Jul	Slalom	Pre World Championships Juniors, Roudnice nad Labem, CZE
27-Jul	29-Jul	Sprint Racing	World Championships Juniors, Racice, CZE
29-Jul		Marathon Racing	Southampton

June

July

Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
2-Aug	5-Aug	Slalom	European Championships U23 & Juniors, Athens, GRE
5-Aug	6-Aug	Canoe Polo	Welsh International, Pembroke
5-Aug		Marathon Racing	Medway
5-Aug		Marathon Racing	Inverness, Highland Series
6-Aug	10-Aug	Canoe Sailing	National Championships & European Cup, Loch Lomond
8-Aug		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series 10km
8-Aug	12-Aug	Sprint Racing	World Championships, Duisburg, GER
11-Aug	12-Aug	Slalom	Nene White Water Course, Div 2, 3 & 4
16-Aug	19-Aug	Slalom	Olympic Test Event, Beijing, CHN
18-Aug	19-Aug	Marathon Racing	National Championship, Wokingham
18-Aug	19-Aug	Slalom	Fairnilee, Div 2, 3 & 4
18-Aug	19-Aug	Slalom	Llandysul River Festival, Div 3 & 4
18-Aug	19-Aug	Surf	British Plastic Championships, Watergate Bay
19-Aug	20-Aug	Canoe Polo	London International
19-Aug		Marathon Racing	Bradford Circuit
23-Aug	26-Aug	Sprint Racing	Olympic Test Event, Beijing, CHN
25-Aug	26-Aug	Slalom	Grandtully, Div 1 & 2
26-Aug		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Regatta
30-Aug	2-Sep	Sprint Racing	European Championships, U23 & Juniors, Belgrade, SCG

August

### Have we missed any?

We have compiled the list from those events which people have notified us of and we do our best to ensure that the information is correct at the time of writing. However, circumstances change, so if this is the case or if you know of any competition events that you think should be added, contact: Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk

### Where can I view a calendar of the whole year?

Visit the BCU and Canoe England web sites ([www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)) and follow the link 'News & Events'. A full list is available to download in PDF format here.

### I am new to competition events - what's it all about and how do I enter?

There are many paddlers who may not have thought about the competition side much, but disciplines DO welcome newcomers. The next issue of Canoe Focus will provide more information for those who are thinking of trying a competition for the first time. Alternatively, look in the directory for details the contact person of a particular discipline, or visit the BCU web site ([www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)) and look under 'disciplines' to visit a discipline's web site.

### Club events

We are aware that there are hundreds of club based events that take place throughout the year. Unfortunately we will be unable to list them all here, however we are very keen to publicise them, we want the BCU web site to become the place people post details of events, email Shruti Passi: [shruti.passi@bcu.org.uk](mailto:shruti.passi@bcu.org.uk)

### For more information on all disciplines and events visit:

Canoe polo: [www.canoepolo.org.uk](http://www.canoepolo.org.uk)

Canoe sailing: [www.intcanoe.org.uk](http://www.intcanoe.org.uk)

Flat water racing:  
Visit BCU, then 'Disciplines' and 'Flat water racing'

Freestyle: [www.ukfreestyle.com](http://www.ukfreestyle.com)

Marathon racing: [www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk)

Slalom: [www.canoeslalom.co.uk](http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk)

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## Another outdoor degree?

There's a buzz happening in Lochaber. It started with the Outdoor Capital of the UK, a company set up to market the area and its attributes.

Lochaber College UHI, Fort William, soon became actively involved in looking at how to provide vocationally based education and training, providing high quality leadership, instruction and service in the outdoors.

A family of courses at Lochaber College UHI have come about through an ever-growing partnership between a range of bodies in the area – schools, businesses and the college.

The courses include a new degree in Adventure Tourism Management, starting in September and an SVQ Level 2 Activity Leadership course, specifically designed to cater for people who have enthusiasm and commitment, but not necessarily experience.

The courses cover a broad scope, and will attract a wide range of students with different aspirations and preferences. Depending on where they exit, every student should be an attractive employment proposition. The practical and vocational skills are the kind of thing that students can apply in the outdoor activity sector, combined with life skills that they can take anywhere.

For more information please contact Dan Morgan or Debbie Williams at Lochaber College UHI on 01397 874 000

## PADDLE THIS

### Bringing Wales on board with the 'Paddle for Life'

In April, Sandy Buttle MBE, President, Phil Blain, Chairman, along with directors and officers of the WCA signed the 'Paddle for Life' in Llandrindod Wells. Shortly before this took place, the paddle had been signed in Sedgefield by PM Tony Blair and in Westminster by Michael Martin, Speaker of the House of Commons. Seb Coe, Mike Haslam of the Dragon Boat Association, and Paul Owen, CEO of the BCU had previously signed the paddle.

When the paddle signing in the UK is complete the paddle will be signed by the American Embassy then flown to the US for further signings, including the Governor of Minnesota, the Senator and the Chief of the Dakota. The signed paddle will be used as the world's first perpetual trophy for the Main University Boat Race for the Blue Planet. The race will be over 2012 yards, symbolising all the world coming on board for a post 2012 Kyoto agreement on global warming, and of course London 2012. Liberty Bell Boats, built in the US, will be used with student crews representing the great civilisations and cultures of the world. All will have made their 'Paddle for Life', and pledged to keep it for life. A Main University Boat Race will take place in Wales later in the year and other British universities are expected to introduce races.

David Train, former Olympic Coach, developed 'Paddle for Life' in Fladbury. Paddling bell boats is part of an extended programme of active learning in which children plant and grow willows that they crop to build and decorate paddles. They pledge to keep the paddle for life, thus sinking carbon and learning about the carbon cycle. The programme is designed to promote sustainability and long-term thinking, but for those who cannot wait to grow the



willows before taking part, it is possible to obtain plain wooden paddles on the basis of two trees planted for every paddle sold.

The flagship of the 'Paddle for Life' is the Liberty Bell Boat. Liberty Bell Boats can be economically built in the community using environmentally sustainable methods and materials, bringing the programme within reach of all. The prototype Liberty Bell Boat was built in a domestic garage in Fladbury, and further boats were built in the same way in the US.

As the programme nears the ultimate aim of the Main Race for the Blue Planet taking place on a worldwide basis, many links are being completed. The children's story of turning a sword and shield into a paddle as a way of replacing conflict with team-work and co-operation, was inspired when David heard the (then) speaker of the House of Commons talking about the origins of the British Parliamentary system; so the signing of the paddle by the present speaker is particularly significant.

David's aim is to bring the world on board, country by country, village by village, school by school, club by club.

**Pam Bell**

## Discover Lundy Island

Sea Kayaking South West are now offering Lundy Island sea kayaking adventures.

Using the charter boat 'Obsession II' to get paddlers and kit to and from the island, they are running day trips

and multi-day camping trips to Lundy island; no experience is necessary. As you paddle along the Lundy coast there is an amazing array of wildlife to watch and encounter, from the biggest sea bird colony in the south west of England to the resident seals and even a basking shark.

Based on the North Devon coast, SKSW are also offering everything from

taster sessions and day trips along their spectacular coastline, to accommodation based holidays and even island-hopping expeditions to the Outer Hebrides.

SKSW also run their own introduction to sea kayaking and sea kayak improver courses.

For their 2007 brochure contact Sea Kayaking South West. Email - [info@seakayakingsouth.co.uk](mailto:info@seakayakingsouth.co.uk) or call - 01271 813129 or visit - [www.seakayakingsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.seakayakingsouthwest.co.uk)



## PADDLE THIS

### North Wales experience

Coastal Spirit offers sea kayaking, rock climbing and hill walking tours in North Wales. A unique guided adventure to those memorable places, which allows you to experience our natural world close up. Their programmes are suitable for those who are 18 or over, from the beginner to the more experienced paddler, climber or walker.

Coastal Spirit is managed by Sonja Ezergailis who has undertaken a number of open canoeing and sea kayak expeditions and Roger Chandler who has walked, climbed and paddled throughout the UK and led groups in the Southern Ocean and Chilean Patagonia, the Mediterranean Sea, and above the arctic circle, to Norway's Lofoten islands. Have a look at their web site [www.coastalspirit.com](http://www.coastalspirit.com) and imagine the sense of freedom, the spirit of discovery and adventure. The North Wales coastline provides ideal venues for exciting and inspirational journeys.



**PADDLE THIS**

## Canoeing – most popular watersport for the fifth year running!

A recent survey has shown that Canoeing is the most popular watersport for the fifth year running. This was reported in an independent survey of adult participation carried out on behalf of the RYA\*, BMF\*, MCA\* and RNLI\*.

The trend is also evident in the steady and consistent growth in the British Canoe Union's membership figures, which are increasing at 9% per year. Whilst participation is going up, membership is increasing at an even faster pace, indicating that more and more people recognise the benefits of joining the BCU.

It would seem that the National Governing Body is not the only organisation to benefit from this dynamic sports' popularity. The dramatic increase in the sports popularity has had a positive impact in the commercial sector. Key canoe manufacturers have seen growth in sales, many of whom will be present at a number of large shows across the country during the summer months where over ½ million people are expected to attend.

Dean Maragh, Chief Executive of the Association of Canoe Trades, comments, "We've seen the popularity of canoeing through our 'Canoe Village' feature at several large, national shows. It's a real boost for the trade and great to see so many people enjoying paddling."

The popularity of the sport and recreation is quite clear, given its many benefits, including:

### Truly inclusive

Regardless of age, ability or goals with 8 different types of canoeing, 500 clubs in the UK and over 9,000 qualified



coaches there is something for everyone. The survey demonstrates that canoeing is very popular among family members and is particularly enjoyed by those aged 35 years and over.

### Great recreation

Whether it is fast flowing, white water, or flat recreational paddling or even a team activity like canoe polo, canoeing caters for all tastes.

### Healthy active

The attractive combination of getting close to nature, getting fresh air and keeping fit at the same time is difficult to ignore. It is a great way to build strength and to work the cardio vascular system.

### Social activity

Canoe and kayaking is a great way to meet new people. This could be by going to a local club, paddling with friends or volunteering. Paul Owen, Chief Executive of the BCU comments: "The survey confirms what we already know, this is a fantastic sport with many benefits and is enjoyed by so many, which is why it continues to be such a popular and rapidly growing sport."

## Ken Phillips

The Racing community, and in particular, the regatta officials, were sad to hear of the recent death of Ken Phillips. After several months of suffering, Ken died in hospital on Sunday February 11th. Our sincere sympathy goes to his wife Eileen; they were a devoted and loyal couple that celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary just last year.

Both Ken and Eileen have worked on the National Watersports Centre canoeing regattas for over 25 years. Along with a volunteer group of canoeing supporters they were recruited to help in the late 1970s, in preparation for the Nottingham World Championships in 1981.

Ken and Eileen worked laboriously typing handwritten results onto 'Gestetener' stencils. It was just as important then to get the results out quickly as it is now, but far more difficult and very messy when the machine went wrong. They were the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Ken continued to make meticulous checks of the results which began to flow easily from computer printers. But then, also became more involved with race records and promotions, and contributed ideas as to how this job could be done fairly in the wild weather conditions of the Watersports Centre. He was always quiet and very conscientious; tidy, systematic and always had the tools for the job. Above all, he was incredibly reliable and kept all the paperwork filed, ready to answer any query that may arise in the future.

Eileen declined the privilege of working on computers and became the social centre of the regatta officials' world. She provided tea, coffee and organised the meals, which kept everyone going. She arrived loaded down with homemade cakes and thermos flasks for many years, until Ken's health dictated that they should both retire from the job in 2004.

Ken was as quiet as Eileen is robustly enthusiastic and they both had their own way of supporting our sport. Together they made helping at regattas a priority in their life and gave their time willingly and with pleasure. His wife of 50 years as well as many of us who remember him as a good friend and colleague will sadly miss Ken.

Let us all remember that Eileen loves a chat, loves someone to pop in and eat her delicious cakes, likes having people around her... and help her through this very lonely time.

Di Lawler

## Students brave the ww rapids of central Asia

Two students from the University of Nottingham are preparing to take on the white water rapids of the mighty rivers of Siberia and Mongolia.

The prestigious Four Borders Expedition is made up of some of the best white water kayakers British universities can offer. Graham Milton, a second year Industrial Economics student, will lead the eight-strong team. He was selected after a gruelling selection weekend last November, along with third year Physiotherapy student, Paul Sherman.

The team will be rafting some of the most difficult rivers in the Altai Mountains, some of which have never been kayaked before. The students will be entirely self-sufficient, battling down fierce, icy rivers, days from civilisation, in boats loaded with food and

overnight camping gear. Teamwork will be essential as any mistakes could be disastrous.

Graham, who first started paddling ten years ago at the age of 11, says they chose Siberia and Mongolia because of the incredible scenery and huge, long stunning rivers. His biggest challenge will be keeping everyone safe yet pushing them hard. "Our main danger will be the fact that we are so remote. If one person has to eject from their kayak then we have to get them out of the water as quickly as possible and then get their kayak and paddle out. Otherwise, it could be a day's walk to the nearest road."

The grading for rivers is 1–6. One is a ripple — six marks areas that are "a serious threat to life". They will be kayaking plenty of class 5 rapids and

carrying their boats around the Grade 6 stretches. 21-year-old Graham, from East Horsley in Surrey, says it might not be that easy. "Another danger of kayaking is paddling into a canyon where the walls would be too steep to climb out or inspect a rapid. We always have to monitor the banks as well as the rivers. On some rivers we will carry all our over-night kit and food for several days making our boats heavy to manoeuvre through the rapids and hard to carry around the class six rapids.

Paul, 31, from Perth in Scotland, has turned his love of kayaking into a life-style. He says it has taken him to some "awesome places". In Iceland he worked as a river guide. He also spent three seasons in Colorado as a senior guide running kayak/rafting trips — some of them lasting up to eight days.

The team fly out to Siberia on 3 July 2007. They will be taking still and video pictures of the expedition. A third member of the team is Tom Hunter, from Sheffield, who is studying at Nottingham Trent University.

## HandiRack competition

The four winners selected at random are as follows:

- Caroline Green of Bucks
- James Humphries of Devon
- Carole Sullivan of Swansea
- Ricky Clarke of Coventry

## CCPR research

The CCPR are currently undertaking a research project which aims to understand the impact of current and future Government legislation on sports clubs. This will enable CCPR to argue more effectively on behalf of sport and recreation.

Please could you spare 10-15 minutes of your time to complete the following survey, upon completion you will be entered into a prize draw to win your club £500 of sports equipment, courtesy of Decathlon! Please click on the following link or paste it into your web browser, thanks for your time!

<http://www.sportinginsights.com/ccpr/survey.htm>

## PADDLE THIS

### Bitches website launched

[www.the-bitches.co.uk](http://www.the-bitches.co.uk)

A new website has been launched that is dedicated to providing information for paddlers about The Bitches white water play spot near St Davids in Pembrokeshire. Designed by local canoeist, Matt O'Brien, the site aims to give the basic information needed to get on the water safely. As well as the tidal information there are ideas on what to do when you can't get out to the Bitches, including a mention of Whelping (bitching on the ebb flow) and information on the marine environment. There are other plans for the site and these will be introduced during the rest of the year.



### Longest day paddle

On the 21st June 2007, Shaun, Mark and Brett will set off from Sennan Cove (Lands End) and paddle back to St Margarets Bay (Dover) in their sea kayaks to raise money for charity.

They will carry everything they need and plan to camp on the beaches for the 450 mile challenge which will take them two weeks, paddling 30-40 miles per day.

Mark Foulds and Shaun Cullen are fire fighters at Dover Fire Station and Brett Meredith is a local Dover carpenter. They are working in close consultation with HM Coastguard and the RNLI as well as the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) and they plan to promote fire and sea safety along the way.

They are supporting the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund who look after injured fire fighters and their families and the Dover Water Sports Centre who help disadvantaged children get back on track through water sports.

Their training has already started and they plan to keep a video and photo diary during training and the expedition. The local press has already taken a keen interest, as have the media sections of the KFRS and HM Coastguard.

[www.longestdaypaddle.talktalk.net](http://www.longestdaypaddle.talktalk.net)

### Development officers appointed in N. Ireland

Two development officers have been appointed within Northern Ireland by two different organisations but aiming to achieve similar aims. Ashley Hunter is the new Coaching Development Officer for the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) and Kathryn Callaghan is the new Countryside Recreation and Waterbased development officer for The Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN).

Ashley's post aims to develop paddle sport in general within Northern Ireland, while Kathryn will focus on developing access, information and infrastructure for paddlers.

#### Ashley will be working on;

- The implementation of the BCU - UKCC coaching scheme.
- Assisting clubs and club paddlers in their progression.
- Athlete and facilities development for the 2012 Olympics.
- Assisting N.I national squads in their development and successes.
- The design and implementation of new projects.
- Raising additional finances for paddlesport projects.
- And finally building the sport in many areas.

#### Kathryn will be working on;

- The development of new canoe trails across Northern Ireland, including The Lower Bann, Blackwater, Lough Neagh, and Strangford Lough canoe trails.
- The provision of interactive, online paddling information for Northern Ireland.
- The publication of canoe trail guides for each of the trails.

There is a long history of paddlesport success within Northern Ireland which includes respected expedition leaders, leading BCU coaches, Olympic and world-class athletes and squads, and a high number of recreational paddlers in all disciplines. There is also a large expanse of water to use so we hope that the canoe trails will encourage more people into the sport and onto the water.

It is CANI's and CANN's aim to continue these successes and encourage more people to participate in the sport.

For further information either contact: Ashley Hunter at CANI on 08702 405065 or [cdo@cani.org.uk](mailto:cdo@cani.org.uk) or Kathryn Callaghan CANN on 02890 303937 or

[kathryn@countrysiderecreation.com](http://kathryn@countrysiderecreation.com)

## OBITUARIES

### Martin Compton

Sadly we learn of the death of Martin Compton a long time BCU member. More recently Martin was enjoying paddling his K1 and sea kayak in Carrick Roads and around Falmouth. During the 80s he spent considerable time establishing a following in sprint and marathon racing in Cornwall, initially within the Scout movement and subsequently as a leading figure in the establishment of the River Fowey CC based at Golant.

Most weekends saw him not only racing himself but unselfishly helping youngsters attend Nottingham sprints or a marathon race, following the arduous drive from deepest Cornwall. Martin's death was sudden and unexpected having been paddling up until only a few days before. His willingness to encourage others and time spent listening will be missed by many. Our best wishes to his wife Julie and young daughter Rebecca at this sad time.

Stan Missen, Bradford on Avon CC

### Peter Denton

It is with sadness I have to report Peter Denton suddenly passed away peacefully on Friday 4th May 2007.

Peter, who was 68, got involved in canoeing when one of his sons, Richard, started in C1 in the early 80's. In 1985 Peter got involved with section judging; he qualified as an ICF Judge and in 1986 looked after the Judges Register and became a gate judge examiner; he also officiated and chaired at many Premier and Division One events. In 1987 Peter devised and set up the Officials Competition and continued with this for ten years. Peter slowly gave up on section judging duties but continued to run gate judges exams until five years ago.

Peter was on the Cardington Artificial Slalom Course Management Committee (CASC) and regularly did the 'opening and closing' for organisations.

Peter supported the sport by helping at Viking KC events of whom he was an honorary vice president. Most of the slalom fraternity who attended the National Inter Club Finals will remember Peter sitting on the finish gate for hours on end. He will be sadly missed

Our thoughts go to Peter's Wife Ann and his family.

Jim Croft BCU Slalom Administrator and a friend

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## Letters

## Voluntary access agreements

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article 'Putting Pilot Voluntary Access Agreements in Place – Update' that ran in April's edition of Canoe Focus.

The text cited in the article came from a very early working draft of a letter to River Wear stakeholders but was not included in the final version. This is because it is not Environment Agency policy to advise photographing canoeists. Neither do we comment on trespass because this is a civil issue in which we have no role.

We are keen to assure canoeists that it is our policy to help interested parties increase access to water for all where it does not adversely impact on the environment and existing river users.

Yours sincerely,  
William Crookshank  
National Recreation Manager

### Reply from Canoe England

The article in the April issue of Canoe Focus quoted from three letters to stakeholders provided by the Environment Agency to Canoe England and understood to be in the public domain. The Canoe England Access Policy Group is pleased to learn the Environment Agency has clarified their policy and advice to landowners in a revised letter.

NB. The Agency has written to stakeholders in each of three sections of river with the following position statement:

#### ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NORTHUMBRIA AREA Position statement – Wear Canoe Access Pilot

The recent DEFRA-funded project carried out by Brighton University sought to investigate whether or not it would be possible to negotiate a voluntary agreement for canoe access on the River Wear in Durham. This project has now finished and the Northumbria Area of the Environment Agency is seeking to resolve the issues that this pilot project has raised.

After careful consideration, we have decided to take a different approach on three stretches of the lower River Wear:

- Low Butterby to Shincliffe Bridge.
- Shincliffe Bridge to The Sands.
- The Sands to Finchale Priory.

More details of what we intend to do on each stretch of the river are given below.

#### Low Butterby to Shincliffe Bridge

We will not actively pursue a negotiated voluntary access agreement for canoeing on this stretch

## CONTRIBUTION DETAILS

Email: peter@canoefocus.co.uk

Post: Canoe Focus Letters, 49 Greenfields, St Ives, Cambs PE27 5HB

at the present time. During 2007 we will survey the fishery in this stretch and we will inform landowners of the environmental issues concerning canoe access on this stretch of the River Wear. If landowners decide that they wish to encourage canoe activity here, we will work with them to ensure that this will not harm the fishery.

#### Shincliffe Bridge to the Sands

We will work with landowners and river user groups to negotiate a voluntary access agreement for canoeing along this stretch. We aim to substantially achieve this by May 2007. If significant progress has not been made by this time we will consider stopping work on this initiative for the present. In this event, landowners might decide to dedicate a Right of Open Access under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act.

#### The Sands to Finchale Priory

In view of the strong opposition from landowners and other river users we will not pursue a negotiated voluntary access agreement for canoeing along this stretch of the River Wear, at the present time.

Northumbria Area, March 2007

## Members Classified

For some time now I have wanted to write to the BCU regarding the non-appearance of the Members Classified advertisements.

Until recently, we have always had 'Member's Classified' included in our magazine, providing a valuable service to members both buying and selling. I, myself have used this service.

I find that online advertisements are inconvenient (or even impossible for some members) to access and therefore they discourage the casual perusal by members that could generate a sale.

Consequently, it is a far less effective method of selling member's boats and equipment, compared to the written word in the magazine. Please would you reconsider bringing the 'Members Classified' back for the members.

Sincerely  
Frank Stevenson

I appreciate your position if you are unable to gain access to the internet, however, such is the fast moving nature of selling used equipment meant the Member's Classified page was outdated in its first week after being printed.

Consequently, the decision was made to put the information on the Canoe Focus website where the items can be updated daily. Ed.

## Nowzad dogs

Thank you so much for publishing my letter in my quest to raise money for the Nowzad Dogs of the Helmand Province in Afghanistan whilst I was serving out there.

The response I had from some readers of Canoe Focus was fantastic – I would be grateful if you are able to pass on my thanks – it is so appreciated and with the money we

have raised so far we have managed to get three of the dogs and eleven of the puppies to safety at an animal rescue in Kabul. Leaving them behind after all we went through together would not have been something I could contemplate.

I am now back in the UK as I broke my ankle a few weeks ago and have managed to get the Nowzad Dogs website up and running as I have nothing else I can do all day! We are now aiming to raise enough money to get the dogs back to the UK and to further highlight the suffering of the ones we had to leave behind... this time. Sgt 'Penny' Farthing  
In the August edition there will be a competition with prizes of river coaching from 'Penny' as a way of saying thankyou to readers who helped the plight of the dogs. Ed.



LOCATION: The Peace Statue, Howe Lawns

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# Doing the

John is South African and grew up in and around PMB. He got into paddling after toying with rowing and with a combination of partners completed four Duzi races. He then came over to the UK and has done a bit of paddling with me. After a few years of talking about it, we finally managed to get out for the race. The plan was simple and good. The race is Thursday, Friday, Saturday so we would arrive the weekend before and have Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to sort out the boat and paddle (trip) a few sections of the river.



Boat shakedown before race

We arrived in Durban to plan but there was a problem. Water. There wasn't any in the river. So Plan A had been to trip some of the middle of the race to learn some of the rapids and get used to the style of the river. But as we couldn't do this we went to Plan B. Plan B was drive some of the route and look at rapids where we could see them.

We had to get up very early to look at the route and recon the portages. Even though we left at 5:30 am it was still fiercely hot by the time we had finished and went back to base for breakfast at 10:30 to 11.

This left plenty of time to play with the race boat and visit the world famous Popes Canoe Centre. Graham Pope-Ellis winner of numerous Duzis and all round paddling legend started Popes. He started making his own kit as he couldn't buy it and created a market. He has sold Popes now but Owen Hemmingway is a character too. Canoe shop proprietors seem to be the same world over.

Fortunately there is a release of water for the race and this kicks in on Wednesday evening.

## Thursday, race day one

As there are 1,600 competitors the start is split into batches of 60 boats every ten minutes. Batch A is the top paddlers. We were in batch P. We got up extra early and watched the top paddlers shoot

Ernie Pearce weir only 1,000m after the start.

We had a good start and were third boat from our batch



The before shot

Writing a narrative of ones adventures is difficult. To you, the writer, it is all fascinating and very interesting. The jokes hilarious and surely everyone wants to know about it. The truth is somewhat different. For someone who wasn't there it can all be a little trivial and trite and the writer has not explained anything that the reader wants to know. And this is the situation I find myself in. With my good friend John Drummond, I went out to South Africa in January 2007 to race the Hansa Powerade Dusi. The Dusi? An 80 mile, three day, marathon canoe race between Pietermatitzberg (PMB) and Durban. **James Treadgold describes his experience.**

over Ernie Pearce weir. A good shoot and no swim. Then it was only ten minutes paddling down to the second weir, Commercial Road where there is a big crowd and TV cameras. And they got their monies worth with us. A perfect line but a touch too fast and we hit a rock. This stopped us dead. The water piled onto the back deck and popped the seams. The front six inches bent through 90°. We stayed in and up and got through the rocks below. Our support crew had almost left for the next stop but Shaun spotted our stop and ran over.

If you have ever repaired a glassfibre boat you'll know that it takes time. Well in SA they do it a bit differently. Hot mix. Rub the boat with newspaper to get rid of surface water. Sand down and apply resin with way too much catalyst. It goes off very quickly and gets very hot, hence the name. So an hour later we were back on the water in a fixed boat.

The rest of day one is hard with numerous rapids and some long runs. It was on the second long run that I had a bit of an accident. Whilst running hard downhill dragging the boat I went over on my right ankle and tore the ligaments. I've twisted ankles before but this was a whole new league. And I did say dragging the boat. SA marathon boats are made to the sprint weight minimums. This gives tough boats. And to speed things up down hill they are

dragged from towlines. It's not so bad over the grass but the shale is something else.

However it is much faster and saves the shoulders.

Anyway, we made it to the end of day one. John booked the boat into the repair shop and I went to get my ankle strapped.

Most of the major manufacturers offer a repair service if you have bought your boat from them. We had a Popes boat so Popes re-fixed the repairs we had done en-route. All one has to pay for is a 'tip' to the person doing the work.

## Friday, day two

We had somehow managed to climb up a few batches even with our adventures. So it was M batch for us, 671st on day one time. I had strapping tape round my right foot to stop any further damage and we had a fixed boat.

We headed our batch into the compulsory Duzi bridge portage 750m after the start. We were second boat away and stayed behind this wily crew as they had Duzi Rat stickers on their boat. You get a sticker after five completions; a lot of guys had '10' and '15' stickers. John said to follow them, as they would take good lines down the rapids and I did as I was told. Unfortunately, we were able to paddle much faster than them so we overtook and led our batch by a fair stretch into the first Saddles portage.

A short while after Saddles there is the confluence of the Umsunduzi with the Umgeni. The river gets much wider, faster, browner and the rapids get bigger. There had been a big storm on Thursday night and the river was stonking. It was so high that one of the major rapids was washed out. I didn't notice it at all.

Somewhere after this we had another misfortune. In the middle of a rapid I snapped off my left paddle blade. We didn't swim but were stuck with only one good set of blades. Luck was with us, as standing on the bank was a young man, a local, in normal clothes with a paddle. So we casually asked if it was his paddle. No. It then took my conscious about one microsecond to decide it was my new paddle. So the next question was "Can I have it?" He said yes. Game on John, let's go.

On we paddled and seemed to be taking most things in our stride. A good late take out on the Nqumeni portage and we passed loads of crews up the hill and ran down the other side. We portaged a couple of nasty rapids but then shot Hippo really well. I'm dead chuffed with that. Our spirits were lifted and we were enjoying it.

A bit further on we took a big swim in the middle of Big Bend Rapid. We had been down just about everything but we got a bit too sideways into a hole

# Dusi



Rock dodging at Side Shute rapid on day three



A minor rapid with an unknown crew

Chatting to other crews near Broken bridge

The Valley of 1000 Hills

Ernie Pierce weir on race day. Note brown water from the dam release

and over we went. It was a long swim through some big drops but it finally flattened out and we got to the bank. My Gees seat was wrecked. Very luckily the seat top was found so I sat on this on top of a bit of foam out of the back of the boat. Not great but good enough to see us to the start of the dam.

The dam is about 8km of flat water. We fuelled up, put in a spare seat, got a better paddle and set off. By now we were quite delayed and the fastest boat around. And I was fired up. I pulled hard and we stormed across the dam. One other K2 tried to come with us. They struggled to sit on our wash and we were way too easy on theirs. It was only a matter of time before they dropped. And they did. I think I wrecked John a bit on this too.

And so ended day two. Crossing the finish line is great. Either just before or just after getting out of your boat there are the Hansa Girls and Powerade Bunnies. Young attractive ladies in bikinis handing out cans of Hansa beer or bottles of Powerade/water/coke. Very welcome after five hours. We must investigate getting some for UK races...

## Saturday, day three

After climbing batches on day two we dropped back again to O batch for day three. We were 609th on time for day two and 622nd overall. After two days we had gained one batch. The last day starts on the dam and it is a 4km paddle to the portage at the dam wall, then a 1km run to put in right in the middle of a

rapid. Once again we blasted out from the gun and led across to the portage. It was a bit choppy but we dropped everybody by miles. We even caught the stragglers from the previous batch.

The water on day three is much cleaner as it comes out of the bottom of the dam. We had a good paddle down the first section and got big cheers from our support crew as we made it successfully through Side Shute. They had seen carnage before us but we were clean as a whistle.

Day three has the choice of either a paddle with lots of rapids or a 10km run with the boat. The portage is called Burma Road but this is just the name of the road you cross at the top of the hill. It is steep up and steep down. I hadn't flown for ten plus hours and 5,000 miles to portage so we went round. In doing so we did take our last swim in a fairly minor rapid. My fault as I didn't decide left or right early

enough and a rock caught us. Not too much time lost but very annoying. A few running repairs at the last portage, some very fun rapids and then it was more flat water all the way to the finish.

The finish at the Blue lagoon in Durban is very welcome. I accepted the beer, coke and Powerade from the girls (strange that) and had the finisher's photo taken. Two grinning idiots.

There's not a lot more to say. A few thanks are required. To most of the Drummond family – John's parents, sister, brother-in-law. To John's old paddling partners and assorted mates who helped us out. To the 'pale English ladies', my long-suffering wife Ursula and John's girl friend Natalie. The best support crew you could ask for. And John.

John and I are still friends even with the adventures. He shouted at me a lot when he thought my steering wasn't up to much and he was right most of the time. Day three was our best day on the water and we were 415th. Overall we came 561st out of 1090 finishing crews in 13h.2m.35s. The winner, Ant Stott had a time of 8h.3m.23s. What had we been doing for the other five hours? I had guessed we'd be in the top 150. The boat that shot the first weir just in front of us came 64th so top 150 was not an unreasonable expectation.

So 2007 was learning to paddle SA style. Roll on 2008; I'm going back, its unfinished business. If anybody wants to come with us and have a go, please get in touch. ●

## FACTS

The Hansa Powerade Dusi 2007 race sees the return to major competition of the K2 pairing of John Drummond and James Treadgold. John and James paddled the 2004 Devises to Westminster International Canoe Race finishing an agonising 65 seconds behind the winners in a total of 18 hours and 35 minutes of non-stop paddling!

# Route 66

## Antarctica style



It was a chance meeting at the canoe club I run when I first heard about a possible expedition to Antarctica; it was a few months off and nearing

Mike Devlin and Richard 'Russ' Abbot

the end of its planning process. I didn't hold out much hope of getting on it but asked anyway, there was a limit to the number of places and a strict requirement on qualifications. It didn't look likely I would be able to go until a good friend of mine, and new father to a son had to pull out; I was disappointed for him that he couldn't go, but will be eternally grateful to Joe for making sure I got his place.

One of the few penguins to miss the last plane from Devils Island







Expedition area

**Antarctica**



The team posing in front of the 1500ft Vertigo cliffs



The expedition members on the deck of HMS Endurance

The plan for the Expedition was to paddle around James Ross Island (JRI), a large island off the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. This had stemmed from a proposal to paddle Greenland 66 North and then 66 South at a later date. HMS Endurance the Royal Navy's Ice Patrol vessel provided us the perfect opportunity to get close to 66 South and explore the possibility of paddling around this previously Ice shrouded island.

It should go without saying that to attempt a challenge like this we needed to undergo some pretty serious training. My main effort went into growing a suitable cold weather expedition beard so I could look as steely as Scott et al in the photos. The training was much less arduous with roughly 2-3 hours a night on the ergo (Kayak rowing machine) and about an hour of weight training. This training regime was supplemented by some serious eating that more than compensated for any potential weight loss.

Many of the team competed in the 'Great North Run' and worked on their cardio work with running and sea kayaking trips in Scotland and Norway. This was not an option for me having damaged my knee kite boarding. So I was duty bound to keep at the rower.

The total expected expedition distance was going to be around 150 miles with possible extended

portages over the Ice. We had three days paddling on the Falklands during a stop on the way down which proved a great training ground. Mare Harbour to Stanley – 60 miles, the trip couldn't have been better as far as challenges went. The first came quickly, we chose to paddle to the end of the harbour and portage Berther's Beach - carrying or pulling fully loaded kayaks was a good workout with each weighing over 70kg.

The first of many lessons, having a strop to hand to drag your boat saves unpacking everything to find it. It is also near suicidal trying to shoulder a boat of this weight on your own, but one of us did it.

The second day brought strong winds that made progress hard till we rounded Tussock Island, confronted by the full force of the northerly winds in excess of 50 knots the crossing was to be impossible, we turned with the wind heading for 'shelter' and I use the term lightly. Mark (BV) was capsized in heavy kelp during his turn through the breaking waves. Unable to roll tangled in kelp and his boat's forward hold filling with water through the popped hatch we had our first swimmer! BV was quickly recovered to his boat by Russ and Mike, but lost the front hatch cover... Our cameraman was not happy!

Not wishing to remain long where we were on the exposed beach and with limited time to get back to our ship before it sailed to Antarctica, potentially without us; we planned for an early start and drew up two plans, the first to make a ditch effort for Bluff cove for a pick up, the second and preferred option was weather dependent and meant a long day to make up the time.

After an exhilarating and tiring day we'd paddled for almost twelve hours in some really testing conditions and covered over 35 miles to get to Port Stanley. The weather and sea were typically changeable for the Falklands. The passage through Pembroke Point was interesting! Possibly the hardest going section of our entire trip, in the huge swell and breaking surf, I felt we were all desperately hoping everyone was going to be ok, because I certainly wasn't looking forward to attempting a rescue in those conditions, and I don't think anyone else except perhaps Mike fancied it either.

Reaching Stanley, all members of the team had experienced something new and had a number of modifications in mind for kit before paddling in Antarctica. By the 17th we had sailed through the ice for a couple of days, and were desperate to get on the water. The current MET gossip: James Ross Island is iced in and impassable!

It was bad news; the ice concentration between Hamilton Point and Lockyer Island was 9-10/10th (that is 90-100% coverage) for a ten-mile stretch. There was a second massive concentration south of Persson Island too. The thick ice meant we'd be without ship support in the event of a crisis and would be extremely hard pushed to complete the required distance in the time we had. We had to admit it was very unwise for us to attempt the circumnavigation and conceded this year we'd have to alter our plans.

A quick rethink; we needed to get off the ship quickly to get most paddling time, making base camp in the nearest sheltered cove and producing several alternative routes including the one we finally went for, which was to circumnavigate Vega Island and then visit Egg, Red, Vortex, Humps and Devil Islands, covering approximately 105 nautical miles in the process.

We had our boats craned over the side of the ship and entered them from the rope boarding ladder dropped from the quarter deck. We set off under the watchful gaze of the captain and many of the ship's company who saw us off with waves, and faces that said rather you than me.

Excited to be on the water we headed for our base camp and start location at Martha's Cove S63 55.949 W057 40.163. The BBC south film crew and the ship's helicopter followed us out for the first couple of miles to get some aerial and close up photographs before leaving us to head on our way. We set up camp and secured the tent with rocks, a vital task as the wind can destroy camps leaving nothing to return to. The ship's company and British Antarctic survey teams have witnessed this in the past, and it was not going to happen to us.

### 18 Feb 2007 Destination Devil Island

Our first full day on the water was perfect, mirror calm sea with surprising warmth from the sun. The channel was filled with icebergs but with large easy to follow passages through them. The bergs were spectacular, ranging from wind and sea sculpted pieces of art, to blocks as large as two miles in size.

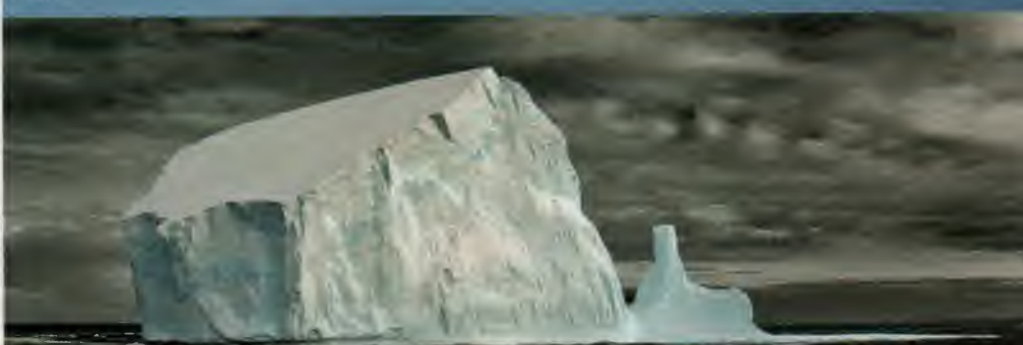
Feb 20th. Our first dusting of snow at camp 3



Townies first big seal launch with a fully laden sea kayak



Heading to base camp on the first day, spirits high.



One of the bigger loose bergs, some are several miles in length and over 500ft tall...

Some of the spectacular icicles around are over 8ft long.



[royalnavy.mod.uk/kayak](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/kayak)



Richard Abbott:  
Ships Navigator



Steve PH:  
PO Survival equipment



Pete Grey:  
PO Aircraft Engineer



Mark Jameson (BV) camera man the following: Navy Lynx Pilot



Mark Townsend: PO (MA)

Matt Twisleton: Lt Air Engineer

One of many seals, they all look cute for the photo's but don't get too close!



Typical ice concentrations, and a tight group to get through the closing gaps.



24th Feb. Aerial picture taken by the ship's Lynx Mk3 Helicopter, of us lunching on a berg.

Every few minutes there was something new to see, Fur, Weddell and Leopard Seals, and a lot of Adelie Penguins. Even the ice was interesting, having an intimidating habit of inverting or cracking apart with little or no warning, fun when you're next to them.

In the shadow of Devil Island we rose early to the icy cold and the rank smell from the remains of the Penguin colony. Getting up from a warm sleeping bag with frost on the tent requires a certain motivation, the brilliant clear blue skies and view of the ice filled Prinz Gustav Channel provided it, and we started the morning routine.

The first 30 minutes were silent as we shook off the stiffness and got into the paddling routine with the paddles rhythmically splashed the water providing the only sound on a glassy sea. Not a breath of wind, just the brilliant sunshine. The backdrop stupendous: to the left Erebus and Terror gulf stretched away, and to the right the cliffs of Vega Island stand tall. What a day to be alive and on the water. The wildlife seemed inquisitive, birds swooped over us, seals sunbathe and come in close to our boats, small fish and shrimp dart on the mirror surface and are often followed up by Minke whales which signal their arrival with loud blows that you can hear for miles. As we rounded the cape we got the first glance south. Fog rolling in from the Weddell; still a few hours away, we stopped in the sunshine on flat sea ice for early lunch. Everyone ravenously attacked biscuits brown, a basic military 24 hour ration staple carbohydrate. Your appetite changes when you're hungry... they tasted good for the first time!

As a white water paddler I felt the need to play, I dragged my boat to the top of a snowy mound on the berg and surfed down into the water, all on video of course [on youtube], and it got it out of my system. We still had a 13-mile crossing back to JRI, so back to more serious paddling. The fog rolled in, and only paddling kept us warm, over two hours into the crossing we needed a toilet break, paddling through Ice makes this much easier. Launching back into the water Pete reverse seal launched, his boat stopped half on and half off the berg against a small block and he toppled over into the freezing waters. After a few futile attempts to roll he tried to pull his spray deck, first ripping his drinks bottle off his deck instead, he came up gasping and scarlet faced from the cold. I called the others as I went to help him. Pete being both very fit and Norway trained as a Royal Marine managed to clamber back onto the ice off my boat and sort himself out quickly. BV recovered his boat, and Mike threw a dry hat and gloves. Our resident doc POMA 'Towney' ensured he was not suffering from hypothermia or frostbite but the Stikine drysuit had done its job. We set off quickly to get warm as everyone's hands were cold from holding onto the ice and recovering boats and paddles from the water. Crisis averted a stark contrast to lunch a few playful hours before.

The gloom refused to lift; with five nautical miles to go we constantly refined our navigation with GPS. As the coast peeled out of the murk, spirits rose and soon a campsite was identified. Minutes later we'd beached and tents were erected. Nearly 20:00 and the temperature plummets past zero we looked

forward to ten whole hours in it ('it' being your sleeping bag).

20 Feb 2007

We woke to a white world, what had been mud and stones the night before now a blanket of snow. The wind had picked up so we radioed the ship for a weather forecast and decided to sit tight. Waiting in a tent listening to the wind and watching the snowfall is cosy, you're warm, settled, and don't feel very motivated to get up and out. However, this cosiness soon turns to frustration. Knowing when to act is as important as acting itself. So we waited. Lunchtime came round and we re-assessed the plan. Nordenskjold's hut was too far and across the exposed Admiralty Sound, we needed to move back towards base camp and wait out the weather guaranteeing an unsupported circumnavigation of Vega Island.

It looked better after lunch so we decided to get back on the water and track back into Herbert Sound. The tents were simultaneously struck down at 1300; this is coordinated to ensure no one is left standing around

getting cold so everybody helps everyone. We watch to ensure the last person sets off ok, this time in the falling snow. The wind is behind us as we head back towards the Naze, via Humps Island and find ice blocking our way. Russ, the team navigator has to weave a course around the thicker concentrations. We follow in single file, fascinated by the beauty of the icebergs. We see the snow fall on the sea and freeze, building up a layer of white slush through which our kayaks carve a silent path. We work hard at maintaining forward progress and soon lose sight of the coast.

The humps of the so named island appear out of the falling snow, and the wind picks up ominously. A late lunch at 16:30 finds us huddled in the lee of a beached iceberg watching the tide come in. There is no tidal data in this area, part of the job that Endurance our parent ship is currently working on improving, but for

us it is guess work. We had timed our paddle to take advantage of the rising tide, but had not anticipated how quickly it rose. Even during our 45 minute stop we moved the kayaks twice to stop them drifting off.

We set off with some urgency as the wind had chilled us and daylight hours were running short. Our path was clear of ice and we soon discovered why; the wind had really got up, this time becoming threatening; 30 knots on the water is much more serious here than in the UK. Wind chill on exposed flesh drops the temperature and the danger of frostbite is significant. We check each other's exposed skin. Most are now wearing balaclavas and goggles. The white caps started breaking and the snow swirled across the water, a sure sign of the next gust. During the stronger gusts we're brought to a standstill. Now making the shelter of the shoreline becomes essential for survival so the pace picks up and each silently digs deep knowing what is required.

Our risk margin is now small, if anything goes wrong we'd all be in trouble. This focused our effort and a light banter broke out only as we regrouped in the lee of the shoreline. Our clothes were wet and stopping risky, we needed to find a sheltered place for the tents or keep moving, we picked our way round the shoreline hugging the cliffs and inching our

To find out more about HMS Endurance and the expedition - [www.visitandleam.co.uk](http://www.visitandleam.co.uk)






way round headlands. What little flat ground we found was too close to the high tide line, we pressed on. Mike and BV together spotted a possibility and landed to check the site, tucked in a valley well off the beach a bit of flat stream bed looked ok (not the season for flash floods).

We dragged the kayaks the 100m up to the site and set about erecting tents in the gale. It's a four-man job to put up each tent. And we worked together collecting rocks to hold down the flysheets and position the kayaks to afford some extra protection. Effort now pays later on, so we collected snow to melt for water and closed down the tents. We endured a noisy sleepless night wondering if the tents would blow away; we later hear from the ship that the wind was hitting our position at around 70 knots.

Next day we stayed put as the weather continued to ravage our tents, it's certainly below -25°C and the temperature's causing communication problems as the batteries go flat quickly even in the comparative warmth of the tent.

Following a frustrating day hunkered down; we rose to sunshine, calm seas and no wind. A great surprise and a real bonus as we could dry out wet gear, re-pack boats, and generally sort our lives out. The difference a day makes! The day's paddle via base camp to Lachlan point at the northerly tip of James Ross Island was calm and bright. No need for head-overs and balaclavas; just plenty of sunscreen and fluid. Schmoozing along Herbert Sound towards base initially ice free, we soon entered an iceberg graveyard. Paddling through brash ice and occasional open water we made our way through the serene bergs. Clearing the ice, we struck out for base across open water. Ten or so miles later, Russ and I race to be the first to circumnavigate Vega. He follows me in closely followed by the rest of the team; we were all ready for a good hot lunch and a long break.

Sunning ourselves and reflecting on the day we debated whether or not to continue – conditions were great, but the hold of base camp was tempting. Eventually we made the decision to carry on to Lachman point; we would paddle for another three hours. Again the paddling was easy going with light winds, however, as the sun went down we lost its warmth and began to feel the chill, firstly on our hands and then later as we approached the point we began to feel cold throughout.

Paddling past the Imposing 1,500 foot cliff line of west Vega we rounded the point and got our first views of the Graham Land and the Detroit Plateau. The breathtaking view across the Prince Gustaf Channel to the snowfields and mountains of the Antarctic Peninsula was truly fantastic and solidified our plan to land there.

The point provided us the best campsite. Poised between high cliffs and accessed via beached ice we shared our site with a few fur seals, seagulls and skuas. A cold but stunning amphitheatre of nature, only in middle earth could one imagine such a breathtaking site.

### February 23rd ; What a day!

Again this place never ceases to amaze through its beauty and ability to turn up the unexpected. The day started early, initially hard going with a few aches and pains creeping in from the previous few days and the cold. We reached Red Island after over four hours paddling, amazing with sheer cliffs on all sides and a statuesque rock formation on its western side called the monument. We stopped for a break to assess the ice concentration that had been increasing since we left Cape Lachman.

The going was getting tough through the ice with lots of detours to find the easiest leads through the ice. By the time lunch was due we had not reached the peninsular so we again lunched on a berg. More biscuits brown, always a delight, and some noodles, the obligatory photo shoot and on our way. No sooner had we started than we ground to a halt as we were penned in by moving ice [see youtube].

Continuously getting separated by closing leads, three of us were faced with a climb over the ice. This involved a few of the other guys assisting from the iceberg and some nifty footwork to get up from the kayak to the iceberg. We all managed it safely even when the last man, Mike, had the ice he was standing on disappear from beneath him. We carried on and finally made the peninsular on a beautiful rocky outcrop. We only stopped to view the ice conditions ahead but this was such a beautiful spot and with time getting on, the consensus was we'd stop for

the night. It was the right decision because although we were five miles short of our target the scenery we had discovered was stunning. We were literally surrounded by ice in all directions and sharing our campsite with some resident fur seals. To top this off, as the sun was setting we were visited by Minke whales that moved serenely in the bay below us.

The next day we made for Egg Island for morning tea (too many officers in the group), again hampered by the ice we diverted to Vortex Island to the south. Great experience and fun in the sunny conditions, we had on a number of occasions to get the boats from the water and drag them. It was a challenge but very rewarding at the same time, without teamwork our progress would have been very slow.

Again this place never ceases to amaze through its beauty and ability to turn up the unexpected



Rich 'Russ' Abbott, taking a break from leading us through a maze of ice

During the morning paddle through and over the ice, Towny's beloved kayak sustained a crack and took on water in his bow section, an emergency repair by our master and mentor Mr Devlin gets us on the water quicker than expected, what that man can't do with Harry Black maskers.

We had a further 13 nautical miles to Base Camp at Martha's Cove, the longest and dullest 13 miles of the trip, everything seemed grey and every outcrop started to look like the entrance to Martha's cove. Brisk winds were coming in from the west and hitting our starboard aft quarter, which made the paddle difficult even with skegs down. A great last night in the snow-covered cove, sharing celebratory drinks we had left at base camp, we had mixed feelings

about heading back to the ship. On the one hand it was good to know that we could get hot showers and sleep in comfort, on the other, our time on the water was coming to an end. With the way we paddled and dealt with the portages and the weather I am confident the team could have achieved the circumnavigation of James Ross Island. But without this trip to prove it we were not to know.

We were blessed with predominantly good weather and enough difficulties to make it feel like the challenge it was. The personal equipment we had was top line and was more than capable for the task. Our kit was inspected by a Royal Marine Detachment Sergeant Major Mountain Leader 1st class, and Palm, Lendal, and P&H had made sure that we had the best available.

I wish that all paddlers could experience this kind of trip and I recommend sea kayaking to everyone. While you read this account and look at the pictures I hope you can imagine the beauty of paddling in such a magical place. Of course it is not always tranquil; the environment here is very changeable and requires constant attention to prevent injury or worse. Our camping skills are all good as is our cold weather and survival knowledge. If you plan well and train hard, these obstacles can be minimised and this environment explored and enjoyed...

Happy Paddling. ●

Matthew James Twiselton, Lt Royal Navy.

Schmoozing along Herbert Sound towards base initially ice free, we soon entered an iceberg graveyard



From left to right: Mike D, Mark 'Towny' Townsend, and MAVs, Rich Abbott



One of many Ice arches we couldn't resist paddling under – length of detour no object



Mike Devlin appreciating the tranquil view from Cape crystal

## FACTS : COOL ANTARCTICA

1. If Antarctica's ice sheets melted, the world's oceans would rise by 60 to 65 metres.
2. Antarctica is pushed into the earth by the weight of its ice sheets. If they melted, it would 'spring back' about 500m. It would do this very slowly taking about 10,000 years to do so.
3. Antarctica is the best place in the world to find meteorites. Dark meteorites show up against the white expanse of ice and snow and don't get covered by vegetation. In some places, the way the ice flows concentrates meteorites there. The ice makes them gather in one place.
4. The cold and dry conditions in the 'dry valleys' region of Antarctica are so close to those on Mars that NASA did testing there for the Viking mission. It has not rained in the dry valleys for at least two million years.
5. One of the biggest icebergs ever (possibly the biggest iceberg ever) broke free from the Ross ice shelf in Antarctica in 2000. It was 295km long and 37km wide, with a surface area of 11,000 sq km above water - and ten times bigger below. It's similar in size to The Gambia, Qatar, The Bahamas, or Connecticut.
6. It has been estimated that during the feeding season in Antarctica, a full grown Blue whale eats about four million krill per day (krill are small shrimp-like creatures), that's 3,600 kg or four tons - every day for six months.
7. Since the Antarctic convergence arose about 20 million years ago, there has been very little exchange of fish or other marine life in either direction. This means that fish have lived in their side of the ocean and have not crossed over to their neighbours side. Antarctic fish have lived at between +2°C and -2°C for five million years (-2°C is the freezing point of sea water, below zero because of the salt). They are therefore the best cold adapted animals that there are on the planet.
8. A domestic deep freeze runs at about -20°C. The mean summer temperature on the great East Antarctica icecap is -30°C and mean winter temperature around -60°C. That's a lot colder than your freezer! The lowest ever temperature recorded was at the Russian Vostok station. It was -89.6°C
9. When the Antarctic sea-ice begins to expand at the beginning of winter, it advances by around 100,000 square km per day, and eventually doubles the size of Antarctica, adding up to an extra 20 million square kilometres of ice around the land mass. That's one and a half USAs, two Australias or 50 UK's worth of ice area that forms, then breaks up and melts each year.
10. Snow falling at the South Pole takes about 100 000 years to 'flow' to the coast of Antarctica before it drops off the end as part of an iceberg.
11. The Antarctic ice cap has 29 million cubic kilometres of ice. This is 90% of all the ice on the planet and between 60 and 70% of all of the world's fresh water. Only about 0.4 percent of Antarctica is not covered by ice.
12. Antarctica has a peculiar group of fish called the ice fish. These have no red pigment - haemoglobin - in their blood to carry oxygen around. They get by perfectly well without it because the temperature is so low and oxygen dissolves better in cold temperatures. They just have a larger volume of clear blood instead and this gives them an unusually ghostly white colour, particularly their gills. Recent research on the ice fish has shown that their DNA has been damaged by high levels of ultra violet light coming from the ozone hole. They have less pigment to stop the UV getting through. Many other Antarctic sea creatures including fish have antifreeze in their blood so they don't accidentally get frozen solid!
13. The largest land animal in Antarctica is an insect, a wingless midge, Belgica antarctica, less than 1.3cm (0.5in) long. There are no flying insects (they'd get blown away), just shiny black springtails that hop like fleas and tend to live among penguin colonies.
14. Samples of ice known as ice cores are regularly drilled through the ice in Antarctica by scientists. They are removed as a long cylinder of ice that gives an indication of the past going back tens of thousands of years. The properties of the ice, of dust trapped in the ice, and even of air bubbles trapped in the ice give valuable information about the earth's climate at various times in the past. A glaciologist could easily give you a drink of water that was frozen during the life of Christ.
15. In 1981 a swarm of krill was tracked by US scientists that was estimated at being up to 10 million tonnes of krill! This is the equivalent of about 143 million people (at an average of 70kg each) or more than the entire populations of the UK and Germany combined.



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# Going for Korea

The first weekend of March saw the national white water raft selections take place at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. The existing ladies team were feeling the pressure as a surge in popularity meant that they had someone to give them a run for their money.

David Leathborough takes up the story of the weekend...

Two teams, one from Buxton and one from the Newtown area had been training hard all winter and were ready for the challenge. Stakes were high, as the selected team would be going to South Korea in June to represent GB at the White Water Rafting World Championships.

The Nottingham men's team had been meeting every week come rain, wind or snow and could be often seen practising endurance runs on the Trent by moonlight and giving the rowers something to aim for. For the ladies, being spread across the country made training pretty hard but they too would meet every fortnight or so and spend a solid weekend honing and refining their skills. Training on different venues such as the Tryweryn, Conwy, Dee, Wye and the Trent, the ladies soon started to make a name for them selves.

## Endurance, slalom and sprint

Rafting competitions are made up of three disciplines including endurance, slalom and sprint. The endurance is often the race that is given most prestige and carries most points in a competition. It is usually a down river slog combining river running and reading skills, individual fitness, team skills and a whole load of bloody mindedness! The pressure is usually on the guides at the back to remember the fastest lines down tricky rapids for stretches often as long as 15km.

The sprint race can be the most exciting for spectators. Rafts are set off head to head down stretches of fairly intense white water of up to 1 km long. Often there is only one fast line down the rapids and the rafts will have to jostle for position whilst getting down the rapid safely. The most technical event requiring most manoeuvrability and teamwork is the slalom. Just like slalom in a K1 or C1, it involves moving through downstream and upstream gates without touching or missing any gates. Unfortunately, as there are six of you in a large rubber raft, it requires a fair amount of moving around in the boat to get through some of the harder gates (often involving team mates getting up close and personal as they jump into each other's laps!).

The Trent was high and moving fast so any use of flow would be advantageous to the teams. A five-minute warning was blasted from the air horn, a one-minute – some last second instructions and shouts of encouragement were heard, then 3,2,1 go! Paddles engaged with the water, arms

pulled back and the rafts surged forwards. A slightly late start from the existing ladies 'Debs Dears' saw them having to make up ground. An extra push was found from somewhere and Debs Dears took the lead chasing the wake of the men's team. After a hard 20 minutes of paddling the white water course was reached and the teams finished to shouts of support from spectators lining the banks. Buxton Birds and Care UK battled all the way down the Trent finishing with Buxton Birds just in front.

Sunday morning dawned with the river even higher than the previous day and the Trent looking suspiciously dark murky brown. The men's team put on an impressive demonstration to show the moves needed to get round the tricky course and then the competition was on. With lots of encouragement from the bank, Debs Dears worked hard to secure first place. With brilliant performances, Care UK from the other ladies teams pipped the Buxton Birds and took second place.

## Massive blast of adrenaline

So with Debs Dears fairly secure in their position the attention was on who would take second place in the Sprint grand finale with Buxton Birds and Care UK sitting on equal points. Sitting on the start line for the head to head sprints is often the most intense part of the competition, maintaining your start position, adjusting to catch the best part of the flow, listening for the count down and then the massive blast of adrenaline as you surge forwards over the start line. Often tangling paddles with the other team searching for an open surface of water to dig your paddle in, fighting against the knocks given by the other raft, feeling the relief of open water as you reach the rapids. It all combines to give an amazing experience and is also an exciting race to watch. Debs Dears stormed through to take first place in both races winning the dubious pleasure of racing the men's team at the end. The one to watch however was the grudge match of the day Buxton Birds versus Care UK, it was all to play for who ever took the win here would take the chance to come away and represent GBR at the Europeans. As they jostled on the start line you could feel the tension in the air, and they were off! Some great paddling and guiding saw them fighting it out all the way down the course, with Buxton Birds just taking it at the end to gain second place.



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## ECA European slalom championships

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British Eurosport and Eurosport International will be showing recorded and live action from the slalom championships where the full GB slalom team will be competing.

All times below are UK BST

Saturday 16 June 2007

09.00-10.15

K1W semi-finals

10.15-11.00

Highlights from the team championships

12.00-13.00

Highlights from the C1 semi-finals

13.00-13.30

Live coverage of the K1W final

Sunday 17 June 2007

09.30-10.30

K1M semi-finals

10.30-10.45

Highlights from Saturday C1 finals

13.00-14.30

Live coverage of the K1M and C2 finals

The last race of the weekend was Debs Dears pitted against the mighty men! There was lots of banter and in an effort to give the ladies something to chase the men stripped off to their shorts and gave us a booty dance on the start line! We soon cooled them off with a quick shovel of water over the lot of them and the race was on! Hot on their tail Debs Dears after racing all day could not quite put the performance in and finished a respectable close distance behind them!

The existing teams had defended their title and were there to fight again another day. The standard of the ladies teams that entered was brilliant and I know the rest of my team join me in congratulating them for the

competition they presented which really shows how much training and hard work they have put in. Thanks to Hoopla, Debs, Dave 'the man' Leathborough for all their hard work, and to the supporters and people who came down to run the event.

The teams have now joined forces to fund raise for our trip to Korea, a corporate raft race has been organised for the 28th May from which we hope to raise the majority of the funds we need. We would like to thank our on going kit sponsors Peak UK, Teva, Reed, Double Dutch and Buff for their quality gear and support.

For a break down of results, information and entry forms for the corporate raft race please visit our web site

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



<http://youth.ukfreestyle.com>

## The first of the year

The first of this year's Youth Freestyle Series, on the 14th April, was full to capacity with 50 eager youngsters aged 8 to 18 taking part in the competition in Llangollen. This year we had bright sunshine and hot temperatures – a stark contrast to last year's sleet and rain – but unfortunately this meant low water

levels. Undeterred, the paddlers and coaches made the most of the features using rocky rapids, eddylines, flat-water and small waves for the coaching sessions and competition.

The boater X was entertaining for both the competitors and spectators. The paddlers were faced with tasks, which involved spinning round and running for their boats before paddling as fast as they could to the bottom of the course. Some thought it would be quicker to race without putting their decks on, although those that sunk probably soon regretted that decision! The U15s finalists had an extra handicap as they weren't allowed paddles; the free hands caused some interesting 'tussling' between competitors.

Due to the water levels the freestyle competition was held in several places rather than in one spot. It consisted of flatwater/eddyline moves near the top of the river, must-make moves in the middle hole and spinning in the bottom hole. The U15s categories saw huge scores with the top three: Stuart Parry (1st), Anthony Ing (2nd), Ed

Mead (3rd, just three points behind Anthony) getting eddyline loops and plenty of clean and super-clean cartwheels which earned them the top three scores of the day.

However, the variety of features and the essential moves on the middle hole, which consisted of side-surfs, blasting and rolling, meant that everybody had a chance to rack up loads of points. This was evident in the U15s ladies' event where Poppy Layton got some nice smooth cartwheels on the top eddyline, but Islay Crosbie knew how to play the variety game and took the win with rolls, stern squirts, spins, blasts and surfs in both directions.

At the end of the day the top three paddlers in each category were presented with medals and certificates. Palm Equipment provided some spot prizes, which went to Anthony Ing for the highest score from a non-sponsored paddler, and William Squire in the U12s category for the best swims of the day.

A big thanks to UK Freestyle for funding the series and to all of the following sponsors: Pyranha, Palm Equipment/Dagger Europe, Squarerock/Jackson Kayak, Kayakojacko, Desperate Measures, Kara Expeditions.

**Fiona Jarvie**





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## PAD DLE THIS

### Four medals won at the freestyle worlds

It has been a successful week for GB who won an incredible four medals at the Freestyle World Championships in Ottawa, Canada (29th April-5th May).

The heat was on in the Women's K1 (kayak single) with the leader-board constantly changing throughout the race, so congratulations to Fiona Jarvie, aged 30 from Wimborne, Dorset who demonstrated her great strength to win a bronze medal! Fiona has a number of awards to her name including a bronze at the 2005 World Championships.

The GB team also dominated the squirt classes, with Ben White winning a gold medal in the men's event and Greg Nicks and James Reeves taking third and fourth place. The women performed well in the female squirt event with Claire O'Hara and Emma Runciman taking home a silver and bronze medals respectively.



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A sunny weekend saw Cardiff University beat off opposition to win in all three leagues of the Cardiff University Canoe Polo Tournament. The competition was ferocious and the bay water was cold, but the teams fought off the competition to win their finals and emerge on Sunday as champions.



This event is organised every spring by Cardiff University CC, with universities from all over the country invited to come to Cardiff and compete in the bay. The event has grown considerably since it was started six years ago as a local derby with Swansea. It is now a regular date in many university calendars and is seen by many clubs as an opportunity to check out the opposition before the BUSA competition.

would be a difficult match as many of the old boys team train with the A team and have in their student days been members of the A team. The match was characterised by much aggression and determination, with the students eager not too lose out to the graduates but the graduates resolute to prove their superiority. By the final whistle the A team were emerging as the winners due to some superb shooting skills and an impenetrable defence.



Cardiff University A team – The A league winners (Left to Right: Richard Holloway, Andy Francis, Richard Grounds, Elan Winter, Barnaby Munn, Mark Miles, Robert Jones, Robert Edmunds)

**The A league**

This year the A league saw teams from Warwick, Exeter, Cardiff Old Boys A and Cardiff A and B teams competing for the title in a 'round robin' style tournament. The semi-finals for the A league saw Cardiff University A drawn against Exeter and the Cardiff University B team against the Old Boys A team.

The final was eventually between the University A and the Old Boys team. All the players concerned knew this

**The B league**

The B league provided competition experience for the ladies and many Cardiff students who are new to canoe polo this year against teams from Hertfordshire, Bristol and Cardiff Old Boys B. Hertfordshire are a new team competing on the canoe polo circuit; a weekend in the cold of Cardiff bay provided a baptism of fire for them but only enthused them further to develop their skills. Both Cardiff Ladies and Cardiff University D teams made it to the semi-final. The ladies semi-final against Bristol was so close that it went to golden goal in extra time and the Cardiff D team lost out to the Old Boys B team. The final match was played between Cardiff Old Boys B and Bristol B and saw the Old Boys B win 5:1.

**Ladies league**

The Cardiff University ladies also played the ladies final against Bristol ladies a game that had previously been very close. By half-time the Cardiff Ladies were winning but again there was no place for complacency as the margin was too slim. During the second half Cardiff Ladies scored a few more goals and by the final whistle had a convincing win 6:1.

The A league was sponsored by Outdoor Active and the B league by Up and Under with the WCA providing trophies and medals for all the league winners. As both the A team and the Old Boys B team are affiliated to the university, the canoe club is now able purchase some new equipment for their forthcoming river trip to Scotland.

The organisers would like to thank The Bay Authority Outdoor Active, Up and Under, Wydean Canoe and Adventure Centre, Harry Ramsden's, City Surf, The Pier, Lush, Millies Cookies, Castle Welsh Crafts, Dominos Pizza, The Slug and Lettuce, Body Shop, Marks and Spencers, Pizza Express, Mega Bowl, and Kudos. Thank you to all our sponsors, the event could not happen without your support. ●

Rebecca Isles

**PADDLE THIS**

**Kingston kayak girls take the Yorkshire region title!**

The Kingston kayak girls have come first in the Yorkshire Canoe Polo Novice Ladies League. The team of Ailsa Williamson (13), Claire Medina (14), Caroline Dowe (17), Alex McKenzie (15) and Danni Johnson (13) (Not pictured) overcame the challenge from Loughborough University's Purple Nasties, Sheffield University, Manchester University, York University's Mighty Ducks and Green Star to take the title.

Over the three tournaments the team worked well in both attack and defence to hold off strong opposition and take the title. The games were played in the spirit of sport and were a credit to all teams involved.



Claire and Alex were also in the Kingston youth team who gained third place in the Yorkshire U16's Premier Division. Other players included Tom Hallett, Liam Rogers and Sam Tasker.

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## DW report

**Deceptive weather over Easter took its toll on competitors in the 2007 Devizes Westminster International Canoe Race with warm days and near freezing temperatures at night leading to just over a quarter of teams dropping out. Peter Hutchinson reports.**

Steady rain through February and early March produced a good flow on the canal and river sections of the 125-mile course. As the levels dropped, concerns about conditions were replaced with hopes of fast times in the elite race.

Piran Shelley of Richmond CC and Tristram Turner of Bristol CC won in 17 hours and 3 minutes – one of the faster times in recent years. For Piran, first place comes after finishing second in 2006 and third in 2005. "It's really satisfying, the win is just starting to sink in," he said with fingers still tingling. Tristram's first DW as a senior will be remembered for the "cold of the night". Paddlers on the four-day course complete each stage in daytime. Second place went to Richard Hendron of Richmond and Paul Lanighan of Falcon Oxford, whilst third went to Daniel Beazley and David Hallam, a pair of DW veterans from Leaside. "We'd been hoping to win, but we're happy with third," said Danny.

Paddlers and support crews will remember 2007 for the plummeting night temperatures. "It was the darkest, foggiest and coldest I've coped with," said Beazley, a view echoed by many of the crews. Most paddlers were approaching or passing through Dreadnought Reach near Reading just after sunset. As the fatigue set in and the cold took its toll the drop-outs began. As the fog froze, paddlers and canoes were covered with a thin layer of ice.

Reading CC brothers Tim and Philip Pearse, competing in the junior event for the last time, won the four-day race. Cokethorpe School took second and third place, laying down the gauntlet to the impressive number of school entries.

"It was a trouble free race, although a lot of the crews didn't have the easy time they'd been expecting," said Course Director Paul Ralph, adding thanks for the Environment Agency's huge effort on essential work required to sort out the course, including completely rebuilding the portage at Bray Lock on the Thames.

Reflecting on steady numbers and prospects for next year's 60th anniversary race, Chief Umpire Ian White said "it's good to see large numbers taking part in DW. It would be great to see some elite crews push to break the records." The current record for the 125-mile course, set in 1979, is 15 hours and 34 minutes.

Philip and Tim Pearse



# DW '07



## DW 2007 – devoted workers

Over 300 volunteers help out over the Easter Weekend to make the Devizes Westminster marathon happen. In Devizes check-in and scrutineering crews are available on Friday and Saturday. The starting Marshall is the first of many down the course. Three campsites are set up down the course for juniors and the reception operation at Westminster includes safety boats as well as food, time keeping, first aid and changing facilities. "Volunteers make a massive contribution to Devizes Westminster," says an exhausted Yvonne Riley who looks after the Westminster Finish camp, "and we're always looking for more." Add the 800 or so friends and family supporting the paddlers, and that is a total of 1,100 volunteers, DW truly is a spectacular achievement.

## DW in a Klepper

In keeping with DW's roots, the idea to take part in the longest non-stop canoe race in the world materialised in a pub, in Prague. I'd never heard of the race until this moment. Now it's an unforgettable part of my life says Jan Carpenter.

Training began in August 2006 and with only one of us having any experience in canoeing we enrolled on a BCU recognised 1 and 2 Star kayak/canoe course to get a feel of skills we would need. The idea from the start was to complete the race in Klepper canoes, the type used by the Commando's during WW2 and still used today. All we needed was a feel of how to canoe in a straight line and how to paddle efficiently, the rest would be hard work and determination.

Our constraints at home were to prove challenges in themselves. We were a fair distance away from the race circuit or suitable canals for practice. Training schedules, juggling work, family life and tidal constraints on the river, all played their part. For the times when there wasn't enough water, it was running, cycling, or cardio-vascular circuits.

After a week off at Christmas, we started to put our heads together to finalise the details. Plans took a set back when one support crew and one canoeist had to pull out at the 11th hour due to a training injury. We were only a month away from the Waterside D! Morale was low.

We trained with the Kleppers, practising portage techniques and running distances to simulate the 77 lock gates we had to negotiate. The Waterside D was not treated as a race, more of a full dress rehearsal, the boat at its full weight carrying all kit needed. From this we could get an estimate time for the full Devizes to Westminster and get experience of the course. We finished in 8 hours and 55 minutes.

The two weeks between Waterside D race and DW was spent recovering and fine-tuning the boats. We worked out our schedule on 31.5 hours paddling. Life became a routine of carbohydrate intake, small amounts of paddling and circuit training, as well as last minute preparations. The day before the race we found out that our entry forms, complete with payment, had not arrived at DW HQ! I had four days physical and

## RESULTS

### Senior Doubles

1. 17:03:27 - Piran Shelley (Richmond CC) and Tristram Turner (Bristol CC)
2. 17:21:40 - Richard Hendron (Richmond CC) and Paul Lanighan (Falcon Oxford)
3. 18:25:05 - Daniel Beazley (Leaside CC) and David Hallam (Leaside CC)

### Junior Doubles

1. 15:49:46 - Timothy Pearse (Reading CC) and Philip Pearse (Reading CC)
2. 16:19:31 - Tim Muller (Cokethorpe School) and Ed Male (Cokethorpe School)
3. 16:22:07 - Fred Reif (Cokethorpe School) and Paul Yates (Cokethorpe School)

### Singles

1. 15:13:21 - Simon Fennemore (Wey CC)
2. 16:14:48 - Guy Dresser (Royal CC)
3. 16:28:49 - Shaun Thrower (Hereford)



## New web site for canoeing

If you are looking at marathon canoeing or are a marathon paddler this is the site to visit: [www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk). The site is new whilst still growing and developing, but they would welcome your contributions, race details and general information. It is the place for the latest news and information about marathon canoeing.

mental rest before the start of DW 2007. Note to self – get paperwork completed and out of the way early.

Constructing the canoes on Devizes Wharf on Saturday 7th April, the weather was warm and forecast getting warmer. Both Kleppers were in the water and over the start line at 15:01.

With 125 miles ahead of us and blue skies overhead, we were just happy to get this far after all the calamities of training and preparation. As we were not race canoes, we treated the whole event as a test of endurance as well as achieving the best possible time.

During the race, problems came and went, but the main thing was to knuckle under and get the job done. Grit, determination and teamwork were the order of the day. Our boat made Teddington Lock with 15 minutes to spare before teams were stopped going through. Our support failed to reach us in time after having to wait for and replenish the team behind. We had to carry on with just three chunks of chocolate each and one litre of water between us for the last 17 miles.

We arrived at Westminster Bridge at 11:30 on Easter Sunday night absolutely shattered, to be greeted with a medal draped unceremoniously

We arrived at Westminster Bridge at 11:30 on Easter Sunday night absolutely shattered, to be greeted with a medal draped unceremoniously around our necks, a double egg banjo and a cup of Rosie Lea!

around our necks, a double egg banjo and a cup of Rosie Lea! It was a great feeling to see four men struggling with our canoe as we sipped on our tea! We were delirious after 32 hours 14 minutes and 27 seconds of paddling. We were 78th out of 86 finishing and 117 starting. Sadly, our second crew didn't make the tide at Teddington and decided to retire after 108

gruelling miles. They are back in training for next year, my boat team is support crew this time!

The advice I would give to anybody entering the DW for the first time is to allow you plenty of time for an extensive training program. Do not under estimate this race. If possible, enter all four of the Waterside series of races to get to know the course and portages. However, the D is the most important to gain knowledge of the start of the course and to be able to gauge your estimated timings for the whole race.

Good luck, it's well worth the effort. ●



## DW 2008

Devizes Westminster 2008 is the 60th anniversary of the race on 21-24th March 2008. If you want to take part – get a copy of The Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race by Brian Greenaway from the DW organisers through [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk)

# Quadrathlon - 4 x fitter

Quadrathlon, made up of a 1.5km swim, 8km kayak, 40km bike and 10km run, has to be one of the toughest tests of all round sporting ability and fitness in the world of multisport. One of our Brits, Andrew Byatt, (a former K1000 British junior medallist) is making big waves in the sport internationally. We catch up with Andy to gain an insight into a sport that may give that extra dimension to your paddling.

Quadrathlon is best described as triathlon with kayaking added as a 'bonus'. It is a sport that actually combines an ideal balance of upper and lower-body disciplines enabling individuals, such as kayakers, to excel in the usually lower-body dominated world of multisport.

This summer sees a World Cup quadrathlon come to UK for the first time and a number of kayak friendly multisport events on the calendar. We will be following a selection of these races and the progress of the



UK's top quadrathlete

Andrew Byatt through the summer season. Andrew is the first person to have achieved national championship medals in all four sports of kayaking, quadrathlon, triathlon and surf life saving (the later three of which were all achieved in one season!). He has also been a GB team member in each of these sports, too.

**So what is it that lures such athletes into this seemingly crazy event? We asked Andrew...**

Variety, this is the biggest thing for me. I'm training up to 20 hours a week, across four different disciplines, with my friends in a variety of great environments, so I never get

bored. I definitely wouldn't do that much, if just sitting in a kayak. Quadrathlon also enables me to maintain a level of fitness high enough to chop and change through many different competitive sports at a very high level. I think this is because each sport complements the other.

**You say that each of the sports complements each other, how do swimming, cycling and running benefit your paddling?**

I think most people in the know have heard of the benefits of cross



training and quadrathlon definitely ticks all the boxes. I feel that running allows you to train at heart rate levels usually unattainable in a kayaking alone; the cycling leaves your legs super strong so that you can drive through them as hard as you like for any length of time; and swimming gives you specific upper body endurance that transfers perfectly across to your paddling. I guess it kind of makes you four times fitter.

**There seems to be a lot of training to be done and plenty of 'toys' to buy. Any recommendations for others wishing to get involved?**

I have been pretty lucky Plymouth University, Marsport kayaks, Snugg wetsuits and Bike chain have all really helped me to sort out the best equipment, but the one thing I have learnt is that, whatever level you participate at, the number one priority for each piece of kit is always to get the correct fit. It must be the right size for you! Training wise - there is a lot to be said, far too much for the scope of this article but, obviously start with short sessions and progress them up to longer ones over time. The point I try to emphasise is that your body becomes quicker in the periods between training, when you rest, recover and over adapt, not during training sessions. So all my training is based around this point. Most importantly though, without the motivation you won't get anywhere so enjoy every session! Then come along have a go at race and come and say hello, everyone is pretty friendly. ●

## PADDLE THIS

### Tim Brabants wins his second bronze medal



**After winning a bronze medal in the first World Cup in Zagreb, Tim Brabants added a second bronze to his 2007 collection with a solid performance in Szeged, Hungary.**

Brabants (world silver medallist and European champion in 2006 and Olympic medallist 2000), paddled excellently winning the bronze in the Men's K1 (kayak single) 1000m event. He lost out to Canadian Olympic Champion Adam Van Koeverden, followed by Zoltan Benko of Hungary.

Another promising performance came from Matt Lawrence and James Train in the C2 (canoe doubles) 1000m race, the other GB boat to make 'A' final. They improved on their Zagreb performance by coming eighth in a time of 3.41.8. The winners of the event were the German pair of Gille/Wylwenzek.

Keep an eye out for Andrew's training tips in coming issues. For more info see [www.andybyatt.co.uk](http://www.andybyatt.co.uk)

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**WENONAH JENSON ICF SMASHES DEVIZES TO WESTMINSTER RECORD**

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If you are planning to paddle in the 2008 race please let us know and we will do all we can to advise you.

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3 Wenonah Jenson J18	22:59:5
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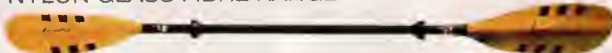
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# Suggested paddles



Where can I go paddling is often the question from new and experienced paddlers. Well, we are campaigning for greater access to the 98% of waterways we do not have access rights on... but in the meantime there are some interesting paddles around and the following are a few suggestions. Our hope is to offer a variety of suggested paddles as whilst some canoeists are interested only in rapid or white (wild) water rivers, others enjoy competing and there are also many others who enjoy paddling quietly along, exploring and visiting new scenes and developing awareness of nature round them. In our selection of paddles we hope to cover everyone's needs.

## PADDLE THIS: GREAT OUSE

The River Great Ouse rises in Northamptonshire and is canoeable from Buckingham. Unfortunately access to most of the river above Bedford is denied by intransigent fishing interests. The present navigation extends from Kempston weir through to the Wash, although few canoeists will want to paddle either the Bedford river sections between Earith and Denver or the Great Ouse beyond Ely. However the river does link with the Little Ouse, the Wissey, the Lark and the Cam, offering touring access to a vast placid water network.

The river is controlled by the Environment Agency who issue the required licence to canoe; BCU membership covers this river and its tributaries except the Cam above Baits Bite Lock, which is administered by the Cam Conservators who issue a separate licence.

The right of navigation on the Great Ouse from Kempston extends to all the backwaters; the only problem areas are at St Neots and Offord, where fishing clubs believe (erroneously) that they control the navigation of the backwaters. Paddlers should be aware that the right to navigate does not include the right to access weirs or to encroach within their walls; however, the backwater weirs identified below present no problems and I am not aware that anyone has ever been challenged on them.

The best complete guide to the river system is that published for cruising by Imray Laurie, Norie and Wilson Limited and written by Andrew Hunter Blair of the Great Ouse Boating Association. This has a wealth of useful information on the river and fascinating local historical insights into the local area.

I have summarised the campsites available below.

Start at Kempston	0 miles
Great Barford Scout campsite	10 miles
Rush Meadows, Eaton Socon	17 miles
Brampton	25 miles
Houghton Mill	29 miles
Holt Island St Ives (Scouts)	31 miles
Earith	38 miles
Popes Corner	50 miles

Groups will need to use the public campsites that exist along the river, but I have never had any problem camping discreetly with one or two tents or bivvis – settle in around dusk and move on at daybreak and no-one is any the wiser. So much of the Great Ouse runs through remote farmland that you often miles from any habitation.

**Kempston Mill – 0 miles (approx distances along the main river).** Grid ref: 024477 From the A5134 Kempston High Street, turn into King William Road and left into River View. At the end is a car park and public toilet.

Under normal flow, the river here is about 18 inches deep and has the fastest flow of the navigable sections. Between here and Bedford there is very little river traffic, footpaths either side of the river, some pretty sections between trees and open scenery, with houses set back from the river. Sometimes aggressive swans in late Spring. Herons and Kingfishers abound.

**Railway bridge – 2.3 miles.** Keep to the river right and watch out for rowers from here through Bedford.

**Bedford town centre – Riverside car park (free on Sundays) – 2.5 miles.** River left, with public toilets. You may launch from pontoon at the Star/Viking boathouse, but be observant of rowers. Under the town bridge: the right hand arch is best for canoes.

**Duckmill weir – 2.7 miles.** To the right, a stepped weir, safe to shoot in low/normal water levels if the sluices are closed, but may be fishermen in the pool below.

Or continue on past the lock, under the Victorian suspension bridge and just past the next weir. Portage at the disused boat rollers, about 150 yards further on. Once on the lower river, motor craft become more common, especially after Priory Marina at 3.5 miles, in a beautiful wide reach. From here to Great Barford the scenery is predominantly rural, tree-lined stretches alternate with fields.

**Cardington Lock – 4.5 miles.** Car park accessible from the A421 through Priory Business Park, but there have been car break-ins here. Just before the lock the Cardington artificial slalom course, river left, provides spectator fun on many weekends. Portage river left just after the lock, a low canoe platform gives an easy launch.

**Castle Mills Lock – 6 miles.** Portage right.

**The Danish Camp, Willington – 8 miles.** Hot and cold food, drinks and ice-creams. Their jetty is often cluttered and hard to use.

**Willington lock – 8.2 miles.** An easy portage right at low platforms or portage the weir on the left at the public footpath.

**Great Barford – 10 miles.** Shops are one mile away in the village and the Anchor pub is riverside. There is a scout



If you have a suggested paddle... please e-mail the text and images to the editor of Canoe Focus:

[peter@canoefocus.co.uk](mailto:peter@canoefocus.co.uk)

Text is preferable in Microsoft Word format and images as 300dpi JPEGs saved at highest quality. Access online @ [www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org)

## New leaflets

We have a new RAC campaign leaflet along with the 'You, your canoe and the environment' leaflet. They can be obtained from the RAC via

[www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org) or if you would like copies of these to hand out please do e-mail us at [info@riversaccess.org](mailto:info@riversaccess.org). Stickers also available.



## Essential reading

The spring issue of **Countryside Recreation Network** featuring water recreation is essential reading. Refer to [www.countrysidecreation.org.uk](http://www.countrysidecreation.org.uk) and click on journal.

Articles on access to water from the Environment Agency (EA), Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) and the Countryside Access and Activities Network (Northern Ireland) describe developing access. Stuart Fisher (Canoeist/paddlers International) also comments in the Response section on page 28 with a view shared by Canoe England.

The EA predictably promotes the finding of Brighton 3, in stark contrast to how the SCA works to a modern statutory right with the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 favoured by Canoe England.

## Filming access

### Friday 30th March

On a wet Friday afternoon a group from Poole Harbour CC (Thanks Geoff, Jennie, Mark, Andy, George to name but a few) came down to the banks of the river Frome in Wareham to take part in a film for Meridian TV about access to rivers.

The River Frome in Dorset is yet another river where there are imaginary boundaries i.e. no entry areas for boats let alone canoes.

Thank you to everyone for their help and to Geoff Goulden and Mark Rainsley for volunteering to be interviewed on camera.

## Effects of canoeing on fish stocks

### Research and Development Technical Report W266

Payment - W266 para 6.3 states: "Licensing of anglers is a specific fee charged in relation to the national fishery service provided by the EA, whose fishery activities encompasses a range of statutory obligations. This has no bearing or influence on right of access for anglers, which is an entirely different issue.

It is difficult to envisage how a parallel can be drawn with a national licence for canoes in relation to the service that would be provided. In the absence of an identifiable service provided in return for a licence, inevitably this would be regarded as a tax. In addition in the absence of fundamental legislative change for access licensing as a tool to provide facilities for greater access would be non-sensical."

Hartford church



## PADDLE THIS: GREAT OUSE

camp site at Barford. Contact David White on 01234 870837. Limited parking at roadside by the church. Portage the weir on the left bank at the public picnic area. The section to Roxton lock is particularly pretty and peaceful.

**Tempsford lock – 12 miles.** Portage right but with no easy portage platforms, so a high exit and fences to negotiate. Shortly after the lock, 'The Anchor' (Tempsford) provides another refreshment opportunity. After the A1 bridges, a long, open reach eventually leads to the Little Barford power station.

**Eaton Socon lock – 16.5 miles.** An easy portage with low platforms. The Mill is a very pleasant pub/restaurant. Alternatively at low flows, shoot the side weir into the backwater (river right, under a low footbridge where the river curves left several hundred yards before the lock).

**Rush Meadows Camp site river right – 17 miles.** TL180596. Tel 01480 474404. A pleasant although sometimes damp campsite, very convenient for an evening paddle to The Mill.

**St Neots – 17.5 miles.** Good car park river left, access through a narrow channel by the boating pond. Ice-creams and other refreshments, toilets. Look out for rowers on the main river and of course motor cruisers!

**River Kym – 18 miles.** The Kym is navigable from Hail Weston and has been regularly paddled in spate from Kimbolton, but beware of the barbed wire!

**St Neots Paper Mills lock – 19 miles.** Portage left across the busy B1041 Ideally post a lookout for traffic as the lorries come quite fast and the lines of sight are very poor. There is a nature reserve on the left, but the main railway line on the right can disturb the peace!

**Offord lock – 22.5 miles.** Portage right at the lock, across a busy minor road and over a kissing gate. The side weir before the lock is a clean shoot in the centre – there are iron stanchions protruding at the sides of the weir and the landowner (left bank) is very aggressive (Offord anglers).

**Backwater – 24.3 miles.** The side weir (right) can be shot into a quiet backwater which joins the main river above Godmanchester. If you are going to paddle the backwaters, then turn upstream to Brampton lock and then right at the Mill.

**Brampton lock – 25.5 miles.** Portage left. There is a campsite in Bromholme Lane, accessible from the backwater behind the Mill. 01480 437566. Just below the lock is Brampton Mill restaurant. If you want to park here and access the river, please ask and buy a drink!

**Godmanchester lock – 27 miles.** The portage platform is built onto the brick wall of the old lock, parts of which can still be found on the bank beside the new lock. Or paddle down to the Pool at Godmanchester where there is a small

slipway and several pubs and a chip shop, pass under the Chinese bridge and follow the little backwater, get out on the left (just above the old mill sluice) and carry down the steps to the back of Island hall and thus out onto the main river. Turn right onto the main river. Just before the town bridge is the Bridge Hotel; quite posh but does very nice afternoon teas (for open boaters).

You'll pass the end of Cooks Backwater on your right and then the end of Brampton backwater on your left before proceeding on the main river under the town bridge. There is a public car park on the left with good access at the rowing club. TL245718.

On the main river you'll pass under the town bridge and then to Hartford. Hartford church is in a very pretty setting and was regularly visited by William Cowper (poet) There is a small car park here (off Church Lane) with good river access TL255725.

**Backwater route.** At the Mill, turn left and follow the small stream past moored cruisers. After a small bridge, follow the right hand fork (left is Alconbury Brook) You get an excellent view of Hinchinbrooke House (now a school, but formerly one of Oliver Cromwell's residences). This leads you into the woods and a low limbo girder bridge. At summer levels lie down and pass underneath the girder; at high water levels you may need to climb over the girder! After another right fork, you'll hear the sound of rushing water and you'll know that the weirs are ahead. The right hand weir may be shot by short kayakers (it has a concave face) but most people prefer (and open canoes must) go down the left hand weir. It is has a very gentle slope with a small drop at the bottom – usually a scrape. I often get out onto the left hand wall, line the canoe down and then climb down the wall to get back into the canoe – saves boat wear and tear!

Follow the meandering backwater through to where it rejoins the main river just above the A14 bridge in Huntingdon. To follow the main river turn left or to navigate Cooks backwater, turn right.

**Cooks backwater.** This is a very pleasant meander with more flow than the main river; the left fork will take you to Hartford church, but carry straight on to where the backwater joins the main river at the very large Hartford Marina – turn right downstream. (You will see a small side weir on the right about 100m before the end of the backwater; it is possible to drop over this and bushwhack you way through to Rhymers Pool, but the cut is very overgrown nowadays).

### Dave Savage RAO East region

**Next issue: St Ives to Pope's Corner on the Great Ouse**

**My thanks to Anne Dorber for prodding me into action to write this up and for contributing some up to date information on the river above Huntingdon. Any queries or updates, do please email me: [david@mepal.co.uk](mailto:david@mepal.co.uk)**



## Support from the Inland Waterways Association

IWA is supporting the Rivers Access Campaign mounted by the BCU, which aims to open up most of the country's rivers to access by non-powered small boats, such as canoes. At present less than 3% of the country's rivers are freely accessible for boating recreation of any sort. A Ten Minute Rule Bill - Access to Inland Waters Bill 2007 - was introduced to the House of Commons on 24th January, by Dr Des Turner, MP for Brighton. The Bill outlines the need for legislation, similar to the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003. The legislation would identify canoeists and other water users' right to access the waters as well as codify their responsibilities. Whilst the Bill is unlikely to make substantial progress in this Parliament, it has helped highlight the public demand for greater access to the waterways in England and Wales, and which already exists in Scotland. The successful introduction of the Scottish Land Reform Act, which provided a public right of responsible access to most of the land in Scotland for walking, canoeing and other recreational activities, dispelled many of the fears of landowners of opening up their land.

The Countryside Right of Way legislation, which gives people the right to roam in certain designated areas is more restrictive than the Scottish law and does not allow for canoeists and swimmers, etc, to access waters for which there is no specific agreement or public right of navigation. The Access to Inland Waters Bill 2007 would provide statutory access rights to and along most inland waters. However, people would only have these rights if they exercised them responsibly. All rights of navigation would continue to exist and are unaffected by the Public Access to Inland Waters Bill (2007). Of over 41,000 miles (66,000kms) of rivers in England and Wales without a public right of navigation, only 510 miles (812kms) of mostly highly restricted access has been negotiated. Some agreements are for just a few days each year adding very little to the 2% of inland waterways with a public right of navigation. Ultimately, access is in the hands of riparian owners. If they refuse to engage in negotiation, there is no way a canoeist or others can make progress.

More information about the Inland Waterways Association can be found at [www.waterways.org.uk/Home](http://www.waterways.org.uk/Home)

## Learning Outside the Classroom

The Secretary of State has launched 'Learning Outside the Classroom' manifesto, for education and skills.

Just briefly some of the things it states are that the department will (read government for that):

- Provide young people with a wide range of experiences outside the classroom, throughout their education.
- All young people should have regular and meaningful learning experiences, which are focused and enjoyable.

**We will** - provide inspiring activities that meet the needs of all young people, whatever their age, ability or background. Ensure these activities offer first hand experience of the world outside the classroom, practical and relevant learning and progression across key stages.

What can be more inspiring than a trip in a boat, bell boat, canoe or kayak to go and study wildlife, experience the science of water and the world around us. Test physical and mental skills; experience something you have never done before. For the child with special needs to feel the freedom going on a canoe or kayak can bring.

Training can be given to those who feel less confident to take children out of the classroom his also giving the teaching staff not only a different methodology for experiential teaching but also different personal skills. Everyone benefits all ways round!

The manifesto says: "We want everyone involved to recognise the value of learning outside the classroom."

It also says: "We strongly support the educational case for learning outside the classroom. If all young people were given these opportunities we believe it would make a significant contribution to raising achievement in national curriculum subjects, in the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and in the expectations of Sustainable Schools." [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools).

## World Rivers Day

World Rivers Day is set for September 30th this year (as always, falling on the last Sunday in September) and, while the event is still several months away, it will be here before we know it. Consequently, it is hoped that river advocates from around the globe will start planning events as part of this year's World Rivers Day celebration.

Last year, river enthusiasts across the world came together for the second annual event. It was a great success, with millions of people involved from almost 30 countries.

This year, some exciting new events will be part of World Rivers Day. The 'Pan-South American Rafting Expedition' will depart just after WRD festivities this September, travelling across the continent and promoting river conservation issues along the way. A final fund raising event for this initiative will take place on British Columbia's Thompson River in September.

In addition; plans are already underway for a circumnavigation of the British Isles in a 42-foot, sea-going canoe in conjunction with Spirit Dancer Canoe Journeys. This two-year expedition will have a significant environmental and educational focus, visiting virtually every river estuary in Britain in time for World Rivers Day, 2008.

### Promoting river stewardship

World Rivers Day is a celebration of the world's waterways. It highlights the many values of rivers and strives to increase public awareness and hopefully encourage the improved stewardship of rivers around the world.

### Join the celebration!

World Rivers Day organisers encourage all of you to come out and participate. In particular, consider starting a Rivers Day event of your own, which might range from a stream cleanup to a community riverside celebration - be sure to tell us about it!

### International partners

World Rivers Day is intended to compliment the broader efforts of the United Nations Water For Life Decade. We also appreciate the support of the United Nations University through the International Network on Water, Environment, and Health. To find out more about water issues, and how to get involved with World Rivers Day, visit the websites below for more information.

World Rivers Day: [www.worldriversday.bc.it.ca](http://www.worldriversday.bc.it.ca)

BC Rivers Day: [www.riversday.bc.it.ca](http://www.riversday.bc.it.ca)

United Nations 'Water For Life Decade':

[www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade)

Wonder Of Water: [www.wonderofwater.ca](http://www.wonderofwater.ca)

## Misinformation... again

Published in The Field Magazine for the 1st May 2007 - under the heading 'Rejection Leaves Canoeists High and Dry', Martin Salter MP, once again says the government

## Did you know this?

**There is a recreational canoe club who has 70+ members of all ages, many with families, all with a passion for paddling and enjoying our coasts and rivers. But with the exception of one day a year - they are not permitted to paddle on 'our' rivers. One of which is a short distance from the club. They are confined to the sea or estuaries.**

There are over 50 miles of their nearby river which are navigable by canoe. The access they have on that river amounts to less than (in total) 3.5% (split across three very short stretches). But for just one day a year they have managed to negotiate a paddle on 6.25 miles of it!

This is the same river where one the rights of navigation have recently been uncovered.

Canoeing is ecologically sound and environmentally benign. It causes no pollution leaves no trace of passing and is an ideal way to access the water environment. It gives people a better understanding of the landscape, habitats and we believe that the more people use rivers the more they will want to protect them.

## London 2012 - Demolish, Dig, Design

### The Olympic Delivery Authority's Milestones to Summer 2008

In the above document one of the milestones is (page 13) Milestone 05 the regeneration of the waterways in the Olympic Park will have started, improving the environment and access for the 'big build'.

One of the paragraphs reads, "Access around the waterways will be increased, encouraging local communities to enjoy and use the river for recreational activities."

Just to remind you how canoeing and the use of our inland waterways can support the development of children.

## Arranged visit

**Roger Blanchard, Access and Environment Officer of Halifax CC, arranged a visit by his local Halifax MP Linda Riordan, to see their slalom competition. Roger was not only able to show her how brilliant and socially inclusive the sport of canoeing is but also explained in great detail the appalling access situation.**

Linda Riordan arrived on Sunday and brought with her Mr David Draycott, local Labour party branch secretary, who is to stand in local council elections later this year. They arrived whilst the first slalom run was still going on and went straight down to riverside. A photographer from the Courier also arrived during and got several photos of Linda, Roger, Sarah Ford and Roberta Davis, a young teenage club member who is also a slalom competitor. He also took several 'action' photos of playboaters and slalomists. We had decided to get Roberta to accompany us throughout to give the junior paddlers perspective and try to impress on our guests the benefits of canoeing to young people.

Linda and David were very receptive to HXCC and the RAC (especially since she saw many juniors milling around). Without asking, she offered to help in any way possible and wants me to keep her informed of developments. She said she'd put the date of 18th May in her diary to ensure she's in the House of Commons on that day to support the bill.

Thank you to all who were involved... the message is getting out and we do know the MPs who support us is dramatically on the increase. This is due to your help and support. Many thanks... please do keep lobbying.

Below: club members with Linda Riordan (third from left).



have rejected the Public Access to Inland Waters Bill. Well the Bill is still to be heard on 18th May. He also states that canoeing (and by that he must mean everybody but anglers) is harmful to the environment. He also states the government believes that voluntary access agreements are the only way forward.

Seeing as the work of the Environment Agency is falling over and even the EA in one region have moved away from even trying to maintain the so called voluntary access agreements. This shows that they are not viable, sustainable and these type of agreements are certainly not the way forward.

## Environment Agency –

strategic planning for water related recreation

In 2006 the Environment Agency's (EA) announced pilot schemes in the South West and Anglian regions and Wales. The EA's brief is to produce a more strategic approach to planning recreational access to inland and coastal waters. DEFRA has commissioned the schemes for the Agency to lead a steering group to include Government Office, Sport England, Natural England, the Development Agency for the region, and British Waterways.

The first step has been a series of consultation workshops with stakeholders. In late April and early May four workshops were held in the South West; six in East Anglia; and eight in Wales.

The assistance of the South West, Eastern Regional Development teams and Colin Kempson has enabled Canoe England to be represented at workshops in these regions. The WCA supported the workshops in Wales.

The business of the workshops was to gain an overview on current and future provision, demand and participation; and social and environmental impacts. Canoe England centred on the overall impact of the restrictions and uncertainty of access to water. It is a major constraint for the national governing body to plan for the development of paddling and increasing participation and created pressure on existing venues and facilities. Legislation is required to provide a clear and recognised access. Parliament excluded access to and along water from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the government is proposing legislation for access to virtually all the coastline.

Many stakeholders not for the first time were surprised that over 96% of rivers did not have public access

Other factors raised were: protecting water recreation from restrictive legislation and planning guidance; the loss of prime riverside clubs/centres to development schemes; how paddling supports a range of government agenda for health, education, social inclusion, and economic issues; lack of access often entails extra travelling.

All workshop attendees will receive a summary of the workshop and information for how they might remain engaged with strategy development process.

The BCU believes a strategy based on a list of rivers and waters, zoning, and the proven weakness of voluntary access agreements would not satisfy paddlers. It can only perpetuate the restrictive access to water.

## Coastal access proposals –

Going to public consultation

Watch out on the websites for more information... to have your say!

As previously mentioned in Canoe Focus Canoe England has been part of a group with other governing bodies and interest groups (including Equestrian Access Forum, British Mountaineering

Council, Cyclists Touring Club, International Mountain Biking Association UK, Open Spaces Society, Disabled Ramblers and the Ramblers' Association) who have been keen to lobby the Government on coastal access.

Whilst the group supports the government's intention to improve access to coastal land in England, they would, however, suggest amending the ministerial vision as follows: "A coastal environment where rights to access the length of the English coast lie within a landscape corridor that offers enjoyment, understanding of the natural environment and a high quality experience; and is managed sustainably in the context of a changing coastline."

Following on from a collective lobbying process including press releases and letters the group met with DEFRA and Natural England to seek information about the forthcoming Government Consultation on Coastal Access. The group once again reinforced their views about their collective vision for the coastal access.

### That there should be

- A new, statutory, national approach is required to deliver the wide-ranging benefits outlined in the Government's vision and outcomes. Existing measures currently being considered – such as rights of way legislation or local agreements - will not deliver consistent, long-term access improvements or measures to protect wildlife and landscapes.

### The government should

- Take the opportunity being presented by the current review of access and the proposed Marine Bill to join-up policy on the coast and develop long-term solutions to the challenges the coast presents as well as deliver wider benefits for the public.
- Introduce legislation giving Natural England powers to designate a coastal zone along the entire coast of England. Within the coastal zone there should be a presumption in favour of access for informal, quiet, responsible recreation. The Government and Natural England should develop measures to address the needs of wildlife and landscapes within the zone, taking into account increased rates of coastal change. The coastal zone should also carry special planning regulations so that it is protected from unsuitable development.

### Public consultation... Have your say!

The public consultation is due for release at the end of May and will run for 12 weeks. Following completion and analysis of the responses a ministerial announcement of the way forward can be expected in the late autumn. The consultation is going to be web based and should be available on the Defra website (and may be the Natural England one too).

It is proposed that the consultation will have four options for improving access. The public consultation is an important part of the process and it is important that everyone should take this opportunity to feed in their views. Defra wants to hear views on all the options. Ideas, evidence and additional information would be welcomed.

It is from the advice given that the majority of beaches may be included within the scope of the coastal access corridor. There are many beaches which are privately owned but access was allowed, so the main issue is where they aren't accessible, or where payment is made for access. Canoe England asked about inclusion of beaches that were accessible from the sea even where not accessible from land. It is suggested that these should be considered as it would be logical to include them.

Keep an eye on these

[www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp)

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

[www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org) and [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)

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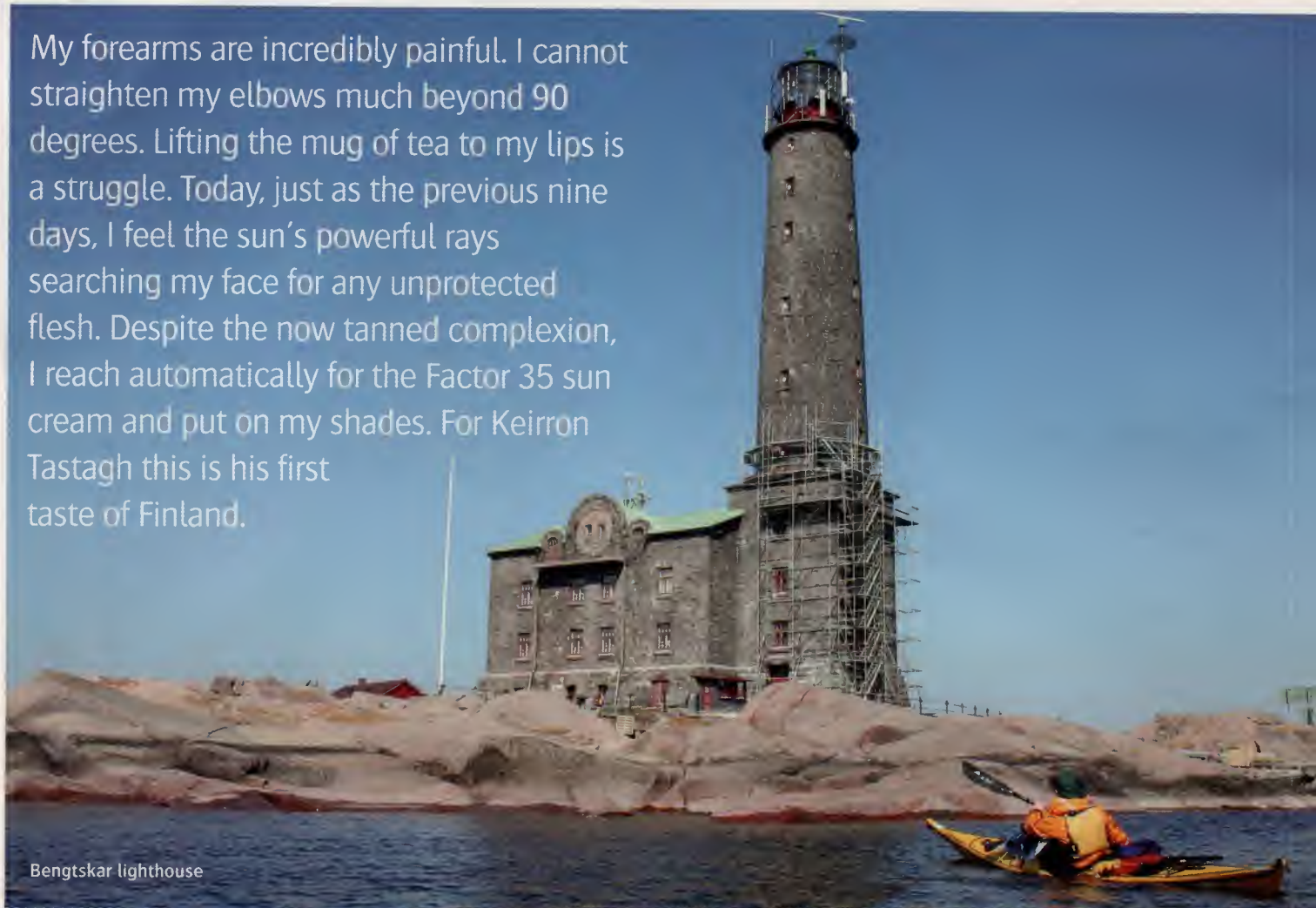


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My forearms are incredibly painful. I cannot straighten my elbows much beyond 90 degrees. Lifting the mug of tea to my lips is a struggle. Today, just as the previous nine days, I feel the sun's powerful rays searching my face for any unprotected flesh. Despite the now tanned complexion, I reach automatically for the Factor 35 sun cream and put on my shades. For Keirron Tastagh this is his first taste of Finland.



Bengtskar lighthouse

Till the 'thaw', just three weeks previous, the Gulf of Finland (an expanse of brackish water, broken by thousands of small islands,) on which we had been paddling, is used for recreational skating and long distance skiing.

The invitation to Finland had been an unexpected delight. I'd met and paddled with Jukka Linnonmaa, (the training co-ordinator for 'Helsingin Melojat' - Helsinki Paddlers) the previous summer, whilst leading a Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Expedition in Norway. Jukka had subsequently offered to fly me out, stay with his family, and train coaches from his and other Helsinki kayak clubs, who wished to gain BCU qualifications.

Between training sessions and copious saunas, Jukka took me on a kayak trip to give me an insight into what has been one of the most inspirational paddling locations I've visited. It was not the paddling, but in fact a chin-up competition (on returning from the trip,) with Jukka's energetic daughter, which was causing my body so much distress.

Jukka



# Finnish

## Paddling to Morganland

We put in at Hanko, a handy peninsula forming Finland's South-West tip. Our aim was to reach the southern most lighthouse in Finland, situated on a small island, beyond which lay open water to Estonia. Bengtskar, the tallest lighthouse in Scandinavia is normally visited via the ferry, running regularly in the summer months, but also a few groups of committed paddlers who enjoy the exposure and serenity the island offers.

We set off in the evening. Carefully loading our kayaks with provisions and then carrying them down to the waters edge. We had dressed light, knowing the warm air temperature combined with the paddling ahead, would keep us toasty hot. Attempting to avoid the incomplete slipway, my feet suddenly shot out from under me, and I fell straight on to my backside into the marina!

Realising that no serious damage was done, we both fell about laughing and got underway.

Keeping the three-quarters full moon, clear yet almost opaque, high on our left, and the bright sun, slowly sinking on our right. The sky, free of clouds, a perfect spectrum of blues, from the deep tropical turquoise overhead, paling to a light blue grey on the horizon. Three Sea Eagles flew across our path, their huge wingspan throwing shadows on the still water. As the day drew to a close, we arrived at

"The sky, free of clouds, a perfect spectrum of blues, from the deep tropical turquoise overhead, paling to a light blue grey on the horizon."

'Morganland' - Morning Land, so named by the inhabitants of the scattered outer islands, for catching the sun's first rays.

Providing a stunning nesting site for 75 pairs of Arctic terns, Morganland also bore evidence of the Russian/Finnish Winter Conflict of 1939-40. This theme was to run throughout the trip, providing a

moving history lesson, reinforced by strong characters displaying memorable passion, with a backdrop which defied emotion not to surface.

Pulling the kayaks up on the smooth rocks, the warmth of the sun was decreasing. Looking around for a comfortable spot to pitch the tents, we noticed we were not alone. The disused bunker perched on the island's only high point, silhouetted three scopes and an outline of a motionless person. By the time we had gathered a few possessions and made our way over the intermittent rock slabs and thin, well worn trail leading to the hilltop, the figure had disappeared.

Two Finnish bird watchers greeted us, Seppo Sallyla, a giant of a man, and his companion. We gladly accepted the offer of a bunk for the night, and brought our kit over from the kayaks. Jukka prepared a meal whilst I trotted joyously about the island, taking photos and collecting the kit I'd forgotten on our previous run.

Seppo showed me where to find wild chives, (known to the Finnish as wild onions) growing in clumps amongst the mixture of grass and rock outcrops. Jukka presently added this to the meal. As the sun spread its crimson colour across the picturesque scene, we listened to Seppo explaining the 150 bird species he'd recorded that week,

recounting the tales of the Finnish defence of Morganland, sipped wine from our plastic mugs and ate Jukka's culinary success.

As drowsiness kicked in, enhanced by the exposure to the hot sun and a few mugs of red wine, I remember Seppo discussing his other hobby – collecting old weapons from the war. He was both very knowledgeable and surprising in his chosen interests, and got from me a great deal of respect in the short time I spent with him.

“As drowsiness kicked in, enhanced by the exposure to the hot sun and a few mugs of red wine, I remember Seppo discussing his other hobby – collecting old weapons from the war.”

After breakfast next morning, a mild Westerly on the shore provoked me into wearing a long sleeved cagoule for the

day, guessing that offshore it may get colder. As we prepared to set off, Seppo appeared, dressed in a bearskin hat, Russian Military greatcoat, trousers and big boots. It passed by mind that he would be a daunting figure in a different situation.

**Bengtskar lighthouse**

He bade us farewell as we set off for Bengtskar, which was vaguely visible in the distance. Yet again we were slightly overdressed, but a fresh breeze in our faces and a relaxed paddling pace kept us from overheating. Intending to treat the trip as a total relaxation break, I left all the navigation, organisation and important decisions in the very capable hands of Jukka.

**Finnish facts**

Finland was a province and then a grand duchy under Sweden from the 12th to the 19th centuries and an autonomous grand duchy of Russia after 1809. It won its complete independence in 1917. During World War II, it was able to successfully defend its freedom and resist invasions by the Soviet Union - albeit with some loss of territory. In the subsequent half century, the Finns made a remarkable transformation from a farm/forest economy to a diversified modern industrial economy; per capita income is now on par with Western Europe. As a member of the European Union, Finland was the only Nordic state to join the euro monetary system at its initiation in January 1999.

**Coastline:** 1,250 km

**Climate:** cold temperate; potentially subarctic but comparatively mild because of moderating influence of the North Atlantic Current, Baltic Sea, and more than 60,000 lakes

**Terrain:** mostly low, flat to rolling plains interspersed with lakes and low hills

**Population:** 5,223,442 (July 2005 est.)

**Capital:** Helsinki

# delight



Rosala chieftain hall



Iukka cooking tea



Seppo

Having phoned the night before, we arrived at the lighthouse about midday, and were welcomed by Katariina, a very bubbly, vivacious and likable Bengtskar guide. She had prepared an enormous pan of delicious fish soup, with a platter of local bread for us. Whilst serving other visitors, baking in the kitchen and smiling all the time, Katariina told us about the lighthouse, now in its centenary year, of the 200,000 Euros raised to pay for the work on the exterior and the thousands of visitors expected for the birthday celebrations. Still finding time to chat to all of her customers, answer questions about her job and produce continuous trays of fresh baked and still warm, 'sweet buns', washed down with fresh coffee. She was entralling.

Across from us at the table, were the officers from a military patrol vessel, who had also called in for lunch. Remembering Seppo's tale of the lighthouse battle, we checked the tower steps for marks left by a hand grenade, which had saved the small band of Finnish soldiers, defending the island many years ago. Outside, Finnish school children basked in the sunshine, explored the island, and lay on the rocks writing about their perceptions of Bengtskar. Wishing us a safe journey, Katariina said goodbye and hurried back inside.

**Viking village and museum**

Our course was now almost due west, and the wind shifted in turn, retaining a steady headwind. A pair of Arctic swans flew overhead, the noise of their wing beating loudly in the otherwise tranquil air. Yet again

we kept a leisurely pace, stopping to take photos and admire the barren stillness.

Our next destination was a Viking museum, located on one of the inner islands. The sun continued to beat down, Eider ducks became more frequent and in larger groups, and the islands got larger and closer together.

'Rosala' is operated by the same family who run Bengtskar. Having left the kayaks on the beach, we walked the short distance to the museum. Finding that the village shop was closing, we hastily doubled back to the old, Finnish style, brown timber house, which seconded as the local store. Having stocked up with ice cream, beer, bread and sandwich fillings, we arrived back at the Viking village.

A large school group were staying at the village, (groups stay in the Longhouse, eat traditional Viking food baked on-site, learn crafts and discover how the Vikings lived.) A busy lady stopped kneading the dough she was making to give us a presentation and put on a film for us to watch. We learnt that the original Vikings did not have horns

"The word Skol, said as a toast, came from the Viking word for skull, as warriors would drink a toast from their victim's severed head!"

on their helmets, (a myth invented by the clergy to cast the Vikings as Devils), and that the word Skol, said as a toast, came from the Viking word for skull, as warriors would drink a toast from their victim's severed head! Then followed a tour of the Longhouse, with its fur lined sleeping quarters and central fire pit.

**The return to Hanko**

With the last of the daylight, we paddled to a secluded island, and set up camp on the flat rocks;

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overlooking two swans floating close by. Amidst the chatter of birdlife nearby, (initially mistaken for human voices), I pitched the tent to catch the early sun. We sat drinking wine and discussed the past two days, and life in general. A Tern called out, circling our camp and landing on the far shore. It called once more and was joined by another. The swans sank their heads in their gleaming white feathers, drifting in the centre of the inlet.

Woken very early, soon after day break by the bright sunlight, we felt the change in the wind. It was now blowing stronger from the East, (the direction we would now paddle to return to Hanko), so promising a harder paddle for the last part of our trip. We ate our cereal, watching the swans sail away into the larger stretches of water between islands.

Morning break was taken at a tiny village, with a renowned old church, just up from the water's edge. Jukka told of miniature scale ships which are hung from the ceiling, as a constant reminder of the inherent fishing culture within the Finnish community. It was a way of paying homage to the many killed through this way of life. Outside the ribbons fluttered on the giant Maypole, symbolic of another ongoing cultural tradition. We stopped at the shop to buy warm garlic bread and ice creams.

The sun glistened on small chop, created by the increasing Easterly, splashing droplets of barely salty water in our faces. Large groups of Eider ducks were common; a pair of Terns sat on low rock as we paddled by, and later on another Sea Eagle flew over. A military patrol vessel chugs by, and civilisation becomes evident on the shores. Returning to the marina, the slipway has been completed, and a more dignified landing guaranteed. ●

My stay in Finland now seemed to be racing by. Assisting on a trip with a local school class down the river running past Jukka's house, gave the opportunity to experience another view of the Finnish culture, and be charmed by the simplicity of the gentle moving water, the bright fresh green leaves opening on the overhanging trees, contrasting Silver Birch with peeling bark, rolled like old parchment. The young Finns spoke broken English, mostly chattering in their native tongue, filling me with a desire to learn their language and be less ignorant when conversing with them.

Two more days of kayak training and assessments around Blueberry Island and it was time for leaving. A time of hugs and fond farewells. The plane roared into takeoff, and my head relaxed on the rest, I dozed off.

The plane must have changed direction into the sun, for its glare on my face made me open my eyes again, and look down. A leg of land, which looked vaguely familiar passed below, my blurred thoughts fought to recognise it. Slowly the realisation dawned on me, it was Hanko, and if we carried on in this direction.... Morganland came into view, memories still very fresh, changed my expression of concentration to a smile, and there was Bengtskar, unmistakable in its shape and prominent structure.

Farewell to all, I had the feeling I'd be seeing them again.



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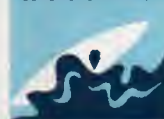
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 or email at [info@woodmill.co.uk](mailto:info@woodmill.co.uk)

# BCU photo competition



The winners for March and April (as voted by you) are:

**March adult winner:**  
Lee McClean

**April adult winner:**  
John Kelly

**March youth winner:**  
Mark Adams

**April youth winner:**  
Ruari Fangman



**Mark Adams**  
March – Youth winner



**Lee McClean**  
March – Adult winner



**Alec Feuillade**  
**Anna Pollock**



The photo competition is still running! For your chance of winning the 2007 competition get clicking now!

**To enter:** Send your digital photos in jpeg format via email to [chloe@bcu.org.uk](mailto:chloe@bcu.org.uk)

Or post your photos on a CD to:  
Chloe Nelson-Lawrie  
British Canoe Union  
18 Market Place  
Bingham  
NG13 8AP

Remember to label your photos and to provide contact details that include your name, address, telephone number, age and BCU number.



**Ruari Fangman**  
April – Youth winner

**Prizes: Monthly winner**

A winner will be chosen each month until December 2007. Each month one adult will win £25 Cotswold vouchers and one youth (under 18 years old) will win £25 WHSmith vouchers. Winners will be announced on-line and in future editions of Canoe Focus.

**How winners are chosen**

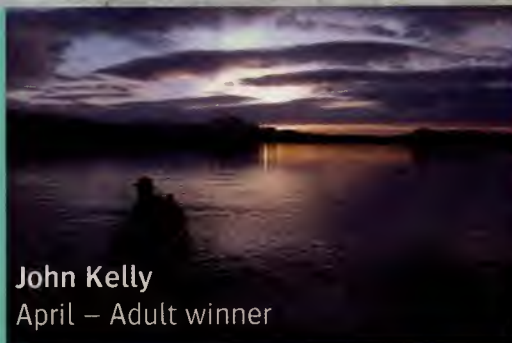
Once we receive your photograph it will be uploaded onto the BCU web site where people can vote for their favourite image by emailing the number of the photograph to [pete@bcu.org.uk](mailto:pete@bcu.org.uk)

**Overall winner**

At the end of January 2008 one overall winner from the youth category and one winner from the adult category will win a digital camera worth £150!

**How to enter**

Email photographs in jpeg format to [chloe.nel-on-lav-rie@bcu.org.uk](mailto:chloe.nel-on-lav-rie@bcu.org.uk). Or send in photographs on a CD to; BCU, John Dudderidge House, Adbotton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS. Remember to provide contact details that including; membership number, name, address, telephone number and age.



**John Kelly**  
April – Adult winner



**Stuart Court**



**Andy Biggs**

## Tyne double celebration

The members of TVCC are celebrating the awarding of the second stage of an 'Award for All' grant of £5,000, following the initial grant of £5,000 in April 2006.

The first stage of the award was used to buy a range of junior playboats, general purpose boats and kit along with sea kayaks and an open canoe along with a storage container to keep them in. The second stage of the award will buy more kit and help to develop coaches and make new school club links a reality.

The club is now planning a big celebration to reward everyone's hard work in achieving the award.

## Kingston KC Top Club celebrations

**Congratulations to Kingston KC as they retain accreditation for another two years as a Top Community Club. Kingston is another club that has been around for over 20 years offering much variety to all wishing to paddle. To find out more about what this thriving club go to [www.kkc.org.uk](http://www.kkc.org.uk)**

# Doing what I love!

**"Canoeing? Yeh, love to have a go!"**  
**Something like that anyway when I was given my first opportunity in 1963 in my local scout troop. Somewhere on the Ribble, I think!**

From Bury, I loved my scouting and my sport. I gained my Queens Scout Award and then I was off to Loughborough for my PE teacher training. I took up my first post in 1972 in Burton upon Trent; I've been here ever since! From 1973, for five years, I was teacher-warden at a local outdoor education day centre, teaching canoeing, mostly, to school groups. I returned into schools in 1978 to continue my career as a PE teacher and will finally 'hang up my boots' in July.

I qualified as a senior instructor in the early 70's, founded Burton CC and became involved in the Staffordshire coaching panel. After progressing through the kayak and canoe Advanced Proficiency Tests, I applied to attend one of the first 'coach' courses. A week at the 'Brenin', under the directorship of Geoff Good, was successfully completed!

By the mid 80's my 'competition' outlet was to be found in marathon racing and my recreation in the open canoe, plus some excellent sea kayaking around our wonderful UK coastline. My interest in open canoe had been noted and I was invited onto the Canoe Star Tests working party; for five years I organised the 'National Open Canoe Rally', held in Lancashire, Nottingham and Bala; and organised coach educator workshops for kayak instructors wishing to convert to the open canoe. Following this I represented the BCU for a few years on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Safety and Technical sub-committee to help generate more interest in the use of the open canoe by young people.

On the club scene, as a trustee and chairman, in 1983 I was travelling to Worcester every weekend to demolish the old clubhouse and bring it back to Burton on local brewery

lorries! This first home of the club was demolished in 2005 to make way for the very recent CDDP clubhouse project. A real eye-opener as project leader, but the club had to be based in five containers for 12 months! Whilst all this is going on I have served three 'tours of duty' as LCO for Staffordshire, including coach education courses and workshops; continued to teach PE to GCSE and A level students, although I did change from full to part-time in 2001.

I now seem to be busier than ever, but the good news is I am busy doing what I love doing – Paddlesport. I've had some truly wonderful times out on the water, canoeing and kayaking, inland and sea, participating and educating, recreation and competition and I am really looking forward to this opportunity to call on my experiences to assist in promoting paddlesport, developing clubs, increasing participation and bringing Paddlepower to young people.

Central England is a huge area to cover but I know I will be very ably assisted by a great team at the BCU and I look forward to the challenge of meeting you all, seeing your clubs in action and helping you to develop paddlesport.

**Stuart Briggs**  
**Central England Development Officer**

## Easter polo event

**Following on from the success of the Christmas novice polo event, we had to run another. So waiting for the next seasonal holidays, to help justify the chocolate prizes, we ran an Easter novice polo event.**

Standards had been raised since Christmas and a greater skill level was seen from all. Some teams looking like they had called in some secret weapons for the event!

A hard fought event was battled throughout the evening with Friends of Allonby being pushed to the last match by Southport Wildcats to gain first place in the junior event. In the senior event, Friends of Allonby did by no means have a run away victory with the other three teams putting in good games with some great play and goals.

A huge thanks needs to be given to Pendle and Clitheroe CC for lending kit to help me attempt to break the amount of kit in a vehicle and the polo event, Friends of Allonby CC for their loan of kit, Bolton Youth service for their support of the event, all the adults and children that made the event work and for all the volunteers that helped referee, time keep and keep score.

So our plans are getting bigger now, with a polo extravaganza – please see the events page (66) for details.  
**Garth Field**

## YouthFest

The BCU Young People's Programme is pleased to return to Nottingham and the National Watersports Centre for the 2007 YouthFest event.

We are delighted to announce that PGL will again be sponsoring the event to ensure we provide yet another memorable event and one not to be missed!

YouthFest includes a range of activities that participants can have a go at to make it a great day of Paddlesport – including the 2007 Bellboat National Championships. For an information leaflet email [youth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:youth@bcu.org.uk) or check out the web site [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk)

## What is the Perception Wavehopper challenge series?

**Going as fast as you can downstream, it's great for learning more about rivers and developing skills – even better as it's challenging, fun and exciting!**

- A fun series of events are held around the country, which are run by the BCU Wildwater Racing Committee in partnership with the BCU Youth Programme to introduce young people to wild water racing. The series is open to those who are either not ranked or are ranked in Division B. The races are either over two short runs or one slightly longer run. The age categories are U10, U12, U14 and U16. All age groups are based on 1st Jan 07.
- Wavehopper kayaks can be provided just contact the race organiser for details. To start with however you may wish to use a kayak that you are more used to so long as it's under four metres in length, just bring along your buoyancy aid, paddle, helmet and spraydeck.
- Paddlers should be at least BCU Paddlepower Discover or BCU 2 Star standard.
- Most events run alongside national events catering for all ages.

### Events 2007

- Sun 17 June** Chester Dee – Chester CC, Colin Smith, 75 Stanton Road, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 3AT  
**Sat 14 July** Nene 2 – Northampton – Solihull CC, Geoff Barber, 21 Oakfields Way, Catherine-de-Barnes, Solihull B91 2TR  
**Sat 2 Sept** Marple – Manchester CC, Dave Bradshaw, 3a Hardcastle Road, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9BY  
**Sun 15 Sept** Nottingham – Wiltshire Youth, Kevin Bowerbank, 37 Bank Street, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6DN

### Perception Wavehopper Challenge Series Finals 2007

- Sun 23 Sept** Langham Farm-Frome – Bath CC, Kevin Bowerbank, 21 Sarum Avenue, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6SE

For more details see [www.wildwater.org.uk](http://www.wildwater.org.uk) or [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)



## New kid on the block

The Rocket mini K4. The Rocket has been designed as a one class boat aimed specifically at eight to twelve year olds. It has been designed in collaboration with Marsport and taken into account the principles of Long Term Paddler Development.



The Rocket mini K4 joins the ranks of the Lightning mini K1 and the Hody mini K2. The Rocket is available from Marsport.co.uk who are also sponsoring a series of Rocket races. There will be events for the new mini K4 at National regattas and other selected events. The BCU have purchased eight Rocket mini K4 which will be available to race at the national regatta and other selected races.

Ollie Harding

## Let the challenge begin!

Available from July 07

A Funtastic Flexible Paddlesport Challenge which aims to develop and challenge boat handling skills whilst developing strokes and moves – blending slalom, freestyle and polo, with a touch of wild water and flat water racing.

The challenge has been designed around the BCU Long Term Paddler Development Programme, offering something for everyone. What underpins the challenge is the total flexibility in its delivery, focusing on the paddler, not just the boat. The challenge will help to provide paddlers with developing skill based around a predetermined course in managed and measured environment and will fully open the doors of our sport for all paddlers, providing an opportunity to experience the many different disciplines and helping coaches' spot where an individual is most motivated.

Further information and details of resources to support the scheme are available from the BCU Youth Programme - contact [youth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:youth@bcu.org.uk) 0845 3709520.



## The Lightning Series 2007

The Lightning Series is a series of four regattas timed to run alongside the National Sprint Regattas held at Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham and at Dorney Lake, Eton. The events take place during the May, June, July and September regattas with racing now fully integrated into the regatta programme. Paddlers compete over 500 metres and 1K in Lightning mini K1, the Hody mini K2 and new for this year is the new Funda mini K4.

### Lightning Sprint Cup 2007

Points will be awarded for each event culminating in the final event where double points will be awarded. The next events are:

**7-8 July** Lightning National Championships Dorney Lake, Eton

**8-9 Sept** Lightning Sprint Cup finals - Inter club regatta Nottingham

### Lightning Sprint Cup rules 2007

Points are accumulated at each nominated event leading to a final at the Inter Club Championships in September. The Sprint Cup includes overall prizes for both individuals in each category and overall club prize. Age categories Boys U10 Girls: U10 Boys U12 Girls U12 Note: Age on 1st January 2007

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

For further information please contact: Lightning Sprint Cup Organiser, Ollie Harding 07886 010288 or email: [ollicharding@mac.com](mailto:ollicharding@mac.com)

## PADDLE THIS

### Paddlepower goes LIVE

Paddlepower is an exciting scheme that has been designed to meet the needs of young people. It's colourful and youth centred approach aims to:

- Encourage more young people to come into and stay in the sport.
- Provide progression and reward achievement in a wide range of topics.
- Show them all aspects of the sport – both competitive and adventurous.
- Provide signposts into clubs where their skills and development can be nurtured.
- Provide a flexible structure for delivery according to venue/situation.

An entry level award suitable for taster sessions or as part of a series of sessions.

Four progressive levels based on 24 topics which can be grouped into safety awareness, paddling skills, varied experiences, and supporting knowledge. The award is equivalent to 1 Star.

Follows on from Passport with a further four levels to take the young paddler to equivalent of 2 Star standard.

Paddlepower Explore and Paddlepower Excel to be launched Autumn 2007.

#### How does it work?

At PaddlePower Start there is a certificate which is awarded by the coach. For each award after Start there is a colourful progress card for the young paddler to record their progress and to encourage them to move to the next stage with a BCU certificate awarded on completion of each award.

Who can deliver the awards? A Level 1 coach can deliver PaddlePower Start, after that a Level 2 coach is required. For Explore and Excel, a Level 2 coach can deliver with support from a discipline specific coach/s.

How do I get started? There is no need to register but all coaches must have the coaches manual to start delivering the scheme. A starter pack which includes a sample of the progress cards and coaches manual to support delivery will be available for £5.00 or the coaches manual is now available to download from the website. Resources can be ordered via our Eshop or direct from the address below.

For more information contact the Young People's Programme on [paddlepower@bcu.org.uk](mailto:paddlepower@bcu.org.uk) or 0845 370 9500.

## Junior Development Project funding

If you started paddling in the last ten years there is a good chance you started in Junior Development Programme (JDP) funded equipment. The Young People's Programme has over the last eight years raised a staggering £764,228, that's a total of 861 boats, 474 paddles, 364 buoyancy aids 32 Ergos and eight trailers.

This year the JDP through the Community Club Development programme has contributed £50,000 to Canoe England Top Clubs and Sport England Club Mark clubs for match funded equipment.

Sport England has a requirement that clubs provide data on membership each year. It looks increasing likely that future funding will be targeted at Top clubs and Club mark clubs. To find out more about Top Club and Clubmark contact [youth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:youth@bcu.org.uk)  
Ollie Harding

## NE snippets

The Youth Programme has swung into action in the NE with two indoor events having taken place at Prudhoe Leisure pool hosted by Tyne Valley CC – an X stream challenge and a junior Surf competition – yes really! On the R.Tyne, juniors and adults had the opportunity to develop their skills on a X stream challenge course.

At the Tees White Water Centre, juniors keen to develop their freestyle skills have been having tuition from Darren Broderick, the NE freestyle representative. Hopefully these youngsters will now feel confident to enter the National Youth Freestyle series – this is now become so popular that pre-registration is essential. [www.youthukfreestyle.com](http://www.youthukfreestyle.com).

Details on further events in the NE region can be located on the youth section of Canoe England [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk) - or ask your club secretary. The problem with updating the regional website will hopefully soon be resolved!

Congratulations to Tyne Valley CC on becoming accredited with Top Club/Club Mark!

Happy paddling! Bobby E. Timperley, PDO NE region

# Surfing but not as we know it!

Tyne valley CC hosts Britain's first indoor surf kayak competition. Unless you know different?



Twenty eight 'kayak surfers' Under the age of 16 from across the northern region competed at Britain's first indoor surf kayak competition at Prudhoe Waterworld Leisure Pool. The event took to the indoors to entice youngsters to try surfing in a safe setting taking advantage of the pool's wave machine.

Broken down into U16, U13 and U10 years-of-age categories, the event took account of the often daunting

effect the unpredictability of outdoor waves can have on younger surfers.

Megan McGuire and Zac Allin aged (9) from Tyne Valley CC, have been kayaking for a year and both took first place in the U10 categories. Hamish Rutherford and Calum Bradbury both also from Tyne Valley came first and second respectively. Both started kayaking last summer with Calum being the youngest in the age category at only 13 years old. Ellie Hudspith took third place in the U10 group, being the youngest competitor (age 8) is no stranger to kayaking as she has paddled with her dad Ray, the organiser for a number of years.

Organised by Tyne Valley CC, on behalf of the BCU Young People's Programme, participants were judged on the best of three runs with a focus on takeoff, ride, break off and overall performance within the ten minute heats.

Ray Hudspith, PE School Sport and Club Links Development Officer with the BCU, said: "It was great to see such a good turn out for our first ever indoor surf kayak event, especially one that's geared towards young age groups. This adds a new dimension to events aimed at increasing participation, adding fun and excitement while developing the fundamentals of paddlesport – agility, balance and coordination."

**Ray Hudspith, Tyne Valley CC event organiser**

## Paddles Up revisited

Those were the days. I used to love watching 'the box' when canoeing events such as slalom and sprint racing and the fun 'Paddles Up' series were regularly presented on TV. The 'Paddles Up' event in particular had so much fun and excitement with seal launch starts, on white water, passing paddles through hoops and over a bar under pressure of the stop watch. This inspired me to run a similar type of event... in a swimming pool!

So how do you add the excitement of white water into a swimming pool I hear you ask? Firstly the pool is a leisure pool, incorporating wave machine, slides, waterfalls, water cannons and geysers. So setting a course that guided competitors through deliberately positioned obstacles on top of, or inside, these features provided the level of difficulty needed to make this a challenging course. The seal launch was from a one metre high diving platform.

With any event it takes a little imagination, using the environment around you. Using what water is available, resources and structures, along with creativity and imagination open up possibilities for more unique events to evolve. Events of this nature, including the soon to be launched X Stream challenges, are the grass roots of our sport and essential to its

continued growth. Over the years I have seen too many competitions and events disappear around the country, although it is encouraging now to see new ones appearing at regional level including freestyle, Wavehopper and Lightning series events.

Hosted by Tyne Valley CC, the event attracted 32 entries from all over the NE region, is part of the club's commitment to being an accredited community club that offers a variety of opportunities to young people in its club and the region.

The course consisting of 15 obstacles used a mix of slalom forward and upstream gates where paddlers had to approach from the other side to either 's' turn or 'spin' around one of the poles. The first gate was positioned directly after the seal launch start that required lots of control to prevent the boat from being popping out to either side, incurring a two second gate touch penalty. Fifty second penalties were awarded for not completing or missing the obstacle. Gates 10 and 11 were positioned over the two geyser bubble makers that created a boiling wall of water at the entrance to the gates. A roll gate proved no problem to many but assistance was given to non-rollers. Other obstacles included limbo gates, passing a paddle through a suspended hoop and throwing the paddle over a two metre high bar. Blowing a whistle



inside the waterfall, with tons of water cascading on top of you, and a strong current pushing you away from the goal, added difficulties. Competitors however were not deterred, even seven-year-old Jack Tennyson, the youngest entry rose to this particularly difficult challenge. A chicane or zigzag weave led to the final obstacle... a basketball hoop set at two metres high. Three attempts were allowed to score a basket which stopped the clock.

The event could never have been the success it was without the volunteers and those parents who support the juniors by driving them to the events so they may compete. A big thank you and will see you at future events that are planned for 2007 so watch out for the dates on the Northern region web site. The event attracted sponsorship from Ainsworth and Powerhouse Marine Ltd to which a huge thanks must go to for their generosity t-shirts were also given as prizes by Tyne Valley Club.

**Ray Hudspith, Tyne Valley CC event organiser**



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## Consultative meeting for BCU members of Eastern region

On Saturday 30th June at 6.30pm at Mepal Outdoor Centre, Cambridgeshire, during the Eastern Region Development team's 'Magic and Mystery' weekend.

The meeting agenda will include discussion on what committee, if any, the regional membership wants. Nominations to reform any such committee can be submitted in advance or will be taken from the floor at the time of the meeting. No nominations will result in continued vacancies or no active committee.

Other topics for discussion should be submitted in advance to Paul West by 15th June.

Contact Paul by e-mail on [pawest33@btopenworld.com](mailto:pawest33@btopenworld.com) or send a SAE to 33 Risedale Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 9NW

**Paul West**  
Vice Chair BCU - Development Team Eastern Region

## Community project opens

On March 31st 2007 the Mayor of Richmond-upon-Thames opened the refurbished Richmond CC club house, which was aided by a £135,000 grant from CCDP1 funds.

New changing rooms, showers, toilets, kitchen, multi-use room, lobby and lift (for the disabled) plus structural changes were made. Improvements have also been made to the boat house underneath. The club, developer, owner of the penthouse above, Canoe England, Sport England and other partners all got together to deliver this scheme.

This particular refurbishment proved to be very difficult in complying with DDA, Sport England, CCDP1 and other requirements within an existing shell. The space above the club house has been sold as a penthouse flat. The owner of which donated £5k to the club for its works. The club is planning to refurbish its balcony overlooking the river as its next step.

**Chris Hawkesworth**

## Bishop's Stortford CC

Bishop's Stortford CC, located on the Herts-Essex border, is proud to have recently become the fourth BCU Top Performance Club in the Eastern region. At a small ceremony, a cake made by club members and decorated with the BCU and ClubMark logos was cut to commemorate the occasion.

As part of the process, the club also achieved ClubMark accreditation (SportEngland's national kite-mark scheme for safe, effective, child-friendly sports clubs). Although Stortford is a large town with a population of over 35,000 and a plethora of sports clubs, just three other groups in Bishop's Stortford have so far gained ClubMark approval.

Chairman Gary Aldam said: "This is a significant milestone for BSCC. By taking the time to work towards and achieve Top Club and ClubMark, we have demonstrated our real commitment towards our paddlers and the wider local community." The club is confident that new initiatives, such as summer holiday courses

run in partnership with the district council, will prove to be a valuable source of untapped young talent.

Membership stands at just over 70, almost equally balanced between adults and juniors. Although the club occasionally sends a small group to Wavehopper races and has recently started a polo team, its main focus remains firmly on sprint and marathon racing. Bishop's Stortford were tenth last year in the National Hasler Marathon finals. Stortford paddlers were amongst the medal winners at the 2006 National Sprint Championships, including golds for Ryan Walkinshaw and Shea Hickman in U14 K4 (1000m and 2.5km). Many on the racing circuit will know the current over-55 Vet C1 Marathon Champion Robin Dromard. Over the years, paddlers from the club have also represented GB at many levels. The club hosts one of the Essex Winter Series marathons each November.

Despite the club's serious commitment to sporting achievement, with all the training and dedication that this entails, BSCC still retains a strong sense of fun and has a reputation for being a friendly and family-orientated group. New members are always welcome, even if they have no previous experience of racing, and introductory courses for novice paddlers are generally available during the summer.

More information on [www.stortfordcanoe.org.uk](http://www.stortfordcanoe.org.uk) or by ringing the Secretary on 01279 755089.



## YORCIE NEWS: [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk)

Given our dry spring and low river levels, all paddlers should be pleased to know that all the Washburn release dates so far have run and that is how we plan it will continue. Aren't we lucky to have somewhere to go for a paddle on white water on a dry day!

Paddlers may therefore be surprised to learn that in order to renew our lease for the Washburn facility, the region will have to invest over £20,000 in environmental and biodiversity studies. How can we justify this? Simple. We either do it and renew the lease, or we don't and over 30 years of paddling will end in 2009. To that end if you are in any doubt as to where you should go for a paddle please support the Washburn, tell your friends and take them whenever you can. When you meet Norman at the gate and give him your fiver, please remember he is going to have to do that another 4,000 times just to pay for the studies. And that would assume the release was free, (which it isn't, as that needs a 100 of you each release!). Forthcoming dates are June 9-10th and 20th with West Yorkshire CC, Sunday 24th June with Leeds CC. Special note needs to go to July 7-8th which is our own Fun Weekend of the Yorkshire champs please contact Esther on 01302 535941 or [esther.mathews@btinternet.com](mailto:esther.mathews@btinternet.com). As always please check the YORCIE info line on 0845 833 8654.

### Coaching news

As regular readers of this column will know, I always have a mention of coaches. This is because over 60% (1,218) of the region's members (2,023) are also coaches. In ascending order of Level 1 to 5, the breakdown is 206, 626, 313, 60, and 13.

So who on earth would be a secretary (volunteer at that), for all those coaches? Well, luckily we are indeed fortunate to have the considerable talents and services of Janet Cartwright who I want to thank on behalf of you all. Not only does Janet keep us all informed of what's going on, but she has just pulled together the Aldwark Coachfest weekend at which 17 courses ran in parallel, supported by 24 coaches and cooks and enjoyed by 100 of the regions coaches. What a great team. Thank you all.

The next coaches get-together is again being hosted by White Rose CC on Sept 23rd at Fearnville Sports Centre, Oakwood Lane, Leeds, LS8 3LF. Minutes of the last meeting and an agenda for the next can be obtained by emailing Janet at [paul@pcartwright.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:paul@pcartwright.freereserve.co.uk) or tel. 01484 603126. Coaches will know that the

conversion to UKCC is now being delivered from this autumn onwards. In Yorkshire we aim to start this process on 23rd September (venue and content TBA).

Calling all clubs and groups. The 'loads of money' (or "how can my group get hold of someone else's money for our pleasure") talk is on Monday 25th June at 7.30. It is being presented by Louise Tideswell who runs a company called Plan4Sport ([www.plan4sport.co.uk](http://www.plan4sport.co.uk)). White Rose CC at their Roundhay Park Lake venue is hosting it. This is your club's invite so please ensure you are represented. Numbers are limited. If you'd like to know more, receive regional info, or come to a meeting, (the next are Sept 10th, Oct 29th and then the ACM on the 27th November), then please contact Jon on [jakey@btinternet.com](mailto:jakey@btinternet.com). Please amend your directory at page 53 as Jon and Diane have moved to 18 Hayton Wood View, Aberford, Leeds, LS25 3AN tel. 0113 2250984. Good luck and best wishes.

Access. After Louise's presentation on the 25th June, there will be a short access update from Paul Lister. So it's double header for you all. Access to cruise the river Derwent is now available on the second Sunday in the month, throughout the year! Trip lengths, some with overnight camping, are flexible and varied. The only condition to this new agreement is that you contact the region's new access organiser, Paul Lister at [access@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:access@yorcie.org.uk) or tel. 01944 758463 or 07751 767067 at reasonable times.

Paul would very much appreciate your help and is aiming to update the whole of the region's waters. Our aim now is not to have just one or two access advisors per river, but to have as many as we can. Any clubs or groups who use a particular section are encouraged and requested to let us know what you know. We'll aim to fill the gaps once we know what we don't know! Don't forget the access officers maxim "how do you eat an elephant?" Answer, "one lump at a time!"

All these events and more are in greater detail at [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk)

If you want to have your event added to the YORCIE web please send Kate an email to [webmaster@yorcie.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@yorcie.co.uk) please put 'web' in your subject. Please keep you news coming into me, like this little tip that I'll share with you. If you want clear surfing info then put magicseaweed.com into Google. I wish you a great summer.

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



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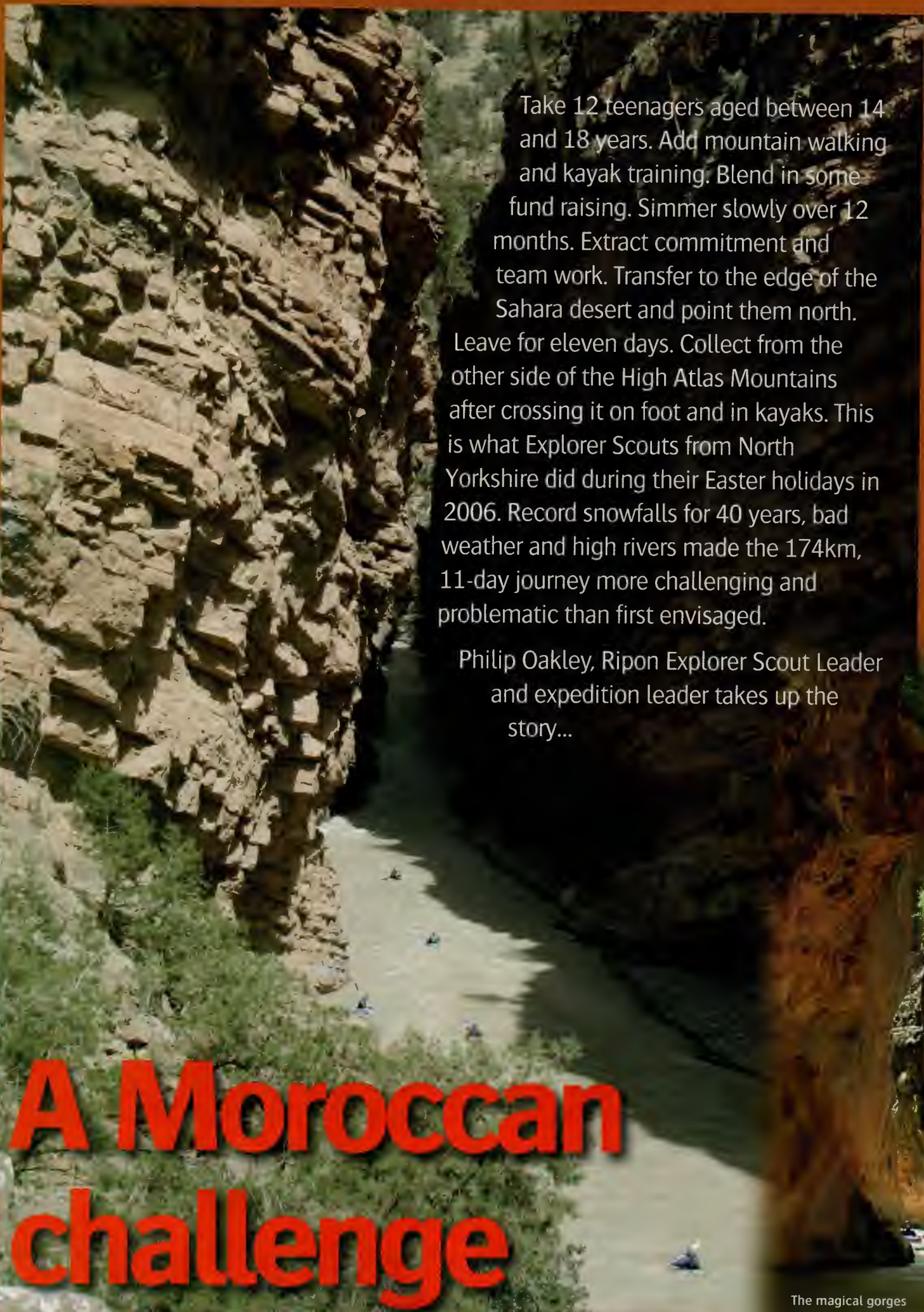
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Philip Oakley, Ripon Explorer Scout Leader and expedition leader takes up the story...

# A Moroccan challenge

The magical gorges of Morocco

Providing a challenging and testing expedition for youngsters in today's politically correct climate is to put your head on the chopping block. Society encapsulates young people in so much cotton wool with expectations of not getting even a scratch after something "adventurous". So our young people experience dumb-down adventure. However, with careful planning, preparation, training, constant (realistic) risk assessment, using a suitable destination as a relatively safe, but adventurous environment, it is possible to provide real adventure. Morocco provides an ideal venue for real adventure. With very experienced instructors and careful group management, risks can be greatly reduced and the rewards of personal development, immeasurable. This adventure is about the personal development of 12 young people, helping them develop valuable life skills.

This was the second trekking and kayaking expedition to Morocco I had organised. The first was in 2004. With the help of Hamish McMaster, the boss of Water-by-Nature, a global rafting and kayaking company, I was able to create a wilderness travel experience for my Scouts.

### A year of build-up

The 2006 team consisted of Phil Oakley (Expedition Leader), Mike Reid, (Assistant Leader), Ed Collins, James Child, Steve Hickey, Simon Walmsley, Stuart Fairbairn, Jack Newsome, Thomas Hughes, Stuart Wallace, Matthew Harris, Oliver Gibson, Richard Davill and Sam Lowe (team members).

One of the reasons I chose a kayaking expedition was because each team member would be required to develop a new skill and would need to rely on this skill to keep them safe. I was already a Level 3 coach and able to do much of the training. Most of the team gained their 3 star - or were not far from achieving it - and several had achieved their 4 star. All could roll and all had been on white water river trips. Most had done the canoe safety test. Also, Ed and I did the white water safety and rescue course. On the trekking side, all the team had done the Scout Mountain Activity Award.

Our flight touched down at Marrakech airport late Friday evening. The following morning we were woken at 5am with the early morning call to prayer from the numerous loud speakers on the Youssef Mosque. We needed an early start as we had an eight hour journey in front of us to cross High Atlas Mountains to the Sahara Desert, first by minibus and then later that afternoon transferring to the back of a truck when the road stopped and dirt track began.

## THE TREK

### Berber whisky, bread and 4x4's

Camp that night was literally at the end of the track, just outside the remote village of Amajgag. Tents were pitched and evening meal soon being served by our Berber muleteers, who would be carrying our kit on their "Berber 4x4's" (or mules). Omar was our Berber Guide, who spoke reasonable English as well as French, Arabic and Berber.

Breakfast – bread, jam, cheese, honey, tea, and coffee – was ready for 7.00am and departure at 8.00am. This became the daily norm. The first couple of hours were spent wading through ankle deep river, flowing through spectacular red rock gorges, towering 200m above us. Beyond these gorges were fertile plains with villages perched on top of small hills: And beyond this the Mgoun Mountain range, rising to more than 4,000m, which we would start crossing the following day. A local invited us into their house for mid morning break of Berber bread, dipped in olive oil and 'Berber whisky', which is sweet mint tea.

That day we covered 20 km. Camp was on a hillside outside a village in the foothills of the Mgoun range. Before evening meal Omar arranged a hamman (a sort of Turkish bath) for us in the village. This was our first wash in two days. That night the weather turned for the worst. Rain and wind lashed our tents throughout the night. The tents, which were supplied by the trekking company, had seen better days! They were fine for summer weather but not the sort of weather we were going to experience for the next 36 hours.

Morning dawned with the rain still falling. A few people had wet sleeping bags and flattened tents, but moral soon picked up when the rain stopped and breakfast served. After three days of eating 'different' food, people's stomachs were starting to develop a mind of their own. The morning saw a steady flow of team members dashing off to secure their place behind a boulder, which hadn't seen previous 'action'.

We set off on day two trekking with a slowly emerging sun and a steady ascent. In front of us was a three-hour ascent to the 3000m pass. At the pass the wind was about 60mph making it very difficult to stay on our feet. That night we spent the night in a derelict mountain hut, which was now used by goats, as our tents would not have stood up in the high winds and rain. For goats it was five star accommodation as it had a roof, walls and doors.

However, room service hadn't been round that morning and the goats had certainly not cleaned up after themselves. It took quite a bit of cleaning before we could use it. Moral at this point was low. Most just wanted to pack-up and go home. Being uncomfortable, wet, cold, dirty, tired, and not knowing how long it would last, was pushing people into new areas of personal development. Most had never experienced this before.

Rain was coming through the roof and bringing down chunks of plaster and the night wind and rain lashed the hut. We were at the remotest part of the expedition where the nearest village of any size was at least five hours away by mule. There were no roads. If we had an emergency we would have to rely on the satellite phone we were carrying.

The following morning was bright with a warming sun. Kit started to dry out and we were able to brush off the goat muck which was on everything. Soon after leavening the hut we found ourselves climbing a rock face to avoid the swollen Mgoun River. Our main challenge that day was to cross over another 3,000m pass. We walked 22km that day. Omar told me that this six-day trek was for "fit men, not boys" and could not understand why we were doing such a hard trek with such a young group. I think he was more use to groups doing easygoing, 'holiday' trekking, not a group wanting a challenge.

### Moral begins to improve

Day four started with blue skies that accentuated the snow-capped mountains and moral was high. The day is best summed up from Stuart Fairbairn's entry in the group diary: "Woke up at 6.30am by Sam kicking us. Had breakfast, then went walking. Lovely hot weather and nice easy road to walk on. At the top of Tizi-n-Tsalli-Imenain had a snowball fight. We walked for 14.12km before we stopped for lunch."

The weather was becoming much kinder to us with clear blue skies and a pleasant 32 degrees. By mid-morning we reached a viewpoint where we could see 'La Cathedral Rock' in the far distance. This was to be the end point of the trekking and the start of the kayaking.

By day five the trekking was becoming easier. We were losing height all the time as we headed down to the river. Our campsite for that night was just outside a small village, where numerous children appeared and joined in a game of Frisbee. Sam, Jack, and Matt also decided to take them on at football when it wasn't long before the older teenagers from the village joined in and our boys had quite a battle on their hands! Not sure who won, stick to the Frisbee next time boys!

Our last day of trekking was only 15.5km and to most this was not a day too soon. It had been quite a physical challenge during the last six days, much of which was at 8,500 ft. By lunchtime we had reached the 'Hidden River' and the end of the first part of the expedition. We had just walked 114km, from the Sahara Desert and crossed the highest part of the Atlas Mountains. Now we were about to kayak down a white water river for a further five days.

Omar, our trekking guide, had done a fantastic job of helping get the team safely through the mountains. The well-being of the group had been his main priority. He was very impressed with what we had achieved with such a young group. He had kept the group motivated with his wit and dry sense of humour. We said our farewells to our muleteers and Omar. Later that afternoon a large white transit with trailer van pulled up and out jumped four big, mean, tough looking river guides (!!) who introduced themselves as Blue, Olli, Clive and Dougie from Water-by-Nature. Our next adventure had just begun...





# THE PADDLE

## A bomb proof roll required

Spaghetti bolognaise was on the menu that night. The Explorers were happy: Food they recognised! Clive, the river team leader briefed the group about camp hygiene and etiquette. Our trip was going to take us into a remote area where road access was at least five hours way. So falling ill because of poor hygiene could affect the whole trip, as well as being very unpleasant for the individual, as the only 'runs' they would want would be down the rapids.

Day 7 was our ninth day of continuous travel since leaving Ripon, a challenge in itself. The team were about to be physically and mentally stretched and their kayaking skills tested beyond anything they have ever experienced before. Due to the exceptionally high winter snow falls (highest in 40 years) the river was at least a meter higher than normal and this caused concern among our river guides. Clive had seen the team paddle at the Tees Barrage earlier in the year and had an idea of their ability. A bombproof roll was important - which some of the team were still trying to master on moving water! Although there were options to portage the Grade 4 sections, much of the river was Grade 3. Having multiple capsizes and swimmers would test the guides leadership and kayaking skills to the full. After the first day there was still access to a dirt track road, this would be the last opportunity to make other arrangements if paddling skills were not up to the river ahead.

The morning was very busy: boats fitted out, kit issued and safety briefs. All kit was double checked in anticipation of any swims ahead! Also the kit raft had to be loaded and launched. While all this was happening, Jono, our video-photographer, recorded events.

## Pinball Rafting

By 11am we were on the water. Clive organised us into three groups so the better kayakers would form one group and would wait at various places to help provide safety cover for the others. The swiftness of the water took most by surprise. It was not long before Sam took the title as first swimmer. After about an hour of paddling, we were at our first serious

rapid with large undercut banks, which everyone portaged because being washed into the undercut could be fatal. At lunch stop Big Stuart said his big toe hurt. This turned out to be an in-growing toe nail. It hadn't troubled him during the 114km trek, however after one morning sitting in a kayak it was turning septic. The toe looked extremely painful and he assured us it was.

That afternoon we did our first substantial Grade 3 rapid – a series of tight bends flowing into a narrow gorge. Steve helped Dougie in the equipment raft to fend off the gorge walls as it 'pin balled' its way down. While I waited with the lead group above the gorge, we saw Sam's boat and paddle float past without Sam. His attempts at rolling were failing, but he was giving it a good go and was rescued before a nasty swim down the gorge, where Ed and James went chasing his kit. Then Matt missed the eddy before the gorge and capsized against the gorge wall in large turbulent water. My heart beat faster as I pictured him being pinned, but his bomb proof roll got him back up. Sam walked the 500m to the bottom of the gorge while everybody else got through OK.

## Marvo the mystical magician

In camp that evening, Big Stu's toe was not looking good. After applying iodine and a dressing the decision was made that he could not continue the trip in a kayak. So Clive made arrangement using the satellite phone to have a 'ducky' (a long inflatable boat) brought in the following morning. We were at the point of fully committing ourselves to the river for the next four days and there would be no road access beyond this point. It dawned on the team that something as 'minor' as an in-growing toenail could have serious repercussions on the expedition.

Our second day of paddling would be another full day of Grade 3. The level of the river presented numerous river hazards – rocks, pour overs, holes, large boils, pinning problems and 'Wee Stinky' was also ahead of us – 600m of Grade 4. Only three of us were allowed to run this section. It was the last hole that gave James and me a good beating as James misjudged the last bit and dropped into the hole. Steve ran the hole further left, got sucked under and popped out the other side and I misjudged the line and dropped on top of James's boat which was being re-

circulated – I then joined it in the most powerful hydraulic I have ever experienced. After what seemed like an eternity and attempts at rolling overridden by the power of the water, I banged out of my boat. When I surfaced I remember seeing James on the end of a throw line and Steve smiling smugly from the eddy. I was then off on a long swim down Grade 3 with Olli in the chase boat. After the carnage was sorted out and equipment retrieved, the group continued down the river expecting to find the gear raft around the next corner with our lunch. Dougie hadn't made any of the eddies until camp that evening.

The following day we had our first day of non-travel since leaving Ripon. We had been on the move for eleven continuous days. We were going to spend two nights at this remote campsite with 100 metre red rock cliffs towering around us and the river crashing through the Grade 3 rapids; a nice location for a day of rest. That evening we had pizza and chips and sat around the campfire being entertained by Marvo the mystical magician and other silly sketches by the group.

## Sam rolls and rocks the casbah

The following day was back on the water. Jono had fitted a small video camera to the front of a boat which captured the facial expressions of Ed and Steve as they ran the rapids. This was going to be another full day of paddling and problem solving, but it was also the day when Sam did his first successful roll and just above a big hole! The main rapid of the day was 'Rock the Casbah' (named so because of the casbah on the cliff above). This was Grade 4 with risk of serious pinning at the bottom if you misjudged it on the way down. Again the guides only let four of us run this 600m section as the others portaged. With no dramas on this one, Jono was a bit disappointed, as carnage makes for good video footage! The team looked more relaxed and at ease as they crashed through rapids. That evening moral was high as we sat around the campfire. Adrenaline had been pumping all day and had left the team physically and mentally drained.

The final day of paddling had arrived. The river was starting to mellow. As WBN literature says 'Paddle mellow Morocco!' This must be the bit they meant. Our first rapid, called 'Cheeky Monkey', which at grade 3+ everyone ran. The rest of the morning



The Mgoun mountain range



we paddled through narrow gorges, at times no wider than 10m, with intimidating red rock cliffs towering 300m above us. The river still had to be treated with respect. Although no more rapids, there were still tight corners with large boils and rocks to get pinned on for the unwary, and there was no riverbank to swim to, just rock face.

By lunch we emerged from the gorge. The river was now wider and slower moving. All could relax: And the guides took a big sigh of relief. They had got everybody down, safely. They had used all their skill and experience well and the team had been filled with confidence, drawing on the guides kayaking and leadership ability. All had gained better kayaking skills but more importantly had gained in personal confidence and self belief. They had demonstrated courage throughout the trip and pushed themselves further than they had ever experienced. The last 6km was crossing the Bin El Ouidane reservoir. Fortunately WBN had organised a motor boat to tow us across to where the minibus was waiting. We had travelled from the Sahara Desert, across the High Atlas Mountains, first on foot covering 114km and then kayaking 60km down into the fertile foothills in the north. An eleven day continuous wilderness travel experience for a group of teenagers who had made a commitment 15 months earlier. ●



Phil Oakley



Our last four days in Morocco were spent in Marrakech and at the coastal town of Essouira where we could relax and buy souvenirs. The trip had been a great success. Everybody had been pushed physically, mentally and emotionally, beyond what they had ever experienced. All had worked well as a team and had done what was asked of them. We had been the first youth team to complete this journey. It will be something to remember for many years to come and will hopefully open their eyes to the world about them. Many thanks must go to our river guides who did a fantastic job on the river. A very professional approach throughout. Without the help from Water-by-Nature and Hamish this trip would not have been possible.

So why put your head over a chopping block and organise such an expedition for young people? When a mum says that her son went away as a boy and returned as a young man, is that worth not worth it? Or when they start helping in their community as young leaders?

**Photographs by:**  
**Jon Church**  
**Philip Oakley**

**FACTS :**

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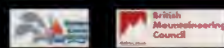


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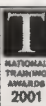
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# Round Britain in

In part two, Phil Clegg ended by described the heart-stopping moment an F15 fighter unleashed its firepower at a target only 500 metres away...



A docile sunfish



A beach campsite

The flat red buoy 500 metres out to sea was a target, and the missile fired from the steeply diving F15 fighter jet fell towards it in a gentle curve before detonating with an ear shattering explosion right on top of it. Turning towards the beach we paddled as fast as we could away from it. We closed ranks in the hope of making ourselves more visible until we realised the red of Barry's boat exactly matched that of the target. Meanwhile the F15 thundered over the top of us, banked round in a steep climbing turn before diving back towards us and strafing another target on the beach. Rapidly changing direction again we headed on south leaving the fighter jet to continue firing at its targets behind us.

Once safely out of range we paused to check the charts to see how we could have stumbled into this firing zone, there was no zone on the charts, only a couple of buoys marked DZ, presumably standing for drop zone. There were safety boats patrolling the perimeter but they hadn't expected us to be coming from the open sea.

We had completed two thirds of an attempt to circumnavigate Britain by kayak and earlier that day had crossed the river Humber coming into the drop zone from out to sea. We had learnt a valuable lesson and a new chart symbol!

We were trying to complete the circumnavigation as fast as possible and with our good progress so far we had started to realise that we were in with a shot of beating the current record of 85 days set by Nigel Dennis and Paul Caffyn back in 1980. The strain was starting to tell on our bodies. Harry took only six days of resting recovery after dislocating his shoulder and was paddling phenomenally well. He had to adapt his paddling style to cope and his body was showing it, muscle around his damaged shoulder was wasting away as he tried to favour his good side throwing out the symmetry in his body and his stroke. In addition the pain was causing him to lose sleep and he was taking painkillers that would knock out a horse. Barry was suffering with suspected stomach ulcers and had lost a lot of weight that he could ill afford. His back was also causing problems and carrying the heavily laden boats was a big issue. Unfortunately for us the good weather

was holding and so we couldn't allow ourselves a day off to recover.

The consistent tides of the south east coast were giving us a good push and constantly altering our body clocks to keep in time with them was hard work but at times would give us a good lie in, a long lunch break or an early finish. Battling against it at full flow wasn't an option. Passing Dover was a morale-boosting milestone and being sucked through the tidal races of the Solent was good fun.

By the time we got to the south west, summer had really kicked in and the weather was fantastic. One night an inquisitive fox that would not leave us alone visited us. I got up to scare him off; meanwhile he nipped round the other way and urinated on my empty sleeping bag. Happy that he had established his territory he moved off leaving me with a musky smelling sleeping bag for the rest of the trip.

## Ethical issue

Rounding Land's End we found a 30-metre cave tunnel providing a short cut through the headland that brought up the ethical issue of what counted as an authentic circumnavigation. As we arrived at Bude the fine weather finally broke and with heavy rain and strong wind we apprehensively landed through a surf break that had us all

## FACTS

## WE WERE NOT THE FIRST

It has to be said that although we did manage to beat the record, which Nigel and Paul set 11 25 years ago they were the first to paddle round Britain and so set the standard for others to aim for. The equipment available then was far less developed. I know that when Paul wanted to increase his paddle length he cut his shaft in half and stuck a broom pole in it. I know of 15 people that completed the circumnavigation before us, and I am sure that whether fast or slow, unsupported or supported, solo or as a team, they must all have experienced good times and bad times, just like us. If you are looking for adventure in your sea kayak, you would have to go a long way to beat what we all have here on our doorstep in BOWEN. You will have to get out there and give it a go.

# 80 days part 3



An inquisitive fox



A secluded beach



thinking of the surf-landing incident in Scotland. From Bude we crossed to Lundy and then the 30-mile crossing to Wales, however the weather conditions forced a couple of days rest. These were the first since Llosgiemouth for Barry and me but it was Harry's first day off since he had got back on the water after his shoulder dislocation on the north coast of Scotland, there has to be a John O' Groats to Land's End record there.

Finishing fever had now set in; as long as the weather and our bodies didn't give us too much trouble we knew we could beat the record. We were keen to do better than that; we wanted to finish in 80 days, simply because it had a nice ring to it. After two days waiting in Bude we got the forecast we needed for the up coming crossings to Wales via Lundy. The following days crossing to Wales saw us back in the country we had started from. Another day got us to Whitesands and TYF outdoor centre where we met up with the cast and crew filming the 'This Is The Sea 2'. Another three days got us round the Lleyn peninsular and within sight of Anglesey and our finish. With only two days to go and forecasts including force seven winds it was getting really exciting.

The wind on day 79 was a Force 7 north easterly, a head wind but just slightly offshore. Staying close inshore we progressed well until we tried to cross a small bay, as soon as we left the shelter of the shore we were in the full force of the wind as it dropped down from the hills above. Before we realised it we were being blown out to sea, we turned and headed straight for shore, it was every man for themselves. It was only when passing lobster pot buoys that we could tell we were making ground. Every metre was hard gained and there

was no stopping to rest. Eventually we made it in and we hugged the shelter of the coast for the rest of the day. This added many miles onto the day and by the time we reached the south coast of Anglesey we had covered 30 miles. We stopped and had dinner before heading on in the dark for another ten miles to make up for lost time.

## Day 80

On day 80 we woke to a gentle breeze but with more strong winds forecast we set off early. We were in home waters now with only 20 miles to go. Coming round South Stack in flat calm conditions we could see the breaking waves of the tidal race at Carmel Head eight miles away. It was the last

thing we needed right now but we decided to go for it. I was sure one of us was going to take a battering but although we all got caught by a few breakers we made it through unscathed. The last few miles to our starting point at Cemaes Bay were high-spirited and we were all very happy to finally see the beach appear through the grey mist and drizzle. Coming into the empty beach we all managed to surf in on the same wave. We had done it. It only remained to prop the camera on a boat to take the team photo before heading to the pub. Friends, who had been expecting us a little later, began to arrive and slowly our expedition life, to which we had become so accustomed, started to change back to a life more ordinary. ■

Good conditions in Cornwall



## FACTS : SPONSORS

Many thanks to all the friends out there who helped us on our way, some we knew before we set off but many we made as we travelled. Thanks especially to the sponsors: Nigel Dennis Kayaks, Lendel, Reed, Kari-tek. And many thanks to all the individuals, organisations, schools and pupils involved with Expeditions.

Finished



# Amazing canoe Challenge

I am the regional president of the South East Region of Soroptimist International and I set the region the challenge to 'Do Something Amazing!' For my personal challenge I didn't know what to do so I spoke to a fellow canoeing instructor Jamie and we decided to canoe across the Caledonian Canal in Scotland from West to East from Fort William to Inverness, 60 miles, including Loch Ness! We completed this in May this year, 2006, after months of preparation but it wasn't an easy challenge but it was great fun.



I spent Sunday and Monday travelling the canal by road talking to the loch keepers and working out entry and exit points since we have to take the canoe out and move it on wheels round the lochs. We also showed them our canoe licence and collected the much-needed key to the toilet blocks! Jamie bought our canoe up by road. It was hoped we would do about 15 miles a day over four days and finish on the Saturday to be met by fellow Soroptimists outside Inverness.

The first day we did the first five miles on the canal and then canoed across Loch Lomond to the Letter Findlay Hotel. This was on the only exit point along the loch where we had tea and shortbread in the hotel before Jamie, my canoeing partner, went to get the vehicle to put the boat on the roof rack and transport it back to our accommodation, a cottage near Urquhart castle, about three quarters of the way along the route. Thanks must go to my support team fellow Soroptimists Marcia and Penny and my mum and Jamie's wife Maureen for doing the driving, preparing the meals and drying our wet clothes.

## Hardest paddle

Day two was a good day and we canoed the rest of Loch Lomond and through the canal. This day there were several lock gates and swing bridges where we had to walk round – in one place the loch keeper opened the gate and apologised that for safety reasons we couldn't go through the gates. We phoned base and said we have five miles to go and an estimated time of return for dinner and then the wind changed direction. We were canoeing with the prevailing wind but sometimes if the weather is changing so does the wind. This was our hardest paddle five miles against the wind with no currents to



help us – but we made it – a little tired and late but – we were half way and feeling good.

Day three was a disaster, the wind was blowing a gale and there were five foot high waves on Loch Ness, so we decided it was unsafe to paddle. As we had done the research we chose to canoe the last five miles of the canal and do some of day four's paddle in order to complete the challenge. The lock keepers were very surprised to see us one day early but pleased we had not put ourselves in danger. To our dismay the wind calmed down in the afternoon so we did the last four miles of Loch Ness and the connecting Loch Oich.

This meant we had 18 miles of Loch Ness to do on the Friday – a real challenge. The day started fine but gradually the rain set in. We completed the last three and half-hours almost without stopping to keep warm. We did stop for a cup of tea in the middle of the loch near Urquhart castle and I amused Jamie by demanding a towel to dry my hair and make me warm again under my woolly hat! At one point we were quite cold and I was wearing my Marigold Gloves to keep my hands warm – we did say if the monster appeared he would swallow me first since my yellow gloves would attract him! We completed the challenge by the jetty for the boat cruises with a purple monster on the bank. That night we went out for a meal to save us cooking.

## Special day

The Saturday was a very special day. We had arranged to do the last mile and meet the local Soroptimists at 11.00. When we turned the corner on the bank there were about 30 people with blue and yellow balloons and big cheers. Then I went off to the local radio station for an interview. On the trip we raised £5,250 for Water Aid, a charity that provides safe drinking water in Africa and Asia. In the evening the local co-ordinator for Water Aid had arranged a special dinner with entertainment and a raffle. This was attended by about 80 people including Rotary and Inner Wheel, Soroptimists and friends. The money has gone to a sustainable water and sanitation project in Nigeria

It really was quite a challenge and I can't believe I achieved it! At one point I counted how many strokes I did in five minutes that was 136. So we worked out in the 25 hours of paddling the 60 miles I did over 34,000 paddle strokes! ●

**Denise Staplehurst and Jamie Houghton**

# Leading a merry dance

## The Dagger Charleston

Touring kayak for estuaries and inshore paddling

The Charleston has been around for a number of years now, however, good design lasts and it seemed the perfect kayak for a lazy touring day. The boat is stable, comfortable and easy to get in and out of, which is important when sliding in from two feet above.

The Charleston handles very well and you will find the acceleration is good with firm tracking without the skeg, and with the skeg should the wind start to pick up. The cockpit is both spacious and comfortable which is as it should be for an all-day cruiser. The cockpit offers a good paddling position with padded seat and supportive backrest that can be adjusted whilst seated in the kayak and adjustable thigh braces. Side lock foot braces complete the interior package.

The Charleston has capacious storage areas both front and back for a serious weekends kayaking, which we didn't really put to the test except for a pair of sandals. However,

the rubberised dual density hatches were much simpler to use than some of the more elaborate systems out there and the storage areas remained dry.

On the same day, I allowed a couple of novices to have a paddle of the Charleston and they coped very well or maybe the boat coped with them. The large cockpit would give any beginner a lot of confidence should the paddler capsize and even for beginners they were able to paddle at a decent pace without zig-zagging.

The predictability and stability of the Charleston would make it ideal for those amongst you who are not too experienced and wishing to develop your paddling skills whilst retaining many qualities that would keep an experienced kayaker entertained for many weekends.

The Charleston comes in two sizes of 14 foot for small to medium paddlers and 15 foot for the larger ones amongst us and is a neat blend of performance and user friendliness.

**Mark Anderson**

**Dagger Charleston 14 or 15 (with skeg) – RRP £549**

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



### Dagger Charleston 14

Length: 14.1' (4.29m)  
Width: 24.75" (63cm)  
Weight: 51lbs (23kg)  
Max weight capacity: 285lbs (129kg)

### Dagger Charleston 15

Length: 15' (4.57m)  
Width: 24.75" (63cm)  
Weight: 57lbs (26kg)  
Max weight capacity: 320lbs (145kg)

### Features:

Adjustable backrest and thigh braces, two hatches with dual density covers, deck elastics and security bar



## Paramo Cambia Zip Neck Top



In the past we have reviewed the short and long sleeve versions of the reversible Cambia range and excellent products they are too.

Now along comes the long sleeved zip version with a high collar to provide increased protection from both colder conditions or for sun protection for all-year round activities. The zip is also excellent for increased ventilation for when you become too warm.

The zip is comfortable being both concealed and with a woven lining to reduce friction.

The zipped Cambia as with the other shirts still offers a choice of two levels of cooling. When you're hot, you wear the fabric's smooth water-attracting face next to your skin to offer maximum cooling. In cooler conditions, you wear the honeycombed air-containing face next to your skin giving a feeling of dryness but still providing effective evaporation of excess water.

My only gripe is the gloomy range of dark colours which in hot sunny conditions attracts light instead of reflecting it similar to a light coloured piece of clothing.

Excellent for watersports due to its light weight and rapid drying capabilities, the zip neck completes the set of an excellent base layer for all conditions and would be an excellent choice for any weekend on the water.

**RRP: £35.00**

**Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL**

**Colours: navy or black**

**Average weight 133g**

**Steve Humphreys**

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

## Helly Hansen Trailwizard

The Trailwizard is the successor to the highly rated Trailblazer.

The ladies short sleeve top was tested in the last issue and the men's top is exactly the same – so there is no need to go into too much detail.

I have found it to be the perfect exercise companion where the shirt does an excellent job of directing moisture away from the body with the CoolGrid; a mesh-like fabric, on the shirt's back, giving excellent ventilation. The loose cut lets air circulate underneath the shirt but the icing on this very cool cake is provided by the zip, which helps you cool off when you really push hard.

Part of the line-up are the Trailwizard tights which as the name suggests, are quite snug. However, don't let that put you off as they have a light feel which means they are not restrictive in any way. Added to this are the zips on the bottom of the legs that go all the way up to the knee to aid ventilation as does the lightly meshed area just below the waist at the back.

A drawcord keeps the tights in place with reflective graphics for night use. On the whole the tights are comfortable – I can wear them all day and because they dry very quickly are good for kayaking in cooler weather.

**Tony Cornwell**

Tel: 0115 960 8797

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



# New kayak for women



The new Necky Eliza sea kayak, from Johnson Outdoors Watercraft, has been designed specifically for women. In the past, women have had to compromise with some kayak models which did not ideally suit their weight or body shape. However, Necky designers have worked hard to come up with a new design which fits the shape of women's bodies better and gives greater comfort, manoeuvrability and speed.

"Often the average female paddler is put in to a boat which is just too big for her," commented Necky designer Spike Gladwin. "People think they will go faster in a longer boat but that's only true if you've got the power and fitness to push it or are a trained Olympic athlete. We've designed this hull to offer maximum efficiency for the size of the person in the boat." The Eliza is tailored for female paddlers of all abilities and a cross-section of women from complete novices to experienced paddlers were consulted on different prototypes until the Eliza design was just right.

Measuring 4.6m long and weighing 22.2kg, it is one of the lightest day-touring kayaks on the market. Although a priority has been to keep the weight down, the standard kayak is manufactured in polyethylene so it's extremely tough. It can be loaded solo on to a car. Features include a lower deck height to give better stroke clearances for women with narrow shoulders. The deck profile minimises windage and quickly sheds water.

The cockpit is an ergonomic fit for a woman's shape allowing better control. "We found that women felt the cockpit on most boats was way too long," added Spike. "We've made it shorter so they can get a good grip and get hold of the boat much better." A touring seat has a back band to offer greater support and foam thigh braces provide control without adding weight. The Eliza hull shape is stable and glides through the water offering little drag. It is easy to paddle and very efficient at touring speeds which are typically about four knots. Bow and stern hatches are included for storage, and a retractable rudder system makes the Eliza simple to steer.

A wide variety of colours is available and the price is £899. One percent of Eliza sales will be donated to the Breast Cancer Fund in the fight against the disease. This also applies to the Venus 10 and Venus 11 from the Ocean Kayak range.

**For further information contact:**

**Johnson Outdoors Watercraft**

Tel: 01493 745192

Email: [office@johnsonoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:office@johnsonoutdoors.co.uk)

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



## PADDLE THIS

### Ainsworth Crank

Ainsworth has introduced a new concept of ergonomic design into their whitewater, touring and professional range of paddles.

The new crank can be incorporated with Ainsworth paddles that are built with either composite or titanium alloy shafts. At an additional cost of £25 per paddle this is a significant development in paddle design that will bring sophisticated structures to a mass market.

The oval shaping of the new grip contributes to a more positive feel – whilst reducing stress on vulnerable areas in the forearm and wrist.

Along with a gentle

bent shaft, an elastomeric foam grip moulds to the hand providing a stable base on which to pull on.

[www.ainsworthpaddles.net](http://www.ainsworthpaddles.net)





# Outdoor Active introduces the Wenonah Argosy

Wenonah's solo canoe designed by Dave Kruger, the Argosy, focuses on river touring and feels right at home in rivers and streams.

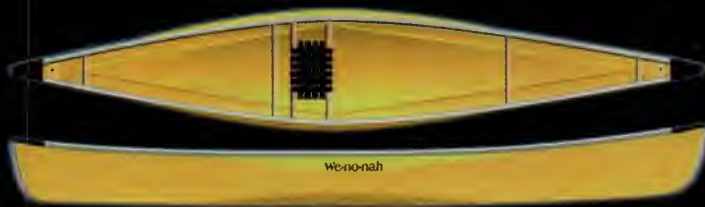
Moderate bow rocker allows this nimble solo to cross eddylines with confidence, while extra volume in the sides (a Kruger trademark) allows the Argosy to be leaned predictably, further enhancing it's performance in rough water.

The new 14'6" Argosy joins the larger solo, the Rendezvous - as well as the tandem Rogue and Cascade - as a down-sized, yet river friendly solo.

Although it is the same length as the recreational solo the Vagabond, this canoe features more rocker (especially near the bow), more depth amidships, more bow flare and

deeper ends to help keep the it dry in moderate whitewater. With slightly more rocker than many of Wenonah's models, the Argosy excels in paddling through moving water, yet still glides through calm water effortlessly.

The introduction follows a so far successful year for Wenonah whose canoes took six of the top seven places, including the first four, in this year's Devises to Westminster race. Canadians Fiona and Mike Vincent smashing the previous record, established in



1989, by 20 minutes to the second in a Wenonah Jensen

**For more information contact Richard Bennett at Outdoor Active, (01454) 261058 or [sales@outdooractive.co.uk](mailto:sales@outdooractive.co.uk)**

# Avoncraft are overcome with Emotion

Avoncraft have launched a new range of sit-on-top's from Emotion Kayaks in the USA. With new designs and bold colours these sit-on-tops are tailored for all the family. Design features like an upturned bow for surfing waves and a defined keel

which will keep you going in a straight line, the Emotion is at home from lakes and rivers to sea and surf.

For portaging the Emotion, Eckla have come up with a trolley for sit-on-top kayaks. Made from lightweight anodised aluminium so it won't rust.

With adjustable mounting arms that fit almost any brand of sit on-top and 260mm pneumatic tyres the Ecklatop 260 can take anything the beach can throw at you. The Ecklatop 260 retails at £60.

**For more information contact Avoncraft on 01707 330000 [www.avoncraft.co.uk](http://www.avoncraft.co.uk) [www.eckla.de](http://www.eckla.de)**



# Highlander Neptune

Highlander, the camping and outdoor brand, have revealed a new range of waterproof rucksacks and holdalls that are lightweight, durable and versatile to keep your kit dry at all times. Available in a choice of four flavours:

- Nautilus bum bag
- Triton drysack
- Poseidon rucksack
- Neptune holdall

All have fully ultra-sonically welded seams and waterproof zips, to ensure the contents stay dry and protected at all times.

We tested the Neptune Holdall that has a gulping 70 litre capacity that swallowed six spray decks and buoyancy aids plus a few other bits and ends and still had room for more. Everything is secured by wrap round clip belts and can either be carried with the handles at either end and on the top or by means of a shoulder strap.

On the front is a dual front pocket for small items that are protected by waterproof zips. Finished off in grey with vibrant blue panels - it is an essential piece of kit that holds huge amounts of luggage whilst when empty is small enough to be fitted into the stowage area of any touring kayak.

**Tel 01506 438 438**  
**[info@highlander-outdoor.com](mailto:info@highlander-outdoor.com)**  
**[www.highlander-outdoor.com](http://www.highlander-outdoor.com)**



## PADDLE THIS

### Keen Barbados

Part of Keen's Waterfront range which includes the Antigua, Trinidad and St Barts, these are sandals with a difference. Toes in sandals, particularly big ones, are vulnerable and often become victim to misfortune when exposed. Keen see the obvious weakness and build in their patented toe cap which not only provides protection but also a main visual point.

The super soft cut EVA midsole cushions the foot and the lightweight design gives you the confidence for longer excursions. The sandals also have an AEGIS Microbe Shield

SBR Lining that fights off odour and bacteria. The package is topped off with the polyester webbing straps and all this is machine washable.

Perfect for the summer  
**Diane Poyner**  
**RRP £20.00**  
**Tel: 0800 612 9262**  
**[www.keenfootwear.co.uk](http://www.keenfootwear.co.uk)**



## Events

## Canoe Camping Club

### Thames and South East group

**Sunday 10 June:** Jubilee River and River Thames

**14/15 July:** Poole Harbour

**Sunday 11 August:** Hampshire Estuary, kayaks only.

The group welcomes individuals and families as guest paddlers. Trips are normally 10-12 miles and suitable for open canoe and kayak. A BCU sticker or navigation authority licence is required. For further details contact: Robin Hickman, [Robin@rhickman.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Robin@rhickman.freeserve.co.uk) Tel 01403 267244

## River Usk race

### Sunday 8th July

**Start:** Newbridge on Usk

**Finish:** St. Julians Hotel, Newport

**Distance:** 8 miles

**Start time:** 13.00

Everyone welcome

For details contact: Alan Baker, 20, Larkfield Close, Caerleon, S.Wales NP18 3EX. Tel 01633 421629

Email: [valandal@talktalk.net](mailto:valandal@talktalk.net)

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

## East Midland's region river trips

### 2nd September - Nottingham Loop

Meet at Holme Pierrepont water sports centre 14 Miles

**Start:** 09.30 on the water 10.00 Water Grade 1

All canoes and kayaks welcome

**Leader:** Frank Taylor contact: [taylor.frank@btinternet.com](mailto:taylor.frank@btinternet.com)

## Free taster courses

### Monday 2nd - Thursday 5th July

For secondary pupils aged 14/16 years. The next taster sessions are specifically aimed at school leavers. They take place during Monday 2nd July - Thursday 5th July.

Subjects offered include agriculture, agricultural machinery, amenity horticulture, animal care, blacksmithing, countryside skills and conservation, equine (with riding tuition on a simulator horse), floristry, forestry and arboriculture, gamekeeping, rural pathways (a programme specifically for pupils who have not achieved, or are unlikely to achieve, high academic qualifications through school), sport (outdoor education) and sportsturf.

For more details please contact Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, Nr Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3AE.

Tel: 01273 890454, email: [enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk)

[www.plumpton.ac.uk](http://www.plumpton.ac.uk)

## Pier to pier to pier race

### Saturday July 7-Sunday 8th

Organised by Brighton Watersports, sponsored by Perception, Nookie, Overboard, Billabong, Yak and Elements Hotel.

No there's not three Piers in Brighton... you'll be paddling from the West Pier to Palace Pier round a marker buoy, and back again – quickest wins!

Why? For one it's a great way to raise extra money for our charities, and two, there's loads of cool prizes from Elements Hotels, Perception, Nookie, Overboard, Billabong and Yak.

There are two categories: under three metre kayaks, and over three metre kayaks. The kayaks can be sit-on-tops or closed cockpit, surf ski's, wave ski's, it's up to you. However, they must be sea-worthy!

**First Race:** 12pm – under three metre kayaks

**Second Race:** 4 pm – over three metre (two-man kayaks accepted). Sponsorship forms are the same as the Paddle round the pier, Minimum sponsorship is £20, register online via [www.Paddleroundthepier.com](http://www.Paddleroundthepier.com) or contact Brighton Watersports on 01273 323160.

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

## Paddlesport demo day

### Sunday 8th July

Paddlesport are hosting their annual demo day; the perfect opportunity to try out loads of new boats. There will be taster sessions available for beginners to the sport and sea kayaking workshops by Ollie Sanders that will inspire all levels. It is a free day so register on line at: [www.paddlesport.co.uk](http://www.paddlesport.co.uk)

## Polo extravaganza

### Clitheroe CC – 22nd July 2007

We hope to have junior, senior and veteran events.

Absolute novice events alongside demonstration games from some of the nations best polo paddlers. For info or offers of support for the July event please contact [gareth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:gareth@bcu.org.uk) or 07738 185885. See you there!

## Totnes kayaks show

### Saturday 4th August 9.30am-8.30pm

Venue: Totnes Kayaks shop, plus additional field next door and River Dart. Free Parking

As Totnes Kayaks reaches its second birthday they would like the opportunity to invite all their suppliers and customers and have a fun day kayaking! Sandwiches and soft drinks will be available during the day with a hog roast in the late afternoon/evening. A video/slide show will run along side with music – free of charge!

Suppliers include Ainsworth Paddles, Avoncraft, Dirty dog, ID&T, Irish Canoe Outfitters, Blue Rush, Dag, Endless River, Lendal, Peak, Reed Chill Cheater, Secumar and Typhoon. Colleges attending will be South Devon College, Bicton College, Dartmoor Mountain Rescue and the Dartmouth RNLi

What do I need you to do? Let me know you can come along and have a great day! [www.totneskayaks.co.uk](http://www.totneskayaks.co.uk)

## Swedish Dalsland marathon+

### A marathon and a half! 11th August

The race is 55 km long, it is a rare challenge, attracting elite paddlers and those who just paddle for fun but want to challenge themselves. The fastest time to complete the three lake course is 4.5 hours and the slowest 12 hours. There is also a junior event which runs over the last 20.7km of the adult course. The marathon is very well run and draws large crowds of locals to cheer everyone one. The best part of the marathon is the 1,000 paddler mass start and participating in the crayfish party on the evening of the race.

[www.knotmaraton.se](http://www.knotmaraton.se)

## Sea kayak symposium

### Orust, Sweden, 24-26th August (there

are also some activities 20-23rd August)

Orust is Sweden's third-largest island and forms part of the west coast archipelago. Gothenburg is 30km to the south. The area is very rural with a number of small population centres. Orust is best known for the manufacture of pleasure craft at both large and very small boatyards. Every second boat exported from Sweden comes from Orust. Paddling the warm waters of the archipelago you will see numerous picture postcard villages and hamlets around the coast.

Stockenträffen is a sea symposium and friendly gathering of sea kayakers from all corners of the world. Beginners as well as hardened kayakers are welcomed to spend a couple of days together to paddle on some interesting water and meet lots of other kayakers, on the water and have a good fun time with like minded people!

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

## ECA Essex

### winter marathon series

(Race 1) 4th Nov 2007 – Bishops Stortford, Herts

(Race 2) 25th Nov 2007 – Herts Young Mariners Base, Cheshunt, Herts

(Race 3) 9th Dec 2007 – Barking, Essex

(Race 4) 13th Jan 2008 – Sudbury, Suffolk

(Race 5) 27th Jan 2008 – Chelmsford, Essex

(Race 6) 10th Feb 2008 – Leaside, Hackney, Essex

Race details will be available on the Essex Canoeing Association website or from the EWS coordinator at [ews@aldam.org.uk](mailto:ews@aldam.org.uk)

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